

Development of Seedling Product Marketing in Baringin Gadut Hamlet Through Digitalization

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Abstract

Penelitian ini mengkaji pengembangan pemasaran produk bibit tanaman di Dusun Baringin Gadut melalui penerapan strategi digitalisasi yang bertujuan untuk mengatasi keterbatasan praktik pemasaran konvensional. Meskipun wilayah ini memiliki potensi besar di sektor persemaian tanaman, jangkauan pasar dan daya saingnya masih rendah akibat ketergantungan pada metode distribusi tradisional. Penelitian ini berupaya merancang dan mengimplementasikan model pemasaran digital yang tidak hanya meningkatkan hasil ekonomi tetapi juga memberdayakan masyarakat setempat. Pendekatan kualitatif deskriptif digunakan dengan melibatkan wawancara, observasi lapangan, survei, dan analisis dokumen bersama pengusaha bibit, masyarakat lokal, serta pemangku kepentingan terkait. Proses penelitian mencakup analisis kebutuhan masyarakat, pelatihan pemasaran digital, implementasi platform toko daring, serta evaluasi efektivitasnya. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa BITO, toko daring berbasis OpenCart yang dilengkapi dengan pelatihan intensif penggunaan media sosial dan e-commerce, berhasil memperluas akses pasar dan meningkatkan efisiensi penjualan. Pada bulan pertama, BITO mencatat beberapa transaksi lintas daerah yang menunjukkan peningkatan daya saing produk lokal. Kendala seperti rendahnya literasi digital dan keterbatasan infrastruktur internet diatasi melalui pelatihan bertahap, pendampingan, serta adaptasi teknis pada platform, termasuk fitur yang dirancang untuk konektivitas rendah. Selain peningkatan pendapatan, inisiatif ini juga berkontribusi pada pembangunan kepercayaan diri dan keterampilan masyarakat dalam teknologi digital, sehingga mendorong pemberdayaan jangka panjang. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini membuktikan bahwa integrasi digitalisasi dengan penguatan kapasitas masyarakat dapat menjadi model berkelanjutan bagi pengembangan agribisnis pedesaan dan strategi yang dapat direplikasi di wilayah serupa.

Abstract

This study explores the development of seedling product marketing in Baringin Gadut Hamlet through the implementation of digitalization strategies aimed at overcoming the limitations of conventional marketing practices. Despite the area's significant potential in the plant nursery sector, its market reach and competitiveness have remained low due to reliance on traditional distribution methods. This research seeks to design and implement a digital marketing model that not only enhances economic outcomes but also empowers the local community. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, involving interviews, field observations, surveys, and document analysis with plant seed entrepreneurs, local communities, and related stakeholders. The research process included community needs assessment, digital marketing training, the implementation of an online store platform, and evaluation of its effectiveness. Findings reveal that the OpenCart-based BITO online store, complemented by intensive training in social media and e-commerce use, successfully expanded market access and improved sales efficiency. Within the first month, BITO recorded multiple out-of-region transactions, indicating increased competitiveness of local products. Challenges such as limited digital literacy and internet infrastructure were addressed through stepwise training, mentoring, and technical adaptations of the platform, including features designed for low connectivity. Beyond improving income, the initiative contributed to building community confidence and skills in digital technology, fostering long-term empowerment. Overall, this study demonstrates that integrating digitalization with community capacity-building provides a sustainable model for rural agribusiness development and offers a replicable strategy for similar regions.

INTRODUCTION

Baringin Gadut Hamlet is known as one of the areas with promising agribusiness potential in Indonesia, especially in the plant nursery sector. Its rich natural resources, supported by local expertise in plant cultivation, make this area a promising candidate to develop into a center for producing high-quality plant seedlings (Novitasari, 2022). However, this potential has not been fully utilized, mainly due to a marketing system that still relies on conventional methods (Artanto et al., 2022). In traditional marketing schemes, market reach tends to be limited, transaction process efficiency is low, and promotional effectiveness is not optimal. This has an impact on the lack of competitiveness of local products in broader markets, both nationally and internationally.

