

Digital Content Management and Purchase Decisions: The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement in Perfume MSMEs

Gusti Ayu Aghivirwiati^{1*}, Ni Putu Nanik Hendayanti¹, I Gede Mahendra Arlansa¹, Ni Komang Ayu Pirji Pratiwi¹, Putu Nadine Rania Pratiwi¹, Jose Agostinho da Costa Belo Pereira²

¹Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis STIKOM Bali, Jl. Raya Puputan No.86, Dangin Puri Klod, Denpasar, Bali 80234, Indonesia

²Universidade de Díli, Av. Presidente Xavier do Amaral, Díli, Timor-Leste

*Corresponding Email: aghivirwiati@stikom-bali.ac.id

ARTICLE INFORMATION

Publication information

Research article

HOW TO CITE

Aghivirwiati, G. A., Hendayanti, N. P. N., influence consumers' purchase decisions. Arlansa, I. G. M., Pratiwi, N. K. A. P., Pratiwi, This study examines the effects of content P. N. R., & Pereira, J. A. C. B. (2026). Digital marketing and online advertising on content management and purchase purchase decisions, with customer decisions: The mediating role of customer engagement as a mediating variable. A engagement in perfume MSMEs. quantitative approach was employed by *International Journal of Applied Business & International Management*, 11(2), 876-894.

DOI:

<https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v11i2.4574>

Copyright @ 2026 owned by Author(s).
Published by IJABIM



This is an open-access article.

License:

Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike (CC BY-NC-SA)

Received: 14 June 2026

Accepted: 17 July 2026

Published: 20 August 2026

ABSTRACT

The rapid growth of Indonesia's local perfume industry and the increasing adoption of digital marketing by MSMEs have intensified competition, requiring effective promotional strategies to distribute questionnaires to consumers who had purchased local perfume products through digital platforms. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM. The results indicate that online advertising significantly affects purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.259$; $p = 0.002$) and customer engagement ($\beta = 0.358$; $p = 0.003$). Customer engagement also significantly and positively affects purchase decisions ($\beta = 0.609$; $p < 0.001$). However, content marketing has no significant effect on purchase decisions or customer engagement. Furthermore, customer engagement significantly mediates the relationship between online advertising and purchase decisions, but not between content marketing and purchase decisions. These findings emphasize the importance of online advertising and customer engagement in enhancing consumers' purchase decisions.

Keywords: Content Marketing; Customer Engagement; Online Advertising; Perfume MSMEs; Purchase Decision

JEL Classification: M31; M37; L81

INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving information era, patterns of information consumption among consumers have changed significantly, making digital marketing one of the most effective strategies for reaching target audiences. This development is consistent with previous studies indicating that online advertising tends to be more economical and effective than traditional advertising, particularly in terms of cost efficiency and reach (Habsari, 2021). Content marketing, as an integral component of digital marketing, functions not only as a means of delivering information but also plays a crucial role in building long-term relationships between brands and consumers. A value-based marketing approach emphasizes consumer engagement in every interaction, which ultimately contributes to the creation of shared value between firms and consumers (Grönroos & Gummerus, 2014). In the context of perfume micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the implementation of informative, engaging, and relevant content marketing has the potential to enhance consumer trust and interest in the products offered.

In addition to content marketing, online advertising has been shown to have a significant influence on purchase decision formation. Previous research suggests that consumers are more responsive to advertisements that are personalized according to their preferences and browsing behavior (Komar & Tunjungsari, 2019). For perfume MSMEs, online advertisements that are creatively designed and aligned with consumer needs can increase interaction levels and enhance the likelihood of purchase decisions. Furthermore, customer engagement through social media interactions enables consumers to gain a better understanding of product characteristics, thereby encouraging purchase intentions (Mulyati & Gesitera, 2020).

The results of this study indicate that effective management of content marketing and online advertising is capable of creating positive consumer experiences. Therefore, perfume MSMEs need to optimize integrated digital content and advertising strategies in order to leverage digital technology to attract more consumers and increase sales. Effective marketing strategies should not only focus on short-term transactions but also maintain sustainable consumer engagement and deliver value that aligns with consumers' expectations of the brand (Dewi et al., 2023).

Overall, understanding how content marketing and online advertising influence purchase decisions, with customer engagement acting as a mediating variable, is essential for designing and implementing effective digital marketing strategies for perfume MSMEs. Increased customer engagement not only contributes to higher sales performance but also plays a vital role in fostering long-term customer loyalty (Setiawan & Salim, 2024).

The novelty of this study lies in its focus on local Indonesian perfume MSMEs, a sector that has been relatively underexplored within the context of digital marketing. Additionally, this research integrates customer engagement as a mediating variable that bridges the relationship between content marketing and online advertising and purchase decisions. This study also develops a conceptual model based on Indonesian digital consumer behavior by considering cultural context and online shopping patterns. Consequently, the research outputs are not only academic in nature but also provide a practical digital promotional strategy model that can be directly implemented by perfume MSMEs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical and Variables Review

Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) theory

This study is grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (S–O–R) theory, which explains how external stimuli influence individuals' internal psychological states and subsequently drive behavioral responses (Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). In the context of this research, content marketing and online advertising function as marketing stimuli that expose consumers to digital information and persuasive messages. These stimuli shape the internal state of consumers, represented by customer engagement, which encompasses cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with the brand. When consumers experience higher levels of engagement, they are more likely to develop positive perceptions, trust, and emotional attachment toward the brand, which ultimately leads to purchase decisions as a behavioral response. Supported by relationship marketing and consumer decision-making theories, this framework emphasizes that effective digital marketing strategies do not directly influence purchase decisions but operate through customer engagement as a key mediating mechanism that strengthens the impact of content marketing and online advertising on consumers' purchasing behavior, particularly within the context of perfume MSMEs in Indonesia.

Content Marketing

Content marketing is defined as a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and ultimately drive profitable customer actions (Pulizzi, 2014). According to Kotler and Keller (2016), content marketing emphasizes delivering meaningful information that educates, entertains, and engages consumers rather than directly promoting products. High-quality digital content enhances consumer experiences, strengthens brand loyalty, and positively influences consumer decision-making (Lou & Xie, 2021). Through social media and other digital platforms, content marketing facilitates two-way communication, enabling consumers to interact with brands through likes, comments, and shares. Such interactions increase consumers' cognitive and emotional involvement, which subsequently influences their purchase decisions (Sarfraz et al., 2025). For MSMEs, particularly in the perfume industry, content marketing is also an effective marketing strategy for communicating product value and strengthening brand positioning in competitive markets (Hartono et al., 2018; Jian et al., 2021).

