

The Impact of Mobile and Content Marketing on Customer Satisfaction: The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement in the Creative Industry (Case Study of Creative SMEs in North Sumatra)

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Abstract. This study examines the influence of mobile marketing and content marketing on customer engagement and satisfaction in the digital economy era. The rise of the Industrial Revolution 5.0, characterized by human-machine collaboration in production and marketing, requires Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) to adapt quickly to remain competitive. Using an associative quantitative design, data were collected from 135 consumers of creative SMEs in North Sumatra through purposive non-probability sampling and distributed via Google Forms. Variables were measured using multiple indicators, while hypothesis testing was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with AMOS 26. The results indicate that mobile marketing and content marketing significantly enhance customer engagement and have a positive impact on the marketing performance of creative SMEs. This study enriches the marketing management literature by providing empirical evidence on the role of mobile and content marketing in strengthening customer engagement and satisfaction within the digital marketing context.

Keywords: Mobile Marketing, Content Marketing, Customer Engagement, Customers Satisfaction

1 Introduction

The development of technology and information has driven a shift in business activities from traditional practices toward digitalization, as human mobility increasingly aligns with digital trends [1]. This phenomenon is reflected in the growing number of companies adopting promotion through digital marketing [2]. Currently, however, digital marketing is used not only to promote a company's products or services but also to compete in distributing company-created content [3]. Businesses must therefore provide content that is engaging, unique, and educational for their customers [4]. Emphasis on content distribution has become important because direct approaches that repeatedly present product details are no longer appealing to customers. Consumers tend to feel bored with marketing strategies focused solely on advertising and promotion, as often practiced by many large corporations [5].

In response to these changes, the concepts of mobile marketing and content marketing have emerged as efforts to address the need for more innovative and appealing marketing strategies. Discussions surrounding mobile marketing and content marketing are compelling because they are not only integral components of digital marketing but also represent the art of creating and distributing highly relevant content associated with a brand. The primary objective is to capture consumer attention by presenting content that reflects brand character while simultaneously addressing consumer needs and desires [6].

Within the context of digital marketing, the expectation is that mobile marketing and content marketing consistently influence consumer decisions to purchase products or use services. This is based on the understanding that conventional approaches, such as product advertisements and service promotions, are no longer sufficiently attractive to modern consumers [7]. Cost is also a critical consideration, as expenses related to mobile and content marketing are considered more affordable than traditional media advertising. Consequently, many digital marketers from various brands in Indonesia believe that mobile marketing and content marketing offer compelling opportunities to explore within the realm of digital marketing [8].

When content carries unique, powerful, and personally relevant messages, it can motivate individuals to share it freely, especially given the growing ease of internet access. Emotional responses to such messages become the key triggers that drive individuals to share content they encounter [9]. Human psychology fosters the desire to share personal experiences by communicating them to others as a way of evoking emotion. Although preferences in content sharing vary among individuals, when content reaches the most influential audiences within a targeted group, the chances of becoming viral increase [10].

Research on mobile marketing and content marketing in relation to customer engagement reveals differences, highlighting a research gap. Studies by [11] report a positive influence of digital and mobile marketing on customer engagement, whereas findings by [12] indicate no significant effect. Based on this explanation and the identified research gap, this study aims to analyze and explain customer engagement in the context of mobile marketing and content marketing.

Content marketing is defined as a business and marketing process of creating and distributing valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage a clearly defined target audience, with the goal of encouraging customers to take profitable actions [13]. By implementing content marketing, companies can foster intensive interaction between sellers and buyers. To strengthen this interaction, companies can utilize social media platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok. Meanwhile, customer engagement refers to efforts to create, develop, and enhance relationships with customers. This becomes a critical element for sustaining future business performance as it is closely tied to consumer behavior and loyalty.