With the development of digital technology, opportunities to overcome the limitations of conventional marketing are increasingly wide open. Digitalization has proven to have a significant impact in various sectors, including agribusiness, by facilitating market access, improving operational efficiency, and opening up broader and more measurable promotional opportunities (Harahap et al., 2024). On the other hand, low digital literacy and limited internet infrastructure in rural areas are major challenges that must be overcome (Lenggogeni & Usman, 2023). Therefore, developing a digital marketing strategy is one of the strategic solutions to optimize the potential of plant seed products in Baringin Gadut Hamlet while encouraging the empowerment of the local community.

Brief Literature Review

Previous studies have examined the impact of digitalization on the development of the agribusiness sector. Research by (Ningsih et al., 2024) reveals that the integration of digital technology, particularly social media and e-commerce platforms, along with data-driven marketing practices, plays a significant role in expanding market reach and boosting agricultural sales through enhanced product storytelling, content personalization, and direct consumer engagement. Research by (Jete & Farah, 2025) demonstrates the significant impact of digital skills training on rural community empowerment, with participants showing marked improvement of over 36 points in digital competencies, leading to increased confidence, economic opportunities, and enhanced engagement with digital platforms for both education and commerce. However, most studies still focus on the agricultural products sector, while the plant nursery sector as a sub-sector of agribusiness has unique characteristics and challenges that have not been widely studied.

Furthermore, there is a noticeable gap in the lack of a holistic approach that not only covers marketing digitalization but also the continuous improvement of community digital literacy. In addition, the lack of infrastructure in rural areas is often not balanced with technical support and assistance, so that the application of technology does not have an optimal impact. This study seeks to bridge this gap by integrating digitalization, community empowerment, and a local needs-based approach.

Reasons for Conducting the Research

This research is motivated by the urgency to empower the community of Baringin Gadut Hamlet, which has great potential in the agribusiness sector, particularly in plant nurseries (Nurchayati, 2022). Although plant seedlings from this area are of good quality and have high selling value, most of the community still uses traditional marketing approaches. Such marketing strategies tend to be limited in reaching a wider market, especially in the modern era which is highly dependent on digital technology. Therefore, strategic steps are needed to help the local community overcome these obstacles, while taking advantage of the opportunities offered by developments in digital technology (Artanto et al., 2022).

One of the main reasons for conducting this research is that, so far, there have not been many digitalization implementation models specifically designed to address local needs. Many digital-based marketing approaches are applied generically, without considering the characteristics of rural communities, which have limited infrastructure, low digital literacy, and minimal technical support (Lenggogeni & Usman, 2023). This situation often results in suboptimal and even unsustainable

technology adoption (Adhimursandi et al., 2024). This research attempts to address these challenges by developing a digitalization model that not only focuses on technology but also involves community empowerment through intensive training and mentoring.

Furthermore, marketing digitalization is not only about expanding market reach but also creating efficiency in the sales process. In traditional marketing, transactions are often time-consuming and lack transparency, causing communities to lose out on potential income that could otherwise be maximized. By utilizing digital platforms such as social media, e-commerce, and web-based applications, communities can promote, transact, and manage their businesses more effectively (Hasanudin & Panigfat, 2023). However, this requires specific skills that most people in Baringin Gadut Hamlet do not yet possess. The digital marketing training designed in this study aims to fill this skills gap and empower the community to make optimal use of technology (Adhimursandi et al., 2024).

Another reason for conducting this research is the significant change in consumer behavior, which is increasingly dependent on digital technology to search for products and services (Singh et al., 2024). This trend shows that products marketed through digital platforms have a greater chance of attracting consumers attention compared to traditional methods (Sifwah et al., 2024). Thus, the people of Baringin Gadut Hamlet must be able to adapt to these changes in order to remain competitive in the market. This research is expected to help them understand the dynamics of the digital market and how to utilize it to increase the competitiveness of their products.

In addition to external factors, internal reasons are also an important consideration. As an area with great agribusiness potential, Baringin Gadut Hamlet has a responsibility to utilize this potential for the welfare of the community. Marketing digitalization is not only about increasing income but also empowering the community as a whole. By mastering digital technology, the community will have greater opportunities to develop their businesses, create new job opportunities, and build a more independent local economy.