Online Advertising

Online advertising refers to the use of digital channels such as social media, search engines, and websites to deliver promotional messages to target audiences (Belch & Belch, 2018). According to Kotler et al. (2021), online advertising enables firms to reach consumers through personalization, precise targeting, and real-time performance measurement. Digital advertising significantly influences consumer decision-making by increasing consumer knowledge and creating positive digital experiences (Sarfraz et al., 2025). Moreover, the adoption of digital technologies and e-commerce platforms has strengthened firms' ability to implement more effective online marketing strategies and improve consumer interactions (Alamanda et al., 2021). Well-designed online advertisements can enhance brand awareness, strengthen brand recall, and encourage consumers to make purchase decisions.

Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is defined as the level of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement that customers exhibit in their interactions with a brand (Brodie et al., 2011). Hollebeek et al. (2014) emphasize that engagement extends beyond transactions and

reflects a psychological state developed through interactive brand experiences. Digital content marketing encourages consumers to actively participate in brand-related activities, thereby strengthening customer engagement and brand loyalty (Lou & Xie, 2021). Engaged customers are more likely to interact with brands, share brand-related content, and develop emotional attachments. These interactions strengthen long-term relationships and encourage customer advocacy through enhanced brand loyalty (Brigitta et al., 2023). Therefore, customer engagement has become an essential element for MSMEs seeking to sustain competitive advantage in digital markets.

Purchase Decision

Purchase decision refers to the process by which consumers identify needs, evaluate alternatives, and decide whether to purchase a product (Kotler & Keller, 2016). According to Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019), purchase decisions are influenced by both rational considerations, such as product attributes and price, and emotional factors, including brand image and trust. In digital environments, purchase decisions are increasingly shaped by digital marketing activities, consumer knowledge, and online experiences (Sarfranz et al., 2025). Effective digital marketing strategies, supported by technological adoption and interactive online platforms, improve consumers' confidence in purchasing products through digital channels (Alamanda et al., 2021). For perfume MSMEs, emotional appeal, brand storytelling, customer engagement, and effective online marketing strategies play important roles in encouraging purchase decisions.

Hypotheses Development

This study adopts the S–O–R theory proposed by Mehrabian and Russell (1974), which explains that external environmental stimuli influence individuals' internal psychological states, which subsequently shape their behavioral responses. In this study, content marketing and online advertising represent the stimuli (S) because they provide digital information and persuasive promotional messages that consumers receive through online platforms. Customer engagement represents the organism (O), reflecting consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral responses after interacting with marketing stimuli. Finally, the purchase decision represents the response (R), referring to consumers' behavioral outcomes after processing the marketing stimuli through their internal psychological states.

The Effect of Content Marketing and Online Advertising on Purchase Decisions

According to the S–O–R framework, marketing stimuli can directly influence consumers' behavioral responses. Content marketing provides valuable and relevant information that helps consumers evaluate products, whereas online advertising increases brand awareness through personalized and persuasive messages. These external stimuli encourage consumers to make favorable purchase decisions (Lou & Xie, 2021; Sarfranz et al., 2025). Content marketing and online advertising are two strategies that have become increasingly important in determining consumer purchase decisions, particularly on digital platforms. The use of content marketing enables brands to communicate more effectively with their audiences through relevant and engaging content, which helps build deeper communication with consumers. Previous studies indicate that the influence of content marketing on purchase decisions is highly significant, especially when consumers feel engaged and are able to interact directly with the content presented (Satiawan et al., 2023).

One study conducted by Satiawan et al. (2023) demonstrates that content marketing plays an important role in influencing consumer purchase decisions on platforms such as TikTok, where users tend to make purchases after being exposed to attractive and informative content. In this approach, content not only serves to capture attention but

also to build trust and enhance loyalty, which are crucial factors in the consumer decision-making process.

On the other hand, online advertising also plays a significant role in influencing purchase decisions. Several studies have shown that the appearance of relevant advertisements on social media and e-commerce websites is directly associated with higher sales conversion rates (Budhiartini & Yulianthini, 2022).

H1: Content marketing has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions among perfume MSMEs in Indonesia.

H2: Online advertising has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions among perfume MSMEs in Indonesia.

The Effect of Content Marketing and Online Advertising on Customer Engagement

The S–O–R theory also suggests that external stimuli first affect consumers' internal psychological states before generating behavioral responses. In this study, content marketing and online advertising function as stimuli that encourage consumers to interact cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally with brands. High-quality content and personalized digital advertisements are expected to strengthen customer engagement (Lou & Xie, 2021; Sarfraz et al., 2025). Content marketing and online advertising contribute substantially to increasing customer engagement. High-quality and relevant content can attract attention and build emotional relationships between brands and consumers (Lim, 2023; Moonti & Adam, 2022). Variations in content formats and media influence how consumers interact, such as by liking, commenting on, or sharing content (Moonti & Adam, 2022).

In addition, online advertising strengthens this relationship when it is tailored to audience preferences (Mulyati & Gesitera, 2020). Interactivity also plays a critical role—content that encourages active participation generates higher engagement compared to one-way content (Ou et al., 2022). Engagement is not limited to physical activities but also includes emotional involvement (Park & Jiang, 2021; Ponomban et al., 2023). Through integrated digital strategies, these two approaches can create a strong and sustainable engagement ecosystem (Lim, 2023; Ou et al., 2022; Purwanto et al., 2022).

H3: Content marketing has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement among perfume MSMEs in Indonesia.

H4: Online advertising has a positive and significant effect on customer engagement among perfume MSMEs in Indonesia.

The Effect of Customer Engagement on Purchase Decisions

Within the S–O–R framework, customer engagement represents the organism that translates external marketing stimuli into behavioral responses. Consumers who are cognitively and emotionally engaged with a brand are more likely to develop favorable attitudes and ultimately make purchase decisions (Brodie et al., 2011; Hollebeek et al., 2014). Customer engagement has a strong influence on purchase decisions because it creates a psychological attachment between consumers and brands (Rizkia et al., 2024). Positive interactions with content or advertisements can increase purchase intention and trust in the brand (Rosadi et al., 2022).

Engagement also acts as a mediator that strengthens the relationship between electronic word of mouth (eWOM) and purchase intention (Salamah et al., 2023). Research by Rosadi et al. (2022) confirms that actively engaged consumers demonstrate higher loyalty and repeat purchase behavior. Furthermore, engagement enhances emotional attachment to the brand, which ultimately leads to stronger purchase decisions.

Therefore, customer engagement is a strategic factor in influencing consumer purchasing behavior.