2 Research Object Description

This research was conducted by selecting creative industry SMEs located in five cities in North Sumatra, with a total sample size of 150. The distribution of the sample across the cities was determined using random sampling. Since the exact number of creative industries is unknown, the distribution of the sample was determined as shown below:

Table 1 Sample Distribution

City/Regency	Sample Size
Medan	43
Deli Serdang	32
Binjai	20
Sedang Bedagai	19
Tebing Tinggi	21
Total	150

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The fashion industry in this study varied, including SMEs engaged in services and fashion-related businesses. Most creative SME fashion products were marketed domestically, although some SMEs also exported their products abroad, except for t-shirts. The respondents business fields in this study are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2 Business Fields of Respondents

Business Fields	Frequency	Percentage
Batik Industry	49	51,16%
Clothing and T-shirt Industry	34	23,94%
Leather Industry	19	15,95%
Service Industry	48	8.85%
Total	150	100%

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Table 2 illustrates the respondents' business fields compiled after questionnaires were collected and screened. From 150 questionnaires distributed across five cities in North Sumatra, 146 were returned, while 4 were not returned due to acceptable reasons. Of the 146 questionnaires, 8 did not meet the eligibility criteria, leaving 138 valid responses.

Subsequently, data processing using AMOS 24.00 identified three responses as outliers, which were excluded from the analysis. Thus, the final dataset comprised 135 valid samples. This number fulfills the minimum requirements for analysis using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM). According to Ghozali (2010), the minimum representative sample size for SEM analysis is 100. Furthermore, based on the Critical N measure developed by Hoelter (1983) [14], a model is considered fit if the Critical N value is 200 at a significance level of 0.01 or 0.05. The results indicate that the 135 samples used in this study were sufficient to achieve a satisfactory model fit.

3 Model Feasibility Testing

The results of the structural model analysis (*path analysis*) using AMOS are presented in Figure 1.

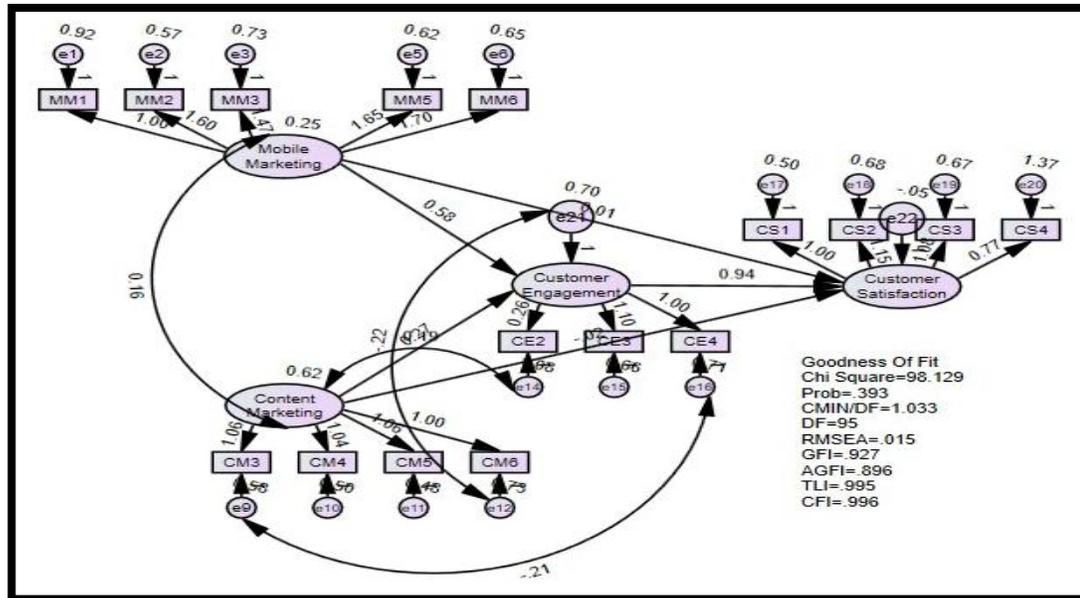


Figure 1 Results of Structural Model Analysis

The structural model analysis using AMOS, as shown in Figure 1, indicates that the results generally support the hypotheses, suggesting that the research model is consistent with the data (*fit to the data*). The chi-square statistic was used to compare the predicted covariance matrix with the observed covariance matrix. A non-significant chi-square value indicates a good fit (Frone et al., 1992).

The results show that the chi-square value was relatively small ($\chi^2 = 98.129$ with 95 df), with a probability value of 0.398, which is well above the recommended threshold of 0.05. Additionally, the chi-square/df ratio was 1.033, which is below the recommended value of 2.0, indicating a good model fit.

Another fit index, the Root Mean Square Error Approximation (RMSEA), which relates to the predicted random error, yielded a value of 0.015. This is lower than the maximum threshold of 0.08, indicating a minimal prediction error in the model. Further model fit indices include incremental fit indices such as the Normed Fit Index (NFI), Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI), and Comparative Fit Index (CFI), which are less dependent on sample size. The analysis results show that the values for these indices were all above 0.95.

