



Digital Marketing Capabilities and Business Performance: The Mediating Role of Customer Engagement

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ABSTRACT

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This study investigated the effects of social media marketing capability, data-driven marketing capability, and content marketing capability on business performance, emphasizing the mediating role of customer engagement. A quantitative research approach was adopted, and data were collected through an online survey of business owners, marketing professionals, and managers operating in Lahore, Pakistan. Statistical analysis was used to examine the direct relationships among the variables and the mediating effect of customer engagement. The findings revealed that social media marketing capability, data-driven marketing capability, and content marketing capability had significant positive relationships with business performance and customer engagement. Customer engagement was also significantly and positively associated with business performance and significantly mediated the relationships between all three digital marketing capabilities and business performance. The study relied on online survey responses from a specific geographical context, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to businesses operating in other regions and industries.

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1.0 Introduction

Digital marketing capabilities influence how organizations communicate with customers, interpret market information, and translate marketing activities into business outcomes. This study examined three complementary organizational capabilities: social media marketing capability (SMMC), data-driven marketing capability (DDMC), and content marketing capability (CMC). Drawing on the dynamic capabilities perspective, it assessed their relationships with business performance (BP), both directly and through customer engagement (CE), among business respondents in Lahore, Pakistan (Homburg & Wielgos, 2022; Liang et al., 2025).

The analysis drew on online survey responses from 350 business owners, marketing professionals, and managers. It examined the direct associations of the three digital marketing capabilities with customer engagement and business performance, as well as the specific indirect associations through customer engagement. This approach provided an integrated assessment of how organizational digital marketing capabilities related to perceived business outcomes. Given the cross-sectional and self-reported design, the findings were interpreted as statistical associations rather than causal effects.

A capability is not simply an asset in terms of having a social media account, an analytics tool, or a publishing schedule. A capability refers to the capacity of the organization to leverage its skills, processes, and knowledge in order to accomplish objectives in the market environment. The company may make a lot of advertisements, yet it lacks the skills to engage people in conversation, analyze the information related to campaigns, or develop any valuable content. Therefore, social media marketing capability, data-driven marketing capability, and content marketing capability are all related, yet different aspects of organizational capability.

There is now evidence of how these skills link up with business performance. Studies in social customer relationship management have pointed to the role played by social media skills at an organizational level to the performance of relationships (Trainor et al., 2014). In marketing analytics, studies have shown that good use of analysis skills leads to good organizational performance (Germann et al., 2013); whereas, studies in digital content creation have shown how information-rich and contextual content can help create online communities of customers (du Plessis, 2017). However, the studies above focus more on tools or measures of performance. Studying all three skills together would help determine if there are distinct contributions to business performance.

The link between capabilities and business performance is just as significant. Resources for digital marketing don't necessarily lead to more sales, customer retention or competitive advantage. They first determine how the customers engage with the firm by responding to communication, giving feedback, recommending products/services, participating in the conversations and maintaining the relationship. The concept of customer engagement reflects this relational process and can be considered a viable link between the marketing capabilities of the firm and its performance. Studies of customer engagement stress the interactive nature of modern customer relationships (Brodie et al., 2011), whereas value-based models of engagement differentiate purchases from recommendations, influence and knowledge contributions (Kumar et

al., 2010).

The business environment of Lahore is an analytically interesting one since companies can differ considerably in their marketing infrastructure, analysis abilities, customer relationships and reliance on digital technology. However, findings based in one city cannot be generalized to apply to the whole of Pakistan. Rather than generalizing local properties to all firms, the current study uses location as a clear boundary condition and analyzes perceptions provided by decision makers with direct responsibility for marketing. The main research question posed here is whether customer interaction statistically mediates the connection between three digital marketing capabilities and business performance.

The research contributions are threefold. First, the study distinguishes interactive, analytical and content-based digital marketing capabilities rather than treating digital marketing as a unitary concept. Second, the dynamic capabilities approach is related to customer engagement as a relational route whereby firm activities are associated with performance. Third, the study offers a unified direct-effect and indirect-effect model based on businesses operating in Lahore. The following sections present the conceptual background, hypotheses, empirical design, findings and implications.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1. Dynamic capabilities theory and digital marketing

The most prominent theoretical framework is the dynamic capabilities approach. According to Teece et al. (1997), competitive advantage in uncertain circumstances relies not just on resources but also on the company's capacity to manage, develop, and reconfigure its competencies. The resource-based approach focuses on the strategic importance and rarity of resources in an organization (Barney, 1991). Both perspectives imply that digital marketing has the potential to increase performance since technology, employees, customer insight, and practices function as a single system. However, acquiring a software package does not generate value without management's skills and flexibility.

