The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Retention Mediated by Customer Engagement

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Abstract

Social Media Marketing is an effort to better understand the dynamics of effective strategies in modern business. The purpose of the study was to determine and analyse the relationship between Social Media Marketing, Customer Retention, mediated by Customer Engagement for Shopee e-commerce users in Palembang City. This research explores the role of social media marketing in maintaining Shopee's customer continuity, customer engagement is a key element in the link between social media marketing strategies and customer retention. The research method was implemented through a quantitative approach using a survey as the research design. The unit of analysis of the research was Shopee e-commerce users in Palembang City with a total of 130 respondents. The data analysis technique was carried out with the SEM-PLS approach to conduct hypothesis testing. The findings of Social Media Marketing proved to have no direct effect on Customer Retention (38.9%), but Social Media Marketing has a positive influence on Customer Engagement by (97.2%) and the relationship between customer engagement and Customer Retention by (0.56%). The results of the mediation test state that Customer Engagement successfully mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing to Customer Retention with a relatively low mediation effect. The implications of these findings provide opportunities for Marketing Managers to develop more effective marketing strategies through social media platforms and increase interaction with customers, in order to increase Customer Engagement. The research results can be used by Shopee e-commerce Marketing Managers to design more targeted marketing campaigns and improve understanding of customer behaviour and needs through analysis of the data generated. The implications of this research also encourage the training and development of marketing teams to improve the effectiveness of their performance and adopt a data-driven decision-making approach in future marketing strategies.

Keywords :
Social Media Marketing; Customer Retention; Customer Engagement.

Introduction
The latest business opportunities are created by the development of Industrial Environment 4.0. Today, transactions are digitized and easier to conduct. Thanks to this technological innovation, a number of e-commerce (electronic commerce) businesses have sprung up. An e-commerce business is a commercial transaction that involves the exchange of value between individuals using digital technology (Huang 2021; Laudon & Traver 2019; Ma & Hu, 2021; Rachmad 2022).

Customer retention maintenance is an indispensable aspect of e-commerce business to retain customers. The achievement of customer retention takes place when the company is able to develop, maintain, and protect a positive relationship between the customer and the company, another term for this is customer engagement (Kadek & Martini, 2022). Social Media becomes very important for e-commerce companies in increasing Customer Engagement so that positive relationships are formed, making consumers not only act as buyers but also as marketers for companies (Arora et al. 2021; Wahid & Gunarto 2022).

Shopee is an e-commerce site that offers a wide range of products, from fashion, to electronics, and daily necessities. Shopee was founded in 2009 by Forest Lee. Shopee received 143.6 million visits in February 2023, down 16.2% from 171.3 million in the previous month. This decline in e-commerce has occurred since the beginning of this year. In fact, the decline was deeper than January 2023, which was 10.5% (Katadata 2023). At this time, Shopee has 8.8 million followers on social media Instagram and 13.6 million followers on, but in one of the uploads for the period 24 April with 35,457 impressions and likes of 1,949 with less than 1,000 comments. On the TikTok platform, there are 108.8 million likes and less than 500 comments in the April period (Shopee 2023).

Customer Engagement in interacting is not proportional to the number of followers on Social Media Marketing Instagram and TikTok Official. The problem with Social Media Marketing is that the indicators at the level of engagement are low, which can be seen from the small number of likes and comments. Other problems that also arise, namely low interaction engagement and often not responding to user complaints. Some previous studies convey different results. In the previous study, it was stated that Social Media Marketing has an effect on trust, and trust has no effect on Customer Engagement. (Rachmadhaniyati, 2021). Meanwhile, Agyei's research states that trust significantly affects customer engagement (Agyei et al. 2020).

The gap related to this research is that previous research succeeded in the overview perspective and did not explore the concepts and understanding related to Customer Retention. In previous research (Bozkurt et al. 2021; Cheraghalizadeh & Dědková, 2022; Hidayat & Martini 2020; Joshi et al.2022; Ramadhanty & Mei Ulina Malau, 2020; Sashi et al. 2019; Vohra & Bhardwaj, 2019) shows different aspects of variables, it is rare to find research that examines Social Media Marketing on Customer Retention mediated by Customer Engagement. Based on the explanation above, this research aims to determine the effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Retention with Customer Engagement as a Mediating Variable on e-commerce users.