This research is also driven by the gap in the literature related to agribusiness digitalization. Most previous studies have focused on crop yields or processed products, while the plant nursery sector is often neglected. In fact, this sector has different challenges and needs, such as the importance of maintaining seed quality during the marketing process and promoting products that do not yet have strong brand awareness. This research attempts to fill this gap by developing a relevant and specific approach for the plant nursery sector.

Overall, this study not only aims to address conventional marketing issues but also to make a greater contribution to community empowerment, local economic development, and digital transformation in rural areas. For these reasons, this study is expected to have a significant impact, both academically and practically.

Research Objectives

Based on the background and gap analysis identified, this research focuses on several key questions:

1. How can digitalization strategies be effectively implemented to increase the marketing reach of plant seed products in Baringin Gadut Hamlet?
2. To what extent can digital marketing training improve the digital literacy of rural communities?
3. What is the impact of digitization on the efficiency of the sales process and the income of the local community?
4. How can constraints such as infrastructure limitations and low initial skills be overcome through a sustainable training and mentoring approach?

State of the Art, Gap Analysis, and Novelty

State of the Art

Digitalization has become a revolutionary approach in various sectors, including agribusiness, where technology enables broader market access, higher operational efficiency, and increased product

competitiveness. In the context of agribusiness, digitalization is often realized through the use of e-commerce platforms, social media, and web-based applications. reveal that the application of digital technology can increase market reach to areas that were previously difficult to reach through conventional methods. In addition, Kusuma et al. (2020) show that digital marketing training can improve the competence of small business actors in the agribusiness sector, even though this training is often sporadic and unsustainable.

Internationally, various studies have examined the role of digitalization in strengthening agribusiness systems, particularly through the integration of information and communication technologies. For example, (Klerkx et al., 2019) emphasize that digital platforms and precision agriculture tools have transformed value chains by enhancing efficiency, traceability, and connectivity among stakeholders.. However, this approach is more often focused on major agricultural sectors such as rice, corn, or vegetables, while the plant nursery sector, as an important sub-sector in agribusiness, has not received adequate attention.

Gap Analysis

Although digitization has shown success in improving the performance of the agribusiness sector, there are still several gaps that need to be bridged, especially in local contexts such as Baringin Gadut Hamlet (Muda Harahap et al., 2024). First, previous studies tend to ignore the unique characteristics of the plant nursery sector. The seedling process has different dynamics from other agricultural products, in terms of product promotion, logistics, and storage. Therefore, digitization strategies developed for general agricultural products are not always relevant to this sector.

Second, although digital literacy has increased in many regions, rural areas such as Baringin Gadut Hamlet still face major challenges, including limited internet access and a lack of understanding of digital technology among the community. Previous studies have often focused only on the application of technology without including measures to improve the community's readiness to adopt it. This creates a gap between the potential of technology and the community's ability to utilize it.

Third, most existing digitization programs do not have a sustainable approach. Training and mentoring are often one-off, so the community does not have adequate support to deal with challenges that arise after the program is completed. This results in suboptimal technology adoption and, in some cases, a return to conventional methods due to a lack of confidence in using the technology.

Novelty

This research offers a new and more holistic approach to overcoming existing limitations, particularly in the plant nursery sector. Several novel aspects of this research are:

1. Focus on Plant Nursery

This study focuses on the plant nursery sector as its main subject. By identifying specific needs, challenges, and opportunities in this sector, this study provides a more relevant and practical model for implementing digitalization.

2. Integration of Digitalization with Community Empowerment

This study not only focuses on technology, but also emphasizes the importance of community empowerment as a key actor in the digitalization process. Through intensive training and ongoing mentoring, this study ensures that the community has sufficient capacity to manage technology independently.

3. Holistic and Sustainable Approach

Unlike typical digitalization programs, which are temporary in nature, this research is designed to have a long-term impact. Training is conducted in a structured manner with materials tailored to the needs of the community. In addition, this research provides a sustainable mentoring mechanism to ensure that the community can overcome challenges that arise in the implementation of technology.

4. Solving Local Infrastructure Problems

This research also pays special attention to infrastructure constraints in rural areas. By integrating technology development strategies based on local needs, this research focuses not only on technical solutions but also on the development of relevant infrastructure support.

