

## An Analysis of Digital Marketing, Local Origin, and Trust in Online Buying Interest for Coconut Oil Products from Village-Owned Enterprises

**Aryawan<sup>1\*</sup>**

Doctoral Program in Management Science, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

[aryawanpdim@gmail.com](mailto:aryawanpdim@gmail.com)

**Usup Riassy Christa<sup>2</sup>**

Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

[usupriassy.christa@feb.upr.ac.id](mailto:usupriassy.christa@feb.upr.ac.id)

**Meitiana<sup>3</sup>**

Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

[meitiana@feb.upr.ac.id](mailto:meitiana@feb.upr.ac.id)

**Vivy Kristinae<sup>4</sup>**

Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

[vivi.cristina@feb.upr.ac.id](mailto:vivi.cristina@feb.upr.ac.id)

**Sunaryo Neneng<sup>5</sup>**

Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

[sunaryo.tuah65@gmail.com](mailto:sunaryo.tuah65@gmail.com)

**Roby Sambung<sup>6</sup>**

Department of Management, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

[roby.sambung@feb.upr.ac.id](mailto:roby.sambung@feb.upr.ac.id)

**Benius<sup>7</sup>**

Department of Economics, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Palangka Raya, Palangka Raya, Indonesia

[benius@feb.upr.ac.id](mailto:benius@feb.upr.ac.id)

\*Corresponding Author

### ABSTRACT

Rural enterprises, such as Indonesian village-owned enterprises, face difficulties marketing their products via e-commerce because potential buyers are uncertain about product quality, delivery reliability, and seller credibility. The growth of social media and online marketplaces creates opportunities to use digital content and local-origin signals to reduce this uncertainty and build trust. This study analyses how digital marketing content and perceptions of local origin influence trust and online buying interest in coconut oil products from village-owned enterprises. It tests the mediating role of trust using a structural equation modelling approach. A mixed-methods design was employed based on an online survey of 120 social media and marketplace users in Indonesia. Qualitative questions explored coconut oil usage, information-seeking behaviour, preferred content, doubts about purchasing from remote regions, and suggestions to increase confidence in buying from rural enterprises. Quantitative data for four reflective constructs (Digital Marketing, Local Origin, Trust, and Buying Interest) were measured on five-point Likert scales and analysed using partial least squares structural equation modelling. The qualitative results show that respondents rely on e-commerce platforms, prefer educational content, and are concerned about delivery risk and shipping costs, and emphasise stronger packaging, clearer quality information, and visible customer reviews. The quantitative findings indicate that digital marketing and local origin have significant positive effects on trust and buying interest, with local origin as the strongest driver of trust and trust as the strongest direct predictor of buying interest. At the same time, trust also partially mediates the effects of digital marketing and local origin on buying interest.

**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Local Origin, Consumer Trust, Buying Interest, Village-Owned Enterprises, Structural Equation Modelling.

### INTRODUCTION

The rapid expansion of digital technologies has underscored the urgent need for e-commerce adoption among rural small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in developing countries, where traditional business models limit market reach and economic growth. Rural enterprises often face a pronounced digital divide, characterised by restricted access to information and communication technologies, inadequate digital skills, and infrastructural deficits that impede their integration into broader digital economies. Village-owned businesses, in particular, struggle to overcome these barriers, leading to significant disparities in market connectivity and competitive opportunities compared with their urban counterparts. This digital divide not only reflects inequalities in technological access but also exacerbates socioeconomic exclusion by limiting rural entrepreneurship's capacity to tap into wider, potentially global markets. Addressing the digital divide through targeted policy interventions, infrastructure improvements, and capacity-building initiatives is crucial for empowering rural SMEs to leverage e-commerce platforms, thereby fostering inclusive economic development and bridging the rural-urban economic gap in developing nations (Ye & Yang, 2020). Digital content marketing serves as a vital bridge, connecting rural products to wider consumer markets and effectively overcoming the geographic and infrastructural barriers that traditionally limit rural enterprises. By strategically using visual content and detailed information on social media platforms, digital marketing can replicate and even enhance the physical shopping experience by providing consumers with rich, engaging, and accessible representations of rural products. This approach not only informs potential buyers about product quality and use but also creates emotional and aesthetic appeal, which are essential elements commonly experienced during in-person shopping. Consequently, digital content marketing has the potential to significantly influence consumer perceptions and purchasing behaviour (Apasrawirote & Yawised, 2022; Saleem et al., 2022). Consumer preference for products with a "local origin," such as authentic natural products like coconut oil, is increasingly driven by values associated with health, sustainability, and trust in product quality. Consumers perceive local products as healthier, less processed, and environmentally friendlier, which appeals to their desire for authenticity and connection to the source of their food. However, conveying this authenticity in digital marketplaces remains challenging. Unlike physical stores, where consumers can directly interact with products and their provenance, online platforms often lack tangible cues confirming a product's local origin and natural authenticity. This lack of sensory experience and face-to-face interaction can undermine consumer trust and complicate decision-making when purchasing local products online. Consequently, it raises an important question for research: How does the perceived authenticity of local origin affect consumer interest in a digital marketplace environment? Understanding this can help improve digital marketing strategies for local natural products to better align with evolving consumer expectations in e-commerce (Barska & Wojciechowska-Solis, 2020; Sahu, 2024). Trust is a critical barrier to online shopping for unknown rural sellers, as consumers often hesitate to purchase from sellers they do not know or cannot physically verify. Without consumer trust in the rural enterprise entity, even the most effective digital marketing efforts become futile, as trust fundamentally underpins the buyer's confidence in the product's and service's quality, authenticity, and reliability. The perceived risk and uncertainty associated with unknown rural sellers create scepticism that good

marketing messages alone cannot overcome. Therefore, establishing and maintaining trust is essential to convert digital marketing exposure into actual purchase decisions. Understanding this mediation role can help tailor digital marketing strategies to build and sustain trust for rural sellers in digital marketplaces (Hidayat et al., 2021; Lăzăroiu et al., 2020; Quintus et al., 2024).

