SECTION: AGRIBUSNESS.
SEKCJA: AGROBIZNES.

How to cite: Firmansyah, H., & Said, L. R. (2023). Harvesting Success: How Farmers' Group Members Cultivate Business Prosperity through Social Media Insights. *Global Innovations and Collaborative Solutions in Contemporary Science* (pp. 246-250). Futurity Research Publishing. https://futurity-publishing.com/international_conference_3

Harvesting Success: How Farmers' Group Members Cultivate Business Prosperity through Social Media Insights

Hairi Firmansyah [1], Laila Refiana Said[2]

[1]Doctoral Program of Development Studies, Lambung Mangkurat University, Banjarmasin, Indonesia, firmansyahhairi@gmail.com

[2]Lecturer Program of Development Studies, Lambung Mangkurat University, Banjarmasin, Indonesia

Accepted: November 25, 2023 | **Published**: December 4, 2023 | **Language:** English

Abstract: This research aims to analyze Farmer Group members' use of social media as a source of information in farming activities in Banjarbaru City, South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia. The analysis used was descriptive. The number of respondents was 60 members of the Farmer Group. The results obtained from this research indicate the use of social media by members of farmer groups as a source of information in farming activities in Banjarbaru City every planting season (business period) consisting of (1) As a source of obtaining technical information on commodity cultivation (45%) (2) As a source of obtaining information on integrated pest and disease control (32%), (3) As a source of obtaining information on harvest and post-harvest (8%) and (4) As a source of information on marketing agricultural products (16%).

Keywords: farmer groups, information, social media.

Introduction

Today's developments in science and technology have produced many communication media that can be used to share information quickly. The many alternative communication media available require consideration and planning in selecting/determining and using appropriate communication media to help disseminate information. Using appropriate communication media will make it easier for the information to reach the target (user) effectively and efficiently. According to Hootsuite's latest report in July 2019, more than 3.5 billion people have joined social media. Of the world's total population of 7.697 billion, 46%, or almost half of the world's total human population, are active social media users. The growth of social media users globally in a year reaches more than a quarter billion (Pertiwi 2019, Riyanto 2019). The results of Hootsuit's research also explain that social media users in Indonesia have reached 150 million or around 56% of the total population.

The uses and gratifications theory approach has been widely used to research media use by audiences. According to Ruggiero (2000), the Uses and Gratifications approach uses new mass media such as newspapers, radio, television, and the Internet. In the internet environment, users are seen as more actively participating in using new media compared to traditional media. It is in line with the Uses and Gratifications approach, which states that media selection can satisfy audiences in meeting their needs, and audiences can understand various reasons for using media.

Researchers use the Uses and Gratifications approach to explain the choice and use of new media, such as the Internet, and its applications by audiences. Currently, the Uses and Gratifications approach is increasingly widespread and has been used to research the use of mobile phones, social media, social networking sites, the use of microblogging, the use of instant messaging, the use of online games, the use of animated news, and the use of entertainment media. In line with this, Amin et al. (2013) stated that the focus of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) applications in the agricultural sector is to meet farmers' needs for information (Suratini et al., 2021). However, the development of information technology, especially social media, has not been able to be utilized optimally by farmers in Banjarbaru City, South Kalimantan Province, Indonesia, to increase farming productivity significantly.

Based on the background, it is necessary to carry out exploratory research to analyze the use of social media by members of farmer groups as a source of information in farming activities.

Research Results

The research was conducted in five sub-districts in Banjarbaru City: Liang Anggang District, North Banjarbaru District, South Banjarbaru District, Landasan Ulin District, and Cempaka District. It still exists in urban areas even though Banjarbaru City continues to develop actively. Research activities will be carried out for three months, from July to September 2023.

The research was conducted in five sub-districts in Banjarbaru City: Liang Anggang District, North Banjarbaru District, South Banjarbaru District, Landasan Ulin District, and Cempaka District. It still exists in urban areas even though Banjarbaru City continues to develop actively. The research was carried out for three months, from July to September 2023.