Through this approach, this research is expected to not only contribute to the development of knowledge in the field of digital agribusiness but also create a model that can be replicated in other rural areas with similar agribusiness potential. The combination of digitization and community empowerment is expected to bring significant changes in inclusive and sustainable technology-based local economic transformation.

METHOD

The present study adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, aiming to provide an in-depth understanding of the dynamics of digital marketing implementation in rural communities. The primary focus is to identify the actual needs of the community, evaluate the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies applied, and analyze their overall impact on the local economy. By employing this approach, the research does not merely describe phenomena but also seeks to interpret the experiences and challenges faced by the community in adopting digitalization for agribusiness development.

The research was conducted in Baringin Gadut Hamlet, a region with significant potential in the plant nursery sector. The subjects of this study consist of plant seed entrepreneurs, local community members, and other stakeholders directly involved in product marketing activities. This diversity of participants ensures that the data collected reflect a comprehensive perspective, encompassing both the producers' challenges and the consumers' responses. The selected location and subjects are considered highly relevant to the research objectives, as they represent a rural community that is in the early stages of adopting digital technology to strengthen agribusiness competitiveness.

To ensure comprehensive and reliable findings, this research employed four complementary data collection methods, namely interviews, observations, surveys, and document analysis:

1. In-depth Interviews

Interviews were conducted with plant seed entrepreneurs, community members, and relevant stakeholders such as agricultural extension officers and local leaders. The purpose of these interviews was to gain an in-depth understanding of the participants' perspectives, challenges, and opportunities related to seedling product marketing (Saputra et al., 2025). The semi-structured interview format provided flexibility, allowing researchers to explore emerging issues during the discussion, such as barriers to technology adoption, experiences with conventional marketing, and expectations toward digitalization.

2. Field Observations

Direct observations were carried out to capture the real conditions of marketing practices in Baringin Gadut Hamlet. Researchers observed how transactions were conducted traditionally in local markets, the promotional strategies used, and the logistical flow of seed distribution. In addition, observations were also directed at assessing the supporting infrastructure for digital adoption, including internet connectivity, availability of smartphones, and access to electricity. This method provided contextual data that complemented the findings from interviews.

3. Survey

A structured survey in the form of questionnaires was distributed to a wider range of respondents within the community. The survey focused on measuring several aspects, including levels of digital literacy, perceptions of digital marketing, readiness to adopt e-commerce platforms, and the expected impact of digitization on income and sales efficiency. The data collected allowed researchers to obtain quantifiable indicators. For example, the percentage of community members who actively use social media for business or the proportion who have access to stable internet

connections (Salsabila, 2024). These numerical findings were then compared with qualitative insights to strengthen the analysis.

4. Document Analysis

Secondary data collection was performed by reviewing documents such as local government reports, community economic records, policy guidelines related to rural digitalization, and previous studies on agribusiness marketing (Zahroh, 2025). These documents provided a broader context and allowed the researchers to cross-check primary data. For instance, economic reports were used to verify the trends in income growth, while government policy documents offered insights into existing support programs that could influence the adoption of digital marketing in rural areas.

Research Procedures

The research was carried out through several stages. First, a community needs analysis was conducted through interviews and surveys in order to identify the main challenges encountered in conventional marketing. Second, digital marketing training was provided to the community to improve their ability to utilize social media, e-commerce, and web-based platforms for the promotion of seedling products. Third, the digitalization strategy was implemented by applying relevant digital platforms supported with continuous mentoring and technical assistance. Finally, an effectiveness evaluation was conducted by measuring the impact of digitalization on market reach, sales efficiency, and community income using data obtained from surveys and interviews.

Data Analysis Techniques

The analysis of data in this study was carried out using a qualitative approach. The process began with data reduction, which involved selecting and simplifying information obtained from interviews, observations, surveys, and documents. The next stage was data presentation, where the results were organized into descriptive narratives and tables to facilitate interpretation. The final stage was conclusion drawing, which aimed to identify patterns, relationships, and impacts in order to formulate comprehensive findings (Hidayat et al., 2025).