H5: Customer engagement has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions among perfume MSMEs in Indonesia.

The Role of Customer Engagement as a Mediating Variable between Content Marketing, Online Advertising, and Purchase Decisions

Based on the S–O–R theory, the organism serves as the psychological mechanism through which external stimuli affect behavioral responses. Accordingly, customer engagement is expected to mediate the effects of content marketing and online advertising on consumers' purchase decisions. Effective marketing stimuli increase customer engagement, which subsequently enhances purchase decisions (Lou & Xie, 2021; Sarfraz et al., 2025). Customer engagement serves as an important mediator in the relationship between digital marketing strategies and purchase decisions. Positive consumer experiences created through meaningful digital content and interactions with brands enhance consumers' brand evaluations, strengthen brand loyalty, and encourage favorable purchase behaviors (Lou & Xie, 2021).

Effective digital marketing strategies encourage emotional engagement, which ultimately leads to purchase decisions (Satiawan et al., 2023). This engagement strengthens the impact of advertising creativity and content marketing on purchase decisions (Setiawan & Salim, 2024). In addition, social media activities that promote active participation have been proven to positively influence purchase decisions (Syalsabila & Hermina, 2023; Wardani, 2022).

According to Brodie et al. (2011), high levels of engagement build brand value and positive customer experiences, thereby encouraging stronger purchase decisions. Thus, customer engagement acts as a key bridge linking the effectiveness of content marketing and online advertising to increased consumer purchase decisions.

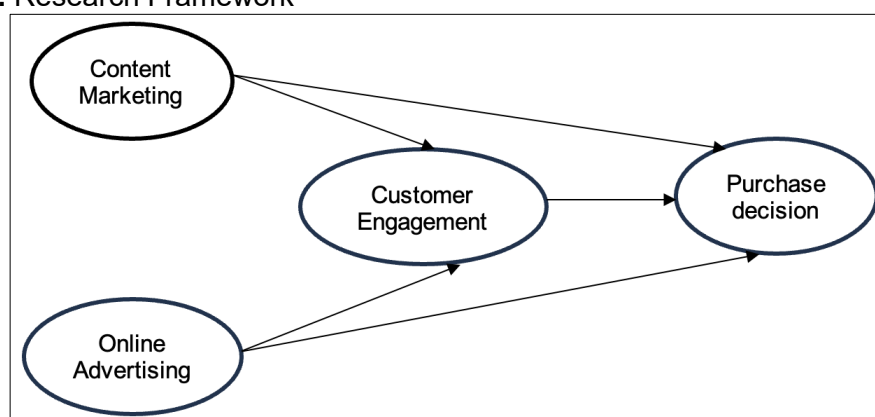
H6: Customer engagement mediates the effect of content marketing on purchase decisions among perfume MSMEs in Indonesia.

H7: Customer engagement mediates the effect of online advertising on purchase decisions among perfume MSMEs in Indonesia.

Conceptual Framework

The study framework model is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Research Framework



RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among content marketing, online advertising, customer engagement, and purchase decisions. An explanatory approach is appropriate because it enables the testing of theoretically derived hypotheses and the structural relationships proposed in the S-O-R framework. In this study, content marketing and online advertising function as external stimuli, customer engagement represents the internal organism, and purchase decisions constitute the behavioral response.

Population and Sample

The target population consisted of consumers who had purchased local Indonesian perfume products marketed by MSMEs through digital platforms, particularly Instagram, TikTok, and Shopee. Since the exact population size was unknown, a non-probability purposive sampling technique was employed.

Respondents were selected based on the following criteria: (1) at least 18 years old, (2) had purchased local Indonesian perfume products from MSMEs within the previous twelve months, and (3) actively used social media platforms where perfume products were promoted. These criteria ensured that respondents possessed relevant purchasing experience and exposure to digital marketing activities.

The minimum sample size was determined based on the recommendation of [Hair et al. \(2017\)](#), which suggests using five to ten observations for each measurement indicator in SEM-PLS analysis. With 25 indicators included in the research model, the recommended sample size ranged from 125 to 250 respondents. To improve statistical power and increase the robustness of the findings, this study collected data from 300 valid respondents.

Measurement of Variables

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of closed-ended questions measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"). The measurement items were adapted from previously validated studies and modified to fit the context of local perfume MSMEs.

Content marketing was measured through indicators reflecting content relevance, informativeness, consistency, entertainment value, and usefulness. Online advertising was measured using indicators related to advertisement attractiveness, informativeness, credibility, personalization, and frequency of exposure. Customer engagement was measured by respondents' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with perfume brands on digital platforms. Purchase decisions were measured through indicators representing purchase intention realization, product selection, purchase confidence, and willingness to repurchase.

Before large-scale data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed by academic experts in marketing and pilot-tested with a small group of respondents to ensure clarity, content validity, and comprehensibility.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection was conducted between December 2025 and July 2026 using an online questionnaire created through Google Forms. The questionnaire link was distributed through social media platforms, including Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, and online consumer communities related to local perfume products. Participation was voluntary,

anonymous, and limited to one response per participant. Prior to completing the questionnaire, respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and provided their informed consent. Incomplete responses and questionnaires that did not meet the sampling criteria were excluded from the final dataset. After the screening process, 300 valid responses were retained for analysis.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using SmartPLS software. The analysis followed the two-stage Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) procedure recommended by Hair et al. (2017). First, the measurement model (outer model) was evaluated by examining indicator reliability, internal consistency reliability, and convergent validity using factor loadings, Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Second, the structural model (inner model) was assessed by evaluating path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), and hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. Mediation analysis was also performed to examine the indirect effects of content marketing and online advertising on purchase decisions through customer engagement.

RESULTS

Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Table 1. Respondents' Demographic Profiles

Category		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	128	42.7
	Female	172	57.3
Age	18–19 years	28	9.3
	20–29 years	158	52.7
	30–39 years	74	24.7
	≥40 years	40	13.3
Education	Senior High School	54	18
	Diploma	42	14
	Bachelor's Degree	146	48.7
	Master's Degree	58	19.3
Occupation	Student	62	20.7
	Private Employee	118	39.3
	Entrepreneur	54	18
	Civil Servant	28	9.3
	Others	38	12.7
Total		300	100

Based on Table 1, the respondent profile indicates that female consumers constituted the majority of the sample, accounting for 172 respondents (57.3%), while male respondents represented 128 individuals (42.7%). This distribution suggests that women are more actively involved in purchasing local perfume products through digital platforms, reflecting the growing interest of female consumers in fragrance products promoted via social media and e-commerce.

