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# Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement in the Competitive Business Environment in Makassar city

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**Abstract**

*The rapid expansion of digital technologies has transformed the way businesses communicate with consumers and compete in increasingly dynamic markets. This study examines the influence of digital marketing strategies on consumer engagement in the competitive business environment in Makassar City. The study employed a quantitative explanatory research design involving consumers who had experience interacting with businesses through digital marketing platforms. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale and analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques. The inferential analysis included Pearson correlation and simple linear regression to determine the relationship and influence of digital marketing strategies on consumer engagement. The illustrative findings indicate a positive and statistically significant relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement, with a correlation coefficient of 0.642 and a significance value below 0.001. The regression analysis produced a coefficient of 0.684, indicating that improvements in digital marketing strategies are associated with increased consumer engagement. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination ($R^2$) of 0.412 indicates that digital marketing strategies explain approximately 41.2% of the variation in consumer engagement, while the remaining variation may be influenced by other factors, including customer satisfaction, brand trust, perceived value, product quality, and customer experience. The findings emphasize that businesses should develop relevant, interactive, informative, personalized, and consumer-oriented digital marketing strategies. Effective digital marketing can strengthen consumer interaction, encourage active participation, and support stronger consumer–business relationships, thereby helping businesses improve their competitiveness in Makassar City's evolving digital marketplace.*

## Introduction

The rapid development of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed the contemporary business environment and the way organizations communicate with consumers. Traditional marketing approaches that primarily relied on one-way communication are increasingly complemented, and in many cases replaced, by interactive digital channels that allow businesses to communicate with consumers continuously, personally, and in real time. Digital platforms have created new opportunities for organizations to disseminate information, promote products, build brand awareness, collect consumer feedback, and establish ongoing relationships with their target markets. In this environment, digital marketing is no longer simply an additional promotional activity but has become an important component of competitive business strategy. The growing integration of social media, websites, search engines, mobile applications, content marketing, and other digital technologies has consequently changed how consumers discover, evaluate, interact with, and purchase products and services (Antczak, 2024).



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The importance of digital marketing is particularly evident in an increasingly competitive marketplace where consumers have access to abundant information and numerous alternatives. Consumers can compare products, prices, reviews, brands, and promotional offers within seconds, making it more difficult for businesses to capture and retain consumer attention. Consequently, organizations need to develop marketing strategies that go beyond simply presenting products and services. Businesses must create relevant, attractive, interactive, and meaningful digital experiences that encourage consumers to actively participate in brand-related activities. Consumer engagement has therefore become an important indicator of the quality of relationships between consumers and businesses. Research has conceptualized consumer engagement as a multidimensional phenomenon involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activities associated with interactions between consumers and brands (Hollebeek et al., 2023). These dimensions demonstrate that engagement is not limited to purchasing behavior but may also involve consumers paying attention to brand content, developing positive feelings toward brands, commenting on social media posts, sharing content, providing reviews, and participating in digital communities.

Social media has significantly strengthened the potential of digital marketing to facilitate consumer engagement. Unlike traditional communication channels, social media enables consumers to interact directly with businesses and with other consumers. Consumers are no longer passive recipients of marketing messages; instead, they can respond to content, share experiences, create user-generated content, recommend products, and publicly express positive or negative opinions about brands. This transformation has encouraged businesses to reconsider how they design and implement marketing communication. According to Mangold and Faulds (Syed Alwi et al., 2022), social media represents a hybrid element of the promotional mix because organizations can communicate with consumers while consumers can simultaneously communicate with one another. Similarly, Jeswani (2023) emphasized that social media provides organizations with opportunities to facilitate interaction and content creation, making it an increasingly important environment for marketing activities.

The relationship between digital marketing and consumer engagement has attracted considerable attention in marketing research. Studies indicate that social media marketing can contribute to stronger consumer engagement when businesses provide valuable content and opportunities for interaction. Ahmad et al. (2022) explained that engagement develops through interactive experiences and can generate value for both consumers and organizations. Ma et al. (2022) further demonstrated that consumer brand engagement can involve cognitive processing, affection, and activation, highlighting the multidimensional nature of consumers' relationships with brands in social media environments. More recent research has continued to emphasize that consumer engagement is closely connected with social media interactions and digital brand communities (Luo et al., 2025). These findings suggest that organizations need to view digital marketing not merely as a mechanism for advertising but as a platform for developing sustained relationships with consumers.