Literature review
Service Dominant Logic Theory
Service Dominant Logic is an update to marketing theory that focuses on the interaction between companies and customers. (Lusch & Vargo 2014). When associated with Social Media Marketing, Customer Retention and Customer Engagement. Service Dominant Logic is the creation of a value that arises if there is an attractive service through Social Media Marketing. By applying the Service Dominant Logic context, companies can strengthen Customer Engagement through valuable interactions, providing space for consumers to participate in the value creation process, and ensuring a satisfying experience. This will positively contribute to Customer Retention.

Social Media Marketing
Social Media Marketing is a marketing strategy that uses social media platforms to promote brands and services involving interesting and relevant content to reach and interact with audiences through various social media platforms such as, Facebook, Instagram, LinkeInd, Twitter, TikTok, and others. The indicators of Social Media Marketing are reach, number of followers, level of engagement, and level of sentiment. (Jason 2022).

Customer Retention
Customer Retention is a company's effort to retain existing customers by building long-term relationships. Customer Retention is very important for companies because customer retention is more effective than getting new customers. Customer Retention indicators, namely, customer life value, repeat purchase rate, retention rate, churn rate, and recommendation rate. (Kotler & Keller 2012).

Customer Engagement
Customer Engagement is a psychological state of a person that can occur based on customer experience with a company's product or service. Indicators of Customer Engagement are, enthusiasm, attention absorption and interaction (Arora et al. 2021).

Relationship of Variables
The findings of Mustika & Farid identified that Social Media Marketing has a positive effect on Customer Retention (Mustika & Farid, 2022). In the results of previous studies, it shows that Social Media Marketing affects Customer Retention (Cheraghalizadeh & Dědková 2022; Menajang et al. 2023).

H1 : Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Customer Retention

In previous research, the interaction of Social Media Marketing has a positive effect on Customer Engagement (Bozkurt et al. 2021). Social Media Marketing has a positive effect on Customer Engagement (Joshi et al. 2022; Rachmadhaniyati, 2021). Previous findings state that Social Media Marketing has a significant effect on Customer Engagement. (Lisnawati & Gunarto 2021; Ramadhan & Gunarto 2021; Utami & Saputri 2020).

H2 : Relationship between Social Media Marketing and Customer Engagement

In Kadek & Martini's research, it states that Customer Retention is influenced by Customer Engagement which is a mediating variable. (Kadek & Martini 2022). Customer Engagement as a Mediating Variable successfully mediates the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable (Irene 2019).

H3 . Relationship between Customer Retention and Customer Engagement
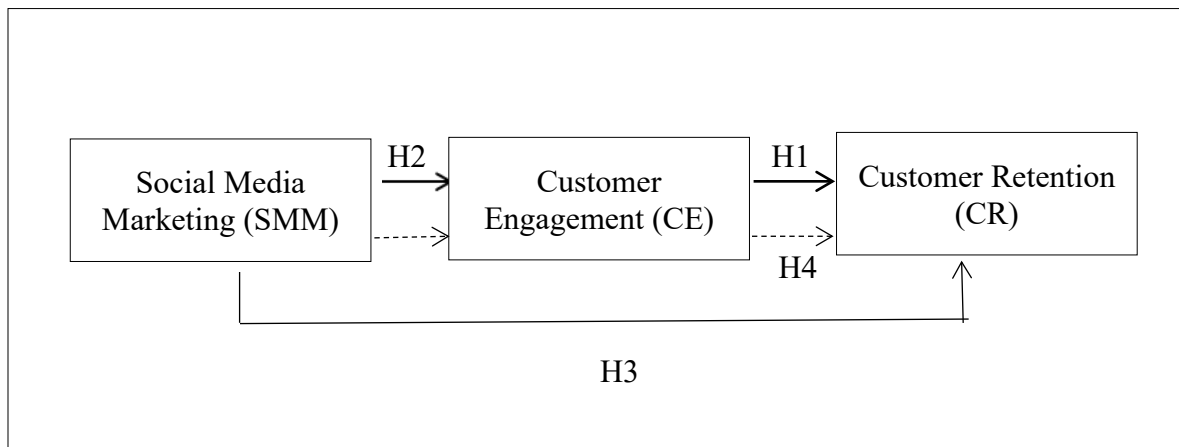

Figure 1. Framework of thinking

Method
This research uses a quantitative approach using the Structural Equation Model (SEM) PLS method to evaluate the relationship between variables. Primary and secondary data were used in this study. Primary data is obtained through questionnaires, while secondary data comes from literature such as books and journals. The instrument used in this research is a questionnaire, where the statements in the Social Media Marketing variable refer to aspects of reach, number of followers, level of engagement, and level of sentiment.(Jason, 2022). Customer Retention refers to, customer life value, repeat purchase rate, retention rate, churn rate, and recommendation rate. (Kotler & Keller, 2012). Customer Engagement refers to enthusiasm, attention absorption and interaction. (Arora et al., 2021) The population is all Shopee e-commerce users in Palembang City. The sampling technique uses Accidental Sampling with the criteria that users have made two purchases who own and follow Shopee's Instagran and Tiktok social media accounts, obtained as many as 130 respondents. The data analysis techniques used are validity test, reliability test, and hypothesis testing (T-test) with the outer model measurement model and inner model in Partial Least Square Analysis (PLS).