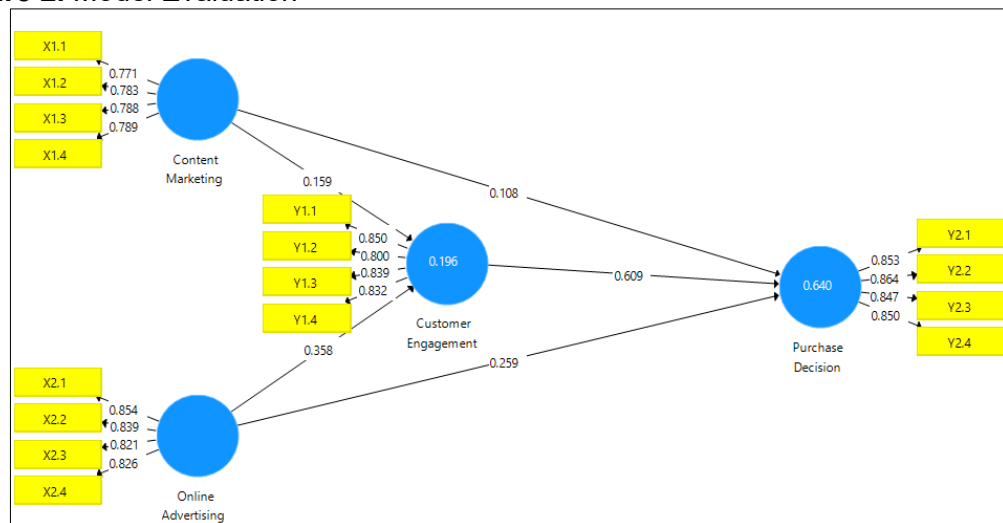
In terms of age, the largest proportion of respondents was in the 20–29-year age group, comprising 158 respondents (52.7%). This was followed by respondents aged 30–39 years (24.7%), 40 years and above (13.3%), and 18–19 years (9.3%). These findings indicate that young adults dominate the consumer segment for local perfume MSMEs. Individuals in this age group are generally more familiar with digital technology, frequently use social media, and are more receptive to online promotional content, making them an appropriate target market for digital marketing strategies.

Regarding educational background, respondents with a bachelor's degree represented the largest group, accounting for 146 respondents (48.7%). This was followed by senior high school graduates (18.0%), master's degree holders (19.3%), and diploma graduates (14.0%). The relatively high educational attainment of respondents suggests that they are capable of evaluating marketing information critically before making purchasing decisions, particularly when interacting with digital content.

Based on occupation, private-sector employees formed the largest respondent group with 118 individuals (39.3%), followed by students (20.7%), entrepreneurs (18.0%), respondents in other occupations (12.7%), and civil servants (9.3%). This composition indicates that most respondents possess purchasing power and regularly engage with digital platforms for product information and online shopping activities.

Overall, the demographic characteristics demonstrate that the respondents are predominantly young, educated, and digitally active consumers. These characteristics are consistent with the target market of local perfume MSMEs, where purchasing decisions are increasingly influenced by content marketing, online advertising, and customer engagement through digital platforms. Therefore, the respondent profile is considered appropriate for examining the relationships proposed in the research model.

Figure 2. Model Evaluation



The results of the analysis in Figure 2 show that all indicators have a loading factor value of more than 0.70, so it can be said that all indicators are valid.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Variables	$\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$
1	Content Marketing	0.613
2	Customer Engagement	0.69
3	Online Advertising	0.698
4	Purchase Decision	0.728

Based on Table 2, all constructs have square root of Average Variance Extracted ($\sqrt{\text{AVE}}$) values greater than 0.50, indicating that each construct possesses adequate convergent validity. These results suggest that the measurement indicators are able to explain a substantial proportion of the variance of their respective latent constructs, thereby demonstrating acceptable construct validity for further analysis.

Table 3. Reliability Test

	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	CR
1	Content Marketing	0.79	0.864
2	Customer Engagement	0.85	0.899
3	Online Advertising	0.856	0.902
4	Purchase Decision	0.876	0.915

The results presented in [Table 3](#) indicate that all constructs demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency reliability. The Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.790 to 0.876, while the CR values range from 0.864 to 0.915, all of which exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70 ([Hair et al., 2017](#)). These results confirm that the measurement items for Content Marketing, Online Advertising, Customer Engagement, and Purchase Decision exhibit good reliability and are appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis.

Table 4. Results of the R-Square Determination Coefficient (R^2)

	Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
1	Customer Engagement	0.196	0.186
2	Purchase Decision	0.64	0.633

Based on the R Square and Adjusted R Square values obtained, it can be seen from [Table 4](#) that the Customer Engagement variable has an R Square value of 0.196 and an Adjusted R Square of 0.186, which indicates that the research model is able to explain 19.6% of the variation in Customer Engagement, while the rest is influenced by other variables outside the model. This value indicates a relatively low to moderate explanatory power of the model. Meanwhile, the Purchase Decision variable has an R Square value of 0.640 and an Adjusted R Square of 0.633, which means that the model is able to explain 64.0% of the variation in purchasing decisions, thus indicating a strong explanatory power of the model. The small difference between the R Square and Adjusted R Square values for both variables indicates that the research model is relatively stable and does not experience significant bias due to the number of independent variables used.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the bootstrapping analysis of this study using PLS analysis can be seen in [Figure 3](#).

