# THE INFLUENCE OF DIGITAL MARKETING ON THE PURCHASE DECISION OF RIVER SNAIL NOODLE IN GUANGXI PROVINCE, CHINA

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## ABSTRACT
This study aims to examine the influence of digital marketing on the purchase decision of river snail noodle among Guangxi residents. The samples consisted of 400 consumers in Guangxi Province who had experience purchasing bagged river snail noodle products. The questionnaire was administered to collect the data, adopting convenience sampling methods. Descriptive statistics, independent samples t-test, one-way ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis were employed for data analysis using SPSS. The results indicated that digital marketing significantly influences consumers' purchase decision of river snail noodle. Among the four digital marketing dimensions, Email Marketing and Social Media Marketing demonstrate relatively stronger effects on purchase decision. In addition, demographic factors partially influence purchase decision, where gender and earning income show significant differences while age and education level do not present significant differences. This study concludes that digital marketing plays an important role in shaping consumers' purchasing decisions in the market for regional specialty food products and provides managerial implications for river snail noodle enterprises to strengthen their digital marketing strategies.
**Keywords:** Digital Marketing, Purchase Decision, River Snail Noodle

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# INTRODUCTION

Digital technology has recently played an important role in transforming business operations, consumer lifestyles, and marketing practices, creating strong interest among firms in adopting digital channels to expand market opportunities and improve customer engagement. However, one of the most important concerns for business operators is how to adapt to the rapidly changing consumption environment shaped by online platforms, mobile applications, social media, and e-commerce systems. In particular, digital marketing has become a major tool for influencing consumer awareness, product evaluation, and purchase behavior in highly competitive markets (Alalwan, 2018). As a result, firms are increasingly required to understand how different digital marketing channels affect consumer decision-making, especially in local specialty food markets where cultural identity and product familiarity are closely connected.

Indeed, digital marketing is especially important for regional food industries because it helps local products reach broader markets, strengthen brand recognition, and communicate product value beyond geographical boundaries. In the case of river snail noodle, a well-known traditional food originating from Liuzhou in Guangxi Province, China, digital marketing has supported the transformation of this product from a local street food into a nationally recognized and increasingly international packaged food product. Through social media promotion, e-commerce platforms, online advertising, and mobile communication, river snail noodle brands have been able to enhance product visibility, attract younger consumers, and improve market competitiveness (Chen et al., 2023; Wechkama & Qin, 2025).

On the other hand, digital marketing alone does not fully explain consumer purchase behavior. Consumers' purchase decisions may also differ according to demographic characteristics such as gender, age, education level, income, and media usage habits. Previous studies have shown that demographic factors can influence consumers' responses to product information, promotional content, and brand communication, while digital marketing channels may play different roles across the stages of attention, interest, search, and action (Smith, 2011; Wang et al., 2022; Huang, Li, & Huang, 2024). In addition, although many studies have examined digital marketing in general consumer markets, relatively few studies have investigated how digital marketing influences the purchase decision of local specialty foods, particularly among consumers in the place of origin of the product.

In line with such importance, this study therefore investigates the influence of digital marketing on the purchase decision of river snail noodle in Guangxi Province, China. Guangxi was selected as the research context because it is the birthplace and core market of river snail noodle, and its residents represent a highly relevant consumer group for examining how digital marketing affects purchase decision. In recent years, brands such as Luobawang, Haohuanluo, and Li Ziqi have actively used digital marketing strategies to promote bagged river snail noodle products through online and mobile channels, making Guangxi an appropriate setting for this study.

The findings of this study may provide practical implications for river snail noodle enterprises and digital marketers by identifying which digital marketing dimensions are more effective in influencing purchase decision. In addition, the study may contribute to the existing literature by extending the understanding of digital marketing and consumer behavior in the context of regional specialty food products.

This study aims to examine the influence of digital marketing on the purchase decision of river snail noodle among Guangxi residents, with particular attention to demographic factors and the four dimensions of digital marketing: Email Marketing, Online Advertising, Social Media Marketing, and Mobile Marketing.