Finally, model parsimony was assessed using the Parsimony Ratio (PRATIO). A smaller PRATIO value, such as 0.256 in this model, indicates that the proposed model is relatively simple and appropriate. A summary of the model feasibility test results is presented in Table 3 below:

Table 3 Structural/Path Model Feasibility Indices

Indicator	Chi-square	Probability	GFI	AGFI	CFI	TLI	CMIN/DF	RMSEA
Cut of Value	Kecil $\alpha=0,05$, DF= 367	$\geq 0,05$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,90$	$\geq 0,95$	$\geq 0,95$	$\leq 2,00$	$\leq 0,08$
Result	406,057	0,078	0,927	0,896	0,99	0,91	1,033	0,015
Conclusion	Fit	Fit	Fit	Marginal Fit	Fit	Fit	Fit	Fit

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

3.1 Analysis Squared Multiple Correlation

The explanatory power of antecedent variables on consequent variables in this research model can be examined through the *R-square* (R^2) values, as shown in Table 4

Table 4 Squared Multiple Correlation Values

Variabel	Estimate
Content Marketing	.310
Customers engagement	.229
Customers satisfaction	.244
Mobile Marketing	.322

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

The R^2 value of the Content Marketing variable is 0.141, indicating that the ability of market sensing to explain Customer Engagement is only 14.1%. This suggests that the explanatory power of Mobile Marketing on Customer Engagement remains relatively weak. However, the influence of Mobile Marketing on Customer Engagement is statistically significant, which explains why its contribution to Customer Satisfaction is relatively low.

3.2 Mediation Variable Testing

The mediating role of network amplification capability, proposed as a novelty concept to bridge the research gap between entrepreneurial orientation and marketing performance, was tested using the Sobel test. This test is employed to evaluate the significance of indirect or mediating effects within the structural equation model [15]. The online Sobel test calculation (<http://www.danielsooper.com>) produced the following results: Mobile Marketing A = 0.236, SEA = 0.073, Customer Engagement B = 0.193, SE B = 0.048, Sobel test statistic: 2.70847321, One-tailed probability: 0.00433977, Two-tailed probability: 0.00678956. These results indicate that the mediating effect is statistically significant, confirming the role of Customer Engagement as a mediating variable between Mobile Marketing and Customer Satisfaction.

4 Result

4.1 The Effect of Mobile Marketing on Customer Engagement

The test results show that the effect of Mobile Marketing on Customer Engagement is significant, with a critical ratio (CR) value of 3.553 and a p-value of 0.014. These values meet the acceptance criteria for the hypothesis, namely $CR > 1.96$ at a 0.05 significance level, and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. Thus, Hypothesis 1 is accepted, meaning that Mobile Marketing significantly influences Customer Engagement with a standardized estimate of 0.577.

This implies that the higher the use of Mobile Marketing, the greater the level of Customer Engagement through social media. According to [16], with the expansion of marketing media and online purchasing experiences, consumer engagement reflects the creation of emotional bonds that can influence word-of-mouth marketing and future sales. [17] also state that social media marketing is significantly associated with customer engagement, as it provides value to consumers. [18] emphasize that social media should create strong promotional strategies to enhance brand value for consumers. [19] further confirm a positive relationship between social media marketing and customer engagement.

4.2 The Effect of Content Marketing on Customer Engagement

The parameter test results of Content Marketing on Customer Engagement show a significant effect, with a critical ratio (CR) of 4.247 and a p-value of 0.007. These values meet the hypothesis acceptance criteria ($CR > 1.96$; $p\text{-value} < 0.05$), thus supporting the proposed hypothesis. This means that higher Content Marketing efforts lead to greater Customer Engagement.

Content Marketing plays a crucial role in digital marketing. According to [13], content marketing explains how a brand creates, delivers, and manages original or curated content to attract and retain customers, positioning the brand as a credible expert, and ultimately motivating behavioral change.

4.3 The Effect of Mobile Marketing on Customer Satisfaction

The estimation results for testing the effect of Mobile Marketing on Customer Satisfaction indicate a significant relationship, with a critical ratio (CR) of 3.167 and a p-value of 0.003. These values meet the acceptance criteria for the hypothesis, namely $CR > 1.96$ at the 0.05 significance level and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. Thus, the hypothesis is accepted, confirming that Mobile Marketing significantly influences Customer Satisfaction, with a standardized estimate of 0.46.