Recent meta-analytical and empirical studies in e-commerce and digital marketing consistently show that trust is a central mechanism linking digital information environments to online purchase intention (Bulsara & Vaghela, 2023; Qiu & Zhang, 2024; Ventre & Kolbe, 2020). Bulsara and Vaghela (2023) highlight that trust in websites and e-retailers exerts a strong, positive effect on online purchase intention across product categories, underscoring the need to design trustworthy digital interfaces and communication. Ventre and Kolbe (2020) further demonstrate that the perceived usefulness of online reviews can enhance trust and reduce perceived risk, thereby strengthening purchase intention in emerging-market contexts. Complementing these findings, Qiu and Zhang's (2024) meta-analytic review shows that review valence, volume, and argument quality significantly influence purchase intention via information diagnosticity, perceived credibility, and consumer trust. At the micro level, Zhu et al. show that information quality and social cues embedded in online reviews enhance trust and satisfaction, thereby increasing purchase intention. At the same time, recent research on organic and sustainable products indicates that perceived value and privacy-related concerns shape consumer trust and online purchase intention in digital channels (Nieves-Pavón et al., 2025; Zhu et al., 2020). Parallel research on online food and local or credence products emphasises the combined role of platform-related factors, product cues, and risk perceptions in shaping trust and purchase behaviour. Maalouf et al. (2025) find that e-service quality, perceived food quality, and convenience-related motivations drive favourable attitudes toward online food ordering, with attitude and trust acting as key pathways to purchase intention on food delivery platforms. In a broader food delivery context, Chen et al. (2020) show that utilitarian and hedonic values, grounded in the theory of planned behaviour, significantly influence consumers' attitudes and purchase intentions toward food delivery platform services, reinforcing the role of perceived value and platform experience in online purchase decisions. For credence goods such as organic food, Watanabe et al. demonstrate that functional and emotional value positively affect consumer trust and that emotional value is a direct driver of purchase intention, highlighting how value perceptions and trust jointly sustain demand for quality-differentiated food products. Studies on online food purchasing in emerging markets also indicate that multiple dimensions of perceived risk (financial, time, psychological) significantly affect trust in online food sellers, and that trust, in turn, mediates the relationship between perceived risk and online food purchase intention. Beyond the consumer side, recent work on rural e-commerce participation shows that engagement with e-commerce platforms can stimulate farmers' entrepreneurial behaviour and facilitate rural revitalisation. However, most of this literature focuses on macro- and meso-level outcomes rather than on consumer trust and purchase decisions for specific local products sold through Village-Owned Enterprises (VOEs) (Lin et al., 2024; Munikrishnan et al., 2023; Watanabe et al., 2020).

Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is chosen for this research because of its strong ability to analyse complex relationships among latent variables, such as Digital Marketing, Trust, and Purchase Intention, which are typically measured through perceptual indicators. SEM allows simultaneous analysis of multiple relationships, making it ideal for capturing the interplay among these constructs. Furthermore, SEM is especially robust and well-suited for testing mediation effects, in this context, the mediating role of Trust within the structural model, to understand how trust influences the link between digital marketing efforts and purchase decisions. Lastly, SEM is appropriate for studies with limited sample sizes or non-normal data distributions, conditions often encountered in research focused on rural enterprises or small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), where collecting large-scale datasets may be challenging. This flexibility enables rigorous analysis despite typical data constraints in such contexts (Dastane, 2020; Li & Peng, 2021; Punyatoya, 2014).

Based on the outline above, this study aims to develop an integrated framework that comprehensively examines the factors influencing e-commerce adoption among rural enterprises. Specifically, the research examines how Digital Content Marketing, perceptions of Local Origin, and Trust Systems interact to increase the likelihood that rural enterprises will successfully adopt and benefit from e-commerce platforms. By combining these key elements, the study seeks to provide actionable insights that address the unique barriers rural sellers face and to contribute to more effective digital marketing and trust-building strategies in this context.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employed a mixed-methods design that combines a qualitative descriptive component and a quantitative explanatory component within a single cross-sectional online survey (Hendren et al., 2023). The qualitative questions were designed to explore respondents' frequency of coconut oil use, their digital information-seeking behaviour, preferred social media content formats, perceived risks when purchasing coconut oil from remote regions, and suggestions to enhance confidence in buying coconut oil from VOEs/MSMEs. In contrast, the quantitative part used Likert-scale items to estimate a Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) model linking Digital Marketing (X1) and Local Origin (X2) to Trust (M) and Buying Interest (Y).