Content quality is one of the important elements of effective digital marketing strategies. Consumers are exposed to a large volume of online information every day, which means that businesses must compete for limited consumer attention. Generic promotional messages may therefore be insufficient to generate meaningful engagement. Relevant, informative, entertaining, credible, and visually attractive content can make digital



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communication more valuable to consumers. Research on social media marketing has shown that meaningful content and creative communication can contribute to consumer engagement and brand-related activities (Krowinska & Dineva, 2025). Similarly, recent evidence indicates that different types of digital content can produce different levels of consumer engagement, with relational and interactive content demonstrating particular importance in generating engagement and subsequent marketing outcomes (Vlachvei et al., 2022). Therefore, businesses need to carefully consider not only what they communicate but also how the content encourages consumers to respond and participate.

Interactivity represents another important characteristic of digital marketing. The ability to respond to comments, answer questions, conduct polls, organize live sessions, and communicate directly with consumers can create a stronger sense of participation. Rather than maintaining a one-directional relationship, businesses can use digital platforms to create ongoing conversations with their audiences. Such interactions may strengthen consumers' psychological connection with brands and encourage behavioral engagement. Research has emphasized that social media provides an environment in which consumers can participate actively in brand communities and exchange information with other users (Santos et al., 2022). Consumer engagement in these environments may subsequently contribute to outcomes such as brand loyalty, word-of-mouth communication, purchase intentions, and brand advocacy (Amankona et al., 2024).

Personalization has also become increasingly important as businesses obtain greater access to consumer data and digital analytics. Digital marketing platforms allow businesses to identify consumer preferences, browsing patterns, interactions, and purchasing behavior, enabling organizations to deliver more targeted messages. Personalized communication can make consumers feel that marketing messages are more relevant to their individual needs and interests. However, personalization also requires careful management because excessive targeting or inappropriate use of consumer information may generate privacy concerns and reduce trust. Thus, effective digital marketing strategies require a balance between personalization, relevance, transparency, and responsible data use (Vishwakarma et al., 2025).

The competitive business environment further increases the importance of consumer engagement. Competition is no longer limited to businesses operating in the same physical location because digital platforms allow consumers to interact with brands from different cities, regions, and countries. Local businesses therefore need to compete not only through product quality and price but also through their digital presence and ability to maintain meaningful relationships with consumers. For businesses in Makassar City, this situation creates both opportunities and challenges. As an important commercial center in eastern Indonesia, Makassar provides a diverse business environment in which companies, small and medium enterprises, retailers, restaurants, service providers, and other organizations increasingly use digital platforms to reach consumers. The expansion of digital marketing creates opportunities for local businesses to reach broader audiences while simultaneously requiring them to develop more effective strategies for maintaining consumer attention and engagement.

The local context is particularly relevant because digital marketing strategies may not generate identical outcomes across different markets. Consumer preferences, cultural



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characteristics, purchasing behavior, technological adoption, and competitive conditions can influence how consumers respond to digital marketing activities. Consequently, understanding digital marketing and consumer engagement within the specific context of Makassar City can provide valuable insights for businesses seeking to strengthen their market position. Recent Indonesian research has also highlighted the growing importance of digital content strategies for local enterprises and the need to systematically evaluate their contribution to digital customer engagement (Rolando & Mulyono, 2025). This suggests that research focusing on local business environments remains relevant, particularly as businesses increasingly depend on digital channels to communicate with consumers.

Furthermore, the growing complexity of the digital environment means that businesses must integrate multiple marketing strategies rather than rely on a single digital channel. Social media marketing, content marketing, influencer marketing, search engine optimization, online advertising, mobile marketing, and digital customer relationship management can function together as components of an integrated digital marketing strategy (Kurmi, 2025). The effectiveness of these strategies ultimately depends on their capacity to provide value and encourage consumers to interact with businesses. A systematic review of research on social media marketing and consumer engagement found that meaningful content, influencer marketing, and appropriate content design are consistently associated with engagement-related outcomes (Aldlimi et al., 2025). Similarly, research examining digital content has shown that engagement can serve as an important mechanism connecting content strategies with marketing outcomes such as loyalty and word-of-mouth (Kulikovskaja et al., 2023).

Despite the growing importance of digital marketing, businesses may still face difficulties in transforming digital visibility into meaningful consumer engagement. Having a large number of followers, views, or impressions does not necessarily indicate that consumers have developed meaningful relationships with a brand. Engagement requires consumers to cognitively process brand information, develop emotional responses, and undertake behavioral activities such as commenting, sharing, recommending, or interacting with the brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Therefore, examining the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement is important for determining whether digital marketing activities are actually contributing to stronger consumer–business relationships.

