

Market Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning on Sales Volume: Role of Digital Innovation as Mediator

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Abstract

Tobacco farming in Situbondo plays a critical role in the local economy. However, despite high productivity, farmers face challenges in effectively marketing their produce to achieve optimal sales outcomes. This study examines the role of digital innovation in enhancing the effectiveness of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) strategies in driving sales volume growth among tobacco farmers in Situbondo Regency, Indonesia. This research explores how digital innovation mediates the relationship between STP strategies and sales growth. Using a quantitative approach, data were collected via a Likert-scale questionnaire from 115 tobacco farmers. This study's findings indicate that market segmentation, targeting, and positioning positively influence sales volume, with digital innovation serving as a significant mediator. The results highlight the importance of integrating traditional marketing strategies with digital tools to broaden market reach and enhance customer engagement. This study provides valuable insights for tobacco farmers and policymakers, underscoring the need for strategic, integrated marketing approaches and digital literacy to support sustainable growth in the local tobacco industry.

Keywords: Digital Innovation, Market Segmentation, Sales Growth, Tobacco Farmers

INTRODUCTION

Tobacco is a significant agricultural commodity in Indonesia, playing a key role in both the economy and culture. The country is one of the largest producers of tobacco in the world, with vast plantations located across several regions, particularly in East Java (Ikhsan & Saidin, 2023). Tobacco farming in Indonesia provides livelihood to millions of farmers and is closely tied to the local economy, particularly in rural areas (Wibawa et al., 2023). In addition to its agricultural importance, tobacco is central to Indonesia's tobacco industry, which includes cigarette production, a major export product, and a significant part of the national tax revenue (Ahsan et al., 2020). Tobacco remains an integral part of Indonesia's economic landscape (Astuti et al., 2020).

Situbondo is a regency located in the eastern part of East Java Province, Indonesia. The regency covers an area of approximately 1,811.65 km² and is home

to over 700,000 residents. Situbondo is known as a tobacco-producing region, which plays a significant role in the local economy (McMichael, 2024). The majority of the population relies on agriculture, particularly tobacco cultivation and other farming activities, which dominate the region's economy (Saputri et al., 2023). In Tambeng Hamlet, Besuki, Situbondo, the majority of the population around 85% relies on agriculture, primarily tobacco and corn farming (Susilo et al., 2022).

According to the Regent of Situbondo, Karna Suswandi, has reached an excessive level. As stated by the Regent, "Produktivitas tembakau di Situbondo tidak perlu diragukan karena saat panen sudah berlebih-lebih", which explicitly indicates the challenge of increasing sales volume. However, even with abundant production, many tobacco farmers face difficulties in marketing their products at profitable prices. Despite abundant production, effective marketing and sales strategies are crucial for sustaining the local economy. Based on this, marketing strategies become essential in increasing sales volume.

Increasing sales volume is crucial for sustainable growth, influenced by various factors like product innovation and customer satisfaction (Pratiwi & Fanani, 2019), and product diversification (Darlis & Utary, 2022). Effective marketing strategies, such as AHP (Maghur & Dahda, 2022), along with social media and digital technology utilization (Martiningtias et al., 2022), play a vital role. Furthermore, market segmentation, social media strategies, and product upselling contribute significantly (Gea, 2022; Mirnasari & Yamin, 2021; Taqwatullah & Nugraha, 2022). Digital marketing, encompassing SEO, content marketing, and social media advertising, enables broader reach and effective customer engagement (Bizhanova et al., 2019; Saeed et al., 2023; Wuisan & Handra, 2023), ultimately driving sales and brand building (Qurtubi, 2022). Thus, effective marketing techniques, optimized through proper market segmentation, are essential for sustainable sales growth.