Digital marketing capabilities are consistent with these assumptions since they provide the opportunity to sense, exploit, and adapt to market signals. Social media activities help identify changes in customer expectations; decision routines based on data turn signals into priorities and targets; and content capabilities allow responding to signals with coherent information. Digital marketing capabilities are not necessarily well-developed in equal measure: an organization may be good at producing content but poor at measuring the results, or conversely, able to analyze data but unable to foster conversation (Verhoef et al., 2021).

This model also identifies another significant form of transmission. Capabilities of organizations might enhance the relationship with customers before any financial returns take place. Therefore, the concept of engagement can be understood as a proximate response to markets in relation to capabilities that lead to organizational results in the long run. However, engagement cannot be considered as organizational capabilities because it represents a relational concept in terms of customer interaction.

2.2. Social media marketing capability and outcomes

Social media marketing capability involves a firm's capacity to communicate through specific platforms, track conversations, respond interactively, and incorporate social media insights into marketing decisions. Social media marketing capability does not equate to the number of followers or postings. Malthouse et al. (2013) highlighted how social media presents new challenges to one-way customer relationship management by turning the customers into active participants in the conversation process. Trainor et al. (2014) have linked social media technology and customer-centricity to the emergence of social CRM capability and customer relationship performance. Hence, firms that respond to queries, feedback, and coherent platform communication are better positioned to foster customer interaction.

On the basis of the performance perspective, good interaction practices could help improve awareness, referrals, service responsiveness, and customer acquisition and retention activities. However, the benefit of the activity depends on its alignment with the organization's processes and not necessarily the social media platform. A capability-based view suggests both direct and indirect relationships between capability and performance. The latter is through engagement. The hypotheses are hence proposed.

H1a: Social media marketing capability is positively associated with customer engagement.

H2a: Social media marketing capability is positively associated with business performance.

2.3. Data-driven marketing capability and outcomes

Data-driven marketing capability refers to the ability of an organization to gather relevant information about the customers and the campaign, evaluate the quality of the information, understand the results of the analysis and use the information for making marketing decisions. The use of marketing analytics presents chances for personalizing campaigns, optimizing the channels used and better allocation of resources; however, marketing analytics also presents issues relating to privacy, data quality and governance (Wedel & Kannan, 2016). According to Germann et al. (2013), the use of marketing analytics was related to performance and involved managerial support, analytical culture and skills.

Engagement may be facilitated by the use of data to aid organizations in understanding changes in customer needs, determining an appropriate rate of communication and providing information that is considered relevant by the customers. However, personalization that invades privacy and inaccurate targeting could erode trust. Therefore, the proposed association is positive from the perspective of capability of the organization rather than making the claim that more surveillance or more data collection leads to better outcomes. The more recent conceptual framework considers analytics as part of process that allows organizations to understand and respond to market changes (Vesterinen et al., 2025).

It is possible that performance advantages may occur independent of engagement. This would include proper budgeting for marketing programs, campaign assessment, and forecasting of demands. Therefore, the theoretical model should consider both direct and indirect routes to performance for the purposes of empirical investigation.

H1b: Data-driven marketing capability is positively associated with customer engagement.

H2b: Data-driven marketing capability is positively associated with business performance.

2.4. Content marketing capability and outcomes

The content marketing capability refers to an organization's capability of planning, designing, tailoring, distributing, and assessing useful content through customer touchpoints. The focus is more on the capabilities of an organization rather than mass production of content. As reported by du Plessis (2017), content can be included into community discussions based on the interests of the audience and platform context. Considering that customers interact with information through different touchpoints throughout their journeys, clearness, consistency, and relevance become extremely significant for maintaining long-term relationships (Lemon & Verhoef, 2016).

Useful information in the form of explanations, demonstrations of products or services, customer experience stories, or problem-solving content may attract customers' attention and make them participate voluntarily. Content marketing capability can assist organizations in delivering value propositions, reducing customer uncertainties, and supporting search and referral processes. However, content quantity cannot be regarded as a valid replacement for quality as poorly aligned content can waste organizational resources and fail to engage customers.

H1c: Content marketing capability is positively associated with customer engagement.

H2c: Content marketing capability is positively associated with business performance.

2.5. Customer engagement and business performance

Customer engagement is defined as a multi-dimensional phenomenon which involves cognitive attention, emotional involvement, and active interaction with a brand or company. Brodie et al. (2011) distinguished engagement from involvement and participation and Hollebeek et al. (2014) designed a social-media-driven concept of engagement including cognitive processing, affection, and activation dimensions. Therefore, engagement may be manifested in the form of attentive interest, relationship orientation, feedback, conversation, and advocacy, and should not be equated with the mere number of likes and page views.

Engaging customers can provide organizations with knowledge, recommendations, referrals and re-contact. Kumar et al. (2010) stated that customer relationship value does not only lie in transactions but also in influence and knowledge provided by the customer. The relationship between involvement, engagement, self-brand connection, and intention to use the brand were identified by Harrigan et al. (2018). Although there may be an industry-specific relationship with the organizational outcome in question, the aforementioned research supports the hypothesis of customer engagement being a valid market-level antecedent of business results.