Data Validity and Reliability

The validity and reliability of the data were ensured through triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from interviews, observations, and surveys (Sari et al., 2025). Method triangulation was achieved by combining qualitative and quantitative approaches (Matović & Ovesni, 2023). These steps were undertaken to guarantee that the findings of the research were credible, consistent, and academically reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion section presents the outcomes of the research implementation, highlighting how the process of digitalization was applied in Baringin Gadut Hamlet and examining its initial impact on marketing practices, sales performance, and community empowerment, which are further elaborated through the case of the BITO online store as a concrete model of digital-based seedling product marketing.

a. Results

The project to digitize plant seed marketing through the OpenCart-based BITO online store began as an initiative to help the Baringin Gadut Hamlet community expand the marketing reach of local products. The results of the field survey became the main basis for designing features and marketing strategies that suited the community's needs. The following are the initial implementation results

1. Online Store Platform Design

BITO was designed with a simple yet functional interface to facilitate users, both sellers and buyers. The main features provided include:

- a) A complete catalog of plant seeds with descriptions, prices, and stock availability.
- b) A payment system that supports local bank transfers.
- c) A *live chat* feature to facilitate communication with buyers.
- d) Social media integration to expand promotions.

2. Digital Marketing Training

The community was provided with intensive training on the use of the BITO platform, ranging from product uploading, order management, to promotion using social media such as Facebook and Instagram. The training results showed that 85% of participants successfully understood the basics of online store management.

3. Initial Impact on Sales

In the first month of operation, BITO recorded 25 transactions, most of which came from customers outside the region. Although still in its early stages, this data shows great potential for further development. Featured products such as durian, mango, and avocado seeds were the most popular.

b. Discussion

The results of the initial implementation of the BITO online store can be categorized into several important aspects that describe both the opportunities and challenges faced by the community. These aspects include the identification of market potential, the formulation of an initial marketing strategy, and the handling of early obstacles during the digitalization process.

1. Market Potential and Initial Strategy

The results of field surveys demonstrate that plant seedlings produced in Dusun Baringin Gadut are of high quality and competitive value. However, the market reach of these products remains limited due to reliance on conventional distribution channels. The introduction of the BITO online store as a digital platform offers a practical solution to expand market access beyond the local area. In the early stages, promotional activities were focused on targeting potential customers in nearby cities, particularly through the use of social media platforms and agribusiness community networks. This strategy not only broadened the exposure of local products but also introduced the community to more systematic and measurable marketing approaches.

2. Initial Challenges and Their Management

Despite the promising results, several obstacles emerged in the early stages of implementation.

a) Lack of Technological Experience

A significant portion of the community was not yet familiar with the use of digital platforms for business purposes. To address this issue, training programs were designed and delivered in stages, supported with intensive mentoring sessions. The training modules were prepared using simple language and practical examples, including simulations of online store management, to ensure that participants could follow and apply the knowledge effectively.

b) Internet Infrastructure Constraints

Another major challenge was the uneven quality of internet connectivity in rural areas. To mitigate this issue, several technical adjustments were made in the BITO platform. For example, product upload features were optimized to allow the use of small file sizes so that they could be accessed even under limited internet bandwidth. This adaptation enabled the community to continue managing the platform despite infrastructural constraints, ensuring the sustainability of digital marketing practices.

3. Positive Community Response

The creation of the BITO online store was enthusiastically received by the community, especially because it provides new opportunities to introduce their products outside the region. Additionally, the existence of BITO has increased the community's confidence in utilizing technology.

CONCLUSION

The digitization of seed product marketing in Baringin Gadut Hamlet has proven to be an effective solution in overcoming the limitations of conventional methods, such as narrow market reach and low transaction efficiency. Through the implementation of digital platforms such as online stores and social media, as well as intensive training in digital literacy, the community has been able to expand market access, increase sales efficiency, and increase income. In addition to providing economic benefits, this strategy also empowers the community by providing new skills relevant to the technological era. Constraints such as limited internet infrastructure can be overcome through a continuous training approach and technology management focused on local needs. This digitization not only increases the competitiveness of local agribusiness but also provides a foundation for community-based economic sustainability.

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