Market segmentation, targeting, and positioning are critical marketing strategies that drive sales growth. Market segmentation divides the market based on demographics, geography, psychographics, behavior, and product-related factors, helping identify profitable markets, as a single marketing program rarely satisfies heterogeneous markets (Christian & Qi, 2022; Irawati & Prakoso, 2022). It allows for tailored strategies that enhance promotional effectiveness and customer insights, ultimately boosting sales volume (Manggu & Beni, 2021; Sintaro et al., 2020). Targeting focuses on the most relevant market segments, increasing sales conversion by aligning with consumer needs and preferences, optimizing promotions, and improving consumer engagement (Hermantria, 2021; Mandasari et al., 2021; Sumarni, 2022). Effective targeting also enhances customer loyalty and drives sustainable sales growth (Efendi & Prasetyo, 2022). Positioning differentiates a product or brand in consumers' minds, creating a unique image and attracting the right market, leading to higher sales (Andriani, 2019; Hanifah & Pantas, 2022). That strategic will helps build strong customer relationships, increase brand awareness, and gain a competitive edge, resulting in significant sales growth (Azzaki, 2021).

Extensive research indicates a positive relationship between market segmentation, targeting, positioning, and increased sales volume. Market segmentation has been proven effective in boosting sales across various sectors,



including retail (Yoseph et al., 2020), banking (Osei et al., 2021), automotive (Basri, 2023). Precise targeting strategies, including mobile targeting, also contribute to sales growth (Feng et al., 2020; Nurhilalia et al., 2023). Strong product positioning, supported by innovation and advertising, influences purchasing decisions and drives sales increases (Manik, 2021; Sarita et al., 2022).

Despite the positive trend, there are research gaps requiring further investigation. Some studies indicate that the relationship between segmentation, targeting, positioning, and sales volume increase is not always linear and can be influenced by external factors (Ilham Abu & Ridwan, 2023; Sakinah et al., 2023). There are instances where segmentation and targeting do not significantly affect sales (Sudarso, 2022). Furthermore, some research also suggests that market segmentation does not always guarantee a significant competitive advantage (Chevhanova & Vasiuta, 2021). These gaps highlight the need for further research to understand the factors influencing the effectiveness of marketing strategies in driving sales volume.

This research offers a novel perspective on Kotler's theory of needs, wants, and demands by integrating the mediating role of digital innovation in the context of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP). While Kotler's framework emphasizes understanding consumer behavior by differentiating between basic human needs, culturally influenced wants, and demands driven by purchasing power (Hackley, 2023; Wang, 2020), this study extends its application to the digital age. Specifically, it examines how digital platforms and tools can be strategically employed to identify and segment markets with greater precision, personalize targeting efforts, and dynamically position products to align with evolving consumer preferences (George, 2021; Hakim, 2023; Schlegelmilch, 2022). This highlights the potential of digital innovation to act as a mediator, enhancing the effectiveness of STP strategies derived from Kotler's theory and enabling companies to more accurately target consumer needs and drive sales growth (Yi, 2018).

Overall, this study aims to explore the role of digital innovation as a mediator in the segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) strategies to enhance sales volume, particularly in the context of the tobacco industry in Indonesia, specifically in Situbondo Regency. By integrating Kotler's theory of needs, wants, and demands, this research proposes a novel approach that leverages digital technology to more accurately identify and personalize marketing strategies. It is expected that this study will provide valuable insights into the impact of digital innovation on enhancing the effectiveness of traditional marketing strategies and driving sustainable growth in the tobacco industry in Situbondo, which faces challenges in product marketing despite abundant production.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a Likert-scale questionnaire to collect data from tobacco farmers in Situbondo. The research design involves a questionnaire using a Likert scale to measure the key variables. Segmenting the market (X1) is assessed through five indicators: Geographic Area, Demographic Profile, Buying Behavior Characteristics, Consumer Needs, and Customer Loyalty Level (Asman, 2021). Targeting (X2) is measured using five indicators: Segment

Size Potential, Sustainable Segment Growth, Cost Efficiency of Segmentation, Alignment with Company Resources, and Competitiveness and Attractiveness (Fawzi et al., 2022). Positioning (X3) is evaluated based on five indicators: Product Performance Quality, Product Benefits, Market Relevance, Competitive Advantage, and Trust (Oktarini, 2022). Digital Innovation (Z) is measured by four indicators: Entertainment, Interaction, Trendiness, and Customization (Kim & Ko, 2012). Finally, Sales Growth (Y) is measured through three indicators: Achievement of Sales Volume Targets, Profit Increase, and Contribution to Company Growth (Indrasari, 2019).

