

The Influence of Customer Engagement as a Mediating Variable in the Causal Relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention on the TikTok Platform

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ABSTRACT

In the era of Industry 4.0, where digitalization propels the rapid growth of marketing through content media (Content Marketing), it is imperative to investigate the extent of influence exerted by Customer Engagement on Purchase Intention within the TikTok platform. This study provides a theoretical framework for delving into the mediating role of Customer Engagement, which establishes a connective thread between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention. The research method employed in this study is a quantitative survey approach. The sample for this research comprises TikTok platform users from across Indonesia, with a total of 120 participants. The data analysis techniques used include Simple Linear Regression Analysis and Regression Analysis of Mediating Variable, all conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics version 25. The results showed that Content Marketing has positive effect on Purchase Intention, Content Marketing has positive effect on Customer Engagement, Customer Engagement has positive effect on Purchase Intention and Customer Engagement can mediate Content Marketing on Purchase Intention both directly or indirectly.

Keywords: Content Marketing, Purchase Intention, Customer Engagement

1. Introduction

Currently, we live in the era of Industry 4.0, where digitalization has penetrated all fields, including marketing. The term "Digital Marketing" is no longer unfamiliar to us, as is the term "Content Marketing," which is one branch of Digital Marketing. Content Marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on the creation and distribution of valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract a predefined audience and ultimately encourage them to take beneficial actions (Pulizzi, 2014). According to We Are Social, the development of information technology is closely related to the rapid growth of internet users worldwide. In January 2023, the number of internet users in Indonesia reached 212.9 million out of a total population of 276.4 million people. The number of cellular mobile connections in Indonesia is 353.8 million, equivalent to 128% of Indonesia's population, while the number of active social media users in Indonesia reached 167 million. This

data also shows that social media platforms, including TikTok, have a large user base and the potential to be an effective content marketing channel. TikTok Shop is a feature or part of the TikTok platform that allows users to sell or buy products through the TikTok app. The presence of TikTok Shop allows users to discover and purchase various products offered by active sellers on the TikTok platform. This feature provides an easy and integrated shopping experience directly within the TikTok app, allowing users to buy products that catch their attention without leaving the application. TikTok Shop also offers opportunities for sellers to expand their reach and gain more customers through this popular platform.

Previous research has analyzed the positive impact of Content Marketing on Purchase Intention, as seen in studies by Ramadhan Irianto (2021) and Wardana, et al. (2022). One study with significant positive results was conducted by Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat (2020), which investigated the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Green Purchase Intention. However, a different view is presented by Abdjul, et al. (2022), stating that Content Marketing does not significantly affect purchasing decisions, indicating that the Content Marketing variable does not always impact consumer purchasing decisions. Karr (2016) identified five dimensions of Content Marketing: reader cognition, sharing motivation, persuasion, decision making, and factors. These dimensions include (1) Reader Cognition, which involves interactive content that is easy to understand and remember; (2) Sharing Motivation, which discusses content that provides value and education, reflects the brand, builds and maintains good communication, meets needs, and is informative; (3) Persuasion, which covers content that attracts interest, has reciprocal influence, is reliable, unique, consistent, and relevant; (4) Decision Making, content that drives motivation and decision-making; and (5) Life Factors, content that provides life values and benefits. Other studies not only investigate the causal relationship between the independent variable Content Marketing and the dependent variable Purchase Intention but also introduce other variables that can mediate the relationship between them. One study that analyzed the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention with the mediation of Customer Engagement is conducted by Mahendra & Nugroho (2021) and Prasetya & Susilo (2022). The results of both studies show that the Content Marketing variable has a significant positive impact on Purchase Intention when mediated by Customer Engagement. According to Mahendra and Nugroho (2021), Content Marketing affects Customer Engagement, represented by the number of likes and comments. The more likes and positive comments generated from customer responses, the more it indicates that a product brand can build a positive and intense relationship with customers. This also creates opportunities for a brand to become more recognized by a wider audience, both domestically and internationally. Prasetya & Susilo (2022) state that customer feedback can influence Customer Engagement. Customer responses to Content Marketing can be used to map the dimensions of customer engagement. The goal of mapping customer engagement dimensions is to identify interaction patterns and customer engagement. Based on the analysis of previous studies, it can be concluded that Customer Engagement can mediate the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention. The selection of the Customer Engagement variable is due to its proven significant positive impact in mediating the relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention, as shown in the research by Mahendra & Nugroho (2021) and Prasetya & Susilo (2022). Seeing the phenomenon that underscores the importance of Content Marketing in influencing Purchase Intention, as well as the awareness of the role of Customer Engagement as a mediating factor, researchers feel the need to conduct further analysis. This research will examine how these variables interact on the TikTok platform. This study is expected to provide a more comprehensive understanding of effective content marketing

strategies and contribute to increasing purchase intentions among TikTok users. Based on the phenomena presented in the background, the researchers will analyze the influence of the Customer Engagement mediation variable on the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention on the TikTok platform.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Purchase Intention