# LITERATURE REVIEWS

**Relationship between Demographic Factors and Purchase Decision**

Demographic factors have long been regarded as important predictors of consumer purchase decision. Variables such as gender, age, education level, and earning income can shape consumers' information processing, value judgments, and purchase behavior. In the context of food consumption, these demographic characteristics are closely related to brand preference, product evaluation, and response to marketing communication.

Previous studies have shown that gender can influence food-related purchase behavior. Female consumers are often more attentive to product information, quality, and brand image, whereas male consumers may be more sensitive to convenience, price, and promotional incentives (Lassen et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2022). Age is another important demographic variable, particularly in digital consumption contexts. Younger consumers are generally more responsive to digital content, short-form media, and peer recommendations, while older consumers tend to focus more on trust, safety, and product reliability (Smith, 2011; Nguyen & Gizaw, 2014). Education level may affect consumers' ability to evaluate product information and compare alternatives, while income level is closely associated with purchasing power, price sensitivity, and perceived value (Pathan et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2022; Müller-Pérez et al., 2025).

In Guangxi, river snail noodle is not only a convenient packaged food product but also a culturally embedded local specialty. Therefore, demographic differences may play a meaningful role in shaping consumers'purchase decision in this market. Based on the literature, it can be concluded that demographic factors may generate differences in the purchase decision of river snail noodle. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Demographic factors significantly generate differences in Guangxi residents'purchase decision of River snail noodle.

**Relationship between Digital Marketing and Purchase Decision**

Digital marketing refers to the use of digital platforms, channels, and technologies to communicate with consumers, deliver value, and influence decision-making processes. It has become a core strategy in modern consumer markets because it enables firms to provide product information, create interaction, build trust, and stimulate purchase behavior through multiple digital touchpoints (Wan, Zhang, & Ye, 2024; Kulikovskaja et al., 2023).

In this study, digital marketing is examined through four dimensions: Email Marketing, Online Advertising, Social Media Marketing, and Mobile Marketing. Email marketing is mainly used for personalized communication, promotional delivery, and customer retention. Prior studies have shown that informative and well-structured email content can improve consumers'brand trust and support purchase decision (Ligaraba et al., 2023; Skourou & Spiliotopoulos, 2024). Online advertising increases brand visibility and product awareness and can encourage consumers to search for product information and consider trial purchase (Lim, 2011; Crespo et al., 2025). Social media marketing has become especially influential in food consumption because it allows consumers to access recommendations, reviews, influencer content, and user-generated content, all of which can strengthen emotional engagement and trust (Sohaib et al., 2022; Gong et al., 2022). Mobile marketing, including app notifications, mini-program messages, and SMS-based promotions, is effective because of its immediacy, convenience, and ability to reach consumers near the final purchase stage (Hongyan & Zhankui, 2017; Tarnanidis, 2024).

In the market for bagged river snail noodle, digital marketing is especially important because consumers often rely on online information, e-commerce platforms, and social media exposure before making purchase decisions. Since bagged river snail noodle is widely promoted through digital channels, digital marketing is expected to play a significant role in shaping consumers'brand and product selection. Therefore, it can be concluded that digital marketing has a positive influence on purchase decision. Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H2: Digital marketing influences people in Guangxi purchase decision in River snail noodle.

**Relationship among Demographic Factors, Digital Marketing, and Purchase Decision**

Consumer purchase decisions are often influenced by both demographic characteristics and marketing stimuli. Demographic factors may shape the way consumers interpret marketing messages, while digital marketing channels may influence different stages of the decision-making process, including attention, interest, search, and action (Smith, 2011; Wang et al., 2022; Pires et al., 2022). In the context of bagged river snail noodle, consumers are likely to respond differently to digital marketing based on their gender, income, and digital media habits, while digital marketing itself provides the informational and interactive environment that facilitates purchase decisions.