Figure 3. Hypothesis Testing

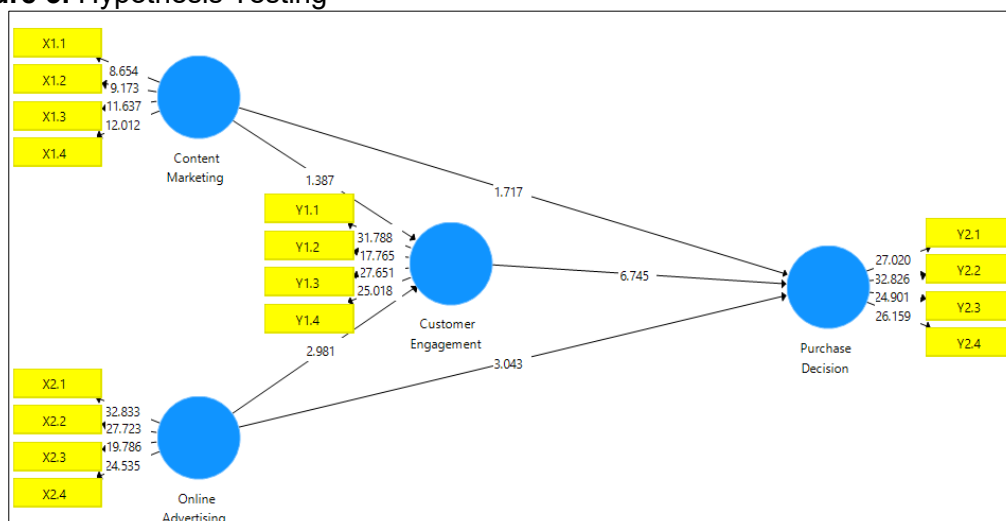


Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

	Hypotheses	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
H1	Content Marketing -> Purchase Decision	0.108	0.115	0.063	1.717	0.087
H2	Online Advertising -> Purchase Decision	0.259	0.259	0.085	3.043	0.002
H3	Content Marketing -> Customer Engagement	0.159	0.179	0.114	1.387	0.166
H4	Online Advertising -> Customer Engagement	0.358	0.345	0.12	2.981	0.003
H5	Customer Engagement -> Purchase Decision	0.609	0.602	0.09	6.745	0
H6	Content Marketing -> Customer Engagement-> Purchase Decision	0.097	0.109	0.073	1.321	0.187
H7	Online Advertising -> Customer Engagement-> Purchase Decision	0.218	0.206	0.072	3.006	0.003

The results in [Table 5](#) present the results of hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS with a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$). The results indicate that four of the seven proposed hypotheses are supported, while three hypotheses are not supported.

The direct effect of content marketing on purchase decision (H1) is not supported because the path coefficient is positive ($\beta = 0.108$), but the relationship is not statistically significant ($t = 1.717$; $p = 0.087 > 0.05$). This finding suggests that content marketing alone is insufficient to directly encourage consumers to purchase local perfume products. Similarly, the effect of content marketing on customer engagement (H3) is not supported ($\beta = 0.159$; $t = 1.387$; $p = 0.166 > 0.05$). Although the relationship is positive, the effect is statistically insignificant, indicating that the existing content marketing implemented by local perfume MSMEs has not been able to meaningfully increase customer engagement.

Furthermore, the indirect effect of content marketing on purchase decisions through customer engagement (H6) is also not supported ($\beta = 0.097$; $t = 1.321$; $p = 0.187 > 0.05$). This result indicates that customer engagement does not mediate the relationship between content marketing and purchase decisions.

In contrast, online advertising has a significant positive effect on purchase decisions (H2), with a path coefficient of 0.259 ($t = 3.043$; $p = 0.002 < 0.05$). Therefore, H2 is supported, suggesting that effective online advertising directly encourages consumers to purchase local perfume products.

The results also show that online advertising significantly influences customer engagement (H4) ($\beta = 0.358$; $t = 2.981$; $p = 0.003 < 0.05$). Thus, H4 is supported, indicating that attractive and informative online advertisements are capable of strengthening consumers' interaction and engagement with local perfume brands.

Customer engagement demonstrates the strongest direct effect on purchase decisions (H5), with a path coefficient of 0.609 ($t = 6.745$; $p < 0.001$). Accordingly, H5 is supported,

indicating that consumers who actively engage with a brand are more likely to make purchasing decisions.

Finally, customer engagement significantly mediates the relationship between online advertising and purchase decisions (H7) ($\beta = 0.218$; $t = 3.006$; $p = 0.003 < 0.05$). Therefore, H7 is supported, demonstrating that online advertising not only influences purchase decisions directly but also indirectly by enhancing customer engagement.

DISCUSSION

Key Findings Analysis

The Influence of Content Marketing and Online Advertising on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the statistical results ($\beta = 0.108$; $t = 1.717$; $p = 0.087$), H1 is not supported because the p-value exceeds the 5% significance level. Although the path coefficient is positive, the effect is not statistically significant, suggesting that content marketing alone is insufficient to directly influence consumers' purchasing decisions. This finding implies that content marketing in the context of perfume MSMEs primarily serves as an informational and awareness-building tool rather than a conversion driver. Consumers may perceive the content as useful for understanding product features or brand identity, but it does not necessarily trigger immediate purchase intentions. Although the coefficient shows a positive direction, the effect is not statistically significant, suggesting that content marketing alone is insufficient to directly influence consumers' purchase decisions. This finding implies that content marketing in the context of perfume MSMEs primarily serves as an informational and awareness-building tool rather than a conversion driver. Consumers may perceive the content as useful for understanding product features or brand identity, but it does not necessarily trigger immediate purchase intentions.

Several possible explanations can be considered for this non-significant finding. First, the content produced by MSMEs may lack emotional appeal, storytelling elements, or interactive features that are necessary to stimulate consumer action. Second, content marketing typically requires consistency and long-term exposure to build trust and influence behavior, while this study captures a more immediate behavioral response. Third, the perfume industry relies heavily on sensory experiences (e.g., scent), which are difficult to convey effectively through digital content alone, limiting its persuasive power. This result contrasts with prior studies such as [Satiawan et al. \(2023\)](#), which found a significant effect of content marketing on purchasing decisions. The discrepancy may be attributed to differences in research context, industry characteristics, and consumer behavior patterns.

In contrast, based on the statistical results ($\beta = 0.259$; $t = 3.043$; $p = 0.002$), H2 is supported. The significant positive relationship indicates that online advertising effectively influences consumers' purchasing decisions. The effectiveness of online advertising can be attributed to its targeted nature, high visibility, and ability to deliver persuasive messages within a short period. Features such as personalization, retargeting, and promotional incentives (e.g., discounts and limited-time offers) can create urgency and encourage immediate purchasing behavior. This finding indicates that online advertising is more effective in directly influencing consumer purchase decisions. The effectiveness of online advertising can be attributed to its targeted nature, high visibility, and ability to deliver persuasive messages in a short time. Features such as personalization, retargeting, and promotional incentives (e.g., discounts, limited-time offers) can create urgency and encourage immediate action.

This finding is consistent with [Budhiartini and Yulianthini \(2022\)](#), who emphasize the role of digital advertising in increasing sales conversions, particularly in e-commerce and social media environments. Therefore, online advertising emerges as a more powerful tool than content marketing in directly driving purchasing decisions within this study context.

The Influence of Content Marketing and Online Advertising on Customer Engagement

Based on the statistical results ($\beta = 0.159$; $t = 1.387$; $p = 0.166$), H3 is not supported. The results indicate that the content developed by perfume MSMEs has not been effective in fostering meaningful customer engagement. Although the content may provide useful information, it does not sufficiently stimulate consumers' cognitive, emotional, or behavioral involvement with the brand. This indicates that the content developed by perfume MSMEs has not been effective in fostering meaningful engagement among consumers. Although the content may provide information, it does not sufficiently stimulate cognitive, emotional, or behavioral involvement.