The target population consisted of active social media or e-commerce users in Indonesia who are potential consumers of coconut oil products, and data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed via the PopSurvey platform by Populix, a professional survey agency. A total of 120 valid responses were obtained for PLS-SEM with four indicators per construct, and respondents were eligible if they were adults with at least one active social media or marketplace account. All the participation was voluntary, and all responses were treated as confidential and used solely for academic purposes. The questionnaire comprised two main sections that are a set of behavioural and perception questions (frequency of coconut oil usage, platforms used to search for product information, preferred content types, main doubts when buying from remote regions, and open-ended suggestions) and a matrix of Likert-scale items measuring the four latent variables Digital Marketing, Local Origin, Trust, and Buying Interest on a five-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Each construct was operationalised with four reflective indicators that capture perceived quality of digital content, perceptions of local origin and socio-economic value, confidence in VOEs as sellers, and intention to seek information, recommend, and purchase the product online.

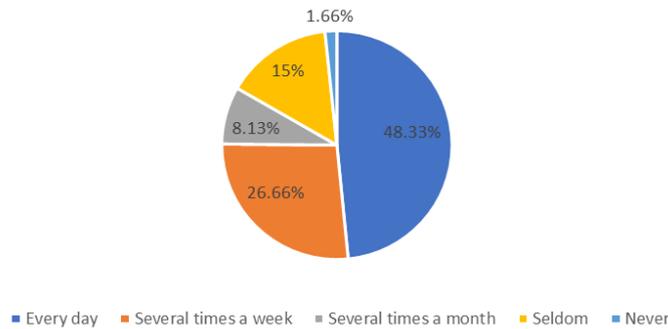
Qualitative and descriptive items were summarised using frequency distributions and percentages for closed questions, and word counts for open-ended suggestions. At the same time, the quantitative data were analysed with PLS-SEM using SmartPLS, following the standard two-step procedure: the measurement model was first evaluated through indicator loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted, Fornell-Larcker discriminant validity, and variance inflation factors, and the structural model was then assessed using R<sup>2</sup> values, f<sup>2</sup> effect sizes, bootstrapped path coefficients, and specific indirect effects to test the mediating role of Trust.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Consumer Online Behaviour, Content Preferences, and Perceived Risk: Qualitative Findings

#### 1.1. Frequency of Coconut Oil Consumption

The first question asked respondents: "How frequently do you use or consume coconut oil products?" The results in Figure 1 indicate that 48.33% of respondents use coconut oil every day, and 26.66% use it several times a week. A smaller proportion, 8.13%, use it several times a month, 15% report using coconut oil rarely, and only 1.66% state that they never use coconut oil at all. Overall, this distribution suggests that approximately three-quarters of respondents fall into the regular-user category, combining daily and several-times-a-week usage.



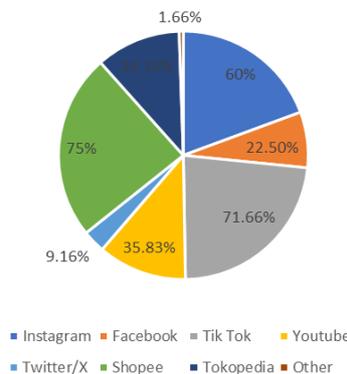
**Figure 1:** Frequency of Coconut Oil Usage among Respondents

From a theoretical perspective, such a pattern is closely related to the concepts of product involvement and consumer knowledge. Consumers who use a product frequently tend to have higher involvement and richer prior experience, which shape how they process information and evaluate marketing messages. High-involvement consumers typically engage in more elaborate information processing and rely on their accumulated product knowledge when they encounter new information, including digital content. In contrast, low-frequency or non-users rely more heavily on external cues, such as online reviews, visual demonstrations, and educational explanations, to form their initial beliefs and purchase intentions. In this study, the high proportion of regular coconut oil users suggests that many respondents already possess a relatively well-developed internal reference frame when assessing the credibility and usefulness of digital content about coconut oil products.

### 1.2. Digital Platforms for Product Information and Reviews

The second question explored the digital platforms respondents frequently use to search for product information and reviews: “Which social media or e-commerce platforms do you often use to search for product information or reviews?” Because respondents could choose more than one option, the percentages represent multiple responses. The data show that 71.66% of respondents use TikTok, 75% use Shopee, and 60% use Instagram to search for product information and reviews. YouTube is used by 35.83% of respondents, Tokopedia by 34.16%, Facebook by 22.5%, Twitter/X by 9.16%, and other platforms by 1.66%.

The pattern shown in Figure 2 indicates that Shopee and TikTok emerge as dominant channels, with Shopee serving primarily as the main e-commerce marketplace where respondents access structured information, prices, and formal customer ratings. At the same time, TikTok and Instagram serve as social discovery platforms where respondents encounter short-form content, informal reviews, and product recommendations. YouTube and Tokopedia complement these primary channels by offering longer video content and additional marketplace options. In contrast, Facebook and Twitter/X appear to play a more limited role for this particular product category.