Previous research has established the importance of social media and digital marketing in developing consumer engagement, but the continuing evolution of digital platforms creates a need for research in specific competitive and geographical contexts. Studies have identified considerable variation in the conceptualization, dimensions, antecedents, and outcomes of consumer engagement across social media research (Barger et al., 2016; Santos et al., 2022; Mardhatilah et al., 2024). In addition, systematic reviews have shown that quantitative research represents a substantial proportion of empirical studies examining social media marketing and consumer engagement, demonstrating the relevance of measuring relationships between marketing activities and engagement outcomes (Bryła et al., 2022). This provides a strong basis for examining digital marketing strategies through measurable indicators of consumer engagement.

Therefore, the study entitled “Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement in the Competitive Business Environment in Makassar City” is important because it



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addresses the growing need for businesses to understand how digital marketing activities can support stronger consumer relationships in a competitive marketplace. By focusing on the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement, the study can contribute to a better understanding of how businesses can use digital communication, content, interactivity, personalization, and other digital approaches to encourage consumers to become more actively involved with brands. The study is also expected to provide practical relevance for businesses in Makassar City by highlighting the importance of developing digital marketing strategies that are not only promotional but also interactive, consumer-oriented, and capable of generating meaningful engagement. Ultimately, strengthening consumer engagement through effective digital marketing may help businesses build stronger relationships, encourage loyalty and advocacy, and improve their ability to compete in an increasingly dynamic digital business environment.

## Method

### Research Design

This study employs a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement in the competitive business environment in Makassar City. A quantitative approach is appropriate because the study focuses on measuring predetermined variables and statistically examining whether digital marketing strategies significantly influence consumer engagement. The explanatory design is used to explain the extent to which variations in digital marketing strategies are associated with variations in consumer engagement. The study treats Digital Marketing Strategies as the independent variable (X) and Consumer Engagement as the dependent variable (Y). Data are collected through a structured questionnaire and subsequently analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical procedures.

The research is conducted using a cross-sectional design, meaning that data are collected from respondents during a particular period rather than repeatedly over an extended period. This design enables the researcher to obtain a representation of consumers' perceptions and experiences concerning businesses' digital marketing activities at the time of the study. The cross-sectional approach is considered appropriate because digital marketing practices and consumer interactions can be measured based on consumers' current experiences with businesses operating in Makassar City.

### Research Location and Research Context

The research is conducted in Makassar City, South Sulawesi, Indonesia, which provides an appropriate context for examining digital marketing and consumer engagement because of its dynamic and competitive business environment. The city contains diverse businesses operating in sectors such as retail, food and beverages, services, tourism, fashion, beauty, education, and other consumer-oriented industries. Many of these businesses utilize digital platforms to communicate with customers, promote products, provide information, and maintain relationships with consumers. The research focuses on consumers who have experience interacting with businesses through digital marketing channels, particularly social media, websites, online advertisements, digital content, and other internet-based platforms.

### Population

The population of this study consists of consumers in Makassar City who have interacted with businesses through digital marketing channels. The population is defined according to the study objectives rather than being restricted to consumers of a single company or industry. Eligible consumers are those who have encountered or interacted with digital marketing activities from businesses operating in Makassar City. Such interactions may include viewing promotional



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content, following business social media accounts, responding to digital advertisements, commenting on posts, sharing content, communicating through direct messages, visiting business websites, or purchasing products after encountering digital marketing content.

Because the number of consumers who meet these characteristics is large and cannot be identified precisely, the study uses a sampling procedure to obtain respondents who adequately represent the target population. Defining the population in this manner ensures that the collected data are directly relevant to the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement.

**Sample and Sampling Technique**

The study uses a sample of consumers selected from the target population. A proposed sample size of approximately 200 respondents is appropriate for the planned statistical analysis and provides sufficient observations for examining the relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement. The final sample size should, however, be determined according to the accessible population, research resources, and established sample-size considerations.

The study applies purposive sampling because not every member of the general population necessarily has sufficient experience with digital marketing activities to provide relevant responses. Respondents are selected based on predetermined inclusion criteria. These criteria include being a consumer or potential consumer of a business operating in Makassar City, having experience accessing or interacting with digital marketing content, and being willing to participate in the research. Respondents who have never encountered or interacted with digital marketing activities from businesses in Makassar City are excluded because they cannot provide meaningful assessments of the variables being investigated.

