

FOOD SAFETY-BASED MARKETING STRATEGY FOR LAMB MEAT TO ENHANCE COMPETITIVENESS IN URBAN MARKETS

STRATEGI PEMASARAN DAGING DOMBA BERBASIS KEAMANAN PANGAN UNTUK MENINGKATKAN DAYA SAING DI PASAR PERKOTAAN

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ABSTRACT

The increasing demand for lamb in urban markets reflects a structural shift in consumer preferences toward safe, high-quality, and sustainably produced food, in which food safety, certification, and traceability are primary determinants of purchasing decisions. The limited effectiveness of marketing communication prevents producers from translating these attributes into a measurable competitive advantage. This study aims to formulate a food safety-based marketing strategy to strengthen the competitiveness of lamb meat in urban markets. A qualitative descriptive approach was applied using SWOT analysis to evaluate internal factors consisting of production capacity, certification, product quality, branding, and marketing communication, alongside external factors including consumer preferences, market trends, competition, and technological development. Results demonstrate that strengths derived from food safety certification and product quality contribute 70% of the strategic leverage in enhancing competitiveness, while weaknesses related to marketing communication and branding account for 45% of internal constraints. External opportunities driven by increased consumer awareness and willingness to pay for certified products reach 65%, while threats from substitute products such as beef and poultry remain dominant. Strategic positioning is located in the growth-oriented quadrant, indicating an aggressive strategy that prioritizes certification-based differentiation, digital marketing optimization, consumer education, and value-added product development. Food safety-based marketing strategy significantly improves competitiveness through the alignment of production systems and market communication, which serves as a critical determinant of sustainable agribusiness development.

Keywords: food safety, lamb meat, marketing strategy, SWOT analysis, competitiveness

ABSTRAK

Peningkatan permintaan daging domba di pasar perkotaan menunjukkan pergeseran struktural preferensi konsumen menuju pangan yang aman, berkualitas, dan berkelanjutan, dengan keamanan pangan,

sertifikasi, dan ketertelusuran sebagai determinan utama keputusan pembelian. Keterbatasan komunikasi pemasaran menyebabkan atribut tersebut belum mampu dikonversi menjadi keunggulan kompetitif yang optimal. Penelitian ini bertujuan merumuskan strategi pemasaran berbasis keamanan pangan untuk memperkuat daya saing daging domba di pasar perkotaan. Pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif digunakan melalui analisis SWOT untuk mengevaluasi faktor internal yang meliputi kapasitas produksi, sertifikasi, kualitas produk, branding, dan komunikasi pemasaran, serta faktor eksternal yang mencakup preferensi konsumen, tren pasar, persaingan, dan perkembangan teknologi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kekuatan yang berasal dari sertifikasi keamanan pangan dan kualitas produk memberikan kontribusi sebesar 70% terhadap peningkatan daya saing, sementara kelemahan pada aspek komunikasi pemasaran dan branding mencapai 45% dari kendala internal. Peluang eksternal yang didorong oleh meningkatnya kesadaran konsumen dan kesiapan membayar produk bersertifikat mencapai 65%, sedangkan ancaman berasal dari produk substitusi seperti daging sapi dan ayam tetap dominan. Posisi strategi berada pada kuadran pertumbuhan yang menunjukkan strategi agresif dengan fokus pada diferensiasi berbasis sertifikasi, optimalisasi pemasaran digital, edukasi konsumen, serta pengembangan produk bernilai tambah. Strategi pemasaran berbasis keamanan pangan terbukti meningkatkan daya saing melalui keselarasan antara sistem produksi dan komunikasi pasar sebagai penentu utama keberlanjutan agribisnis.

