Content Marketing in Shaping Customer Engagement Through TikTok: Generation Z Male Perspective

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Abstract- — *Content marketing has been seen as a critical strategy for capturing and holding audience attention in the digital age, greatly fostering customer engagement. Social media, huge in popular short-format video, goes by the name TikTok and literally is a big force in digital marketing today. It grows with immense speed and is broadly adopted among the male gender in Generation Z, making it very important for brands that are looking to improve engagement. This means that brands have the opportunity to mobilize such a large user base on TikTok to promote products and services using engaging content marketing. The study examines how content marketing shapes customer engagement on TikTok among the male gender from Indonesia, members of Generation Z, who are dominant on the platform. Data was gathered from 228 TikTok respondents exposed to content marketing and analyzed using SmartPLS. The research indicates that TikTok's content marketing positively impacts customer engagement. This study provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of TikTok as a content marketing platform, highlighting specific factors that businesses can focus on to increase engagement among consumers, thereby improving marketing outcomes and fostering deeper customer connections. Subsequent studies ought to investigate the enduring effects of TikTok content marketing on customer engagement and broaden the scope of the examination to encompass other social media platforms that may present more extensive ramifications for digital marketing strategies.*
Keywords— Content Marketing; Customer Engagement; TikTok.

INTRODUCTION

On a worldwide scale, social contact, information sharing, and communication have all been transformed by the extensive internet and social media usage. This widespread connectivity has facilitated unprecedented access to information and digital services, transforming various aspects of daily life, including education, commerce, and entertainment. A significant subset of internet users is engaged with social media platforms, which have become integral to modern social interactions. 5.07 billion people used social media worldwide as of April 2024, making up 62.6 percent of the total population (Statista, 2024a). These platforms have redefined personal communication and become vital tools for businesses, influencers, and public figures to engage with audiences, shape public opinion, and drive cultural trends.

One of the social media channels that the company has embraced to expand is TikTok. Not only have celebrities, politicians, and corporations embraced TikTok, but mainstream media has also picked up on many of the app's popular challenges and trends (Zips & Holendová, 2023). This has aided in maintaining its standing as a major participant in the social media space. It is a new marketing tactic used to promote products and services (Wiwarottami & Widyatama, 2023). Due to its many modern features, TikTok is frequently utilized as a digital marketing platform to advertise products like skincare, makeup, travel destinations, clothing, and more are advertised (Darusman & Sumaryanti, 2022). TikTok has characteristics that set it apart from other social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. Users are limited to sharing photos, comments, and reactions on these platforms. On the other hand, TikTok is an app that allows you to upload videos that are between 15 and 60 seconds long. Although TikTok was once perceived as a social media platform for entertainment, it now offers a wide range of content ideas (Dewi, 2021). At around 127.5 million members on the well-known social video platform, Indonesia had by far the biggest TikTok audience as of April 2024. With almost 121.5 million TikTok users, the United States came next. Brazil ranked third with around 101.8 million viewers watching short videos on TikTok (Statista,

2024b). This incredible growth is more than a fad; it represents a fundamental change in how consumers engage with brands and consume content, particularly in the tech sector (Khoon, 2024). As a result, businesses are starting to see TikTok's potential as a useful tool for content marketing.

Businesses now depend on content marketing to advertise their goods and boost consumer interaction. Businesses can grow their customer base, boost consumer engagement, and boost sales of their products by utilizing TikTok's suite of digital marketing tools, which include paid advertising and content marketing strategies (Gisha & Malinda, 2023). Businesses can leverage the platform's features and depend on original and creative content to maximize the utilization of TikTok as part of their marketing plan. Good content marketing requires an intention and a commitment to publishing informative content to the intended audience (Savitha & Phil, 2023). Users of TikTok are looking for customer value engagement that allows quick customization involving accuracy and creativity, effectively driving customer value and participation in product promotion (Dewi, 2021). Content marketing through digital platforms has lower costs than advertising through traditional media because it just uses a digital platform to distribute the content a company has made to encourage engagement from customers (Bening & Kurniawati, 2019). Therefore, this study seeks to determine how TikTok's inclusion of video uploads on the site influences consumer engagement as a content marketing element.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Content Marketing