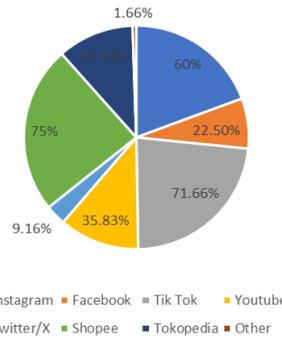


**Figure 2:** Social Media and E-Commerce Platforms used to Search for Product Information and Reviews

These findings are consistent with contemporary digital marketing literature, which emphasises the importance of social media platforms and online marketplaces as key touchpoints in the customer journey. Social media facilitates product discovery, exposure to user-generated content, and electronic word of mouth, while marketplaces provide detailed product descriptions, aggregated ratings, and transactional infrastructure. For rural enterprises such as VOE, a coherent strategy that aligns engaging content on TikTok and Instagram with a credible, well-maintained presence on Shopee and Tokopedia is therefore crucial. The platform distribution observed here suggests that consumers often move between social media and marketplaces before deciding whether to trust a product and seller, and this movement shapes their eventual purchase intention.

### 1.3. Preferred Social Media Content Types for New Products

The third question examined respondents’ preferred types of social media content for new products: “Which of the following social media content types attracts your attention the most for a new product?” The results in Figure 3 show that 76.66% of respondents prefer educational or in-depth product information. Promotional content, such as discounts and special offers, is selected by 51.66% of respondents, while 50.83% indicate that product reviews by influencers or public figures are attractive. In addition, 41.66% are interested in entertaining or creative content that remains relevant to the product, and 29.16% are attracted by storytelling content that reveals the story behind the product. The dominance of educational and informative content suggests that perceived informativeness is a central expectation for consumers in this product category. Respondents appear to value content that explains the health benefits of coconut oil, recommended usage, differences in quality, and possibly the advantages of raw materials sourced from specific local regions. This preference aligns with research on social media content marketing, which finds that the perceived informativeness and relevance of content are important drivers of consumer trust and, ultimately, purchase intention. Informative content reduces uncertainty, helps consumers interpret product claims, and supports more confident decision-making.



**Figure 3:** Preferred Social Media Content Types for New Products

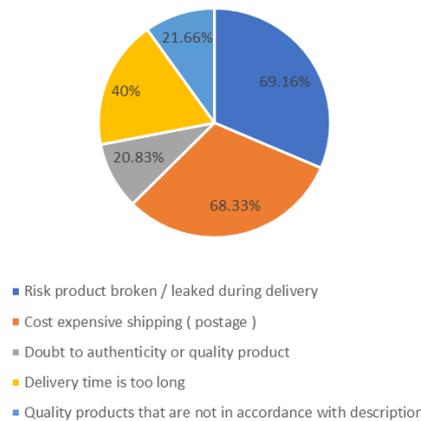
At the same time, the relatively high interest in promotional content and influencer reviews indicates that economic incentives and social cues also play an important role. Discounts and special offers can reduce the perceived cost of trying a new product, especially when offered by a remote seller or a lesser-known brand, such as a VOs. Influencer reviews enhance social proof and provide a vicarious experience, allowing consumers to rely on the perceived expertise and authenticity of opinion leaders when evaluating product quality. In combination, these findings suggest that an effective digital content strategy for VOs coconut oil products should prioritise informative and educational content, while integrating it with well-designed promotions and credible influencer endorsements to appeal to both the rational and social dimensions of consumer decision-making.

**1.4. Perceived Doubts When Purchasing from Remote Regions via E-Commerce**

The fourth question focused on respondents’ main doubts when considering purchasing coconut oil products online from distant regions such as Central Kalimantan: “If you consider buying coconut oil products online from a distant region (for example, Central Kalimantan), what is your main concern?” The results from Figure 4 indicate that 69.16% of respondents are concerned about the risk of the product breaking or leaking during delivery, and 68.33% are worried about high shipping costs. In addition, 40% of respondents cite long delivery times as a source of doubt, 21.66% are concerned that the product quality may not match the description, and 20.83% question the product’s authenticity or overall quality. Only 2.5% of respondents report having no doubts, and 0.83% fall into another category.

These findings clearly show that delivery-related issues represent the most salient sources of perceived risk. The possibility that bottles may break or leak during transit and the expectation of high shipping costs are particularly relevant for a liquid product in fragile packaging shipped from a remote region. In terms of e-commerce theory, these concerns correspond to delivery risk and financial risk, which are recognised as important components of perceived risk alongside product risk and privacy/security risk. When perceived risk is high, consumers are more reluctant to engage in online transactions, and their intention to purchase tends to diminish.

From a trust–risk perspective, one way to mitigate these concerns is to provide strong, credible signals that the seller can manage and compensate for. Clear information about packaging standards, such as double packaging, cushioning materials, and leak prevention, can reduce concerns about physical damage. Transparent communication about shipping options and cost structures can help consumers understand why certain shipping prices apply and perceive these costs as fair. Additionally, explicit guarantees, such as damage replacement or refund policies, can strengthen the perception that the seller is responsible and trustworthy. If these signals are effectively conveyed through digital content and marketplace pages, they can sufficiently enhance trust to counterbalance perceived risk, thereby preserving or even enhancing purchase intention.



**Figure 4:** Perceived Doubts When Purchasing Coconut Oil Online from Remote Regions

**1.5. Suggestions to Increase Confidence in Buying from VOs/MSMEs (Word Count Analysis)**

The fifth question was open-ended and asked respondents: “What suggestions or input do you have so that you feel more confident and interested in buying coconut oil products from VOs/MSMEs online?” The answers to this question were analysed using a word-count approach and visualised as a word cloud. The word cloud highlights the most frequently mentioned words in respondents’ suggestions, thereby revealing the dominant themes that consumers consider important for increasing their confidence.