The target population of this study consists of all tobacco farmers in Situbondo Regency. However, due to the undefined exact number of farmers within this population, conducting a complete census is not feasible. As a result, the study will utilize a sample to collect data. In determining the appropriate sample size, the study follows the guidelines set forth by Hair et al. (2017), which recommend multiplying the total number of indicators in the research instrument by a factor ranging from 5 to 10 when the population size is unknown (Hair et al., 2017). This study includes a total of 23 indicators across all measured variables. Therefore, based on Hair et al.'s recommendation, the sample size for this study will be calculated by multiplying the number of indicators (23) by a factor of 5, resulting in a total sample size of 115 respondents.

Data analysis in this study will be conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of the software WARP PLS 8.0. The analysis will assess both the outer and inner models (Hair et al., 2019). The outer model evaluates the measurement of latent variables through indicators, while the inner model examines the relationships between latent variables (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). This approach allows for testing the proposed hypotheses and assessing the overall fit of the model.

Table 1. Outer Model Result

Variable	Indicator	Loading	AVE	CR	CA	Result
Segmentation (X1)	X1.1	0.887	0.579	0.809	0.701	Valid & Reliable
	X1.2	0.886				
	X1.3	0.710				
	X1.4	0.732				
	X1.5	0.707				
Variable	Indicator	Loading	AVE	CR	CA	Result
Targeting (X2)	X2.1	0.749	0.535	0.709	0.792	Valid & Reliable
	X2.2	0.729				
	X2.3	0.726				
	X2.4	0.742				
	X2.5	0.796				
Positioning (X3)	X3.1	0.719	0.562	0.808	0.703	Valid & Reliable
	X3.2	0.806				
	X3.3	0.701				

	X3.4	0.772				
	X3.5	0.773				
Digital Innovation (Z)	Z1.1	0.828	0.536	0.741	0.740	Valid & Reliable
	Z1.2	0.795				
	Z1.3	0.706				
	Z1.4	0.714				
Sales Growth (Y)	Y1.1	0.814	0.503	0.730	0.763	Valid & Reliable
	Y1.2	0.854				
	Y1.3	0.739				

Source: Warp PLS 8.0 Output Data, processed by Researcher (2024)

The outer model analysis, as shown in Table 1, indicates that the measurement model exhibits strong validity and reliability. All indicators across the five latent variables (Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning, Digital Innovation, and Sales Growth) demonstrate sufficient loadings, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.7. This suggests that the indicators effectively measure their corresponding constructs. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each latent variable surpasses the 0.5 threshold, signifying good convergent validity. The Composite Reliability (CR) and Cronbach's Alpha (CA) values further support the reliability of the measurement model, with all values exceeding the recommended 0.7 cutoff. These results collectively affirm the robustness of the measurement model and its suitability for subsequent structural model analysis.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The inner model assessment will evaluate the relationships between the latent variables, encompassing an assessment of model fit, coefficient of determination (R-squared), direct effects, and mediating effects. Model fit will be evaluated to determine how well the proposed model reflects the observed data. Coefficient of determination will assess the variance in sales growth explained by the predictor variables. Direct effects will assess the impact of one variable on another, such as segmentation on sales growth. Finally, the mediating effects will examine the role of digital innovation in influencing the relationships between segmentation, targeting, positioning, and sales growth. This comprehensive analysis will provide a holistic understanding of the interplay between the variables and their combined influence on sales growth in the context of tobacco farmers in Situbondo.