It is the process of brand promotion or company through advanced direct marketing, the use of texts, videos, or even audio, which are distributed both online and offline, to pique consumers' interest and engage a target market. It is an exciting way to refer to content marketing based on Ijan & Ellyawati (2023) and (Ramdan et al., 2022). Content marketing is the mechanism of creating and disseminating valuable publications and structuring them to pull in a specified audience and motivate worthwhile customer action (Pektas & Hassan, 2020). The purpose of content marketing is the involvement of customers by creating, publishing, and displaying gripping content (Limandono, 2017). Content generated for content marketing can be delivered in several kinds of formats like worded language, bay word, audio content, stagnant images, films, and animations (Shalsabilah & Firmansyah, 2023). Content marketing is the creation and distribution of content over websites and social media. The two main objectives of content marketing are to draw in viewers and persuade them to become clients (Za et al., 2021). To develop customer relationships, content marketing entails producing high-quality material for various platforms (Miliopoulou, 2019). In order to help consumers understand the intended message and purpose, content marketers provide high-quality content (Wiwarottami & Widyatama, 2023).

Customer Engagement

Customer engagement refers to the degree to which a customer's mental state during encounters with brands motivates them in relation to the brand and is dependent on context. These behaviors include cognitive activity, emotions, and specific behaviors (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Customer engagement specifically engages customers in the search, evaluation, and decision-making processes of choosing a brand (Vivek et al., 2012). Because a closely associated brand results from significant audience participation, customer engagement is highly valued in the business sector (Fahimah & Ningsih, 2022). Given the intimate relationship between corporate performance and consumers, customer engagement is a form of business that involves forming, developing, and enhancing customer relationships (Mahendra, 2021). Engagement from customers has improved assessments, trust, and brand loyalty (So et al., 2014). Consumers' engagement with a brand or business indicates that they are motivated by factors other than just purchasing (Ntale et al., 2013). Therefore, it can be said that customer engagement is a process that brands engage in on a regular basis in order to interact with customers and create experiences that will subsequently reinforce the emotional side of the motivation to encourage customers to make repeat purchases because of their attachment to a business's product or brand (Saputro et al., 2023).

Hypothesis

On the basis of these data, the following hypothesis is put forth:

H1: Content marketing significantly affects customer engagement

Conceptual Framework

This study's hypothesis was that content marketing impacts consumer engagement. The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1.
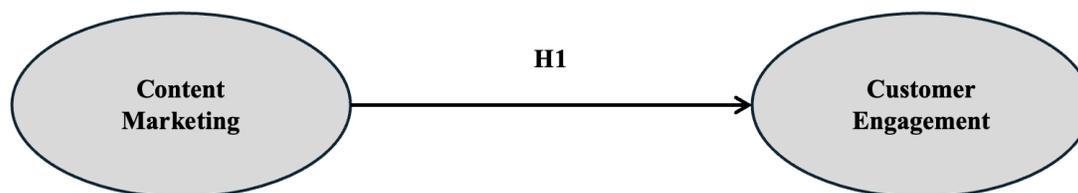

Figure 1. The Conceptual Framework

METHODS

Karr (2016) stated that there are five components to content marketing: (1) Reader Cognition, (2) Sharing Motivation, (3) Persuasion, (4) Decision-making, and (5) Factor. Consumer engagement may be categorized into five different aspects: (1) Learning, (2) Sharing, (3) Advocating, (4) Socializing, and (5) Co-Developing (Brodie et al., 2013).

Research Design

A survey approach is used in this study's quantitative technique to collect primary data from a population sample. Primary data is used to formulate and analyze the research problem. Google Forms is used to conduct online surveys that gather data, which is then posted on social media. Online surveys offer location-independent, automated data collection as well as cost, time, and energy efficiency in data collection. As previously said, primary data from respondents is gathered through observation, interviews, and questionnaires (Bougie & Sekaran, 2016).