Every customer has their own preferences when making a purchase. These preferences influence a customer's desire to buy a product. Many experts have defined Purchase Intention from their own perspectives. According to Aji et al. (2020), purchase intention is a combination of a customer's interest and the likelihood of a customer buying a product. According to Tungka et al. (2020), Purchase Intention is a customer behavior driven by the desire to purchase and choose products based on the customer's experience in using those products. According to Kotler (2008), Purchase Intention arises after receiving a stimulus from a product, generating an interest in trying the product, and ultimately creating a desire to purchase it to possess it. According to Rachmawaty & Hasbi (2020), Purchase Intention focuses on a product balanced with satisfaction with the product, and the individual's interest in it leads to a desire to own and trust that the product is beneficial, prompting the individual to purchase the product.

2.2 Content Marketing

The use of Content Marketing has seen significant development today, and no marketing activity is exempt from it. According to (Pulizzi, 2014), Content Marketing is a marketing strategy that focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract a targeted audience and ultimately encourage them to take beneficial actions. According to Brennan and Croft (2012), Content Marketing is the process of delivering engaging business content to customers through social media, with the goal of building influential relationships on social networking platforms. According to the opinion of Riverside Marketing Strategies expert Heidi Cohen (2013), Content Marketing is content that provides information to consumers in their purchase decision-making, enhances product usability, and provides entertainment without neglecting the company's promotional goals without being intrusive. In this regard, Content Marketing must align with the needs of the target market to achieve the desired effects. Engaging and well-packaged content can capture more audience attention and help achieve business goals (Abdurrahim & Sangen, 2019).

2.3 Customer Engagement

According to Willems (2011), Customer Engagement involves engaging customers in a dialogue and interactive experience to support their purchasing decisions optimally. Specifically, Customer Engagement involves consumers in the process of searching, evaluating alternatives, and making decisions related to brand selection (Vivek et al., 2012). According to other sources (Alexander & Jaakkola, 2015), consumer contributions, such as knowledge, skills, and time, are essential in facilitating the development of a company's products or services. Another source (Van Doorn et al., 2010) states that consumer recommendations and references, such as web postings and other consumer behaviors, influence the companies and brands they own.

2.4 Hypothesis Development

2.4.1 The Influence of Content Marketing on Purchase Intention

(Ramadhan Irianto, 2021), who studied the impact of Content Marketing and Brand Image on the purchase intention of Bukalapak's partner products, a study conducted with Bukalapak partner consumers in the city of Malang, found that Content Marketing simultaneously has a significant influence on the Purchase Intention of Bukalapak's partner products. The research results also prove that Content Marketing has a positive and significant partial influence on the purchase intention of Bukalapak's partner products. In line with the research by Ramadhan Irianto (2021), a study by (Wardana et al., 2022), which examined the influence of Content Marketing on the Purchase Intention of fast-food mediated by cleanliness and moderated by Health Risk Perception in the Covid-19 era, shows that Content Marketing has a positive and significant influence on the Purchase Intention of online fast-food consumers. Another study with significant positive results was conducted by (Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat, 2020), investigating the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Green Purchase Intention mediated by e-Word of Mouth. The research results show that effective and appropriate content marketing encourages consumers to have a green purchasing intention in Jordan.

Based on the aforementioned previous research, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1: Content Marketing has a positive influence on Purchase Intention.

2.4.2 The Influence of Content Marketing on Customer Engagement

The study by Kurniawan (2022) stated that Content Marketing has a partial influence on Customer Engagement. The research conducted by Yanis, et al. (2019) concluded that Content Marketing has a 68.4% influence, with the remaining portion influenced by other factors. The significant impact of Content Marketing on Customer Engagement is also emphasized by Fitrih & Suryawardani (2020). Research by Bening & Kurniawati (2019), Mahendra and Nugroho (2021), and Prasetya and Susilo (2022) also affirmed that Content Marketing has a positive impact on Customer Engagement. Based on the literature review above, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H2: Content Marketing has a positive influence on Customer Engagement.