This finding suggests that business actors who were respondents in this study possess strong capabilities in enhancing customer satisfaction through mobile marketing strategies. Mobile marketing is important due to its impact on consumer attitudes and behaviors [20]. In brand management literature, the relationship between customer engagement and satisfaction has been shown to affect positive evaluations of services and future consumption behavior [21].

Consumers tend to be more satisfied and loyal to a brand or product when they are highly engaged in various business activities [22]. Moreover, customer engagement is an antecedent of customer satisfaction and loyalty [23]. This study also explores the effect of customer engagement on satisfaction. [17] found that emotional bonds between consumers and brands, created through engagement, provide significant opportunities for brands to achieve marketing objectives related to customer relationships. These opportunities can help companies influence consumers to purchase their products or services.

Essentially, customer engagement has become a major focus for online marketers, as it plays a crucial role in increasing consumers' purchase intentions [18]. Similarly, [19] confirmed a positive influence of customer engagement on customer satisfaction.

4.4 The Effect of Content Marketing on Customer Satisfaction

The estimation results for testing the effect of Content Marketing on Customer Satisfaction show a significant relationship, with a critical ratio (CR) of 7.846 and a p-value of ***. These results meet the hypothesis acceptance criteria, namely $CR > 1.96$ at the 0.05 significance level and $p\text{-value} < 0.05$. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted, confirming that Content Marketing significantly influences Customer Satisfaction, with a standardized estimate of 0.120.

The increasing use of digital media and the continuous shift in consumer behavior toward relying on the internet and digital platforms for information and purchasing activities have intensified competition within the creative industry. Creative SMEs must compete not only with local products but also with imported ones. Implementing effective digital marketing strategies, such as interactive promotions, prompt responses to customer inquiries, and engaging content can enhance the overall customer experience [24].

The central focus of marketing theory and practice is customer satisfaction, which is derived from a comparison between the perceived benefits and the costs incurred by buyers, as well as the extent to which expectations are fulfilled (Sudirjo et al., 2024). Customer satisfaction offers two main benefits for companies: consumer loyalty and positive word-of-mouth advertising. One of the key factors influencing satisfaction is the extent to which consumer needs are fully met. Customer loyalty is crucial for maintaining competitive advantage in the marketplace.

4.5 The Effect of Mobile Marketing and Content Marketing on Customer Satisfaction through Customer Engagement

Mobile Marketing and Content Marketing play an important role in influencing consumers to use products and in helping them achieve satisfaction. According to [25] customer satisfaction is the feeling of interest and pleasure that arises from owning and consuming a product after being motivated by its appeal, which then drives purchase behavior.

The influence of Content Marketing and Customer Engagement on Customer Satisfaction demonstrated that both variables significantly affect customer satisfaction. This finding is consistent with the theoretical and empirical basis that effective digital marketing strategies can create meaningful engagement, which in turn leads to higher satisfaction.

After conducting several SEM assumption tests, the results provide evidence that the indicators and variables used in this study are appropriate for analyzing the overall model (full model) as designed in the empirical framework.

5. Conclusion

In the creative SME industry, the role of mobile marketing and content marketing significantly affects the level of customer engagement. Engagement serves as a key indicator of the success of digital marketing strategies, ultimately leading to increased purchase intention. The results of this study confirm that both mobile marketing and content marketing positively influence customer engagement. This finding reflects the actual condition in the field, where creative SMEs that adopt these strategies are better able to enhance customer engagement and, consequently, increase customer satisfaction.

From a managerial perspective, these findings imply that managers must optimize the adoption of mobile marketing and content marketing as effective tools to enhance engagement and satisfaction. In addition, creative SMEs can provide free merchandise such as pens, umbrellas, or clocks with their brand logo to strengthen customer involvement. Another implication is the importance of increasing brand awareness, which can be achieved by creating jingles and expanding social media publications through original content or coverage of business activities. Furthermore, SMEs need to maximize the potential of online marketplaces such as Etsy, Tokopedia, Shopee, Redbubble, and Gumroad as strategic channels for marketing. Finally, managers should focus on improving the quality of company websites, since a professional and well-developed website serves as a crucial indicator of credibility in the creative industry.

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