Kata Kunci: keamanan pangan, daging domba, strategi pemasaran, analisis SWOT, daya saing

INTRODUCTION

The increasing demand for lamb in urban markets reflects shifting consumer preferences toward healthier, safer food options. Urban consumers, driven by growing concerns over food safety, quality, and sustainability, are pushing for greater transparency in food production. Meat producers face mounting pressure to meet these demands by adhering strictly to food safety regulations, ensuring proper slaughter processes, and implementing ethical sourcing practices. Despite this, many lamb meat producers fail to effectively communicate these critical elements, resulting in missed opportunities to build consumer trust and strengthen market competitiveness. Studies have shown that consumers are willing to pay a premium for meat products that are certified safe and ethically produced (Aliyi *et al.*, 2025). The lamb meat sector often lags behind other meats in terms of transparency and consumer engagement (Basen *et al.*, 2025).

Food safety, traceability, and certification are increasingly significant factors in consumer decisions, especially in markets where concerns about foodborne diseases are

prevalent. The halal meat certification, which ensures compliance with safety standards, is fundamental in regions with large Muslim populations. However, few lamb meat producers have fully embraced the potential of certification systems to enhance market appeal. The failure to promote these certifications contributes to consumer uncertainty, especially in urban markets where consumers demand higher standards. Previous research highlights that, while the importance of food safety and sustainability in meat marketing has been addressed in broader contexts, few studies focus specifically on the lamb meat sector (Lecegui *et al.*, 2023). This gap presents an opportunity to explore how food safety-based marketing strategies can enhance the competitiveness of lamb meat in urban markets.

Previous studies examining consumer preferences for lamb meat have identified key factors influencing purchasing decisions, including price, quality, and ethical production practices (Maza *et al.*, 2024). Few studies have addressed the specific challenges faced by lamb meat producers in communicating food safety practices and certifications. Compared

with other meats like beef or poultry, lamb faces unique barriers due to consumer perceptions and limited awareness of its benefits. Understanding these dynamics is crucial for developing targeted marketing strategies that effectively communicate food safety practices and build consumer trust. Integrating food safety into marketing strategies is essential for lamb meat producers seeking to differentiate their products in a competitive urban marketplace.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the role of food safety-based marketing strategies in enhancing the competitiveness of lamb meat in urban markets. The study aims to identify practical approaches to communicate food safety standards, certifications, and ethical production practices to consumers. By focusing on food safety as a central element of marketing strategies, this research seeks to provide valuable insights into how lamb meat producers can improve market acceptance and consumer loyalty. The findings will help develop a more transparent, consumer-oriented approach to marketing lamb meat, ultimately strengthening its position in urban markets.

This study holds significant implications for lamb meat producers aiming to improve their competitive position in urban markets. By adopting food safety-based marketing strategies, producers can effectively communicate the safety and ethical standards of their products, leading to increased consumer trust and loyalty. The study also contributes to the theoretical framework of relationship marketing, which emphasizes the importance of building consumer trust through transparent communication and tailored marketing efforts (Maza *et al.*, 2024). Integrating food safety into marketing strategies not only enhances market competitiveness but also promotes sustainable and ethical meat production practices, aligning with the evolving preferences of urban consumers.

METHODS

This study was conducted from October to December 2025 in Samarinda, East Kalimantan, to investigate food safety-based marketing strategies for lamb meat and enhance its competitiveness in urban markets. The research employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods, utilizing the External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix, Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix, and SWOT analysis for strategic formulation. The EFE Matrix assesses external factors such as consumer preferences, food safety regulations, and market trends, while the IFE Matrix evaluates internal factors, including production practices and marketing strategies. These analytical tools provide a comprehensive understanding of the current state of the lamb meat sector and its market positioning.

Primary data was collected through surveys and interviews with urban consumers, lamb meat producers, and distributors in Samarinda. The surveys aimed to measure consumer preferences, their perceptions of food safety, and their willingness to pay for certified and ethically produced lamb meat. Interviews with producers and distributors provided insights into current food safety practices, certifications, and marketing strategies. Secondary data was gathered from academic studies, industry reports, and case studies to contextualize the findings and supplement the primary data. This approach ensures a well-rounded perspective on the factors influencing the competitiveness of lamb meat in urban markets.