Results and Discussion
Respondent Characteristics
The research identified around 130 respondents who had fulfilled the set requirements and criteria. The profiles of the respondents, who are active Shopee users with accounts on Shopee Instagram and TikTok, reveal interesting variations. Based on the data obtained, it is known that the majority of respondents are female, namely, 124 respondents with a percentage of 95.4% and the number of men reaches 6 respondents with a percentage of 4.6%. The age range of respondents ranging from 17-20 years as many as 20 people (15.4%), 21-25 years as many as 50 people (38.5%), 26-30 years as many as 44 people (33.8%), 31-35 years as many as 1 person (8.5%) and >35 years as many as 5 people (3.8%). Most of the respondents were students as many as 51 respondents (39.2%), 40 respondents (30.8%)

were self-employed, 16 respondents (12.3%) were public and private employees, and 23 respondents (17.7%) were others. The majority of respondents who have made purchases at Shopee> 10 times are 97 people (74.6%).

Evaluation of Measurement Model

The measurement model analysis process in the context of PLS needs to be carried out as the initial stage of the structural equation model (SEM) analysis. This approach was chosen because it is able to describe the specific relationships between latent variables and their associated manifest variables. The initial results of the external modelling stage involve assessing the validity and reliability of the constructs used. In this study, the constructs implemented are reflective. Validity tests include convergent validity and discriminant validity. As for reliability, the evaluation is done through internal reliability measures using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values for each construct. Instructions on the validity values of the reflective indicators used in the research are for the measures listed in Table 1.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Rules of Thumb

Validity and Reliability	Parameters & Rule of Thumb
Convergent Validity: The manifest variables of a construct should be highly correlated (Campbell DT & Fiske D, 1959)	It is said to be valid if: • the outer loading value of the indicator >0.708 for confirmatory research; 0.6-0.7 for exploratory research., acceptable (J. F. Hair et al., 2013), *dan* • nilai AVE >0.50 (Fornel C & Larcker D, 1981; J. F. J. Hair et al., 2014)
Discriminant Validity: manifest variables of different constructs should not be highly correlated.(Campbell DT & Fiske D, 1959)	It is said to be valid if: • - the indicator's external load value on a construct > all of its cross load values with other constructs (J. F. Hair et al., 2013), *atau* • Squared correlation between constructs < AVE for each corresponding conformation (Fornel C & Larcker D, 1981)
Reliability: This principle indicates the accuracy, consistency and precision of the instrument in terms of measurement structure.	It is said to be reliable if: • -CA > 0.70 for confirmatory research, and > 0.60 is acceptable for exploratory research. (J. F. Hair et al., 2013), *atau* • CR > 0.708 for confirmatory and 0.60 - 0.70 for exploratory (J. F. Hair et al., 2013)

Adopted from : (J. F. Hair et al., 2022)

The methodology used for the analysis is first-order structure (FOC), also known as low-order structure (LOC), which refers to a modelling approach where structure is reflected or shaped by constructs.
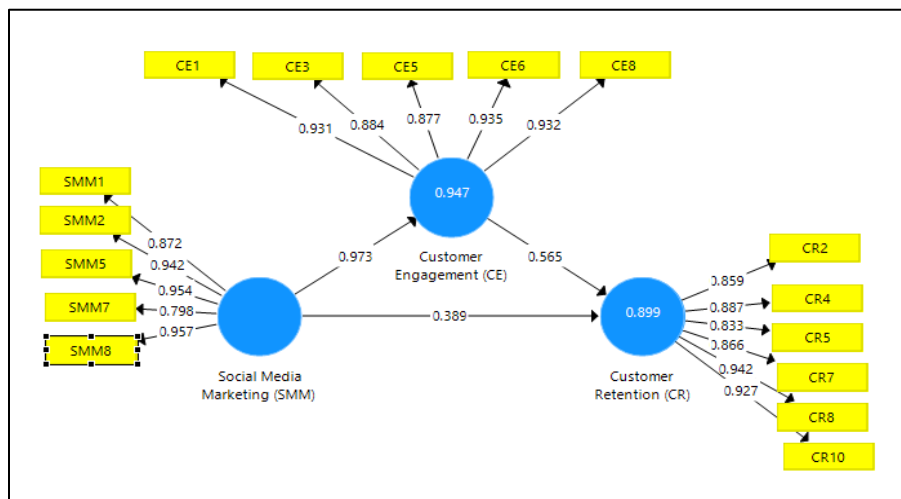

Figure 2. Measurement Model

The lower order measurement model implements latent variables correlated with constructs. The results of the high order measurement model determine the path coefficients between constructs.