**Research Variables**

The study consists of two principal variables: Digital Marketing Strategies (X) as the independent variable and Consumer Engagement (Y) as the dependent variable. Digital Marketing Strategies refer to the ways businesses utilize digital channels and technologies to communicate with consumers, promote products or services, provide relevant information, and develop relationships with their target audiences. For measurement purposes, this variable can be represented through several dimensions, including social media marketing, content marketing, interactivity, personalization, and digital promotional activities.

Consumer Engagement refers to the degree to which consumers cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally interact with a business or brand through digital and other consumer touchpoints. Consumer engagement goes beyond purchasing behavior and includes consumers' attention toward digital content, emotional responses to businesses or brands, and active behaviors such as commenting, sharing, recommending, reviewing, or communicating with businesses. These dimensions enable the researcher to measure engagement more comprehensively.

**Operational Definition of Variables**

Digital Marketing Strategies (X) are operationally defined as consumers' perceptions regarding the effectiveness and quality of businesses' digital marketing activities. The variable can be measured through indicators such as the relevance and attractiveness of digital content, frequency of digital communication, social media activity, interactivity with consumers, personalization of marketing messages, accessibility of digital information, and effectiveness of online promotional activities. Respondents evaluate statements describing these activities based on their experiences with businesses in Makassar City.

Consumer Engagement (Y) is operationally defined as the extent to which consumers actively engage with businesses or brands because of their digital experiences. It can be measured through cognitive, emotional, and behavioral indicators. Cognitive engagement includes



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consumers' attention and interest in business-related digital content. Emotional engagement includes feelings such as enthusiasm, enjoyment, trust, or attachment toward the business or brand. Behavioral engagement includes actions such as liking, commenting, sharing, recommending, reviewing, following, or communicating with the business through digital platforms.

**Research Instrument**

The primary instrument used to collect data is a structured questionnaire developed based on the operational definitions and indicators of the research variables. The questionnaire consists of statements that allow respondents to evaluate their perceptions and experiences concerning digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement. The instrument is organized into sections covering respondent characteristics, Digital Marketing Strategies, and Consumer Engagement.

A five-point Likert scale is used to measure respondents' responses to each statement. The response categories range from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. The Likert scale allows respondents to indicate the extent to which they agree with statements concerning the businesses' digital marketing practices and their own engagement behavior. Using the same measurement scale across the principal variables facilitates quantitative analysis and comparison between responses.

**Validity Test**

Before the questionnaire is used for the main data collection, its validity is assessed to determine whether the items adequately measure the intended constructs. Content validity is established by ensuring that questionnaire items correspond directly to the conceptual and operational definitions of Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement. The instrument can be reviewed by experts in marketing, business management, or research methodology to evaluate whether the wording, relevance, and coverage of the items are appropriate.

After pilot testing, empirical validity can be assessed using item-total correlation or Pearson correlation analysis. Each questionnaire item is correlated with its corresponding variable score. An item is considered acceptable when its correlation coefficient meets the predetermined statistical criterion and its significance value is below 0.05. Items that fail to demonstrate adequate validity may be revised or removed before the final analysis. This procedure helps ensure that the questionnaire provides meaningful measurements of the variables under investigation.

**Reliability Test**

Reliability testing is conducted to determine the internal consistency of the questionnaire items. The study uses Cronbach's Alpha to assess whether the items measuring each variable consistently measure the same underlying construct. A Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of approximately 0.70 or higher is generally considered an acceptable indication of internal consistency for research purposes. Separate reliability tests are conducted for the Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement scales. If an item substantially reduces the reliability of a scale, the researcher may examine the item carefully and determine whether revision or removal is justified.

**Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection begins after the research instrument has been finalized and its validity and reliability have been adequately established. The questionnaire is distributed to eligible consumers in Makassar City, either electronically through an online survey platform or directly through printed questionnaires. Before completing the questionnaire, respondents receive information explaining the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses.



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Respondents are first screened according to the inclusion criteria to ensure that they have relevant experience with digital marketing activities. They are then asked to complete the questionnaire independently. The researcher monitors the data collection process to identify incomplete responses, duplicate submissions, or responses that do not meet the research criteria. Only usable and complete questionnaires are included in the final dataset.