2.4.3 The Influence of Content Marketing on Customer Engagement

Based on the research by (Prasetya & Susilo, 2022), it is concluded that Customer Engagement has a positive influence on Purchase Intention. The same is also suggested by (Mahendra & Nugroho, 2021), stating that Customer Engagement has an impact on purchase intent (Purchase Intention). Therefore, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

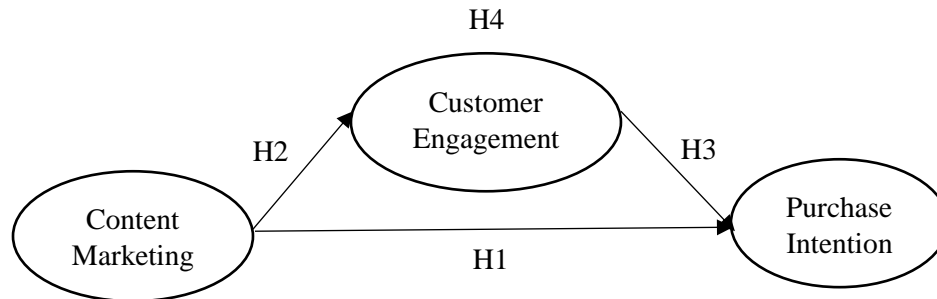
H3: Customer Engagement has a positive influence on Purchase Intention.

2.4.4 The Influence of Content Marketing on Purchase Intention Mediated by Customer Engagement.

The study by (Prasetya & Susilo, 2022) indicates that Content Marketing activities have a positive and significant indirect influence through the mediating role of the Customer Engagement variable. In the research by (Mahendra & Nugroho, 2021), it is mentioned that Customer Engagement significantly indirectly mediates the impact of Content Marketing on Purchase Intention due to the significant direct influence of Content Marketing on Customer Engagement and the significant direct influence of Customer Engagement on Purchase Intention. Based on these two previous studies, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H4: Customer Engagement mediates the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention. Based on the literature review above, the research model can be depicted in Figure 1 as follows:

Figure 1. Research Model



3. Research Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

According to (Sugiyono, 2010:98), the population is the total number of all individuals or subjects whose characteristics are to be inferred. The population represents the entirety of a specific characteristic determined by the researcher for study and drawing conclusions. Therefore, a researcher needs to understand the characteristics of the research population. The most important aspect to consider is the homogeneity or heterogeneity of a population. The population in this study is all active TikTok users in Indonesia. A sample is a part of the population in terms of quantity and characteristics (Sugiyono, 2014:81). The determination of the sample size in this study uses interval estimation because the exact population size is unknown. The formula for calculating the sample size with interval estimation is as follows (Suliyanto, 2011).

$$n = \left(\frac{z^2 a / 2}{4e^2} \right) \tag{1}$$

n = minimum sample size; z = area under the normal curve; e = possible error rate

If the confidence level is 95%, the coefficient at that level is 1.96. If the probability of error is 10%, then the minimum sample size can be calculated as follows: $n = (1,96^2 / 4(0,10)^2) = 96,04$.

Based on the calculation above, the result obtained is 96.04. Because researchers believe that the return rate of well-filled questionnaires is only 80%, to avoid errors such as incomplete answers, this is based on the calculation of the minimum sample size $(100 / 80) \times 96 = 120$. Therefore, in this study, the researchers will take a sample of 120 respondents. The sampling method in this study is conducted using purposive sampling technique, where the sample is based on specific criteria (Suliyanto, 2011). Sample selection will be carried out by distributing questionnaires through various social media platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp. Subsequently, the data received will be selected based on predetermined criteria to form the sample, which includes Indonesian active TikTok users who expressed an interest in buying products through TikTok shop. The questionnaire used in this study has a Likert scale of 5 type, where a scale of 1 means strongly disagree and a scale of 5 means strongly agree.

3.2 Analysis Tools

The analysis tools used in this study include validity and reliability testing using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). In this research, the method used to test reliability is Cronbach's Alpha. Descriptive analysis is also used to gain a more detailed understanding of the collected data. Furthermore, Classical Assumption Tests such as the normality test, non-heteroscedasticity test, and linearity test are conducted to ensure that the regression analysis results meet the established criteria and to determine whether the regression model is suitable for testing or not. The Simple Linear Regression Test is used to estimate the relationship between two quantitative variables, how strong the relationship is between two variables. Regression Analysis of Mediating Variable is used to test whether the third variable, assumed to be a mediating variable, has the ability to mediate the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

