

ANALYSIS OF THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING ON MARKETING PERFORMANCE WITH CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT AS MEDIATION AT BIMBEL RUANG GURU JEPARA

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Abstract: Social media marketing has emerged as a crucial strategy in the digital era, especially for service industries such as education. The tutoring industry in Indonesia, including Bimbel Ruang Guru Jepara, is experiencing rapid growth due to increasing academic demands and high internet penetration among students and parents. In this competitive landscape, social media platforms serve not only as communication tools but also as effective channels to promote services, build brand image, and engage consumers. Hence, it is important to validate how social media marketing strategies contribute to marketing performance in emerging markets like Indonesia. The present study, conducted with 120 respondents who are users of Bimbel Ruang Guru Jepara, aims to examine the influence of Social Media Marketing (SMM) on Marketing Performance (MP), with Customer Engagement (CE) as a mediating variable. Using Structural Equation Modeling with SmartPLS 4.0, the study found that SMM significantly influences both CE and MP. Furthermore, CE also has a significant positive effect on MP and successfully mediates the relationship between SMM and MP. Overall, the tested model explains 58% of the variation in marketing performance, indicating a moderate explanatory power. The findings of this study provide valuable insights for education service providers, emphasizing that building active engagement with consumers is as critical as promotional activities to achieve sustainable marketing performance in digital markets.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing Customer Engagement Marketing Performance Tutoring Industry Digital Strategy.

1. Introduction

The increasing academic demands are fueling the rapid growth of the tutoring industry (bimbingan belajar or bimbel) in Indonesia, including in the Jepara region. However, the market conditions in the digital era present both challenges and new opportunities for service providers. This major shift in the marketing landscape is driven by advancements in information technology, particularly social media, which has evolved from being merely a personal communication tool to a highly effective platform for brand building and promotional activities. This phenomenon is further intensified by the high rate of internet use among students and parents in Indonesia, making social media their primary source of information and interaction with education service providers (Social, 2023).

Traditional marketing often has limitations in reaching more specific audiences and interacting directly with prospective students and parents. Social Media Marketing (SMM) offers a solution by enabling tutoring centers like Ruang Guru to promote their programs, build brand image, and interact with potential users in real-time. Platforms such as Instagram, Facebook, and TikTok provide a space for tutoring centers to showcase program excellence, student testimonials, and study tips and tricks, which can increase trust and interest among prospective

users (Felix et al., 2017). The utilization of SMM is highly relevant for education service providers as it offers a relatively affordable marketing solution with the potential for broad reach (Koay et al., 2020).

However, the effectiveness of SMM is not solely measured by the volume of content uploaded or the number of followers. The success of SMM heavily relies on the ability to generate high customer engagement. Customer engagement refers to the active interaction, participation, and emotional involvement of students and parents with the brand or service through social media (Brodie et al., 2011). This interaction can take the form of likes, comments, shares, or even positive reviews that, directly or indirectly, contribute to the decision to enroll and to customer loyalty. The current digital environment demands that brands not only present service information but also build a dialogue and emotional connection with consumers to create meaningful engagement (Farhat et al., 2021).

Several previous studies have shown that customer engagement has a significant impact on marketing performance (Yusuf et al., 2022). (Marolt et al., 2020) also emphasize the importance of enterprise-initiated customer engagement as a driver for improving marketing performance. Meanwhile, other research has examined the influence of social media marketing on customer engagement and its various impacts (Arifin, 2022). Nevertheless, there remains a research gap in examining the role of social media marketing as an independent variable in building customer engagement, which then impacts overall marketing performance, particularly within the context of the tutoring industry. This research aims to fill that gap by simultaneously testing the relationship model between these three variables at the Ruang Guru Tutoring Center in Jepara, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of how SMM can optimize customer engagement and contribute to marketing success in the digital era.