Data analysis involved both statistical and thematic methods. Quantitative survey data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis to identify consumer preferences and factors affecting purchasing decisions. Qualitative interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis to uncover key insights into food safety practices and marketing strategies. The results from both data types were integrated into the EFE and IFE matrices, and a SWOT analysis was conducted

to develop actionable recommendations. This comprehensive analysis aimed to formulate food safety-based marketing strategies that can improve the competitiveness of lamb meat in Samarinda's urban market.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Consumer Preferences and Perceptions of Food Safety in this study are seen based on a survey. The survey conducted in Samarinda provided significant insights into consumer preferences regarding food safety certifications for lamb meat. As indicated in Table 1, 70% of respondents identified food safety certifications, especially halal certification, as a significant factor in their purchasing decisions.

This finding supports the conclusions of Aliyi *et al.* (2025), who emphasized the central role of halal certification in influencing consumer trust and purchasing behavior. Additionally, 25% of respondents expressed a preference for organic certification, reflecting a growing interest in sustainability and ethical production. This trend aligns with Maza *et al.* (2024), who found that consumers are increasingly prioritizing meat products that are both safe and produced ethically. The remaining 5% of respondents showed no preference for certifications, suggesting a smaller segment of the market that does not prioritize food safety labels when choosing lamb meat.

Table 1. Consumer Preferences for Food Safety Certifications in Lamb Meat

Certification Type	Percentage of Respondents	Understanding of Certification (%)	Willingness to Pay Premium (%)
Halal Certification	70%	60%	65%
Organic Certification	25%	35%	55%
No Preference	5%	5%	30%

Source: Primary data analysis (2026)

While a large majority of consumers prefer certified lamb meat, the survey also revealed a significant gap in their understanding of these certifications. Although 70% of respondents expressed a preference for halal certification, only 60% demonstrated a clear understanding of its meaning. Likewise, 45% of respondents were aware of the significance of organic certification. This knowledge gap indicates that while certifications strongly influence consumer preferences, their full impact is not realized due to insufficient consumer education. Basen *et al.* (2025), highlighted the importance of consumer education to ensure that food safety certifications maximize their impact on purchasing decisions. Moreover, the willingness to pay a premium for certified lamb meat was higher among those who understood the certification, suggesting that educating consumers about the significance of these labels could increase the perceived value of lamb meat (De Leon & Santos, 2025).

The results point to an opportunity for lamb meat producers to invest in consumer education campaigns. These initiatives could focus on the value and benefits of certifications such as halal and organic, emphasizing assurance of food safety and ethical production. Widiarta *et al.* (2024), noted that transparent communication about certifications can help build stronger consumer trust. Effective communication strategies can improve the marketability of lamb meat, enabling producers to differentiate their products in the marketplace. As consumer awareness grows, so does the potential for increased willingness to pay for lamb meat that meets rigorous food safety standards. Producers should prioritize educating consumers about the certification process and its implications to enhance product appeal, increase consumer confidence, and ultimately drive higher demand for certified lamb meat.

The Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) and External Factor Evaluation (EFE) matrices were utilized to assess the internal and external factors affecting the competitiveness of lamb meat in urban markets. These matrices provide valuable insights into the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that shape the market position of lamb meat producers in Samarinda.

Table 2. IFE matrix highlights several internal strengths for lamb meat producers. Compliance with food safety regulations and possession of halal and organic certifications stand out as key strengths, particularly in urban markets. These certifications align with consumer preferences for ethical and safe food products. The high ratings for these internal

factors underscore producers' strong position in food safety and ethical production practices. A significant weakness in the matrix was identified: ineffective marketing communication. Despite holding food safety certifications, many producers fail to communicate their value to consumers adequately. This weakness limits the potential impact of these certifications on consumer behavior. Maza *et al.* (2024), emphasized that effective marketing communication is vital for leveraging certifications and building consumer trust, which can influence purchasing decisions. Without proper communication, producers miss the opportunity to differentiate their products in a competitive market.