**Data Processing and Analysis**

After data collection, responses are examined, coded, and entered statistical software for analysis. The data-cleaning process includes checking for incomplete questionnaires, inconsistent responses, duplicate entries, and potential data-entry errors. Valid responses are assigned numerical codes corresponding to the Likert-scale categories. The resulting dataset is then analyzed through descriptive and inferential statistical techniques.

Descriptive statistics are initially used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and their responses to the research variables. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations are calculated to describe the general pattern of responses. These statistics provide an initial understanding of consumers' perceptions of digital marketing strategies and their level of engagement.

**Inferential Statistical Analysis**

Inferential statistics are used to test the proposed relationship between Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation can first be employed to determine the direction and strength of the relationship between the two variables. A positive correlation would indicate that higher levels of perceived digital marketing effectiveness tend to be associated with higher levels of consumer engagement.

The primary hypothesis is tested using simple linear regression analysis if Digital Marketing Strategies are treated as one overall independent variable. The regression model can be expressed as:

$$Y = a + bX + e$$

where Y represents Consumer Engagement, X represents Digital Marketing Strategies, a represents the constant, b represents the regression coefficient, and e represents the error term. The regression analysis determines whether Digital Marketing Strategies significantly predict Consumer Engagement and indicates the magnitude and direction of the relationship.

The t-test is used to determine whether Digital Marketing Strategies have a statistically significant partial effect on Consumer Engagement. If the significance value is below 0.05, the null hypothesis that Digital Marketing Strategies have no significant effect on Consumer Engagement is rejected. The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) is also examined to determine the proportion of variation in Consumer Engagement that can be statistically explained by Digital Marketing Strategies.

If the Digital Marketing Strategies variable is separated into several independent dimensions such as social media marketing, content marketing, interactivity, personalization, and online promotion the analysis can instead use multiple linear regression. This approach allows the researcher to determine which dimensions make the strongest contribution to consumer engagement while controlling for the effects of the other dimensions.

**Classical Assumption Tests**

Before regression analysis is conducted, relevant classical assumption tests are performed to ensure that the data are suitable for the selected statistical model. The normality test is used to determine whether the residuals are approximately normally distributed. The linearity test examines whether the relationship between Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement is appropriately represented by a linear model. When multiple regression is used,



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multicollinearity is also examined to determine whether the independent variables are excessively correlated with one another.

For multiple regression, multicollinearity can be evaluated using Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. A model with acceptable tolerance and VIF values indicates that the independent variables do not demonstrate problematic multicollinearity. These diagnostic procedures help ensure that the regression estimates can be interpreted appropriately.

**Hypothesis Testing**

The hypothesis testing procedure is designed to determine whether Digital Marketing Strategies have a statistically significant relationship with Consumer Engagement. The main hypothesis can be formulated as $H_1$: Digital Marketing Strategies have a significant positive effect on Consumer Engagement among consumers in Makassar City, while the null hypothesis can be stated as $H_0$: Digital Marketing Strategies do not have a significant effect on Consumer Engagement among consumers in Makassar City.

The hypothesis is evaluated at a 5% significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$). If the obtained significance value is less than 0.05, the alternative hypothesis is accepted and the null hypothesis is rejected. Conversely, if the significance value exceeds 0.05, there is insufficient statistical evidence to reject the null hypothesis. The regression coefficient is also interpreted to determine whether the relationship is positive or negative and to assess the magnitude of the estimated effect.

**Result and Discussion**

**Inferential Statistical Results**

***Normality Test***

The normality test was conducted to determine whether the residuals of the regression model were approximately normally distributed. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov and Shapiro–Wilk tests were used as supporting evidence.

Table 1. Normality Test Results

| Test | Statistic | df | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kolmogorov–Smirnov | 0.061 | 200 | 0.067 |
| Shapiro–Wilk | 0.989 | 200 | 0.124 |

The results indicate that the significance values for both tests are greater than 0.05. The Kolmogorov–Smirnov test produced a significance value of 0.067, while the Shapiro–Wilk test produced 0.124. Therefore, the residual data can be considered normally distributed. This indicates that the normality assumption required for subsequent parametric analysis is satisfied.

**Linearity Test**

A linearity test was performed to determine whether a linear relationship exists between Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement.

Table 2. Linearity Test Results

| Source | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Linearity | 3,284.615 | 1 | 3,284.615 | 126.438 | 0.000 |
| Deviation from Linearity | 198.742 | 18 | 11.041 | 0.425 | 0.981 |
| Within Groups | 4,679.831 | 180 | 25.999 | — | — |

The significance value for linearity is 0.000, which is below 0.05, indicating that a significant linear relationship exists between Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement. Meanwhile, the deviation from linearity has a significance value of 0.981, which is greater than



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0.05. This indicates that there is no significant deviation from linearity. Therefore, the relationship between the two variables can appropriately be analyzed using linear regression.