4. Results

4.1 Validity and Reliability Test

The validity and reliability tests used aim to measure the quality of the questionnaire used appropriately in measuring a number of variables. The validity test in this study used product moment correlation, that if $r_{count} > r_{table}$ with $\alpha = 0.05$ then it is declared valid. The results of the validity test of the Purchase Intention (Y), Content Marketing (X), and Customer Engagement (M) variables shows that from the 11 questions of Purchase Intention, 15 questions of Content Marketing, and 9 questions of Customer Engagement, given to respondents, PI4, CM3, CM11, and CE2 are not valid because the r_{count} values < 0.1779 (r_{table} for $n=120$) and the p_{count} values > 0.05 . So there are only 10 questions of Purchase Intention, 13 questions of Content Marketing, and 8 questions of Customer Engagement left that are stated valid because the calculation results show r_{count} values > 0.1779 (r_{table}) and the p_{count} values < 0.05 . So we need to eliminate the invalid ones so that they can be used as an instrument in research. Reliability testing must be carried out only on questions that already have or meet a validity test, so if they do not meet the validity test requirements then there is no need to continue for a reliability test. The calculation of the reliability test (Cronbach's Alpha) for variables $Y = 0,726$; $X = 0,762$, and $M = 0,630$, can be concluded that they are all reliable because they're greater than 0.60. It is known from Table 1 above that the questionnaire is reliable, because all Cronbach's Alpha values are greater than 0.60. In this way, a conclusion can be drawn that the instrument in this research is reliable, meaning that the respondents' responses to the statements are consistent.

4.2 Classical Assumption Tests : Normality Test, Non-Heteroscedasticity Test, and Linearity Test

In this study, the normality test for residuals was used using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Decision making is to look at the probability number p , with the following conditions: if the probability value $p \geq 0.05$, then the normality assumption is met. The probability value p or Exact is known. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.259. Because the probability value p , namely 0.259, is greater than the significance level, namely 0.05. This means the data is normally distributed. The Glejser test for heteroscedasticity is conducted to examine whether there is inequality in the variance of residuals from one observation to another within the regression model. If the Sig. value is > 0.05 , then there is no heteroscedasticity. Conversely, if the Sig. value is < 0.05 , then there is heteroscedasticity. The ideal assumption is that there is no heteroscedasticity. The research results indicate that the calculated Sig. value is 0.736, which is greater than 0.05. This means that it can

be concluded that there is no heteroskedasticity. The linearity test is conducted to determine the form of the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. If the value of Sig. deviation from linearity > 0.05 , then there is a linear relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. If the value of Sig. deviation from linearity < 0.05 , then there is no true relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. The research results indicate that the deviation from linearity value is 0.876, which is greater than 0.05. Therefore, the data is considered linear, and there is a linear relationship between the independent variable (Content Marketing) and the dependent variable (Purchase Intention).

4.3 Simple Linear Regression Test

In this study, a simple linear regression test is used to analyze the influence of one independent variable (Content Marketing) on the dependent variable (Purchase Intention). The condition for conducting this test is that the data is declared valid and reliable, and the data is normally distributed and linear. If the significance value is < 0.05 , it means that variable X has an influence on variable Y. Conversely, if the significance value is > 0.05 , it means that variable X does not have an influence on variable Y. Another way to make decisions is by comparing the calculated t-value with the t-table. The rule is that if the calculated t-value is $> t$ -table, it means that variable X has an influence on variable Y. If the calculated t-value is $< t$ -table, it means that variable X does not have an influence on variable Y. The results indicate that the Sig value is 0.000, which is < 0.05 , and the calculated t-value is 13.472, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.98 (for $\alpha/2 = 0,05/2 = 0,025$; $df = n - k - 1 = 120 - 1 - 1 = 118$), meaning that X (Content Marketing) has an influence on Y (Purchase Intention). The output in the Model Summary table also explains the correlation (R) value, which is 0.778. From this output, the coefficient of determination (R Square) is obtained as 0.606, which means that the influence of the independent variable (Content Marketing) on the dependent variable (Purchase Intention) is 60.6%, and the remaining portion is influenced by other variables. So, Hypothesis 1, which states that there is a positive influence of Content Marketing on Purchase Intention, is accepted.

Table 1. Simple Linear Regression Test Result

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	5.660	2.709		2.089	.39
Content Marketing	.666	.049	.778	13.472	.000

The value of the Constant (a) is known to be 5.660, and the value of Content Marketing (b/regression coefficient) is 0.666. Therefore, the regression equation can be written as:

The constant of 5.660 signifies that the consistent value of the Purchase Intention variable is 5.660. The regression coefficient X of 0.666 indicates that for every 1% increase in the value of Content Marketing, the Purchase Intention value increases by 0.666. This regression coefficient is positive, meaning that the direction of the influence of variable X on Y is positive.