The AISAS model provides a useful explanation for this relationship. Consumers first notice digital marketing content, become interested in the product, search for more information, take action by purchasing, and may later share their experience (Sugiyama & Andree, 2010; Ruswandi et al., 2021; Huang et al., 2024). In this process, demographic factors may affect responsiveness to digital content, while digital marketing channels provide the actual stimuli that move consumers through the decision path.

Therefore, the literature supports a meaningful relationship among demographic factors, digital marketing, and purchase decision (Al-Azzam & Al-Mizeed, 2021; Pires et al., 2022). As shown in Figure 1, from the literature review, the conceptual framework of this study can be developed as follows: demographic factors and digital marketing are treated as independent variables, while purchase decision is treated as the dependent variable.

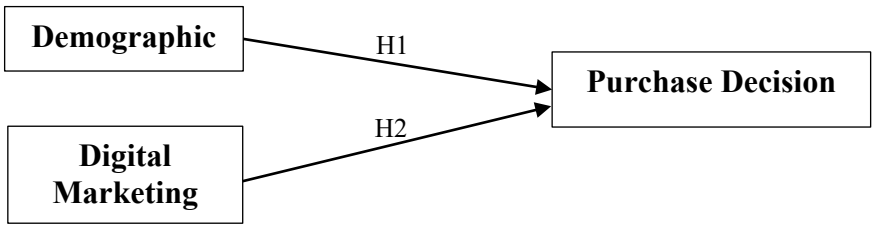


**Figure 1** Conceptual Framework

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In response to examining the influence of digital marketing on the purchase decision of river snail noodle among Guangxi residents, this study adopted a quantitative research approach. The population consisted of permanent residents in Guangxi Province who had experience purchasing bagged river snail noodle products. Since the exact population size could not be determined, the sample size was calculated using Cochran's (1977) formula to ensure statistical adequacy. At a 95% confidence level, a total of 400 respondents were selected.

Due to practical constraints in accessing the target population, convenience sampling was employed for data collection. Although this non-probability sampling method may limit the generalizability of the findings, it is widely used in consumer behavior research and is appropriate for exploratory and empirical studies.

The research instrument was a structured questionnaire consisting of four parts. The first part included a screening question to ensure that respondents had prior experience purchasing bagged river snail noodle. The second part collected demographic information, including gender, age, education level, and earning income. The third part measured digital marketing influence across four dimensions: Email Marketing, Online Advertising, Social Media Marketing, and Mobile Marketing. The measurement items were developed based on the AISAS model, reflecting the stages of attention, interest, search, and action in the digital consumer decision-making process. The fourth part measured consumers'purchase decision.

In this study, purchase decision refers to consumers'behavioral intention and decision-making process, including information search, evaluation of alternatives, and decision to purchase bagged river snail noodle products.These items primarily reflect consumers'responses at the search and action stages of the AISAS model. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree").

Prior to data collection, the questionnaire was assessed for content validity using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method, and a pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's alpha, with all values exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory reliability (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011).

The questionnaire was distributed online to Guangxi residents with purchasing experience, resulting in 400 valid responses.

For data analysis, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) were used to describe respondents'characteristics and study variables. Independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were applied to examine differences in purchase decision across demographic groups, while multiple regression analysis was conducted to investigate the influence of digital marketing dimensions on purchase decision.

This study focuses on examining the direct effects of digital marketing variables on purchase decision. Demographic variables were analyzed separately using t-test and ANOVA rather than being incorporated into the regression model. Future research may consider applying hierarchical regression to examine the combined effects of demographic and digital marketing variables.All statistical analyses were performed using SPSS, and the results are presented in descriptive and tabulated forms.