Qualitative data processing is done through data reduction, namely sorting, focusing attention, and simplifying the data to answer research objectives. The data obtained through the questionnaire was processed using Microsoft Excel and then described..

There is an illustration of the use of social media by Farmer Group members as a source of information in farming activities in Banjarbaru City, which is presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Use of social media by Farmer Group members as a source of information in farming activities in Banjarbaru City in 2023

	Benefits of social media as a source of information	Number of uses (people)	Percentage (%)
1	Commodity cultivation techniques	27	45
2	Integrated pest and disease management	19	32
3	Harvest and post-harvest	5	8
4	Marketing	9	15
Total		60	100

Based on the data in Table 1, social media has become an essential tool for farmer members of farmer groups. As many as 44% of them actively use platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp to search for information about technical methods for cultivating agricultural commodities. Farmers can easily share experiences, tips, and the latest information regarding effective cultivation techniques through social media. It allows for faster and broader communication between members of farming groups, enriching their knowledge in increasing agricultural yields. The existence of special farmer groups on social media becomes a collaborative forum for them to exchange information and provide mutual support. Farmers can ask questions directly, provide solutions to their problems, and share photos or videos of technical demonstrations related to cultivating certain commodities. Thus, social media provides a space to build a solid virtual community among farmers, even though they are in different locations in Banjarbaru City.

Social media platforms also allow farmers to follow accounts discussing cultivation techniques. The latest information about agricultural technology innovations, weather changes, or best practices in commodity cultivation can be quickly conveyed through posts or videos on social media. It helps farmers stay informed and update their knowledge of the latest agricultural developments. Thus, farmers of farming groups in Banjarbaru City use social media as a communication tool and a valuable source of information to improve the quality and productivity of their farming.

Social media has also become a significant tool for farmers of farming groups to find information about how to control pests and diseases that attack their farming in an integrated manner. With a utilization rate of 32%, social media has become an effective platform for exchanging knowledge and experience among farmers. This reflects their adaptation to modern technology as the primary source of agricultural information. In this context, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and WhatsApp emerge as the social media most frequently used by farmers. They form discussion groups or agricultural forums on this platform, where they can share information, present the problems they face, and find solutions together. Through social media, farmers can quickly get answers to their questions about how to control pests and diseases in an integrated manner without having to gather physically.

The successful use of social media by farmers can also be seen in the improvement in the quality of their decisions in dealing with pest and disease problems. Information obtained through social media is often real-time and relevant to local conditions, allowing farmers to take more timely and effective control measures. It can increase farming productivity and reduce losses caused by pest and disease attacks. Apart from that, using social media also provides opportunities for farmers to be involved in virtual training and workshops. They can access webinars or online tutorials on integrated pest and disease management organized by agricultural experts or research institutions. It provides an opportunity for farmers to continue to develop their knowledge and skills in farming management.

Overall, using social media by farmers who are members of farmer groups in Banjarbaru City expands their access to information and builds mutually supportive online communities. It creates a farming environment that is more connected and adaptive to change, increasing the sustainability of farming in the city.

The use of social media by farmer members of farming groups has become an integral part of their efforts to increase knowledge about harvest and post-harvest techniques in farming. Data shows that as many as 8% of the total farmers in the city, or the equivalent of 5 people, actively use social media to find the latest information regarding these techniques. Farmers can share experiences, exchange ideas, and get advice from fellow farmer group members and agricultural experts through social media platforms. It proves that social media is a forum for social interaction and a valuable source of knowledge for farmers to increase the productivity and quality of their agricultural products.

The use of social media by farmers who are members of farmer groups in Banjarbaru City not only focuses on the technical aspects of agriculture but also involves social and economic dimensions. They can access information about agricultural markets, price trends, and business opportunities through social media platforms to help them plan their marketing strategies for agricultural products. In addition, exchanging information via social media also enables the formation of collaborative networks between farmers, which can support the exchange of social capital and increase collective capacity. Thus, the use of social media by farmers in Banjarbaru City is not only a means to increase efficiency in agricultural practices but also as a strategic tool in developing the economic and social aspects of the sustainability of their farming businesses.