Although the word cloud in Figure 5 does not present numerical percentages, the prominence of particular terms can be interpreted in relation to the concerns identified in the previous question. Words related to packaging and shipping appear prominently, indicating that respondents expect safer, more robust packaging solutions that minimise the risk of breakage or leakage, along with clear information about how products are packed and handled. Terms connected to quality and safety also stand out, suggesting that respondents call for more explicit indicators of quality, such as clear labelling, hygienic production practices, and, where possible, relevant certifications. Other recurrent words point towards the need for transparency, including more detailed explanations of product origin and benefits, and the importance of visible customer reviews and ratings that function as trust signals.



**Figure 5:** Word Cloud of Respondents’ Suggestions to Strengthen Confidence in Buying Coconut Oil from VOE

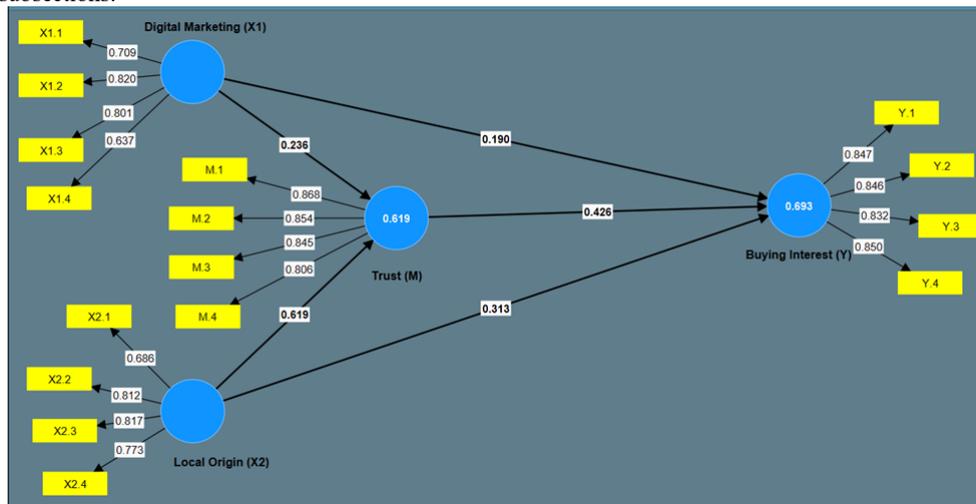
Taken together, these patterns suggest that consumers seek a combination of logistical assurances, information transparency, and social proof to reduce their perceived risk and increase their trust in VOE/MSME sellers. They want to know that products will arrive intact, that the quality is consistent and verifiable, and that other customers have had positive experiences. In practical terms, this means that rural enterprises should invest not only in improving the technical aspects of packaging and shipping, but also in developing digital content and marketplace pages that clearly communicate their quality control processes, local origin, and customer satisfaction. When such measures are consistently implemented and communicated, they can strengthen trust and reduce perceived risk, thereby increasing consumer willingness to purchase VOE’s coconut oil products.

**2. PLS-SEM Analysis**

**2.1. Structural Model Overview**

The model’s structural component is summarised visually in Figure 6. The blue circles represent the latent variables Digital Marketing (X1), Local Origin (X2), Trust (M), and Buying Interest (Y), with the R<sup>2</sup> values for the endogenous constructs printed in the centre of each circle. The yellow rectangles denote the indicators for each construct, and the numbers next to the arrows linking indicators to constructs indicate the standardised factor loadings discussed above. The arrows between the latent variables indicate the standardised path coefficients, which capture the magnitude and direction of the hypothesised relationships (Septiano et al., 2025).

In Figure 6, the R<sup>2</sup> values of 0.619 for Trust and 0.693 for Buying Interest indicate that the model explains 61.9% of the variance in Trust based on Digital Marketing and Local Origin, and 69.3% of the variance in Buying Interest based on Digital Marketing, Local Origin, and Trust. These values can be interpreted as representing substantial explanatory power in behavioural research contexts, where multiple unobserved factors typically influence psychological and attitudinal outcomes. Visually, Figure 6 also highlights the especially strong link from Local Origin to Trust, and the strong link from Trust to Buying Interest, which foreshadow the formal hypothesis-testing results reported in the subsequent subsections.



**Figure 6:** PLS-SEM Structural Model with Standardised Factor Loadings and Path Coefficients

The measurement model was first assessed for indicator loadings, reliability, and convergent and discriminant validity. In the final model, all items load substantially on their intended constructs. For the Digital Marketing construct, the standardised loadings range from 0.637 to 0.820; for Local Origin, they range from 0.686 to 0.817; for Trust, they range from 0.806 to 0.868; and for Buying Interest, they range from 0.832 to 0.850, as visualised in Figure 6 and detailed in the convergent validity output. These values indicate that each indicator shares a large portion of its variance with the corresponding latent construct, and none of the indicators exhibits problematic loading patterns.

Reliability and convergent validity were then evaluated using Cronbach’s alpha, composite reliability, and average variance extracted (AVE). As shown in Table 1, Cronbach’s alpha values range from 0.732 for Digital Marketing to 0.865 for Buying Interest and Trust. Composite reliability (rho\_c) values lie between 0.832 and 0.908, and all AVE values are above the recommended threshold of 0.50, with Buying Interest at 0.712, Digital Marketing at 0.555, Local Origin at 0.599, and Trust at 0.711. Constructs can be considered reliable and convergent when composite reliability exceeds 0.70, and AVE exceeds 0.50. On this basis, the four latent constructs in the model demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency and convergent validity.