Population, Subjects, and Research Objects

This study's target group is all male Indonesian Generation Z TikTok users. Male Generation Z TikTok users who have watched TikTok content marketing are chosen samples from this cohort. Customers of the TikTok platform receive content marketing, which serves as the study object.

Data Collections

Purposive sampling is used in this study in addition to non-probability sampling. The greatest technique is purposeful sampling since it selects the sample based on prevalent traits in the population. With so many TikTok users, intentional sampling was used to choose representative study participants. Interviewers posed direct questions to respondents. In contrast, respondents are asked indirect questions using prepared statements or questions that are systematically and sequentially constructed in surveys (Schindler, 2022). The subjects of this survey were male Gen Z TikTok users. For rating, the respondents of this survey are rated on a seven-point Likert scale. This research questionnaire had a 7-point scale instead of a 5-point scale, because it was believed that the 7-point scale would serve better. It was based on the scale of one being strongly disagree to seven being strongly agree (Joshi et al., 2015). It effectively appeals to the participants' judgment and logic, especially those of male Generation Z TikTok users, by providing a more detailed explanation of the argument. 228 male Generation Z TikTok users who had watched TikTok ads in Indonesia were the subjects of this study. The online survey used to gather data for this study was a Google Form. These valid answers were used to test the hypotheses and determine their validity and dependability (Zhu et al., 2023).

Data Analysis

Both descriptive and inferential analysis techniques are used in the study. In the descriptive analysis, statistical methods are used that describe data as it is collected, with no view to generalizing conclusions to the whole population and applying these generalizations to other situations. For the inferential analysis, which will be done using a variance-based structural equation model, partial least square software, SmartPLS v.4, shall be employed. This encompasses the testing of indicators, model fit, and hypotheses within the PLS analysis. The measurement model will be assessed for Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability were computed to ascertain the reliability of each construct. Reliability is considered adequate when Cronbach's alpha exceeds 0.70 and item-to-total correlations are greater than 0.50 (Hair et al., 2010). On the other hand, validity is a measure of how well the research tool is able to capture the variable in question. In this work, the discriminant validity of each component was examined using average variance extracted (AVE) approaches. All of the model's constructs and variables have strong validity, and any AVE value of 0.50 or greater is indicative of discriminant validity that is currently in place Hanaysha & Hilman (2015). The results showed that discriminant validity existed for every construct, with AVE values exceeding suggested levels.

RESULT

Respondent Characteristics

Table 1 displays the demographic profile that was evaluated for 228 valid and comprehensive respondents' responses to the distributed survey were received. All of the respondents were required as male and belonged to Generation Z. According to education, 72% had completed high school, 26% had an undergraduate degree, and 2% had a postgraduate degree. In Indonesia, the age group of 18 to 34 years old comprises an astounding 78% of its consumers (Khoon, 2024). This demographic result is corroborated by it, and it's important not just because of its size but also because it has a big impact on consumer behaviors and trends. Most Gen Z participants said they were actively involved in content marketing initiatives, and 80% of 150 respondents said they engaged with marketing content on a regular basis to some degree (Singh, 2023). Additionally, the outcome showed that the most popular kind of material was video, as seen in TikTok and YouTube videos.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics ($n = 228$)

Measure	Item	N	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	228	100%
	Total	**228**	**100%**
Generation	Generation Z	228	100%
	Total	**228**	**100%**
Education	High School	164	72%
	Undergraduate	60	26%
	Postgraduate	4	2%
	Total	**228**	**100%**

Analysis Assessment

The method used to conduct the confirmatory factor analysis was Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modeling. The study was predictive in nature, and the ability to analyze complex models and formative as well as reflective aspects were the reasons for selecting this methodology (Jeon et al., 2019). The following three measures should be used in order to assess the construct's validity and reliability (Hair et al., 2019). First, all the indicator factors will have their factor loading more than 0.7. Second, all values of Composite Reliability, rho A, and Cronbach's alpha would be above the recommended value of 0.7.