Table 2. Goodness of Fit Index

Fit Index	Value	Acceptable Range	Result
Average Path Coefficient (APC)	0.28, <0.01	$P < 0.05$	Good
Average R-squared (ARS)	0.58, <0.01	$P < 0.05$	Good
Average Adjusted R-squared (AARS)	0.57, <0.01	$P < 0.05$	Good
Average Block VIF (AVIF)	1.56	≤ 5 (ideally ≤ 3.3)	Good

Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	2.04	≤ 5 (ideally ≤ 3.3)	Good
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	0.51	Small ≥ 0.1 Medium ≥ 0.25 Large ≥ 0.36	Large
Simpson's Paradox Ratio (SPR)	1.00	≥ 0.7 (ideally = 1)	Good
R-squared Contribution Ratio (RSCR)	1.00	≥ 0.9 (ideally = 1)	Good
Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR)	1.00	≥ 0.7	Good
Nonlinear Bivariate Causality Direction Ratio (NLBCDR)	1.00	≥ 0.7	Good

Source: Warp PLS 8.0 Output Data, processed by Researcher (2024)

The assessment of the model's goodness of fit, as presented in Table 2, indicates a strong fit with the observed data. Key indicators such as the Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R-squared (ARS), and Average Adjusted R-squared (AARS) all demonstrate satisfactory levels, suggesting good explanatory power. Furthermore, the model exhibits acceptable levels of multicollinearity, as evidenced by the Average Block VIF (AVIF) and Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF) values. The Tenenhaus GoF (GoF) value further supports the strong model fit, exceeding the threshold for a large effect. Overall, the model demonstrates good quality and consistency, as shown by the Simpson's Paradox Ratio (SPR), R-squared Contribution Ratio (RSCR), Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR), and Nonlinear Bivariate Causality Direction Ratio (NLBCDR). These results collectively provide confidence in the model's ability to accurately represent the relationships between the variables.

Table 3. Synthesis of Significance Testing Results

No.	Hypothesized Relationship	Direct Effect (β)	P-value	Indirect Effect (β)	P-value	Result
1	X1 -> Y	0.25	<0.01			Positive & Significant
2	X2 -> Y	0.25	<0.01			Positive & Significant
3	X3 -> Y	0.17	0.03			Positive & Significant
4	X1 -> Z	0.23	<0.01			Positive & Significant
5	X2 -> Z	0.26	<0.01			Positive & Significant
6	X3 -> Z	0.44	<0.01			Positive & Significant
7	Z -> Y	0.35	<0.01			Positive &



8	X1 -> Z -> Y	0.12	0.03	Significant Positive & Significant
9	X2 -> Z -> Y	0.11	0.04	Significant Positive & Significant
10	X3 -> Z -> Y	0.16	0.01	Significant Positive & Significant

Source: Warp PLS 8.0 Output Data, processed by Researcher (2024)

Table 3 provides a comprehensive summary of the significance testing results, revealing that all hypothesized relationships have positive and significant effects for tobacco farmers in Situbondo Regency. This indicates that Segmentation (X1), Targeting (X2), and Positioning (X3) each directly and positively influence the Sales Growth (Y) of these tobacco entrepreneurs. Moreover, these marketing strategies also positively influence their Digital Innovation (Z), which in turn further boosts their Sales Growth (Y). These findings confirm the mediating role of Digital Innovation (Z) in strengthening the relationship between marketing strategies and Sales Growth (Y) specifically among tobacco farmers in Situbondo. Overall, the results highlight the importance of Segmentation (X1), Targeting (X2), and Positioning (X3), along with the adoption of Digital Innovation (Z), as key drivers of Sales Growth (Y) for these agricultural entrepreneurs.