Table 2. Revised Outer Loading Value of Measurement Model

Constructs	CE	CR	SMM
CE1	0,931		
CE3	0,884		
CE5	0,877		
CE6	0,935		
CE8	0,932		
CR10		0,927	
CR2		0,859	
CR4		0,887	
CR5		0,833	
CR7		0,866	
CR8		0,942	
SMM1			0,872
SMM2			0,942
SMM5			0,954
SMM7			0,798
SMM8			0,957

The outer loading value of the indicators in each variable is> 0.7 so that the convergent validity test in this study is declared valid. The next stage is the validity test process by applying the criteria proposed by Fornell and Larcker (J. F. Hair et al., 2022).

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability, and AVE values

Variables	CA	rho_A	CR	AVE
Customer Engagement (CE)	0,949	0,951	0,961	0,832
Customer Retention (CR)	0,945	0,951	0,956	0,786
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0,945	0,953	0,958	0,822

Discriminant validity on a latent variable can be said to be fulfilled if the square root value of the correlation between latent constructs is smaller than the AVE of each construct involved, or if the square root of the AVE is greater than the correlation between latent constructs.

Table 4. Correlation Value Between Variable Constructs

Variables	CE	CR	SMM
Customer Engagement (CE)	0,912		
Customer Retention (CR)	0,944	0,886	
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	0,973	0,939	0,907

From the test results in Table 4, it can be explained that all the squared correlation values between latent constructs are smaller than the AVE of each relevant construct. Therefore, it can be concluded that all latent variables fulfil the discriminant validity criteria. (J. F. Hair et al., 2022). The data shows that the Cronbach's alpha value for each component dimension and variable exceeds 0.7. In addition, the composite reliability value for each component

dimension and variable also exceeds 0.7. Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables and their manifestations show all constructs of variables that have been valid and reliable.

Structural Model Analysis Results

Figure 3 shows the relationship that occurs between exogenous and endogenous latent variables. The values shown are the size of the path coefficients on each relationship which shows the amount of direct influence of exogenous variables on endogenous variables.
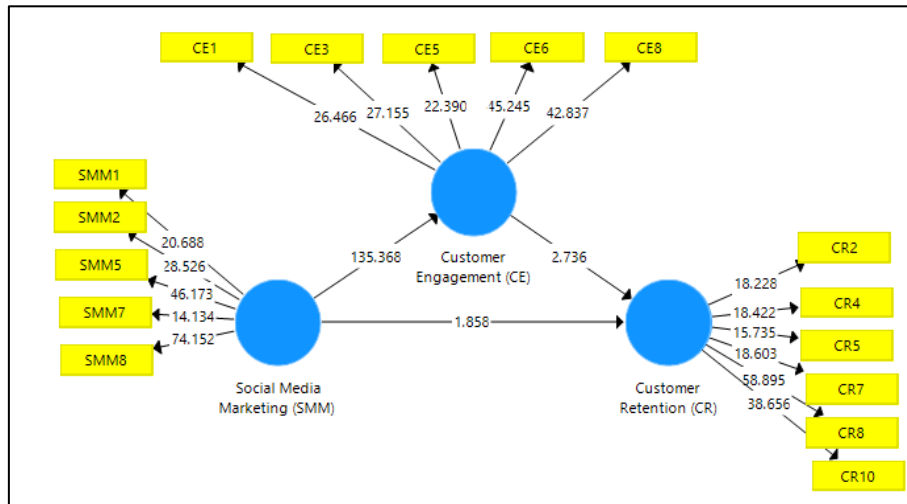

Figure 3. Structural Model

In the full model building process, constructs are reduced if they have no statistically significant effect or no theoretical support. Therefore, model evaluation involves analysis with the bootstrap method in SmartPLS, not just indicator validity and reliability. The results of model testing using this bootstrap approach provide additional information, and the results are in Table 5.