2. Literature Review

Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a company's effort to utilize social media platforms to promote products and build a community within them (Agung, 2022). This strategy is not merely about disseminating information but also about creating meaningful interaction with the audience. Its indicators include Participation & Involvement, Openness, Conversation, Connectedness, and Community (Sudiarti & Munawaroh, 2020).

Customer Engagement

Customer Engagement is a form of communication relationship or interaction that occurs between external parties, such as customers, and the company through various channels (Tan et al., 2024). It reflects how active and deep a customer's relationship is with a brand. Its indicators include dialogue, openness, interaction, exchange of ideas, co-creation of value, and emotional connection (Kankam-Kwarteng et al., 2021).

Marketing Performance

Marketing Performance is the achievement of marketing-related goals that have a positive impact on the overall business performance (Purwanto & Perkasa, 2022). Its indicators include customer satisfaction, customer interest in the company's survival, positive word of mouth, the ability to identify and retain profitable customers, and strategies to increase customer value (Kankam-Kwarteng et al., 2021).

Hypothesis Formulation

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Marketing Performance

Research by Setiadi (2023) shows that SMM has a positive and significant influence on Marketing Performance. Similarly, research by Tobing & Santoso (2024) also reveals a significant influence of SMM on the improvement of Marketing Performance in the service sector.

H1: Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Marketing Performance.

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Engagement

Research by Bilal et al. (2023) found that SMM has a positive influence on Customer Engagement, where marketing activities on social media are capable of increasing customer involvement. A similar finding was reported by Oktaviani & Gunarto (2023) regarding e-commerce users.

H2: Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Customer Engagement.

The Effect of Customer Engagement on Marketing Performance

Research by Yusuf et al. (2022) proves that Customer Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Marketing Performance. Hasibuan & Najmudin (2024), in the context of media, also show that Customer Engagement directly impacts the improvement of Marketing Performance through digital interaction.

H3: Customer Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Marketing Performance.

3. Method

This research employs a quantitative approach to test the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance, which is mediated by customer engagement, among users of the Ruang Guru Tutoring Center services in Jepara. Data was collected via a questionnaire distributed to respondents. The sampling technique used is Probability Sampling with the simple random sampling method.

The sample size is 120 respondents, which will be measured using the Ferdinan formula, where the determination of a representative sample size depends on the number of indicators multiplied by 5 to 10 (Ferdinan, 2006). The minimum sample size for this research is:

$$\begin{aligned}\text{Minimum Sample} &= \text{Total indicator} \times 8 \\ &= 15 \times 8 \\ &= 120\end{aligned}$$

Therefore, referring to the above calculation, this research will involve 120 respondents.

4. Results And Discussion

Respondent Description

Respondents in this study are classified based on several relevant demographic characteristics. These characteristics include gender, age, and education, with the following details:

Table 1. Respondents Description

Cathegory	Description	Total	Percentage
Gender	Male	60	50%
	Female	60	50%
	Total	120	100%
Age	14 Years Old	6	5%
	15 Years Old	7	12%
	16 Years Old	14	12%
	17 Years Old	21	34%
	18 Years Old	52	43%
	Total	120	100%
Education	SMAN	57	49%
	SMK	19	16%
	MA	16	13%
	SMAIT	15	12%
	SMPN	5	4%
	MTS	4	3%
	SMPIT	4	3%
	Total	120	100%

Based on the table, the number of respondents is balanced between males and females, with 60 people each, or 50%. In terms of age, the majority of respondents are in the 18-year-old group at 43% and the 17-year-old group at 34%, while the youngest age groups, 14 and 15 years old, only represent a small fraction. This indicates that the respondents are predominantly late adolescents.

Regarding educational background, most respondents are from SMAN (Public Senior High School) (49%), followed by SMK (Vocational High School) (16%), MA (Islamic Senior High School) (13%), and SMAIT (Integrated Islamic Senior High School) (12%). The remainder are from the Junior High School level, such as SMPN, MTs, and SMPIT, with a relatively small percentage. Overall, this data portrays a respondent profile that is balanced in gender, dominated by late adolescents, and mostly from the upper-secondary education level.