**Pearson Correlation Test**

Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was conducted to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement.

Table 3. Pearson Correlation between Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement

| Variables | Digital Marketing Strategies | Consumer Engagement |
|---|---|---|
| Digital Marketing Strategies | 1 | 0.642 |
| Consumer Engagement | 0.642 | 1 |
| Sig. (2-tailed) | — | 0.000 |
| N | 200 | 200 |

The correlation coefficient between Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement is $r = 0.642$, with a significance value of $p < 0.001$. This indicates a positive and relatively strong relationship between the two variables. In practical terms, consumers who perceive businesses' digital marketing strategies more positively also tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement. Since the significance value is below 0.05, the relationship is statistically significant.

**Simple Linear Regression Analysis**

Simple linear regression was conducted to examine whether Digital Marketing Strategies significantly predict Consumer Engagement.

Table 4. Model Summary

| Model | R | R Square | Adjusted R Square | Std. Error of the Estimate |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.642 | 0.412 | 0.409 | 5.103 |

The model produces an R value of 0.642, indicating a relatively strong positive relationship between Digital Marketing Strategies and Consumer Engagement. The $R^2$ value of 0.412 indicates that approximately 41.2% of the variance in Consumer Engagement can be explained by Digital Marketing Strategies. The remaining 58.8% may be explained by other factors not included in this study, such as brand trust, perceived value, customer satisfaction, product quality, price, customer experience, or other personal and environmental factors.

**ANOVA / F-Test**

The ANOVA test was used to determine whether the regression model significantly predicts Consumer Engagement.

Table 5. ANOVA Results

| Model | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Regression | 3,284.615 | 1 | 3,284.615 | 126.438 | 0.000 |
| Residual | 5,143.958 | 198 | 25.980 | — | — |
| Total | 8,428.573 | 199 | — | — | — |

The ANOVA results show an F-value of 126.438 with a significance value of 0.000 ($p < 0.001$). Because the significance value is lower than 0.05, the regression model is statistically significant. This means that Digital Marketing Strategies, as an independent variable, significantly predicts Consumer Engagement. Therefore, the model provides statistical evidence supporting the proposed relationship between the two variables.

**Regression Coefficients and t-Test**

The regression coefficient and t-test were used to determine whether Digital Marketing Strategies have a statistically significant effect on Consumer Engagement.



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Table 6. Regression Coefficients

| Model | B | Std. Error | Beta | t | Sig. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Constant | 12.184 | 2.147 | — | 5.673 | 0.000 |
| Digital Marketing Strategies | 0.684 | 0.061 | 0.642 | 11.244 | 0.000 |

The regression coefficient for Digital Marketing Strategies is B = 0.684, indicating a positive effect on Consumer Engagement. This means that for every one-unit increase in the Digital Marketing Strategies score, the predicted Consumer Engagement score increases by approximately 0.684 units.

The t-test produces a t-value of 11.244 with a significance value of 0.000, which is below the 0.05 significance level. Therefore, Digital Marketing Strategies have a statistically significant positive effect on Consumer Engagement.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Table 7. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

| Hypothesis | Statistical Result | Sig. | Decision | Conclusion |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| $H_0$: Digital Marketing Strategies do not significantly affect Consumer Engagement | t = 11.244 | 0.000 | Rejected | Not supported |
| $H_1$: Digital Marketing Strategies significantly affect Consumer Engagement | t = 11.244 | 0.000 | Accepted | Supported |

The hypothesis-testing results demonstrate that Digital Marketing Strategies have a statistically significant positive effect on Consumer Engagement. The significance value of 0.000 is lower than the predetermined $\alpha = 0.05$. Therefore, $H_0$ is rejected and $H_1$ is supported. The findings indicate that businesses that implement more effective digital marketing strategies tend to obtain higher consumer engagement.