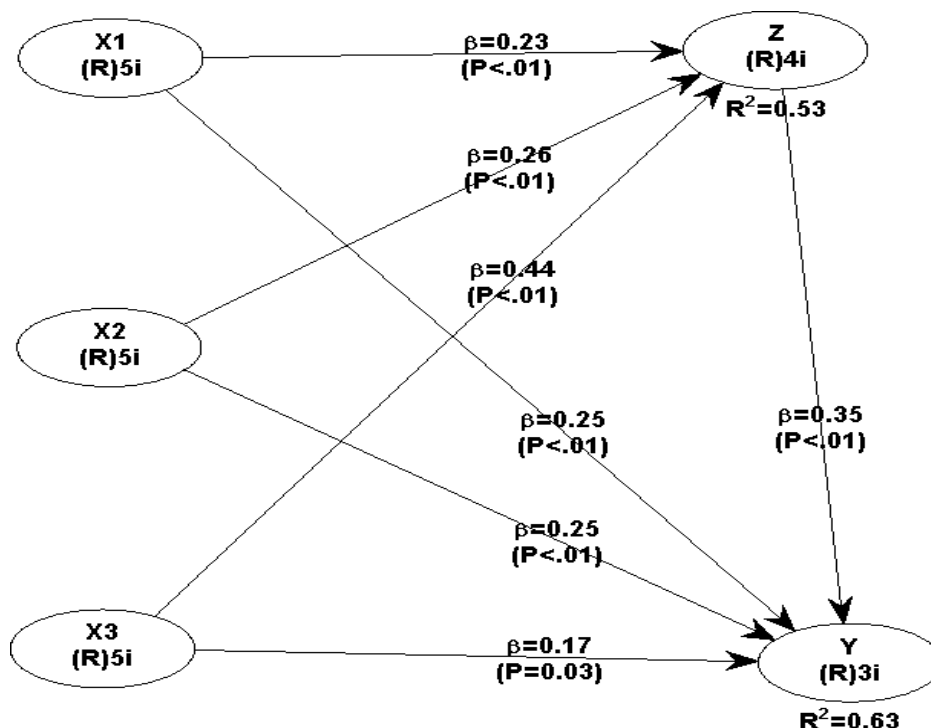


Figure 1 illustrates the path analysis results, highlighting the significant relationships between the latent variables and their impact on sales growth. The analysis reveals that Segmentation (X1), Targeting (X2), and Positioning (X3) collectively explain 53% of the variance in Digital Innovation (Z), as indicated by

the R-squared value. This suggests that these marketing strategies play a crucial role in driving the adoption and effective use of digital tools among tobacco farmers. Furthermore, by incorporating Digital Innovation (Z) into the model, the explanatory power for Sales Growth (Y) increases substantially. The R-squared value for Sales Growth reaches 0.63, indicating that 63% of the variance in sales growth can be explained by the combined effects of Segmentation, Targeting, Positioning, and Digital Innovation. This highlights the significant contribution of digital innovation in enhancing the effectiveness of marketing strategies and ultimately driving sales growth. The findings emphasize the importance of considering digital innovation as a key factor in promoting sales growth within this context.

Discussion

Structural model demonstrates a good fit with the observed data, as evidenced by the various goodness-of-fit indices. This indicates that the model adequately represents the relationships between segmentation, targeting, positioning, digital innovation, and sales growth among tobacco farmers in Situbondo Regency. The substantial R-squared value for Sales Growth underscores the explanatory power of the model, highlighting the significant contribution of these marketing strategies, along with digital innovation, in explaining the variance in sales outcomes. This finding emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach to marketing, where traditional strategies like segmentation, targeting, and positioning are complemented by the innovative use of digital tools. This combined approach can effectively enhance the ability of tobacco farmers in Situbondo to reach wider markets, connect with customers, and ultimately improve their sales performance.