**Table 1:** Construct Reliability and Convergent Validity Indices

	Cronbach’s Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Buying Interest (Y)	0.865	0.865	0.908	0.712
Digital Marketing (X1)	0.732	0.754	0.832	0.555
Local Origin(X2)	0.775	0.779	0.856	0.599
Trust (M)	0.865	0.866	0.908	0.711

Discriminant validity in Table 2 was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The square root of AVE for each construct is higher than the correlations between that construct and all other constructs. For example, the square root of AVE for Buying Interest is 0.844, which

exceeds its correlations with Digital Marketing, Local Origin, and Trust; similarly, the square roots of AVE for Digital Marketing (0.745), Local Origin (0.774), and Trust (0.843) are all greater than their respective interconstruct correlations. This pattern satisfies the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which requires that a construct share more variance with its indicators than with indicators of other constructs, supporting discriminant validity in the measurement model.

**Table 2: Discriminant Validity Assessment using the Fornell–Larcker Criterion**

	Buying Interest (Y)	Digital Marketing (X1)	Local Origin (X2)	Trust (M)
Buying Interest (Y)	0.844			
Digital Marketing (X1)	0.647	0.745		
Local Origin(X2)	0.756	0.617	0.774	
Trust (M)	0.783	0.618	0.765	0.843

To rule out multicollinearity problems, the outer Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values in Table 3 were examined. The VIF statistics for all indicators range from 1.273 to 2.496, well below the conservative threshold of 3.3 or the more liberal value of 5.0, which is sometimes used in PLS-SEM applications. These results indicate that multicollinearity is not a concern and that the indicators provide distinct information for the latent constructs.

**Table 3: Outer VIF Statistics for Multicollinearity Assessment**

	VIF
M.1	2.496
M.2	2.442
M.3	2.004
M.4	1.737
X1.1	1.364
X1.2	1.661
X1.3	1.599
X1.4	1.277
X2.1	1.273
X2.2	1.628
X2.3	1.813
X2.4	1.678
Y.1	2.031
Y.2	2.095
Y.3	1.938
Y.4	2.124

Taken together, the loading patterns, reliability indices, AVE values, discriminant validity checks, and VIF statistics confirm that the reflective measurement model is psychometrically sound. This provides a robust foundation for interpreting the structural relationships among the constructs. The visual and conceptual configuration of the structural PLS-SEM model effectively encapsulates the interconnected roles of digital marketing and local origin in shaping consumer trust within the rural e-commerce context of village-owned coconut oil enterprises. The directional arrows linking Digital Marketing and Local Origin to Trust illustrate a dual-path influence, emphasising that trust emerges not solely from one factor but from the synergistic effect of credible digital engagement and the authenticity signalled by local provenance. The placement of Trust as a central mediating construct, with paths extending to Buying Interest, underscores its critical role as the psychological mechanism through which these antecedents translate into consumer behavioural intentions. The R<sup>2</sup> values associated with Trust and Buying Interest further validate the model’s explanatory power, indicating that the specified predictors account for a substantial proportion of variance in these endogenous constructs. This structural arrangement visually reinforces the theoretical framework by demonstrating how integrated digital strategies and local origin cues jointly cultivate a trustworthy brand image, thereby motivating consumers’ willingness to engage in online purchasing. The model’s clarity in depicting these relationships supports the study’s premise that trust is the pivotal link connecting marketing efforts, perceived product authenticity, and actual buying interest in the digital marketplace. Consequently, the model not only affirms the conceptual underpinnings of rural e-commerce dynamics but also provides a coherent, empirically grounded representation of how VOEs can leverage both technological and cultural assets to enhance consumer confidence and stimulate online demand. This integrative portrayal aligns with broader scholarly discussions of trust formation in emerging market contexts, highlighting the need for multifaceted approaches that combine digital innovation with localised value propositions to drive sustainable e-commerce growth (Barska & Wojciechowska-Solis, 2020; Ye & Yang, 2020).

**2.2. Analysis of Variance and Effect Sizes**

The coefficients of determination for the endogenous constructs further quantify the model’s explanatory power. As reported in Table 4, the R<sup>2</sup> values of 0.619 for Trust and 0.693 for Buying Interest align with those shown in Figure 6 and confirm that the model accounts for a large proportion of variance in both the mediator and the outcome. In the PLS-SEM literature, R<sup>2</sup> values around 0.25, 0.50, and 0.75 are often described as weak, moderate, and substantial, respectively. By this benchmark, the present model achieves variance explanations in the upper part of the moderate range and close to the substantial range, particularly for Buying Interest.

**Table 4: Coefficients of Determination (R<sup>2</sup>) for Endogenous Constructs**

	R-square	R-square Adjusted
Buying Interest (Y)	0.693	0.685
Trust (M)	0.619	0.613

Effect sizes ( $f^2$ ) in Table 5 were computed to evaluate the contribution of each exogenous construct to its respective endogenous construct. Digital Marketing has an  $f^2$  of 0.067 on Buying Interest and 0.091 on Trust, while Local Origin shows an  $f^2$  of 0.122 on Buying Interest and 0.624 on Trust; Trust exhibits an  $f^2$  of 0.225 on Buying Interest. Using Cohen’s commonly cited thresholds of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 for small, medium, and large  $f^2$ , respectively, Digital Marketing exerts small but meaningful effects on both Trust and Buying Interest, Local Origin displays a small-to-medium direct effect on Buying Interest and a very large effect on Trust, and Trust itself has a medium effect on Buying Interest. These patterns reinforce the impression from Figure 6 that Local Origin is a key driver of Trust and that Trust plays an important role in shaping Buying Interest.