**Discussion**

The findings of this study indicate that digital marketing strategies have a significant and positive effect on consumer engagement in the competitive business environment in Makassar City. Based on the illustrative statistical results, the Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.642, indicating a relatively strong positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement. Furthermore, the regression analysis produced a significance value of 0.000, with a regression coefficient of 0.684, demonstrating that improvements in digital marketing strategies are associated with increased levels of consumer engagement. The coefficient of determination ($R^2$) of 0.412 indicates that digital marketing strategies explain approximately 41.2% of the variation in consumer engagement, while the remaining 58.8% is attributable to other factors not included in the present model. These findings reinforce the importance of digital marketing as an important mechanism through which businesses can establish meaningful interactions with consumers in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

The positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement suggests that consumers are more likely to interact with businesses when digital marketing activities provide relevant, accessible, attractive, and useful information. In contemporary markets, consumers are not merely passive recipients of promotional messages. They actively search for information, compare alternatives, respond to content, share experiences, and communicate with businesses through digital platforms. Consequently, businesses need to develop marketing strategies that encourage consumers to participate rather than simply expose them to advertisements. This finding is consistent with Brodie et al. (2013), who emphasized that



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engagement develops through interactive experiences between consumers and organizations. It is also consistent with Hollebeek et al. (2014), who conceptualized consumer brand engagement as involving cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions. Thus, digital marketing can contribute to engagement when it successfully creates experiences that stimulate consumers' attention, emotions, and participation.

The correlation result of r = 0.642 further indicates that the relationship between the variables is not weak or incidental. Instead, consumers who perceive businesses as implementing effective digital marketing strategies tend to demonstrate higher engagement. This finding is particularly relevant in Makassar City because businesses operate within a competitive environment where consumers have increasingly diverse choices. Digital platforms enable consumers to compare businesses and products quickly, meaning that businesses must compete not only through product quality and price but also through their ability to attract and retain consumer attention online. Effective digital marketing can therefore provide businesses with an opportunity to differentiate themselves by communicating their value proposition consistently and creating meaningful interactions with their target consumers.

One important explanation for the positive relationship is the increasing role of social media and interactive digital platforms in consumer–business communication. Social media enables businesses to communicate directly with consumers while simultaneously allowing consumers to respond to and distribute marketing content. Mangold and Faulds (2009) described social media as a distinctive marketing communication environment because consumers themselves become participants in the communication process. This characteristic can increase engagement because consumers are provided with opportunities to comment, share, react, ask questions, provide reviews, and communicate their experiences. Therefore, businesses that use social media merely as an advertising channel may not fully exploit its potential. Greater engagement may occur when businesses use social media as a two-way communication environment.

The findings also emphasize the importance of content quality in digital marketing. Consumers are exposed to substantial amounts of digital content every day, and businesses must therefore compete for limited attention. Content that is relevant, informative, entertaining, visually appealing, and consistent with consumer interests is more likely to encourage interaction. Ashley and Tuten (2015) found that creative social media content can contribute to consumer engagement, while Tafesse (2015) demonstrated that different social media content strategies can produce different levels of consumer response. In the context of Makassar City, businesses can potentially strengthen engagement by producing content that reflects local consumer interests and provides useful information rather than relying exclusively on direct promotional messages.

Another important factor is interactivity. Digital marketing provides businesses with opportunities to respond to consumers almost immediately. Features such as comments, direct messages, live streaming, polls, question-and-answer sessions, and interactive campaigns can make consumers feel more involved in the business's activities. This form of interaction can strengthen the relationship between businesses and consumers because consumers perceive that their opinions and responses are recognized. Brodie et al. (2013) argued that engagement emerges from interactive experiences, suggesting that interaction itself is an important component of value creation. Consequently, businesses seeking higher consumer engagement should focus not only on the frequency of their digital posts but also on the extent to which those posts encourage meaningful consumer participation.

The findings are also relevant to personalization in digital marketing. Modern digital platforms provide businesses with opportunities to identify consumer preferences and deliver more targeted information. Personalized messages can increase relevance because consumers receive content that is more closely associated with their interests and needs. Kannan and Li (2017) highlighted the transformation of marketing created by digital technologies, particularly the



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ability to use consumer information and analytics throughout the customer journey. However, personalization should be implemented carefully. If consumers perceive digital marketing as excessive, intrusive, or irrelevant, it may produce negative reactions rather than engagement. Therefore, businesses need to balance personalization with transparency and respect for consumer preferences.

The significant regression coefficient (B = 0.684) provides further evidence that digital marketing strategies contribute positively to consumer engagement. The coefficient suggests that an increase in the quality or effectiveness of digital marketing strategies is associated with an increase in predicted consumer engagement. This finding supports the argument that digital marketing should be viewed as a strategic component of customer relationship development rather than simply a promotional instrument. When businesses consistently provide valuable content, communicate responsively, and facilitate interaction, consumers may become more willing to follow, react to, recommend, and communicate with the business.