# RESEARCH RESULTS

## Validity and Reliability Analysis

Before the questionnaire was used for formal data collection, content validity and reliability tests were conducted. The content validity of the instrument was assessed by three experts using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method. The content validity of the instrument was assessed by three experts using the Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) method, and the reliability results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1** Reliability Test Results of the Questionnaire(n=30)

| Dimension | Cronbach alpha | Number of items |
|---|---|---|
| **Digital Marketing** | | |
| Email Marketing | 0.866 | 4 |
| Online Advertising | 0.820 | 4 |
| Social Media Marketing | 0.901 | 4 |
| Mobile Marketing | 0.718 | 4 |
| **Purchase Decision** | 0.874 | 4 |
| **Overall** | 0.912 | 20 |

As shown in Table 1, the IOC values ranged from -0.66 to 1.00, and several items were revised based on expert suggestions. A pilot test with 30 respondents was then conducted to examine the reliability of the instrument. Cronbach's alpha coefficients were 0.866 for Email Marketing, 0.820 for Online Advertising, 0.901 for Social Media Marketing, 0.718 for Mobile Marketing, and 0.874 for Purchase Decision, with an overall alpha of 0.912. These results indicate that the questionnaire had acceptable validity and reliability for formal data collection.

## Respondents'Profiles and Studied Variables

Most of the respondents were female (202 people, or 50.5%) compared with male respondents (198 people, or 49.5%). Considering the respondents'age, the results indicated that the majority

were aged between 25–34 years old (117 persons, or 29.25%), followed by 18–24 years old (109 persons, or 27.25%), 35–44 years old (101 persons, or 25.25%), and 45–54 years old (73 persons, or 18.25%). This result indicates that young and early middle-aged consumers represent the primary consumer group for bagged river snail noodle.

In terms of educational level, most respondents obtained a bachelor's degree (255 people, or 63.75%). This was followed by respondents with a master's degree (72 people, 18.00%) and those with senior high school education or below (59 people, or 14.75%). Meanwhile, a small proportion of respondents held a doctoral degree (14 people, or 3.50%).

Considering the respondents'earning income, the largest proportion earned 3000 yuan/RMB or less per month (163 people, or 40.75%), followed by those earning 3001–5000 yuan/RMB (157 people, or 39.25%). Meanwhile, 54 respondents (13.50%) reported earning 5001–8000 yuan/RMB, and 26 respondents (6.50%) earned above 8000 yuan/RMB per month.

Overall, the demographic profile suggests that consumers of bagged river snail noodle in Guangxi are mainly young adults with bachelor-level education and relatively moderate-income levels.

**Descriptive Statistics of Digital Marketing and Purchase Decision**

The descriptive statistics of digital marketing and purchase decision are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2** Descriptive Statistics of Digital Marketing and Purchase Decision

| Variable | Mean | S.D. | Level of agreement | Rank |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Digital Marketing** | **3.53** | **0.768** | **Agree** | **-** |
| Email Marketing | 3.57 | 0.977 | Agree | 1 |
| Online Advertising | 3.50 | 1.023 | Agree | 4 |
| Social Media Marketing | 3.53 | 1.002 | Agree | 2 |
| Mobile Marketing | 3.52 | 1.006 | Agree | 3 |
| **Purchase Decision** | **3.56** | **0.978** | **Agree** | **-** |

Note: S.D. represents standard deviation.

The results in Table 2 indicate that respondents generally have a positive perception of digital marketing activities related to river snail noodle products. The overall mean score for digital marketing is 3.53 (S.D. = 0.768), indicating that respondents agree that digital marketing activities influence their purchasing behavior.

Among the four dimensions of digital marketing, Email Marketing has the highest mean score (Mean = 3.57), suggesting that this channel receives the strongest agreement from respondents. Social Media Marketing ranks second with a mean score (Mean =3.53), followed by Mobile Marketing with a mean score (Mean =3.52). Online Advertising has the lowest mean score (Mean = 3.50), although it still falls within the "agree" level.

In addition, the mean score for purchase decision is 3.56 (S.D. = 0.978), which also indicates that respondents generally agree with statements related to their purchasing decisions for bagged river snail noodle. These findings suggest that digital marketing activities play an important role in influencing consumers'purchase decisions.