The minimum criterion for AVE to be adequate in explaining more than 50% of the indicators is 0.5 (Henseler et al., 2015). All factor loadings exceeded the lowest cutoff level of 0.7. Given that the Cronbach's alpha (CA) and composite dependability (CR) values for each construct were more than 0.7, each construct's dependability was satisfied. The AVE for each construct is greater than the benchmark value of 0.5. Convergent validity has not been a problem to the present study since all three criteria have been attained as indicated on Table 2.

The discriminant validity can be assessed using the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlation, the Fornell & Larcker criterion, and the indicator's cross-loading. The HTMT ratio's allowable value is below the 0.85 threshold. All values fell below the 0.85 cut-off mark, thus satisfying the discriminant validity conditions (Henseler et al., 2015). Table 3 has other information.

Table 2. Measurement Model Assessment

Constructs	Items		Indicator-Loadings	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Content Marketing	DM1	The content of the brand is interactive.	0.805				
	DM2	It is easy to understand the content from this brand.	0.830				
	LF1	The brand's content is memorable.	0.770				
	LF2	The content of a brand is rewarding and instructive.	0.779				
	PR1	Content from a brand can reveal brand identity.	0.849	0.971	0.972	0.974	0.712
	PR2	Content from a brand can establish good relations and sustain them.	0.857				
	PR3	The content from this brand is able to be at par with the needs of consumers.	0.849				
	PR4	The brand content is informative.	0.808				
	PR5	I like the content issued by the brand.	0.793				

	PR6	These brands' content is capable to influence each other.	0.852				
	RC1	I trust the content of this brand.	0.768				
	RC2	I would have difficulty getting the content that this brand publishes, as compared to other brands.	0.756				
	RC3	The brand's content is in harmony.	0.814				
	SM1	The brand's content is relevant to a brand or consumer.	0.812				
	SM2	The brand's content inspires me to get to know the brand better.	0.794				
	SM3	The brand's content encourages me to make buying decisions.	0.849				
	SM4	There are life values in the brand's content.	0.838				
	SM5	The brands' content is helpful for my life.	0.841				
Customer Engagement	AD1	Because of the content from this brand, my problem was solved.	0.896	0.970	0.973	0.973	0.665
	AD2	My desires had been fulfilled by this brand's content.	0.884				

	CD1	I used to search for information about this brand very frequently through various sources.	0.812					
	CD2	Yes, I am willing to make comments about this brand.	0.814					
	LR1	Whatever information I get about the brand, I always share.	0.866					
	LR2	I let other people know what I knew.	0.859					
	LR3	The experience that I have had with the brand was shared.	0.824					
	LR4	The brand is recommended to other people.	0.801					
	SO1	The products/ services of that brand are recommended to other people.	0.818					
	SO2	Through the brand's content, I am driven to interact with other viewers of the brand's content.	0.791					
	SO3	My attention to the brand is on the rise.	0.824					
	SO4	The attitude to the brand has changed.	0.800					
	SR1	My view about the brand is broadening.	0.886					
	SR2	I am willing to contribute to	0.879					

		improving the performance of the brand.					
	SR3	I am willing to contribute to developing the products/ services of the brand.	0.892				

Table 3. Discriminant Validity

	Content Marketing	Customer Engagement
Content Marketing	0.844	
Customer Engagement	0.794	0.815

Table 4. Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.085	0.085
d_ULS	4.018	4.018
d_G	1.997	1.997
Chi-Square	2292.925	2292.925
NFI	0.753	0.753
rms Theta		0.173

The model fit result displayed above in Table 4 indicates that the NFI value of 0.753 is less than 0.9 and the RMS theta, or root mean square theta, value of 0.173 is bigger than 0.102. These two model evaluations show that the model fit is not up to par with the requirements for model fit. However, the model fits the data according to the standardized root mean square-SRMR value, which is 0.085 and less than 0.10 (Henseler et al., 2015). Consequently, it may be said that the model fit fulfills the requirements for the data.