Table 5. R^2 Values

Variables	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Customer Engagement (CE)	0,947	0,947
Customer Retention (CR)	0,899	0,897

The results shown in Table 5 refer to the rule of thumb of the strength of the prediction model which states that the R square value of 0.974 in structure I indicates a strong model, that the strength of the substructure I model in explaining the variation of sample data in predicting the population is strong. In structure II, the R square value of 0.899 indicates a strong model.

Table 6. F^2 values

Variables	Customer Engagement (CE)	Customer Retention (CR)	Social Media Marketing (SMM)
Customer Engagement (CE)		0,167	
Customer Retention (CR)			
Social Media Marketing (SMM)	17,858	0,079	

Table 6 implements the effect size f 2 value of 17.858 that the latent variable Social Media Marketing has an influence on Customer Retention. This category refers to the rule of thumb of the inner model about effect size f^2. The hypothesised relationship between variables can be seen in Table 7.

Based on Table 7, there is one hypothesis relationship that is not accepted, namely, it does not show a direct positive and significant influence relationship between Social Media Marketing on Cutomer Retention which shows:

1. Social Media Marketing affects Customer Retention by 0.389 (38.9%), which is statistically significant because the t-count value is 1.858 (smaller than 1.96). This condition indicates that if social media marketing is good, then customers will try to stay.
2. Social Media Marketing has an effect on Customer Engagement of 0.973 (97.3%), which is statistically significant because the t-count value is 135.68 (less than 1.96) or the p-value is 0.136 (greater than 5%). These results indicate that social media marketing can improve and strengthen the relationship between Shopee and Shopee customers/app users.
3. Customer Engagement has a positive effect on Customer Retention with a value of 0.56 (0.56%), statistically significant because the t-count value is 2.736 (greater than 1.96) This condition indicates that Customer Engagement can influence and increase the level of customer retention.
4. There is a Positive Effect of Customer Engagement on Social Media Marketing and Customer Retention with a value of 0.007. This condition indicates that the mediation effect is positive and significant, Customer Engagement succeeds in becoming an intermediary variable for the relationship between Social Media Marketing and Customer Retention.

Table 7. Path Coefficients, T-statistics, P values

Relationships	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Customer Engagement (CE) -> Customer Retention (CR)	0,565	0,573	0,207	2,736	**0,006**
Social Media Marketing (SMM) -> Customer Engagement (CE)	0,973	0,974	0,007	135,368	**0,000**
Social Media Marketing (SMM) -> Customer Retention (CR)	0,389	0,382	0,210	1,858	**0,064**

The mediation effect in this study, interpreting the effect size value Upsilon (v), refers to a high mediation effect of 0.175, medium mediation of 0.075 and 0.01 low mediation (Ogbeibu et al. 2021). The calculation of Upsilon (v) can be seen in Table 8.

Tabel 8. Effect Size Upsilon (v)

Influence Relationship	Nilai Statistik	Ket
Social Media Marketing (SMM) -> Customer Engagement (CE) -> Customer Retention	$(0,565)^2 (0,389)^2$ = 0,048	Pengaruh rendah

The results of the statistical value on Upsilon (v), Customer Engagement successfully mediates the relationship between Social Media Marketing to Customer Retention with a relatively low mediating effect. So that a new strategy is needed to increase Customer Engagement and strengthen Customer Retention.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the relationship influence test (hypothesis), Social Media Marketing is proven to have no direct effect on Customer Retention (38.9%), but Social Media Marketing has a positive influence on Customer Engagement by (97.2%) and the relationship between customer engagement and Customer Retention by (0.56%). The results of the mediation test state that Customer Engagement successfully mediates the relationship between Social Media

Marketing to Customer Retention with a relatively low mediation effect. So that a new strategy is needed to increase Customer Engagement and strengthen Customer Retention..

Managerial Implications
Based on the summary of conclusions, it is recommended to Marketing Managers develop more effective marketing strategies through social media platforms and increase interaction with customers, in order to increase Customer Engagement. The results of this study can be used by Shopee e-commerce Marketing Managers to design more targeted marketing campaigns and improve their understanding of customer behaviour and needs through analysis of the data generated. The implications of this research also encourage the training and development of marketing teams to improve the effectiveness of their performance and adopt a data-driven decision-making approach in future marketing strategies.

Theoretical Implications
This research is the first research in examining the relationship of Social Media Marketing to Customer Retention mediated by Customer Engagement in the field of trade and electronics. This finding is in line with previous findings stating that Social Media Marketing has an impact on Customer Retention and Customer Engagement (Agyei et al., 2020). It is hoped that future researchers will examine more broadly the indicators in an effort to improve customer relationships and retain customers.

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Biography

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