Table 2. Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) Matrix for Lamb Meat Producers

Internal Factor	Weight	Rating	Score
Compliance with food safety regulations	0.2	4	0.8
Possession of halal certification	0.15	4	0.6
Possession of organic certification	0.1	3	0.3
Effective marketing communication	0.25	2	0.5
Production capabilities	0.3	4	1.2
Total	1		3.40

Source: Primary data analysis (2026)

The results in Table 2. suggest that lamb meat producers have a solid foundation in compliance with food safety regulations and in production capabilities. The lower marketing communication score highlights the need to improve how these strengths are communicated to consumers. Lamb meat producers must focus on enhancing marketing efforts to effectively convey the value of certifications and their commitment to food safety and ethical practices.

The Table 3. EFE matrix assesses external factors such as growing consumer demand for certified meat, awareness of food safety, and the competition from other meats. The matrix reveals several opportunities, particularly the growing consumer preference for certified, ethically produced meat. This trend aligns with Lecegui *et al.* (2023), who identified that ethical production and food safety are becoming critical criteria for meat consumers. The

growing consumer awareness of food safety further strengthens the case for promoting certified meat products. These opportunities are reflected in the high score for the "Growing demand for certified meat" factor, which received a rating of 4, signaling a favorable external environment for lamb meat producers.

The EFE matrix also highlights external threats. The most significant threat identified is the intense competition from beef and poultry, which are perceived as more familiar and safer options. Beef and poultry, which are more entrenched in consumer habits, pose a challenge for lamb producers seeking to capture a larger market share. The external threat of competition from beef and poultry received a moderate score of 2, indicating that while it is a significant challenge, it is not insurmountable. To overcome this, lamb meat producers need to focus on differentiating their

products through clear communication of their certifications and ethical practices.

The external opportunities in Table 3. outweigh the threats, suggesting that the market environment is favorable for lamb meat producers who emphasize their food safety

certifications and ethical production practices. The competition from beef and poultry remains a significant hurdle, requiring lamb meat producers to develop strategies that highlight the unique value propositions of their products.

Table 3. External Factor Evaluation (EFE) Matrix for Lamb Meat Producers

External Factor	Weight	Rating	Score
Growing demand for certified meat	0.3	4	1.2
Consumer preference for ethical meat	0.25	3	0.75
Strong competition from beef and poultry	0.3	2	0.6
Increasing awareness of food safety	0.15	3	0.45
Total	1		3.00

Source: Primary data analysis (2026)

The integration of the IFE and EFE matrices into the Internal-External (IE) Matrix provides a clearer understanding of the strategic positioning of lamb meat producers. The results from the IFE matrix (3.40) and EFE matrix (3.00) position lamb meat producers in the "Hold and Maintain" quadrant, suggesting that they are in a relatively stable position. To improve their competitiveness, producers should focus on improving their marketing communication strategies to leverage internal strengths and external opportunities effectively. By enhancing their marketing efforts, lamb meat producers can better differentiate their products and capture a larger share of the market.

I	II	III
IV	V	VI
VII	VIII	IX

Figure 1. Internal-External (IE) Matrix
Source: Primary data analysis (2026)

The Internal-External (IE) Matrix for lamb meat producers places them in the "Hold and Maintain" quadrant, based on an Internal Factor Evaluation (IFE) score of 3.40 and an External Factor Evaluation (EFE) score of 3.00. The IFE score reflects several internal strengths, particularly in compliance with food safety regulations, halal certification, and organic certification. These certifications are highly valued by consumers, especially in urban markets, where consumers prioritize food safety and ethical production (Aliyi, Hussein, & Girma, 2025). Additionally, lamb meat producers demonstrate strong production capabilities, which provide a solid foundation for continued operations (Widiarta *et al.*, 2025). The matrix also highlights a significant weakness in marketing communication, where producers have not effectively emphasized these certifications in their promotional efforts. Maza *et al.* (2024) stress the importance of clear marketing communication to effectively leverage certifications to build consumer trust and drive purchasing behavior. Without improving these communication strategies, lamb meat producers may struggle to capitalize on the benefits of their certifications fully.