This lack of significance may be due to several factors. The content may lack interactivity, such as calls to action, user-generated content, or engaging formats (e.g., videos, reels). Additionally, the content may not be sufficiently personalized or aligned with audience preferences, reducing its ability to create emotional resonance. These findings suggest that content marketing effectiveness is highly dependent on content quality, creativity, and relevance.

This result differs from studies by [Hollebeek & Macky \(2019\)](#) and [Yang et al. \(2022\)](#), which highlight that high-quality and relevant content can significantly enhance customer engagement. The inconsistency suggests that not all content marketing efforts automatically lead to engagement, particularly when execution quality is limited.

On the other hand, based on the statistical results ($\beta = 0.358$; $t = 2.981$; $p = 0.003$), H4 is supported. This finding demonstrates that well-designed online advertisements are capable of generating consumer interaction, including clicks, comments, shares, and emotional responses. The effectiveness of online advertising in driving engagement can be attributed to its visual appeal, interactive features, and algorithm-driven targeting, which ensures that advertisements reach relevant audiences. This indicates that well-designed online advertisements are capable of generating consumer interaction, including clicks, comments, shares, and emotional responses. The effectiveness of online advertising in driving engagement can be attributed to its visual appeal, interactive features, and algorithm-driven targeting, which ensure that ads reach relevant audiences.

These findings are supported by [Cheung et al. \(2020\)](#), who argue that digital advertising significantly enhances consumer engagement, particularly when it incorporates personalization and interactive elements. Thus, online advertising not only drives purchasing decisions but also plays a crucial role in building consumer engagement.

The Influence of Customer Engagement on Purchasing Decisions

Based on the statistical results ($\beta = 0.609$; $t = 6.745$; $p < 0.001$), H5 is supported. The results demonstrate that customer engagement has a strong, positive, and highly significant effect on purchasing decisions. The relatively high path coefficient indicates that customer engagement is the strongest predictor of purchasing decisions in this study. Consumers who actively interact with a brand, develop emotional attachment, and participate in online engagement activities are more likely to purchase local perfume products. This indicates that customer engagement is a key determinant of consumer

purchasing behavior. The high coefficient value suggests that engagement is the most influential variable in this study.

Customer engagement reflects a multidimensional relationship between consumers and brands, encompassing cognitive (awareness and interest), emotional (attachment and trust), and behavioral (interaction and participation) aspects. When consumers are actively engaged with a brand, they are more likely to develop trust and positive perceptions, which ultimately lead to purchase decisions.

These findings are consistent with previous research by [Ou et al. \(2022\)](#), [Rosadi et al. \(2022\)](#), and [Syalsabila & Hermina \(2023\)](#), which demonstrates that higher levels of customer engagement lead to stronger purchasing intentions and repeat buying behavior. Therefore, customer engagement serves as a critical bridge between marketing activities and actual consumer behavior.

The Role of Customer Engagement as a Mediator

Based on the statistical results ($\beta = 0.097$; $t = 1.321$; $p = 0.187$), H6 is not supported. The insignificant indirect effect indicates that customer engagement does not mediate the relationship between content marketing and purchasing decisions. This finding suggests that content marketing implemented by local perfume MSMEs is not sufficiently effective in generating customer engagement that subsequently translates into purchasing decisions. This suggests that content marketing fails to influence purchasing decisions even through the engagement mechanism. This result reinforces the earlier findings that content marketing is not sufficiently strong in driving either engagement or purchase decisions in this context.

The lack of mediation may be explained by the limited ability of content marketing to generate meaningful engagement. Without strong engagement, the indirect pathway to purchasing decisions becomes ineffective. This indicates that content marketing strategies implemented by MSMEs may not yet reach the level of effectiveness required to influence consumer behavior.

In contrast, based on the statistical results ($\beta = 0.218$; $t = 3.006$; $p = 0.003$), H7 is supported. This significant indirect effect demonstrates that customer engagement plays an important mediating role in strengthening the influence of online advertising on purchasing decisions. Effective online advertising encourages consumers to engage with the brand, and this engagement subsequently increases the likelihood of making a purchase. This finding demonstrates that online advertising influences purchasing decisions both directly and indirectly through customer engagement. In other words, online advertising not only stimulates immediate purchase behavior but also enhances engagement, which further strengthens the likelihood of purchasing.

The finding aligns with studies by [Brodie et al. \(2011\)](#), [Purwanto et al. \(2022\)](#), and [Setiawan & Salim \(2024\)](#), which emphasize that customer engagement is a crucial mechanism in maximizing the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

Managerial Implications

From a managerial perspective, this study suggests that perfume MSMEs should prioritize online advertising as a primary marketing strategy due to its strong direct and indirect effects on purchasing decisions. Advertisements should be designed with a focus on personalization, visual appeal, and interactivity to maximize both engagement and conversion.

At the same time, content marketing should not be ignored but rather improved in quality. MSMEs need to develop more creative, emotionally engaging, and interactive content, such as storytelling, influencer collaborations, and user-generated content, to enhance their help effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that online advertising plays a more dominant role than content marketing in influencing purchasing decisions within perfume MSMEs. While content marketing shows a positive direction, it does not significantly affect either purchasing decisions or customer engagement, indicating its limited effectiveness as currently implemented. In contrast, online advertising demonstrates both direct and indirect significant effects on purchasing decisions, particularly through the mediation of customer engagement.

Furthermore, customer engagement emerges as a critical factor in driving purchasing decisions, acting as a bridge between marketing strategies and consumer behavior. These findings highlight that consumer interaction, emotional attachment, and active involvement with a brand are essential in converting marketing efforts into actual purchases.

The implications of this study suggest that MSMEs should focus on optimizing online advertising strategies by leveraging personalization, targeting, and interactive features to enhance both engagement and purchase outcomes. Meanwhile, content marketing should be improved in terms of creativity, emotional appeal, and relevance to strengthen its impact. For future researchers, this study opens opportunities to explore additional variables, different industry contexts, and longitudinal approaches to better understand the long-term effectiveness of digital marketing strategies.

LIMITATION

This study has several limitations that may affect its internal and external validity. First, the research focuses solely on perfume MSMEs, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other sectors with different product characteristics. Second, the use of a cross-sectional research design restricts the ability to capture long-term effects, particularly for content marketing strategies that typically require sustained exposure. Third, the reliance on self-reported data may introduce response bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of the results. Additionally, the measurement of variables may not fully capture all dimensions of digital marketing practices and consumer behavior, which could influence the findings.