In Banjarbaru City, the trend of modernization in the agricultural sector is increasingly visible with the rapid adoption of social media as a source of information and marketing of agricultural products. Recent data shows that as many as 15% of farmers in this city have utilized social media platforms to increase the visibility of their agricultural products. They use social media to communicate and share information and as a platform to market their agricultural products. E-commerce markets that often appear on social media platforms are an effective means for these farmers to sell their products online, taking advantage of the potential for a broader and more diverse market reach.

The use of social media by farmers in Banjarbaru City also creates a collaborative ecosystem between producers and consumers. Farmers can directly interact with consumers through social media platforms, get direct feedback, and answer real-time customer questions or needs. It strengthens the bond between farmers and consumers and increases transparency in the agricultural supply chain. Additionally, through e-commerce marketplaces on social media, farmers can offer their products more efficiently and keep up with rapidly changing consumer trends.

Social media, as a source of marketing information for agricultural products, provides economic benefits for farmers in Banjarbaru City and helps build a positive image of the agricultural sector in the eyes of the public. By utilizing this technology, farmers can not only optimize their sales but also participate in driving digital transformation in the agricultural sector, creating new opportunities and improving the overall welfare of farmers.

The use of social media by farmers in Banjarbaru City has become an essential milestone in the transformation of modern agriculture. Even though it is not evenly distributed at every stage of agricultural activity, adopting information and communication technology (ICT) marks significant progress in the agricultural sector. Social media provides fast and broad access to the latest information about agricultural technology, markets, and policies, enabling farmers to improve their knowledge and skills continuously. This phenomenon reflects a positive change in the agricultural paradigm, where the farming community in Banjarbaru City is starting to utilize various ICT tools to increase their efficiency and productivity.

Agricultural development, seen through social media as a comprehensive source of information, provides a positive indication for the future of agriculture in Banjarbaru City. This development reflects good adaptation to social and technological changes among agricultural communities. By utilizing social media, farmers can improve their agricultural products' quality and economic welfare. Therefore, it is necessary to continue to encourage technology integration and expand access to information so that all stages of agricultural activities can experience the same benefits. Thus, farmers' use of social media in Banjarbaru City is a local innovation and a model for sustainable agricultural development in similar areas.

Conclusions

The use of social media by Farmer Group members as a source of information in farming activities in Banjarbaru City is 1. As a source of obtaining technical information on commodity cultivation, 45%; 2. As a source for obtaining information on integrated pest and disease control, 32%; 3. As a source of obtaining harvest and post-harvest information, 8%; and 4. As a source of obtaining marketing information on agricultural production, 16%. This research is descriptive and exploratory. Future research should be able to follow up by analyzing various variables that are assumed to influence farmers' digital literacy.

References

Amin, M., Sugiyanto, Sukesi, K., & Ismadi. (2013). Application of Cyber Extension as Communication Media to Empower the Dry Land Farmer at Donggala District, Central Sulawesi. *J. Basic. Appl. Sci. Res, 3*(4), 379–385. https://www.textroad.com/pdf/JBASR/J. Basic. Appl. Sci. Res., 3(4)379-385, 2013.pdf

Pertiwi, W. K. (2019). Hampir Setengah Penduduk Bumi sudah *"Melek"* Media Sosial. Kompas.Com.

Riyanto, A. D. (2019). Hootsuite (We are Social): Indonesian Digital Report 2019. Andi.Link. https://andi.link/hootsuite-we-are-social-indonesian-digital-report-2019/

Ruggiero, T. E. (2000). Mass communication and society uses and gratifications theory in the 21st Century. *Mass Communication and Society, 3*(1), 3–37. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327825MCS0301

Suratini, S., Muljono, P., & Tri Wibowo, C. (2021). Pemanfaatan Media Sosial untuk Mendukung Kegiatan Penyuluhan Pertanian di Kabupaten Minahasa Provinsi Sulawesi Utara. *Jurnal Penyuluhan, 17*(1), 12–24. https://doi.org/10.25015/17202132302