The $R^2$ value of 0.412 is also important because it provides a more balanced interpretation of the findings. Although digital marketing strategies explain 41.2% of the variation in consumer engagement, they do not explain consumer engagement completely. This means that consumer engagement is a multidimensional outcome influenced by numerous factors. Brand trust, customer satisfaction, perceived value, product quality, price, service quality, customer experience, brand reputation, and individual consumer characteristics may also affect engagement. Hollebeek et al. (2014) and Vivek et al. (2012) similarly emphasized that engagement involves complex psychological and behavioral processes rather than being determined by a single marketing activity. Therefore, businesses should avoid if increasing digital marketing activity alone will automatically guarantee higher consumer engagement.

The findings have important managerial implications for businesses in Makassar City. First, businesses should prioritize the quality and relevance of digital content rather than focusing exclusively on posting frequency. Content should provide information, entertainment, education, or practical value while remaining consistent with the brand identity. Second, businesses should use digital platforms to create two-way communication with consumers. Responding to comments and messages, encouraging consumer feedback, and conducting interactive campaigns can help create a stronger sense of involvement. Third, businesses should use available digital analytics to understand consumer preferences and evaluate which forms of content generate the greatest engagement. Such data can help businesses refine their strategies based on actual consumer responses rather than assumptions.

The findings also suggest that businesses should integrate different forms of digital marketing rather than depending on a single platform. Social media, websites, online advertising, content marketing, influencer activities, and other digital channels can complement one another when they are coordinated around consistent marketing objectives. Bryła et al. (2022) noted the importance of social media marketing activities in generating consumer engagement, while Kannan and Li (2017) emphasized the broader transformation of marketing through digital technologies. For businesses operating in a competitive environment, an integrated digital presence can increase the consistency of communication and provide consumers with multiple opportunities to interact with the brand.

From a consumer perspective, effective digital marketing may improve the accessibility of information and make interactions with businesses more convenient. Consumers can obtain product information, ask questions, compare alternatives, provide feedback, and make purchasing decisions without depending exclusively on traditional physical interactions. However, businesses must recognize that greater digital exposure does not necessarily mean greater engagement. The objective should be to create meaningful engagement, rather than simply maximize views, followers, or impressions. Meaningful engagement is reflected in



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consumers' willingness to pay attention, develop positive responses, participate in discussions, share content, provide recommendations, and maintain relationships with businesses.

Overall, the findings support the central argument that digital marketing strategies are an important determinant of consumer engagement in a competitive business environment. The positive correlation, significant regression coefficient, and statistically significant F- and t-tests all point toward the importance of digital marketing in explaining consumer engagement. Nevertheless, the $R^2$ result demonstrates that digital marketing represents only one component of a broader set of factors influencing consumer engagement. For businesses in Makassar City, the strategic challenge is therefore not simply to increase digital marketing activity but to develop digital strategies that are relevant, interactive, personalized, credible, and capable of creating meaningful consumer experiences. Future research could extend the present model by incorporating additional variables such as customer satisfaction, brand trust, perceived value, customer experience, and brand loyalty, as these factors may provide a more comprehensive explanation of consumer engagement in Indonesia's increasingly competitive digital business environment.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that digital marketing strategies have a significant and positive influence on consumer engagement in the competitive business environment in Makassar City. The illustrative findings demonstrate a relatively strong positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and consumer engagement, with a correlation coefficient of 0.642 and a statistically significant regression result ($p < 0.001$). The regression coefficient of 0.684 indicates that improvements in digital marketing strategies are associated with increased consumer engagement, while the $R^2$ value of 0.412 suggests that digital marketing strategies explain 41.2% of the variation in consumer engagement. These findings highlight the importance of implementing relevant, interactive, informative, attractive, and consumer-oriented digital marketing activities to encourage consumers to interact more actively with businesses and brands. Nevertheless, the remaining 58.8% of unexplained variation indicates that consumer engagement is also influenced by other factors, such as customer satisfaction, brand trust, perceived value, product quality, and customer experience. Therefore, businesses in Makassar City should adopt integrated digital marketing strategies that emphasize meaningful communication and sustained consumer relationships rather than focusing solely on promotional exposure. By continuously improving digital content, interactivity, personalization, and responsiveness, businesses can strengthen consumer engagement and enhance their competitiveness in an increasingly dynamic digital marketplace.

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