Future research is encouraged to explore longitudinal approaches to capture the delayed effects of content marketing. Additionally, incorporating moderating or mediating variables such as brand trust, perceived value, or social influence may provide deeper insights. Expanding the research to different industries or cultural contexts would also enhance generalizability. Finally, qualitative studies could be conducted to better understand how consumers perceive and respond to different types of digital marketing content.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to all respondents who participated in this study and provided valuable data. The authors also extend their appreciation to colleagues, mentors, and institutions whose support, guidance, and encouragement contributed significantly to the successful completion of this research. The authors would also like to express their sincere appreciation to Institut Teknologi

dan Bisnis STIKOM Bali for providing financial support for this research. This support has been invaluable in facilitating the completion of the study.

DECLARATION OF CONFLICTING INTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no potential conflicts of interest concerning the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

REFERENCES

- Alamanda, D. T., Wibowo, L. A., Munawar, S., & Nisa, A. K. (2021). The interest in technology adoption in e-commerce mobile apps using modified Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 in Indonesia. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management*, 6(3), 35-45. <https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v6i3.132>
- Belch, G. E., & Belch, M. A. (2018). *Advertising and Promotion: An Integrated Marketing Communications Perspective* (11th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Brigitta, M. Y. F., Effendi, M. I., Sugandini, D., & Suryono, I. A. (2023). The influence of brand satisfaction and luxury brand attachment on customer advocacy through brand loyalty on Zalora marketplace. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management*, 8(3), 133-147. <https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v8i3.2095>
- Brodie, R. J., Hollebeek, L. D., Jurić, B., & Ilić, A. (2011). Customer engagement: Conceptual domain, fundamental propositions, and implications for research. *Journal of Service Research*, 14(3), 252–271. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1094670511411703>
- Budhiartini, N. L. P., & Yulianthini, N. N. (2022). Pengaruh viral marketing dan kepercayaan konsumen terhadap keputusan pembelian dalam berbelanja online pada Tokopedia di Bali. *Jurnal Manajemen Perhotelan dan Pariwisata*, 5(2), 229–237.
- Cheung, M. L., Pires, G., & Rosenberger, P. J. (2020). The influence of perceived social media marketing elements on consumer–brand engagement and brand knowledge. *Asia Pacific Journal of Marketing and Logistics*, 32(3), 695–720. <https://doi.org/10.1108/APJML-04-2019-0262>
- Dewi, N. P. A., Fajariah, F., & Suardana, I. M. (2023). Pengaruh content marketing dan electronic of mouth pada platform TikTok terhadap keputusan pembelian di Shopee. *Kompeten: Jurnal Ilmiah Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 1(4), 178–190. <https://doi.org/10.57141/kompeten.v1i4.23>
- Grönroos, C., & Gummerus, J. (2014). The service revolution and its marketing implications: Service logic vs service-dominant logic. *Managing Service Quality*, 24(3), 206–229. <https://doi.org/10.1108/MSQ-03-2014-0042>
- Habsari, A. F. (2021). Pengaruh keinformatifan, hiburan dan gangguan iklan, terhadap sikap konsumen dalam iklan online e-commerce di situs Youtube. *Jurnal Sosial Teknologi*, 1(12), 1-56. <https://doi.org/10.59188/jurnalsostech.v1i12.261>
- Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2017). *A Primer on Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM)* (2nd ed.). SAGE Publications.
- Hartono, D. S., Wiranto, J. C., Aditama, R. G., & Abdulrahman, A. (2018). Developing marketing strategy of Nasatech Kitchen Set Malang to enter a new market in USA. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management*, 2(2), 101-117. <https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v2i2.15>
- Hollebeek, L. D., & Macky, K. (2019). Digital content marketing's role in fostering consumer engagement, trust, and value: Framework, fundamental propositions, and implications. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 45(1), 27–41. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2018.07.003>

- Hollebeek, L. D., Glynn, M. S., & Brodie, R. J. (2014). Consumer brand engagement in social media: Conceptualization, scale development and validation. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 28(2), 149–165. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.intmar.2013.12.002>
- Jian, O. Z., Utama, A. G. S., Musa, W. N. A. B. W., Hasly, W. B., Al-Rifae, R. F., Hussain, N. S., & Andriawan, N. (2021). Effective marketing strategies of McDonald's in Malaysia and Indonesia. *International Journal of Applied Business and International Management*, 6(2), 33-46. <https://doi.org/10.32535/ijabim.v6i2.1167>
- Komar, H., & Tunjungsari, H. K. (2019). Pengaruh online behavioural advertising dan consumer trust pada sikap dan niat konsumen merespon online advertising. *Jurnal Muara Ilmu Ekonomi dan Bisnis*, 3(1), 71-81.
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing Management* (15th ed.). Pearson Education.
- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for Humanity*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Lim, A. L. (2023). Analisis terhadap keputusan pembelian keramik merk Mulia di Kota Pontianak. *Journal of Economics and Business UBS*, 12(2), 838-851. <https://doi.org/10.52644/joeb.v12i2.190>
- Lou, C., & Xie, Q. (2021). Something social, something entertaining? How digital content marketing augments consumer experience and brand loyalty. *International Journal of Advertising*, 40(3), 376-402. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650487.2020.1788311>
- Mehrabian, A., & Russell, J. A. (1974). *An Approach to Environmental Psychology*. MIT Press.
- Moonti, A., & Adam, E. (2022). Apakah smart digital content marketing dapat meredam perilaku penghindaran iklan?: Sebuah strategi pemasaran digital. *Jambura Agribusiness Journal*, 3(2), 87-94. <https://doi.org/10.37046/jaj.v3i2.15687>
- Mulyati, Y., & Gesitera, G. (2020). Pengaruh online customer review terhadap purchase intention dengan trust sebagai intervening pada toko online Bukalapak di Kota Padang. *Jurnal Maksipreneur: Manajemen, Koperasi, Dan Entrepreneurship*, 9(2), 173-194. <https://doi.org/10.30588/jmp.v9i2.538>
- Ou, C. C., Chen, K. L., Tseng, W. K., & Lin, Y. Y. (2022). A study on the influence of conformity behaviors, perceived risks, and customer engagement on group buying intention: A case study of community e-commerce platforms. *Sustainability*, 14(4), 1941. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su14041941>
- Park, H., & Jiang, Y. (2021). A human touch and content matter for consumer engagement on social media. *Corporate Communications: An International Journal*, 26(3), 501-520. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CCIJ-01-2020-0033>
- Ponomban, D. P., Soegoto, A. S., & Lintong, D. C. A. (2023). Pengaruh kualitas produk, harga, dan digital marketing terhadap keputusan pembelian pada UMKM Dapur Hot di Desa Tatelu, Kecamatan Dimembe, Kabupaten Minahasa Utara. *Jurnal EMBA: Jurnal Riset Ekonomi, Manajemen, Bisnis dan Akuntansi*, 11(4), 695-706. <https://doi.org/10.35794/emba.v11i4.52100>
- Pulizzi, J. (2014). *Epic Content Marketing: How to Tell a Different Story, Break Through the Clutter, and Win More Customers by Marketing Less*. McGraw-Hill Education.
- Purwanto, N., Pancaningrum, E., & Juwita, K. (2022). Analysis of consumer behaviour in making decisions after the COVID-19 pandemic: Perspectives on the theory of stimulus organism response (SOR). *KnE Social Sciences*, 16-24. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v7i19.12425>
- Rizkia, A. R., Akbar, M. A., & Lina, R. (2024). Customer Engagement Mediates the Effect of Content marketing on Purchase Intention. *Advances in Business & Industrial Marketing Research*, 2(3), 123–137. <https://doi.org/10.60079/abim.v2i3.297>
- Rosadi, B., Azhari, S. Z., & Saraswati, J. K. (2022). Understanding the driver of customer purchase decision: The role of customer engagement and brand