**Table 5: Effect Size ( $f^2$ ) of Exogenous Constructs on Endogenous Constructs**

	F-square
Digital Marketing (X1) -> Buying Interest (Y)	0.067
Digital Marketing (X1) -> Trust (M)	0.091
Local Origin (X2) -> Buying Interest (Y)	0.122
Local Origin (X2) -> Trust (M)	0.624
Trust (M) -> Buying Interest (Y)	0.225

Moderate to substantial explained variance in behavioural research signifies that the model captures a meaningful proportion of the variability in key endogenous constructs, thereby reinforcing the robustness and practical relevance of the theoretical framework. In this study, the  $R^2$  values for Trust and Buying Interest indicate that the integrated predictors effectively account for consumer attitudes and intentions toward purchasing coconut oil products from VOs online. This level of explained variance suggests that the included constructs are not only statistically significant but also substantively important for understanding consumer behaviour in this niche market. The relative magnitudes of the effect sizes further elucidate the dynamics at play: local origin, which emerges as a dominant driver of Trust, underscoring the critical role that perceptions of authenticity, cultural heritage, and place-based value play in shaping consumer confidence. Such a finding aligns with the broader literature emphasising the power of localised cues to foster emotional and cognitive trust, especially in rural e-commerce settings where consumers may rely heavily on origin signals as proxies for quality and ethical production. Trust, in turn, exerts a significant influence on Buying Interest, confirming its pivotal mediating function between marketing inputs and consumer action (Rachana & H, 2023; Rezaei et al., 2016). This highlights that, beyond mere awareness or digital marketing exposure, cultivating trust is essential to convert interest into actual purchase intentions. The substantial share of variance explained by Local Origin and Trust in Buying Interest reflects their intertwined importance in driving demand for coconut oil products sourced from village enterprises. It implies that marketing strategies that effectively communicate local provenance and build trust can significantly enhance consumer engagement and willingness to buy, thereby supporting sustainable economic growth for these rural producers. This insight is particularly meaningful given the challenges faced by village-owned businesses in penetrating broader digital marketplaces, where differentiation based on product authenticity and trustworthiness can be a decisive competitive advantage. Overall, these results affirm the conceptual premise that leveraging both technological and cultural assets is vital for fostering consumer trust and stimulating online buying interest in rural e-commerce contexts (Gefen, 2002; Sankar & Kant, 2025).

**2.3. Direct Effects and Hypothesis Testing**

The direct relationships in the structural model in Table 6 were evaluated using bootstrapped path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values. Digital Marketing has a positive, statistically significant direct effect on Buying Interest, with a standardised coefficient of 0.19, a t-value of 2.537, and a p-value of 0.011. This result indicates that more favourable perceptions of digital marketing activities, including exposure to relevant and persuasive content, are associated with a higher intention to purchase coconut oil products from VOs or MSMEs. Prior studies on digital content marketing similarly find that content that is perceived as informative, attractive, and trustworthy can positively influence purchase intention, particularly in online and social media contexts.

Digital Marketing also has a significant positive effect on Trust, with a coefficient of 0.236, a t-value of 3.041, and a p-value of 0.002. This suggests that effective digital communication not only stimulates direct interest but also increases consumers’ trust in the rural enterprise. Empirical research on social media and content marketing often shows that high-quality, transparent, and relevant digital content can foster brand trust, which, in turn, becomes a crucial determinant of online purchase behaviour.

Local Origin exerts significant positive direct effects on both Buying Interest and Trust. The path from Local Origin to Buying Interest is 0.313, with a t-value of 3.086 and a p-value of 0.002, indicating that stronger perceptions of the product’s local origin are associated with greater intention to buy. The path from Local Origin to Trust is even stronger, at 0.619 with a t-value of 9.870 and a p-value below 0.001, making it the single strongest structural relationship in the model. These findings mirror broader evidence that region-of-origin and authenticity cues can substantially increase both consumer trust and purchase intentions for local or traditional food and beverage products. Trust itself has a strong direct effect on Buying Interest, with a coefficient of 0.426, a t-value of 4.915, and a p-value below 0.001. This confirms the central role of trust as a proximal determinant of purchase intention in e-commerce settings, especially where consumers interact with relatively unknown rural sellers. Numerous studies show that trust in the seller, platform, or product authenticity is a necessary condition for online purchase intention, often mediating the impact of marketing communications on actual behavioural intentions.

**Table 6: Structural Model Path Coefficients and Significance Levels**

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Digital Marketing (X1) → Buying Interest (Y)	0.19	0.192	0.075	2.537	0.011
Digital Marketing (X1) → Trust (M)	0.236	0.231	0.078	3.041	0.002
Local Origin (X2) → Buying Interest (Y)	0.313	0.311	0.101	3.086	0.002
Local Origin (X2) → Trust (M)	0.619	0.626	0.063	9.87	0
Trust (M) → Buying Interest (Y)	0.426	0.425	0.087	4.915	0

The pattern of coefficients in Table 6 is entirely consistent with the visual representation in Figure 1. Local Origin clearly emerges as the strongest antecedent of Trust, Trust is the strongest direct predictor of Buying Interest, and Digital Marketing contributes to Buying Interest both directly and indirectly by reinforcing Trust.