Table 5. Structural Model Assessment

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
CM -> CE	0.794	0.796	0.025	32.137	0.000

After the good results of the measurement model, assumptions in the structural model were checked: Figure 2. In order to determine the path coefficient's statistical significance, effect magnitude and T-value, bootstrapping was used with 5000 samples (Jeon et al., 2019). The results of the overall structural model and hypothesis testing are reported in Table 5. The influence of customer interaction on content marketing is favorable and substantial ($\beta = 0.794$; p <0.000 and T-value = 32.137).
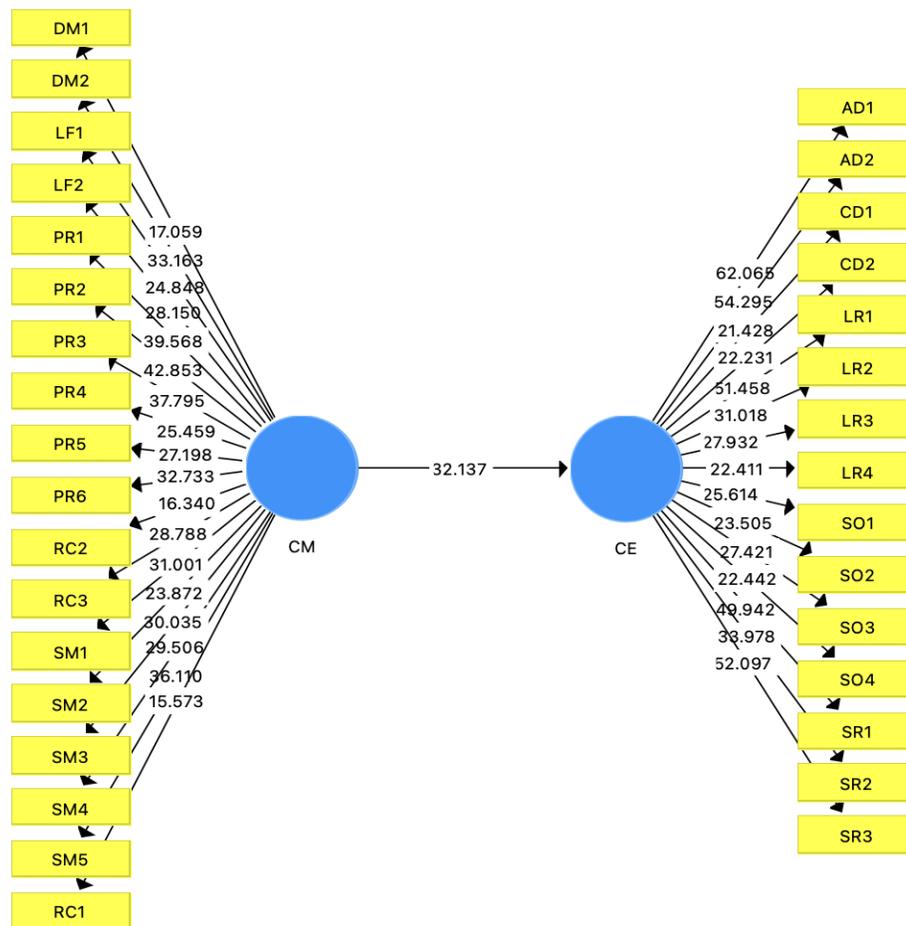
Figure 2. The Assessment of the Research Model