Measurement Model Testing (Outer Model)

This research uses SmartPLS version 4.0 for data processing. The PLS Algorithm Model in the measurement model (outer model) for this study is presented in Figure 1 below:

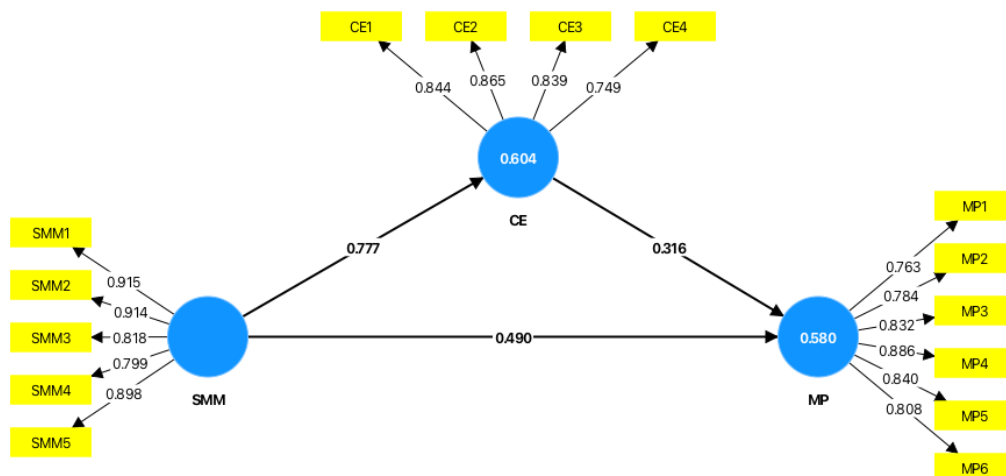


Figure 1. PLS Algorithm Model

Source: SmartPLS version 4.0

The testing of the measurement model (outer model) in this research uses two criteria for data analysis, namely convergent validity and reliability, which are explained as follows:

Convergent Validity and Reliability Test

The results of the convergent validity test in this research can be observed using the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. The reliability test in this study is conducted using the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha methods, which are summarized in Table 2 below.

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Test

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Description
SMM	0,919	0,923	0,757	Valid & reliabel
CE	0,845	0,863	0,682	Valid & reliabel
MP	0,902	0,905	0,672	Valid & reliabel

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Based on Table 2, the overall Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for the research variables are > 0.5 . Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement indicators for each latent variable are convergent valid. The Cronbach's alpha values are > 0.7 , and the composite reliability values are > 0.7 . Thus, all variables or instruments used as measurement tools for this research are declared reliable.

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model)

Coefficient of Determination (R-square)

The R-square test is used to indicate the extent of the impact of independent variables on the dependent variable. An R-square value of 0.67 is considered a strong effect, 0.33 is considered a moderate effect, and 0.19 is considered a weak effect. The results of the Coefficient of Determination (R-square) for this research are presented in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Coefficient of Determination (R-Square) Results

Construct	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
CE	0,604	0,600
MP	0,580	0,573

Source: Primary data processed, 2025

Based on the results in Table 3, the R-square value for Marketing Performance is 0.580, while the R-square adjusted value is 0.573. This indicates that all exogenous constructs together have an impact of 58% on Y, which can be considered a moderate effect. The remaining 42% can be explained by other variables and indicators not detailed in this research.

Q-Square Analysis

In this research model, the magnitude of the model evaluation can be seen from the Q-square predictive relevance. A Q-square value greater than 0 (zero) indicates that the model has sufficient predictive relevance. Conversely, if the Q-square value is less than 0, the model is considered to have low predictive relevance. The results are as follows:

Table 4. Q-Square Values

Construct	SSO	SSE	Q² (=1-SSE/SSO)
SMM	600,000	223,413	0,628
CE	480,000	259,472	0,459
MP	720,000	333,289	0,537

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2025

The results from Table 4 show a Q-square value of $0.537 > 0$ for Marketing Performance. This indicates that the model has predictive relevance or, in other words, has good observed values. Therefore, this model is deemed to have predictive relevance.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in this research is performed by examining the bootstrapping model, which can be seen in Figure 2 below.