#### 2.4. Mediation Effects of Trust

The mediating role of Trust in the relationships among Digital Marketing, Local Origin, and Buying Interest was assessed in Table 7 by estimating specific indirect effects in SmartPLS. The indirect effect of Digital Marketing on Buying Interest through Trust is 0.101, with a t-value of 2.481 and a p-value of 0.013, indicating a statistically significant mediation pathway. This means that digital marketing activities increase buying interest not only through a direct route but also by enhancing consumer trust, which then translates into higher purchase intention. Studies on content marketing and social media frequently report a similar pattern, where trust mediates the effect of digital communication on purchasing outcomes.

The indirect effect of Local Origin on Buying Interest via Trust is 0.264, with a t-value of 4.328 and a p-value below 0.001, representing a stronger mediated pathway. This finding indicates that perceptions of local origin substantially boost trust, thereby increasing buying interest. Recent research on food authenticity and local products suggests that authenticity cues anchored in region or origin are powerful drivers of trust and that this trust, rather than origin information alone, often determines final purchase decisions.

Because both the direct effects of Digital Marketing and Local Origin on Buying Interest and their corresponding indirect effects via Trust are significant, the results indicate partial mediation. Trust does not replace the direct influence of Digital Marketing and Local Origin but operates as a complementary mechanism through which these constructs exert additional influence on Buying Interest. This is consistent with conceptualisations of trust as a central mediator in digital marketing and local-origin frameworks, in which credible content and authenticity cues shape trust, which, in turn, transforms initial interest into a concrete willingness to buy.

**Table 7:** Specific Indirect Effects of Digital Marketing and Local Origin on Buying Interest via Trust

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Digital Marketing (X1) → Trust (M) → Buying Interest (Y)	0.101	0.099	0.041	2.481	0.013
Local Origin (X2) → Trust (M) → Buying Interest (Y)	0.264	0.266	0.061	4.328	0

Partial mediation in this study means that while trust serves as a crucial psychological conduit through which digital marketing and local origin influence buying interest, these antecedents also exert direct effects on consumer intentions independently of trust. This dual pathway underscores that digital marketing efforts and perceptions of local provenance do not rely solely on fostering trust to influence buying interest; they also directly shape consumer attitudes and enhance trust, which, in turn, further motivate purchase intentions. Conceptually, this highlights the multifaceted nature of consumer decision-making in rural e-commerce settings, where trust serves as a central yet not exclusive mechanism linking marketing stimuli to behavioural outcomes. The partial mediation effect reveals that digital marketing content and local origin cues possess inherent persuasive power, capable of influencing buying interest directly through factors such as information salience, emotional appeal, or cultural resonance, as well as indirectly through trust enhancement (Hidayat et al., 2021; Lăzăroiu et al., 2020). For managers of VOs, this finding has important strategic implications: it suggests that while building and maintaining consumer trust remains essential, digital marketing strategies and communications emphasising local origin should also be designed to engage consumers through multiple channels and psychological processes. This means crafting authentic, transparent, and culturally relevant messages that not only foster trust but also directly stimulate interest and purchase motivation. By recognising trust's partial mediating role, managers can adopt a more nuanced approach that balances trust-building initiatives with other persuasive elements in digital content and local-origin storytelling. Such an integrated strategy is likely to maximise consumer engagement and buying interest, thereby enhancing the competitive positioning of village-owned coconut oil enterprises in the digital marketplace. Ultimately, understanding partial mediation enriches the theoretical framework by illustrating that trust is a pivotal but not singular driver of consumer behaviour, emphasising the complexity of influencing buying intentions in rural e-commerce through both direct and trust-mediated pathways (Ijomah et al., 2024; Nesterenko et al., 2023).

#### CONCLUSION

This study examined how digital marketing content and perceptions of local origin influence consumer trust and purchase intent for coconut oil products marketed online by rural enterprises. Qualitative findings indicate that most respondents regularly use coconut oil, rely heavily on social media and e-commerce platforms for information, prefer educational and informative content, and are particularly concerned about delivery-related risks such as leakage, high shipping costs, and long delivery times, while also emphasising the importance of safer packaging, clearer quality and origin information, and visible trust signals such as ratings and customer reviews. Quantitative results using PLS-SEM show that Digital Marketing and Local Origin both have significant positive effects on Trust and Buying Interest, with Local Origin emerging as the strongest driver of Trust and Trust as the strongest direct predictor of Buying Interest, and Trust partially mediating the effects of both Digital Marketing and Local Origin on Buying Interest, thereby confirming the proposed model and highlighting the central role of trust in rural e-commerce. On this basis, rural enterprises such as VOs are advised to prioritise high-quality digital content that clearly explains product benefits, usage, and distinctiveness, to communicate local origin and socio-economic contributions explicitly, and to strengthen trust through robust packaging, transparent information on shipping procedures and costs, and clear guarantees or compensation policies in the event of delivery problems. At the same time, future research is encouraged to test and extend this model across different regions, product categories, and research designs, and to incorporate additional constructs and moderating factors to deepen understanding of consumer behaviour in rural e-commerce contexts.

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