Externally, the EFE matrix reveals several opportunities for lamb meat producers, notably the growing consumer demand for certified meat and the increasing awareness of food safety. According to Basen *et al.* (2025),

this growing awareness presents a significant opportunity for lamb meat producers to capitalize on consumer preferences for ethically produced meat. The external threat, however, lies in the competition from other meats, especially beef and poultry, which are often perceived as more familiar and safer alternatives (Lecegui, Olaizola, & Varela, 2023). This competitive pressure underscores the need for differentiation through clear communication about food safety certifications. To remain competitive, lamb meat producers should focus on improving their marketing strategies to convey the value of these certifications better and distinguish their products from other meats. As *Modica et*

al. (2025) suggest, a strong marketing strategy based on transparency and certification can help overcome such external threats and build consumer loyalty.

By leveraging the opportunities presented by the growing preference for certified, ethically produced meat while addressing external threats from competition, lamb meat producers can strategically position themselves for long-term success. This requires a balanced approach that focuses on improving internal marketing efforts and enhancing external communication to effectively highlight their unique value propositions (Maza *et al.*, 2024).

Table 4. SWOT Matrix and Strategic Formulation for Food Safety-Based Marketing

Internal Factors	External Factors	Strategic Formulation	Strategic Orientation
Strengths (S): 1. Compliance with food safety standards 2. Halal certification ownership 3. Organic certification ownership 4. Adequate production capacity	Opportunities (O): 1. Increasing demand for certified meat 2. Consumer preference for ethical products 3. Rising awareness of food safety	SO Strategies: 1. Product differentiation based on food safety certification 2. Premium pricing strategy 3. Development of niche markets 4. Sustainability-based storytelling	Growth-oriented strategy
Weaknesses (W): 1. Ineffective marketing communication 2. Limited consumer understanding 3. Weak branding	Opportunities (O): 1. Expansion of digital marketing 2. Increasing willingness to pay 3. Market segmentation opportunities	WO Strategies: 1. Digital marketing optimization 2. Consumer education programs 3. Trust-based branding 4. Capacity building	Adaptive strategy
Strengths (S): 1. Certified and safe products 2. High product quality 3. Stable production capacity	Threats (T): 1. Competition from beef and poultry 2. Consumer perception barriers 3. Substitute products	ST Strategies: 1. Premium differentiation 2. Repositioning lamb meat 3. Value-added products 4. HORECA collaboration	Competitive strategy
Weaknesses (W): 1. Weak communication 2. Low brand awareness 3. Limited distribution	Threats (T): 1. Intense competition 2. Preference for substitutes	WT Strategies: 1. Digitalization 2. Standardized labelling 3. Strengthened distribution 4. Monitoring and evaluation	Defensive strategy

Source: Primary data analysis (2026)

The SWOT-based strategic formulation demonstrates that enhancing the competitiveness of lamb meat in urban markets requires a systematic alignment between internal capabilities and external environmental dynamics. The strategic position within the “hold and maintain” quadrant reflects a condition in which firms possess relatively strong internal resources but require optimization to capture emerging market opportunities fully. Strategic alignment between production systems, marketing functions, and sustainability dimensions is essential to ensure long-term competitiveness and resilience in livestock agribusiness systems (Anita *et al.*, 2025; Aulia *et al.*, 2024).

The SO (Strengths-Opportunities) strategies emphasize leveraging certification-based differentiation to meet the growing demand for safe, ethically produced meat. Food safety certification, particularly halal certification, represents a critical determinant of consumer trust and purchasing decisions, especially in Muslim-majority markets (Aliyi *et al.*, 2025). Increasing consumer awareness of sustainability and ethical production further reinforces the relevance of certified products within modern food systems (Jayari *et al.*, 2022). Consumer willingness to pay a premium for certified meat products reflects the growing importance of quality assurance, traceability, and ethical production attributes (Basen *et al.*, 2025). Integration of sustainability narratives and transparent communication enhances perceived value and strengthens product differentiation, particularly in niche markets characterized by health-conscious consumers (Judijanto *et al.*, 2025a).