**Hypothesis Testing**

H1: Demographic factors significantly generate differences in Guangxi residents'purchase decision of River snail noodle.

To test H1, independent samples t-test and one-way ANOVA were conducted to examine whether demographic factors influence consumers'purchase decision. The results are summarized in Table 3.

**Table 3** Differences in Purchase Decision by Demographic Factors

| Variable | Statistical Method | Sig. (p-value) | Result |
|---|---|---|---|
| Gender | Independent Samples T-Test | 0.000*** | Significant |
| Age | One-Way ANOVA | 0.338 | Not significant |
| Education Level | One-Way ANOVA | 0.650 | Not significant |
| Earning Income | One-Way ANOVA | 0.010* | Significant |

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

The findings in Table 3 indicate that gender and earning income have statistically significant differences in purchase decision, while age and education level do not show significant differences. Specifically, gender shows a significant difference ($p < 0.001$), suggesting that male and female consumers respond differently to river snail noodle purchasing decisions. In addition, earning income also demonstrates a significant difference ($p < 0.05$), indicating that consumers with different income levels have different purchasing tendencies.

However, age ($p = 0.338$) and education level ($p = 0.650$) do not show statistically significant differences. This implies that consumers'purchase decisions for bagged river snail noodle are relatively consistent across different age groups and education levels.

Therefore, H1 is partially supported, as only some demographic factors significantly influence purchase decision.

H2: Digital marketing influences people in Guangxi purchase decision in River snail noodle.

To test H2, multiple regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of four digital marketing dimensions on purchase decision. The results are presented in Table 4.

**Table 4** Regression Analysis of Digital Marketing and Purchase Decision

| Independent Variables | Beta | t | Sig. (p-value) | Result |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Email Marketing | 0.267 | 5.457 | 0.000*** | Significant |
| Online Advertising | 0.125 | 2.488 | 0.013** | Significant |
| Social Media Marketing | 0.258 | 5.201 | 0.000*** | Significant |
| Mobile Marketing | 0.109 | 2.286 | 0.023* | Significant |

Model statistics:

$R = 0.594$, $R^2 = 0.353$, Adjusted $R^2 = 0.346$, $F = 53.821$, $p < 0.001$

Note: *** $p < 0.001$, ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

As shown in Table 4, the regression model is statistically significant ($F = 53.821$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that the digital marketing variables collectively explain consumers'purchase decision. The model shows $R^2 = 0.353$, indicating moderate explanatory power, meaning that 35.3% of the variance in purchase decision can be explained by the four digital marketing dimensions.Although the regression model explains 35.3% of the variance in purchase decision, a substantial proportion of variance remains unexplained. This suggests that factors beyond digital marketing may also play an important role in influencing consumers'purchase decisions. In the context of river snail noodle, consumers'behavior may also be affected by intrinsic product attributes such as taste, price sensitivity, brand familiarity, and cultural preference. Therefore, while digital marketing is a significant influencing factor, it should be considered as part of a broader set of determinants shaping consumer purchase decision.

The results further reveal that all four digital marketing dimensions have significant positive effects on purchase decision. Email Marketing ($\beta = 0.267$, $p < 0.001$), Online Advertising ($\beta = 0.125$, $p < 0.05$), Social Media Marketing ($\beta = 0.258$, $p < 0.001$), and Mobile Marketing ($\beta = 0.109$, $p < 0.05$) all significantly influence consumers'purchasing decisions.

Among these variables, Email Marketing and Social Media Marketing demonstrate relatively stronger effects compared with the other channels.

These findings can be explained using the AISAS model, which describes the digital consumer decision process as Attention → Interest → Search → Action → Share. Digital marketing channels such as online advertising and social media help attract consumer attention, while interactive platforms stimulate interest and search behavior. Mobile marketing and email communication can further encourage action, leading consumers to complete the purchase. Therefore, digital marketing plays a critical role in guiding consumers through the AISAS decision-making process.