4.4 Mediation Regression

The testing of the influence of the intervening variable Customer Engagement on the relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention is conducted using the Causal Steps method (Barron and Kenny, 1986). This mediation test is performed by comparing the direct influence of the independent variable (X) on the dependent variable (Y) before introducing the mediating

variable (M). The results indicate that after regressing X on Y to obtain c and its significance, we obtain:

Table 2. Regression X to Y

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	5.660	2.709		2.089	.39
Content Marketing	.666	.049	.778	13.472	.000

The value of $c = 0.666$ (positive), and because the significance of X to Y is significant ($0.000 < 0.05$), Hypothesis 1, which states that Content Marketing has a positive influence on Purchase Intention, is accepted, and it is proceeded to the next stage. After regressing X on M to obtain a and its significance, we obtain:

Table 3. Regression X to M

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	8.169	2.169		3.767	.000
Content Marketing	.470	.040	.738	11.865	.000

The value of $a = 0.470$ (positive), and because the significance of X to M is significant ($0.000 < 0.05$), Hypothesis 2, which states that Content Marketing has a positive influence on Customer Engagement, is accepted, and it is proceeded to the next stage. After regressing X and M on Y to obtain b, c', and their significance, we obtain:

Table 4. Regression X and M to Y

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	1.498	2.629		.570	.570
Content Marketing	.427	.067	.499	6.358	.000
Customer Engagement	.509	.105	.379	4.831	.000

The value of $b = 0.509$ (positive), and because the significance of M to Y is significant ($0.000 < 0.05$), Hypothesis 3, which states that Customer Engagement has a positive influence on Purchase Intention, is accepted. It can be concluded that because c, a, b are significant, and the value of c to c' has decreased from 0.666 (significant) to 0.427 (significant), so, Customer Engagement partially mediates the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention. Therefore, Hypothesis 4, which states that Customer Engagement mediates the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention, is accepted.

5. Discussion

The results of the first hypothesis testing show a positive and significant influence of Content Marketing on Purchase Intention. This is in line with the findings from previous studies (Ramadhan Irianto, 2021; Wardana et al., 2022; Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat, 2020) that have reported similar results. Content Marketing on TikTok is proven to affect consumers' intent to purchase products from TikTok Shop. The reasons for this are related to reader cognition, sharing motivation, decision-making, and life factors (Karr, 2016). In the second hypothesis testing, it is

revealed that there is a positive and significant influence of Content Marketing on Customer Engagement. This result is consistent with the findings from previous studies (Kurniawan, 2022; Yanis, et al., 2019; Fitrih & Suryawardani, 2020). They have also stated that Content Marketing has a positive influence on Customer Engagement. The third hypothesis testing finds a positive and significant influence of Customer Engagement on Purchase Intention on TikTok, influenced by Contingency Interactivity, Self-Company Connection, Extraversion, Openness the Experience, and Behavioral Attachment (Yang & Kang, 2009). Research in line with these results includes studies by Prasetya & Susilo (2022) and Mahendra & Nugroho (2021). The fourth hypothesis testing shows that Customer Engagement has an indirect positive influence on the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention. Other supporting research includes Prasetya & Susilo (2022) and Mahendra & Nugroho (2021). What influences Purchase Intention to buy from TikTok Shop are transactional interest, referential interest, preferential interest, and exploratory interest (Ferdinand, 2006). This research will make several contributions to the literature on Content Marketing and confirm the significant role of Customer Engagement, which can have both a direct and indirect impact on Purchase Intention. For future research, it would be interesting to include an additional mediator variable: perceived trust. Incorporating another mediating variable that is still associated with Customer Engagement would enhance and provide a more comprehensive understanding of how consumers form purchase intentions on TikTok Shop.

6. Conclusion

Based on the research results regarding the influence of Content Marketing on Purchase Intention, the impact of Content Marketing on Customer Engagement, Customer Engagement on Purchase Intention, and the influence of the relationship between Customer Engagement and the causal relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention, it can be concluded that all hypotheses are accepted. Content Marketing has a significant positive effect on Purchase Intention. Content Marketing significantly influences Customer Engagement in a positive manner. Customer Engagement has a significant positive influence on Purchase Intention and Customer Engagement partially mediates the relationship between Content Marketing and Purchase Intention.

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