DISCUSSION

Content marketing is one of the most effective methods for promoting online interaction, which first appeared simultaneously as social media (Bunpis & Haron, 2014). TikTok has become a social media phenomenon, especially among younger people. One approach that marketers employ as part of their marketing plan to present and advertise goods and services to customers is content creation (Amalia & Lubis, 2020). According to Febrian et al. (2021), using digital content marketing has a big impact on customers' perceptions of information as advertising or as a marketing communication activity. TikTok content marketing has emerged as a vital instrument for companies looking to interact with their audience. This is particularly relevant for Generation Z, a group known for their digital nativity and significant online presence. In Indonesia, a country with a large and rapidly growing internet user base, understanding how content marketing in TikTok influences customer engagement, especially among male Generation Z, is vital for businesses aiming to capture this market segment. Looking more closely at the statistics from the prior research (Khoon, 2024), it indicates that the Indonesian TikTok user base is evenly split across genders, consisting of 46% female and 54% male users. It totally supports this research's finding that the customer engagement state of male Generation Z is significantly impacted by TikTok content marketing. Authenticity plays a major role in shaping Generation Z's view and engagement with content marketing initiatives, as they actively participate in them (Singh, 2023). Kurniawan et al. (2022), Prasetya & Susilo (2022) and Putri et al. (2022) also emphasizes how content marketing has a significant impact on customer engagement.

Prior research using Instagram as the media social media tool indicates the most important influencing elements of customer engagement are varied information and easily understood content in Instagram about its content marketing (Fahimah & Ningsih, 2022). Additionally, Litmanen & Sari (2021) suggests that content marketing may influence Instagram user engagement based on the findings. When viewed from Instagram elements, persuasive content has a greater

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engagement rate than other digital content marketing (Khairani & Fachira, 2021). The results of Bunpis & Haron (2014) also show how content marketing affects consumer brand engagement with an online herbal cosmetics business in Thailand. It also works on e-commerce, as another supporting research indicates that e-commerce has to build content marketing strategies since both of these approaches positively affect consumer engagement, which includes motivating e-commerce users to refer the brand to other users (Bening & Kurniawati, 2019). As the findings from Chandra & Sari (2021) indicated that brands are competitive in the digital marketing era and increase customer engagement, Lazada needs to focus on creating high-quality content. This is especially true in other e-commerce domains. Generation Z respondents' inclination towards video content is consistent with their digital behaviors and the widespread use of sites like YouTube and TikTok (Thakur & D'Cunha, 2024).

Generation Z must be aware of and involved with others (PrakashYadav & Rai, 2017). Generation Z is drawn in and becomes more engaged with video content because it is aesthetically pleasing and engaging. According to Haan (2024), video content performs better than other content marketing formats and represents a shift in consumer preferences toward audiovisual storytelling as the primary means of engaging audiences. Supported by Puzon et al. (2023) findings, Metro Manila's Generation Z TikTok viewers are open to watching and learning from interesting videos. They have saved the content and will use it again if necessary (Bunpis & Haron, 2014). TikTok video ads caused Generation Z to experience both pleasant and negative feelings when watching the content (Araujo et al., 2022). To successfully target this audience, brands should consider adding video content to their content marketing campaigns. Brands can influence the attitude of Generation Z towards products and create an affinity that drives them to purchase by providing information that is engaging and relevant (Schmitt, 2023). When targeting Generation Z, businesses get motivated by the fact that this generation commands a larger purchasing power than other generations (Djafarova & Foots, 2022).

CONCLUSION

Based on the above-mentioned findings, which were discussed and elaborated on in the former part, several conclusions could be drawn with respect to this study. First of all, it is revealed that TikTok content marketing significantly enhances customer engagement among the male generation Z in Indonesia. The active participation of this demographic on this platform underlines the need for targeted content strategies. By leveraging TikTok's unique features and keeping the taste of young Indonesian males in mind, it becomes possible to arrest their attention effectively, drive high levels of engagement, and build better relationships with them. The finding supports the critical role played by content marketing with tailored approaches toward reaching and engaging the important audience segment. This implies that, with the proper use of TikTok's unique features and a strong ear for trending content, it will be possible to fashion highly engaging and very relevant campaigns that best drive brand value. Since it links brands with diverse audiences through creative, engaging content, this platform becomes one of the most important tools within any modern strategy. The findings show just how big of a difference a well-executed TikTok content marketing strategy can make in increasing brand awareness, building customer engagement, and resulting in meaningful interactions with target audiences. It proves that TikTok content marketing has a significant effect on the engagement of clients among Indonesian male Generation Z. Conclusively, the study confirms the utility of using targeted demographic research to gain deeper insights into customer engagement strategies and highlights the important role of TikTok in interacting with Indonesian male Generation Z.