- attachment. *Jurnal Ilmu Manajemen Advantage*, 6(1), 53-60.
<https://doi.org/10.30741/adv.v6i1.835>
- Salamah, M., Nursal, M. F., & Wulandari, D. S. (2023). Peran social media marketing, brand image dan kualitas produk terhadap keputusan pembelian pada produk kosmetik Madame Gie di Kab. Bekasi. *Jurnal Economina*, 2(10), 2686-2703.
<https://doi.org/10.55681/economina.v2i10.894>
- Sarfraz, M., Al Kurdi, B., & Rafiq, M. (2025). How digital marketing shapes consumer decision-making employing (AIDA) model with respect to consumer knowledge and consumer experience. *International Journal of Management and Marketing Intelligence*, 2(1), 39-48. <https://doi.org/10.64251/ijmmi.66>
- Satiawan, A., Hamid, R. S., & Maszudi, E. (2023). Pengaruh content marketing, influencer marketing, online customer review terhadap keputusan pembelian dan kepuasan konsumen di Tiktok. *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Bisnis Indonesia*, 9(1), 1-14. <https://doi.org/10.32528/jmbi.v9i1.238>
- Schiffman, L. G., & Wisenblit, J. (2019). *Consumer Behavior* (12th Global ed). Pearson Education.
- Setiawan, R., & Salim, M. (2024). The influence of micro-influencers and content marketing through customer engagement on purchasing decisions. *Gema Wiralodra*, 15(1), 121-128. <https://doi.org/10.31943/gw.v15i1.643>
- Syalsabila, N., & Hermina, N. (2023). The interrelations of celebrity endorsement, social media use, and customer engagement in achieving customer purchase decision. *Jurnal Manajerial*, 10(01), 1-16.
<https://doi.org/10.30587/jurnalmanajerial.v10i1.4650>
- Wardani, M. (2022). Pengaruh social media, word of mouth (wom) dan lifestyle terhadap keputusan pembelian pada toko online Yuika Shop. *Jurnal Komunikasi Dan Kebudayaan*, 9(2), 10-24. <https://doi.org/10.59050/jkk.v9i2.227>
- Yang, Q., Li, H., Lin, Y., Jiang, Y., & Huo, J. (2022). Fostering consumer engagement with marketer-generated content: The role of content-generating devices and content features. *Internet Research*, 32(7), 307-329.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/INTR-10-2021-0787>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR(S)

1st Author

Gusti Ayu Aghivirwiati is a lecturer at the Faculty of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis STIKOM Bali, Indonesia. She holds a degree in Management and has specialized expertise in digital marketing and consumer behavior. She is currently serving as a lecturer, actively involved in teaching, research, and community service activities, particularly in the field of MSME development and digital business strategies. Her research interests include digital marketing, customer engagement, and purchasing behavior.

Email: aghivirwiati@stikom-bali.ac.id

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-1820-5463>

2nd Author

Ni Putu Nanik Hendayanti is a lecturer at the Faculty of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis STIKOM Bali, Indonesia. She completed her higher education in Management and has extensive experience in marketing and entrepreneurship studies. Currently, she serves as a lecturer and researcher, focusing on business management, digital transformation, and marketing strategies. Her research interests include online advertising, consumer decision-making, and MSMEs.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-6659-4937>

3rd Author

I Gede Mahendra Arlansa is an undergraduate student in the Management Study Program at the Faculty of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis STIKOM Bali, Indonesia. His academic interests focus on digital marketing, consumer behavior, and business development, particularly in the context of MSMEs. He is actively involved in academic research related to marketing strategies and customer engagement.

4th Author

Ni Komang Ayu Pirji Pratiwi is an undergraduate student in the Management Study Program at the Faculty of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis STIKOM Bali, Indonesia. Her academic interests include digital marketing, branding, and consumer engagement, with a particular focus on MSMEs. She has been actively involved in research projects related to marketing strategies and consumer behavior.

5th Author

Putu Nadine Rania Pratiwi is an undergraduate student in the Management Study Program at the Faculty of Business and Management, Institut Teknologi dan Bisnis STIKOM Bali, Indonesia. Her areas of interest include digital business, marketing communication, and customer experience. She participates in academic research focusing on online marketing strategies and purchasing behavior in MSMEs.

6th Author

Jose Agostinho da Costa Belo Pereira is a lecturer at Universidade de Dili (UNDIL), Timor-Leste. He holds a Bachelor's degree in International Relations, a Master of Management, and a Doctorate in Sociology and Political Science. He currently serves as the Rector of Universidade de Dili for the 2021–2026 period and is also the founder of the university. In addition to his academic role, he is a senior lecturer and serves as the President of the BOACRIL Foundation. He has extensive professional experience in public service and governance, including serving as a Senior Professional at the National Parliament of Timor-Leste. He has also been appointed as a Commissioner of the National Commission for Elections (CNE – Comissão Nacional de Eleições) of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste since 2007, with appointments from the Government, the President of the Republic, and the National Parliament across multiple mandates. In 2014, he was nominated by the Prime Minister of Timor-Leste as Deputy Chairperson of the Timor-Leste Election Support Mission in Guinea-Bissau.