The analysis reveals uniformly positive and significant relationships between the key constructs. This suggests that each marketing strategy segmentation, targeting, and positioning plays a crucial role in driving sales growth. Moreover, these strategies also foster the adoption and effective utilization of digital innovation, which further contributes to sales improvement. This underscores the synergistic interplay between traditional marketing approaches and digital innovation in enhancing the sales performance of tobacco farmers in Situbondo. The findings emphasize that by strategically segmenting their market, targeting specific customer groups, and positioning their products effectively, these farmers can create a strong foundation for integrating digital tools to further expand their reach, engage customers, and ultimately achieve greater sales success. This integrated approach can empower tobacco farmers in Situbondo to thrive in an increasingly competitive market by leveraging both established marketing principles and the transformative potential of digital innovation.

The findings of this study are consistent with previous research (Basri, 2023; Osei et al., 2021; Yoseph et al., 2020) that has demonstrated the positive impact of segmentation, targeting, and positioning on sales growth. For instance, studies (Feng et al., 2020; Nurhilalia et al., 2023) have shown that precise targeting strategies, particularly those leveraging digital channels, contribute significantly to sales improvement. Similarly, the importance of strong product positioning, achieved through innovation and effective communication (Manik, 2021; Sarita et al., 2022), has been widely recognized in marketing literature. However, this



research further contributes to the literature by specifically examining the mediating role of digital innovation in the context of tobacco farmers in Situbondo, addressing a gap identified in previous studies that have shown inconsistent or insignificant effects of these marketing strategies in certain context (Chevhanova & Vasiuta, 2021; Ilham Abu & Ridwan, 2023; Sudarso, 2022).

This research builds upon Kotler's theory of needs, wants, and demands, which emphasizes the importance of understanding consumer behavior to develop effective marketing strategies. By integrating the mediating role of digital innovation, this study extends Kotler's framework into the digital age, demonstrating how digital tools can enhance the precision of market segmentation, personalize targeting efforts, and dynamically position products to align with evolving consumer preferences (George, 2021; Hakim, 2023; Schlegelmilch, 2022). This novel perspective provides a more nuanced understanding of how tobacco farmers in Situbondo can leverage digital innovation to effectively address the specific needs and wants of their target market, ultimately driving sales growth (Yi, 2018). The findings highlight the potential of digital tools to transform traditional marketing strategies, enabling these farmers to overcome the challenges of an increasingly competitive market and contribute to the sustainability of the local tobacco industry, which plays a vital role in the Indonesian economy (Ikhsan & Saidin, 2023; Wibawa et al., 2023).

This research offers valuable implications for economic development within the Indonesian context, particularly in Situbondo Regency. The demonstrated positive influence of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning, coupled with the mediating role of digital innovation on sales volume growth, provides insights for both tobacco farmers and policymakers. The findings emphasize the importance of strategic and integrated marketing approaches for tobacco farmers in Situbondo to enhance sales performance and contribute to regional economic growth. Furthermore, the study highlights the potential of digital innovation in amplifying the effectiveness of these marketing strategies. By utilizing digital tools and platforms, farmers can expand market reach, engage with customers more effectively, and ultimately increase sales volume, leading to improved livelihoods. For policymakers, this research suggests the need for initiatives promoting digital literacy and access among tobacco farmers, facilitating their integration into the digital economy and fostering economic growth and sustainable development in Situbondo Regency.

CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence for the significant role of market segmentation, targeting, and positioning, mediated by digital innovation, in driving sales volume growth among tobacco farmers in Situbondo Regency. The findings underscore the importance of an integrated marketing approach that combines traditional marketing strategies with the innovative use of digital tools. This approach can enhance competitiveness, improve sales performance, and contribute to regional economic prosperity. This research offers valuable insights for both tobacco farmers and policymakers, emphasizing the need for continuous innovation and adaptation in marketing strategies to thrive in the evolving digital landscape. Further research should explore the specific digital tools and platforms most

effective for tobacco farmers in Situbondo and the potential impact of government regulations and consumer preferences on sales volume. Continued investigation of the interplay between marketing strategies, digital innovation, and sales performance can further empower tobacco farmers and contribute to the sustainable development of the Indonesian tobacco industry.

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