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

The research findings allowed several key managerial implications. Due to the high significance of content marketing influence on TikTok regarding user engagement, brands targeting Indonesian male Generation Z should therefore redirect more resources to increased efforts regarding the creation of engaging content on TikTok. This strategic shift will mean an increase in financial investment and specialized creative teams focused on TikTok content creation. It should be a pool of personnel that clearly comprehends the dynamics, trends, and behavior of users on the platform to develop quality content that is attention-grabbing and relevant to the audience. This will imply the acquisition of a creative workforce with expertise in producing short video and storytelling expertise for effective digital engagement. These specialists, along with the state-of-the-art video editing, animation, and analytics tools and technologies, would help them come up with verses

that are both compelling and data-driven for their content strategy. The focus on content creation for TikTok is full-time, and it ensures the consistent training for creative innovations in trends and formats, thereby giving room for brands to stay up-to-date in a nature-changing digital ecosystem. In so doing, companies can aid in helping to ensure that their content grabs the male Generation Z's attention and drives continued engagement, which can further enhance the effect on the increase in brand connection for further amplified loyalty within this influential category. Second, picking up the fact that male Gen Z in Indonesia is highly engaged when it comes to TikTok marketing, brands must develop a strategy for the kind of content that fits their interest and affinities. This can be ensured by continuously listening to TikTok to make sense of emerging trends or what viral content pieces are dominating that catch the target market's fancy: this can be in the form of popular music tracks, memes, dance challenges, or culturally relevant themes. Elements that make the content strategy of a brand more up-to-date and relevant include the following: Brands should take into consideration the cultural context and peculiarities of Indonesian male Gen Z so that the content really leads back to the local values, humor, and interests. Generating engagement highly increases interactiveness and creates participatory content. Brands may generate test cases, various contests, and interactive videos that would stimulate young male users to participate.

The deepness of such findings can be further extended by including in the analysis other social media platforms and other age groups, therefore giving wider insights and broader managerial implications. While TikTok really works wonders with high engagement for Indonesian male Gen Z, other platforms like Instagram or YouTube, or even X, may be more inclusive for larger audience segments or other types of content engagement. For example, Instagram is known for visual storytelling and influencer marketing, while YouTube focuses on longer-form video content; both these are things that could complement a TikTok strategy. This would also help them in creating more holistic campaigns that would effectively integrate the other age groups, such as Millennials and Generation X. These other groups may have different content preferences, such as informative content or user reviews, and may be more engaged on platforms other than TikTok. Brands should track the effect of each of these platforms on the different demographics in terms of engagement and purchasing decisions. Analyzing both on-and-off-platform engagement could yield even more interesting trends in user behavior platform migration or finding ways to reuse and re-purpose content to extend reach. The diversified strategy would ensure that brands capture a greater market share for better engagement across multiple touchpoints. This would include specialized teams acquainted not only with TikTok but also with the subtlety of other social platforms, and target age groups, for a wholesome digital presence. In addition, by expanding the attention given to TikTok and Indonesian male Gen Z, brands will be given new opportunities to increase loyalty, boost engagement, and reinforce positionings in a digital space that never stops changing.

LIMITATION

These are three limitations of this research. First, it may not generalize to the female segment of Generation Z or older generations or other segment contexts. The focus on this small scope might lead to a biased understanding of how content marketing influences customer engagement within a broader audience. Second, focusing on only TikTok can let one generalize the results only to other social media like Instagram, Facebook, X, or YouTube. Thus, these may only be partially transferable, as different platforms have unique features and user behaviors that could exert different influences on the effectiveness of content marketing strategies. Third, failing to include other possible influencing factors as variables could mean that not every element affecting customer engagement was captured in this research. Additional variables and dimensions would have to be added to the framework to include these, and this would add further depth of understanding and richer insights into the dynamics of content marketing.

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