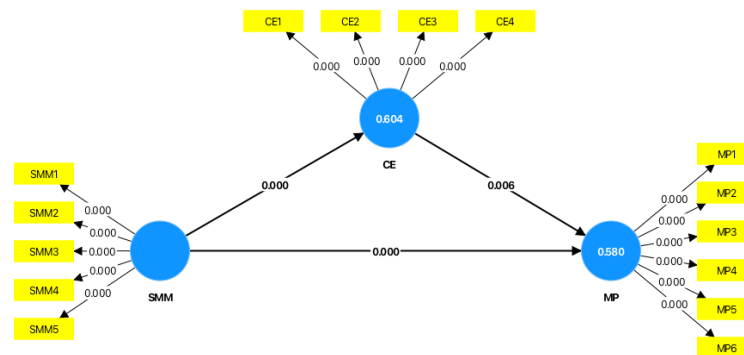


Figure 2. PLS Bootstrapping Model

Source: SmartPLS 4

Figure 2 represents the bootstrapping model in this research, which includes the testing of direct effects and the testing of specific indirect effects, with the following explanation.

Results of Direct Effect Testing

The results of the direct effect testing are obtained by examining the original sample and t-statistics values. A measurement is considered significant if the t-statistic is > 1.65 at a 5% significance level and the p-value is < 0.05 . The path coefficients values for the direct effects are shown in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Path Coefficients (Direct Effect)

Variabel	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
SMM -> MP	0,490	0,498	0,112	4,359	0,000
SMM -> CE	0,777	0,776	0,048	16,347	0,000
CE -> MP	0,316	0,316	0,114	2,760	0,006

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2025

Based on Table 5, the results of the direct effect testing are known, with the following explanation.

Based on the result, the original sample value is 0.490, and the t-statistics value is 4.359, which is > 1.65 , with a p-value of 0.000, which is < 0.05 . This result means that the first hypothesis, which states that social media marketing has a positive effect on marketing performance, is accepted. This finding indicates that social media marketing directly and significantly influences marketing performance.

Based on the result, the original sample value is 0.777, and the t-statistics value is 16.347, which is > 1.65 , with a p-value of 0.000, which is < 0.05 . This result means that the second hypothesis, which states that social media marketing has a positive effect on customer engagement, is accepted. This finding in the research indicates that social media marketing directly and significantly influences customer engagement.

Based on the result, the original sample value is 0.316, and the t-statistics value is 2.760, which is >1.65 , with a p-value of 0.006, which is <0.05 . This result means that the third hypothesis, which states that customer engagement has a positive effect on marketing performance, is accepted. This finding in the research indicates that customer engagement directly and significantly influences marketing performance.

Results of Specific Indirect Effect Testing

The testing of the indirect effect (mediation) in this research can be observed from the original sample and t-statistics values in the specific indirect effect. A measurement is considered significant if the t-statistic is >1.65 at a 5% significance level and the p-value is <0.05 . The specific indirect effect values are obtained through the bootstrapping method and are shown in Table 6 below:

Table 5. Specific Indirect Effect

Variabel	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics ($O/STDEV$)	P Values
SMM -> CE -> MP	0,245	0,243	0,086	2,870	0,004

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2025

Based on Table 6 above, the results of the indirect effect testing are found, with the following explanation

Based on the result, the original sample value is 0.245, and the t-statistics value is 2.870, which is >1.65 , with a p-value of 0.004, which is <0.05 . Based on this finding, the hypothesis stating that customer engagement mediates the influence of social media marketing on marketing performance is accepted. This result indicates that customer engagement is proven to indirectly mediate the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance.