These findings further support the applicability of the AISAS model in explaining consumer behavior in digital environments. In this study, digital marketing channels act as key stimuli that attract attention and generate interest, which subsequently encourage consumers to search for product information and form purchase intention. Thus, the AISAS model is not only applied as a post hoc explanation of the results, but is also conceptually integrated into the analytical framework, linking digital marketing dimensions with the stages of consumer decision-making.

Accordingly, H2 is supported, indicating that digital marketing significantly influences consumers'purchase decision of river snail noodle.

## CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

After addressing the research objective aimed at examining the influence of digital marketing on the purchase decision of river snail noodle among Guangxi residents, the findings summarized that digital marketing has a significant influence on consumers'purchase decision. The regression analysis results indicate that all four digital marketing dimensions, including Email Marketing, Online Advertising, Social Media Marketing, and Mobile Marketing, have statistically significant positive effects on purchase decision. Among these variables, Email Marketing and Social Media Marketing demonstrate relatively stronger effects compared with the other digital marketing channels.This finding is consistent with the AISAS model, as digital marketing activities function as external stimuli that capture consumers'attention and interest, encourage information search behavior, and ultimately lead to purchase decision at the action stage.

According to the study results, it can be discussed that digital marketing plays an important role in guiding consumers through the decision-making process when purchasing river snail noodle products. Digital channels allow consumers to obtain product information, view promotional content, compare brands, and interact with other consumers. In particular, social media platforms and email communication provide personalized and interactive environments that can enhance consumer interest and encourage purchasing behavior. Therefore, digital marketing activities can effectively stimulate consumers'purchasing decisions in the market for bagged river snail noodle.

Nevertheless, the study also reveals that demographic factors partially influence consumers'purchase decisions. Specifically, gender and earning income show statistically significant differences in purchase decision, while age and education level do not demonstrate significant differences. This finding suggests that purchasing behavior toward bagged river snail noodle may be more closely related to consumers'economic capacity and lifestyle differences rather than demographic background alone. In other words, although demographic factors may shape consumers'preferences and purchasing power, digital marketing remains a key driver influencing consumers'purchase decisions.

The discussion portrayed in this study is also consistent with previous research indicating that digital marketing channels play an important role in influencing consumer awareness, product evaluation, and purchasing behavior in digital environments (Wan et al., 2024; Kulikovskaja et al., 2023). In addition, prior studies have suggested that social media platforms enable consumers to access recommendations, user-generated content, which can strengthen

consumer trust and engagement with brands (Sohaib et al., 2022; Gong et al., 2022). These findings support the results of the present study that digital marketing activities can significantly influence consumers'purchase decisions.

The findings of this study provide both managerial and theoretical contributions. From a managerial perspective, enterprises producing river snail noodle products can recognize the importance of digital marketing strategies in promoting their products and expanding their market reach. Companies may strengthen their digital marketing activities through social media promotion, email communication, online advertising, and mobile marketing in order to improve brand visibility and stimulate consumer engagement. Effective digital marketing strategies may also help firms reach younger consumers and expand their market competitiveness.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to existing literature by providing empirical evidence regarding the influence of digital marketing on purchase decision in the context of regional specialty food products. In addition, the study expands the understanding of how demographic characteristics and digital marketing activities jointly influence consumer purchasing behavior in local food markets.

However, this study also has several limitations that should be considered in future research. First, this study adopted a quantitative research approach, which may limit the depth of understanding regarding consumers'perceptions and motivations. Future studies may employ qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews or focus group discussions to obtain more comprehensive insights into consumers'purchasing behavior toward river snail noodle products. Second, the research context was limited to Guangxi Province, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions or markets. Future research may expand the study to other regions in China or international markets to compare differences in consumer behavior. Finally, additional variables such as brand image, product quality perception, and cultural identity may also influence purchase decision and could be incorporated in future research to provide a more comprehensive understanding of consumer behavior in the river snail noodle market.

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**Data Availability Statement:** The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

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