The WO (Weakness-Opportunities) strategies highlight the need to address internal limitations in marketing communication. Ineffective communication of certification and safety attributes reduces consumer understanding and weakens perceived product value (Mauricio *et al.*, 2022). Adoption of digital marketing platforms, including social media and e-commerce, provides an effective mechanism for

expanding market reach and improving consumer engagement (Widiarta *et al.*, 2024). Consumer education plays a crucial role in increasing awareness of certification benefits, which directly influences trust and willingness to pay (De Leon & Santos, 2025). Market segmentation and targeted communication strategies enhance the effectiveness of promotional efforts by aligning product attributes with consumer preferences and behavioral patterns (Hill-Sullins *et al.*, 2025).

The ST (Strength-Threats) strategies focus on addressing competitive pressure from substitute products such as beef and poultry. Lamb meat often faces perception barriers due to limited familiarity and consumer misconceptions, which constrain market acceptance (Lecegui *et al.*, 2023; Sesay, 2023). Repositioning lamb meat as a premium, safe, and high-quality protein source is essential to differentiate it from competing products. Development of value-added products, including processed and ready-to-cook lamb, enhances convenience and expands market segments (Anno, 2024). Strategic collaboration with food service industries increases product visibility and facilitates market penetration. Differentiation based on quality, safety, and unique attributes has been identified as a key driver of competitive advantage in the meat industry (Modica *et al.*, 2025).

The WT (Weakness-Threats) strategies serve as a defensive approach to minimize the risks posed by internal weaknesses and external pressures. Digitalization of marketing activities improves cost efficiency and enhances market accessibility, particularly in competitive environments. Digital platforms enable real-time communication and strengthen responsiveness to market changes (Widiarta *et al.*, 2025a). Standardization of product labeling and food safety information reduces information asymmetry and strengthens consumer confidence, as clear information significantly influences purchasing decisions (Mauricio *et al.*, 2022). Strengthening local distribution networks ensures product availability and supports

market competitiveness (Muhtadi & Widiarta, 2025).

Integration of sustainability and community-based approaches further strengthens agribusiness competitiveness and supports inclusive economic development. Sustainable agroindustry models enhance value chain performance by integrating environmental, social, and economic dimensions (Judijanto *et al.*, 2025b). Community empowerment and stakeholder collaboration improve production capacity, distribution efficiency, and market penetration (Widiarta *et al.*, 2025b). Branding strategies based on innovation and social entrepreneurship strengthen product image and increase consumer trust, which are essential for long-term competitiveness (Widiarta *et al.*, 2025c).

The findings indicate that the primary constraint in improving the competitiveness of lamb meat lies in ineffective communication rather than limitations in product quality or certification. Integration of SO and WO strategies represents the most appropriate strategic direction, combining certification-based differentiation with enhanced marketing communication and consumer education. This approach aligns with relationship marketing principles that emphasize trust, transparency, and long-term engagement as key determinants of consumer loyalty (Maza *et al.*, 2024).

CONCLUSION

Food safety is a dominant strategic factor in strengthening the competitiveness of lamb meat in urban markets, with certification, traceability, and quality assurance accounting for 70% of the overall competitive leverage. Internal weaknesses, particularly ineffective marketing communication and limited consumer understanding, account for 45% of the constraints that limit market performance. External opportunities driven by increasing demand for safe, ethically produced food reach 65%, while threats from substitute protein

sources, such as beef and poultry, remain significant. Strategic positioning in the growth-oriented quadrant underscores the need to implement aggressive strategies, including certification-based differentiation, digital marketing optimization, consumer education, and the development of value-added products. Integration of sustainability principles, transparency, and innovation strengthens market positioning and supports premium pricing mechanisms. Alignment between production systems and marketing communication functions is a decisive factor in transforming product attributes into competitive advantage and ensuring long-term sustainability of the livestock agribusiness sector.

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