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Marketing Performance

The research results show that Social Media Marketing (SMM) has a positive and significant effect on the Marketing Performance of the Ruang Guru Tutoring Center in Jepara. This means that marketing strategies implemented through social media, such as promoting flagship programs, sharing student testimonials, and educational content, directly improve their marketing performance. This finding is consistent with the research by Setiadi (2023) and Tobing & Santoso (2024). Thus, if Ruang Guru Jepara actively and strategically utilizes social media, it will positively impact the increase in registrations, wider market reach in Jepara, and stronger brand image.

The Effect of Social Media Marketing on Customer Engagement

The test results show that Social Media Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Customer Engagement. This finding indicates that the marketing activities carried out by Ruang Guru Jepara on social media, such as Q&A sessions with tutors, interactive quizzes, or sharing alumni success stories, are able to increase the emotional and cognitive involvement of students and parents. This aligns with research by Bilal et al. (2023) and Oktaviani & Gunarto (2023). When Ruang Guru consistently builds a dialogue and creates a connection with its audience, the level of user engagement will increase, manifested in the form of likes, comments, and positive reviews.

The Effect of Customer Engagement on Marketing Performance

Based on the research results, Customer Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Marketing Performance. This suggests that the higher the level of student and parent

involvement with the Ruang Guru brand, the better the marketing performance achieved. This finding is supported by research from Yusuf et al. (2022) and Hasibuan & Najmudin (2024). Therefore, when Ruang Guru is able to create a two-way dialogue and a strong connection with its users, this will increase satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth recommendations, ultimately boosting marketing performance.

The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement

The mediation test results show that Customer Engagement significantly mediates the influence of Social Media Marketing on Marketing Performance. This is a crucial finding that explains that Social Media Marketing does not only have a direct impact but also an indirect one through its role in building user engagement. In other words, the strength of Ruang Guru's social media strategy lies not just in advertising but in its ability to build an active community. This deep engagement is what translates into increased satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendations, thereby improving overall Marketing Performance.

5. Conclusion

This research concludes that the marketing success of the Ruang Guru Tutoring Center in Jepara in the digital era is a multifaceted process that is not solely driven by promotional activities but is crucially shaped by the ability to build and maintain customer engagement. The analysis results confirm that Social Media Marketing (SMM) is a fundamental foundation that drives marketing performance. SMM significantly affects Marketing Performance both directly and indirectly.

The most fundamental finding of this study is the central role of Customer Engagement as a mediator. It is proven that Social Media Marketing (original sample = 0.777; $t=16.347$) will first form an active engagement, participation, and emotional bond from students and parents. This engagement then becomes the main driver for the improvement of Marketing Performance (original sample = 0.316; $t=2.760$). In other words, Ruang Guru Jepara must not only disseminate promotional content but is also obligated to create dialogue and emotional relationships to win customer "involvement," which ultimately determines their marketing success.

Social Media Marketing also proved to have a direct effect on Marketing Performance (original sample = 0.490; $t=4.359$). The mediation test results confirm that Customer Engagement significantly channels the influence of Social Media Marketing on Marketing Performance (original sample = 0.245; $t=2.870$). Overall, the model tested in this research shows a moderate explanatory power, where the Social Media Marketing and Customer Engagement variables together are able to explain 58% ($R\text{-Square} = 0.580$) of the variance in Marketing Performance.

Based on these findings, this research provides strategic implications for the management of the Ruang Guru Tutoring Center in Jepara. Firstly, continuous efforts to create interactive and relevant content such as Q&A sessions, quizzes, or alumni success stories must be a priority to boost engagement. Secondly, marketing strategies should not only focus on information dissemination but must be directed towards building an active community and a two-way dialogue with the audience. Most importantly, the main focus must be placed on building deep customer engagement. This can be achieved by consistently building emotional and cognitive connections with students and parents, which will eventually enhance satisfaction, loyalty, and word-of-mouth promotion. Building engagement is the key to converting a social media audience into long-term loyal customers.

Future research is advised to explore other variables such as content quality, posting frequency, or the types of social media platforms used to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors that can optimize marketing performance in the tutoring industry.

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