This research measures the performance of the business as the perceptions of managers about their relative growth, customer retention, market reach, and general performance, instead of actual accounting profits. The difference is significant since self-perceived performance cannot be equated to actual financial performance of the business. However, customer involvement can have an impact on performance that is self-perceived due to reasons stated above.

H3: Customer engagement is positively associated with business performance.

2.6. Mediating role of customer engagement

The concept of mediation is derived from the premise that the inputs into the organization are transformed into performance outcomes via the reactions of the customers. The capability on social media allows for dialogue reciprocity; capability on data drives the timeliness and relevance of marketing communications; and capability on content provides the customer with a rationale to listen and engage. These pathways may stimulate engagement, which may further lead to retention, positive word-of-mouth, and performance perception. Therefore, customer engagement is one pathway among others.

It is important to distinguish between direct and indirect effects. Marketing analysis might make activities more efficient without necessarily increasing engagement, while informative content could foster engagement before changes in business performance become apparent. For this reason, the analysis retained the direct capability-to-performance paths and examined each specific indirect path through customer engagement. Significant indirect effects were interpreted as evidence of statistical mediation, not causal mediation, given the cross-sectional and self-reported nature of the data.

H4a: Customer engagement mediates the positive association between social media marketing capability and business performance.

H4b: Customer engagement mediates the positive association between data-driven marketing capability and business performance.

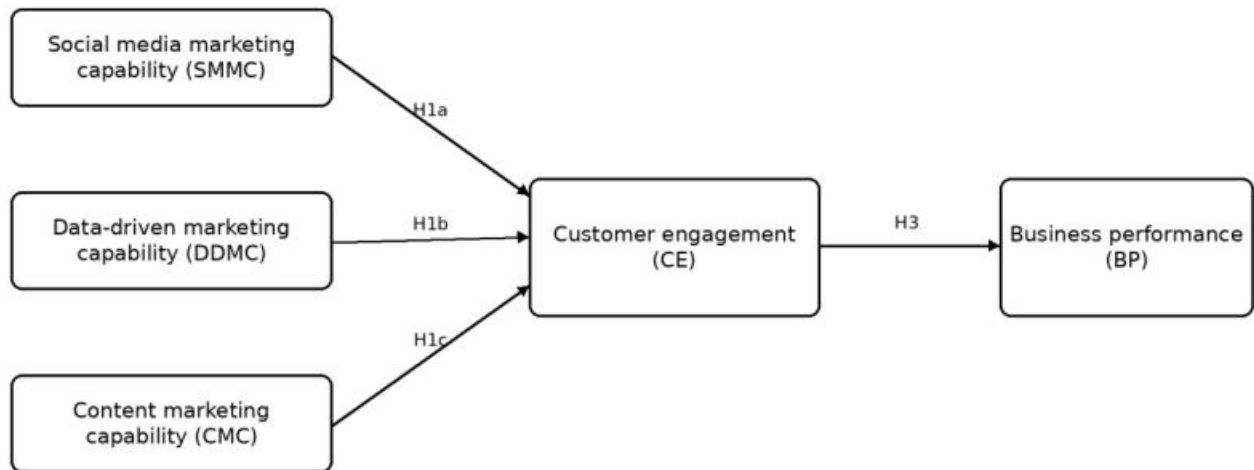
H4c: Customer engagement mediates the positive association between content marketing capability and business performance.

2.7. Conceptual model

The model included three exogenous variables—SMMC, DDMC, and CMC—with direct paths to customer engagement (CE) and business performance (BP). Customer engagement also had a direct path to business performance, creating three specific indirect paths. Correlations among the exogenous variables were permitted. Firm size, industry, and business age remained relevant contextual characteristics when interpreting the findings; their inclusion as statistical controls was not assumed from the reported results.

Figure 1

Conceptual framework and engagement-mediated paths



Note. Arrows from each capability to engagement are H1a–H1c; engagement to performance is H3. Additional direct paths from each capability to business performance (H2a–H2c) and mediated paths (H4a–H4c) are included in the estimated model but omitted from the schematic to preserve legibility.

3.0 Methodology

3.1. Research design and population

The study adopted a quantitative, cross-sectional online survey design involving business respondents in Lahore, Pakistan. Respondents included business owners, marketing professionals, and managers who reported on the marketing capabilities, customer engagement, and performance of the businesses with which they were associated. The analysis comprised 350 survey responses, as reported in Table 2. Firm-level outcomes were measured through the respondents' assessments rather than objective accounting records.

The online questionnaire gathered standardized responses from participants working across retail, services, manufacturing, and technology businesses in Lahore. Respondents were grouped by role, firm size, and sector in the sample profile (Table 2). Because the available study description did not establish probability-based sampling or document independent responses for every firm, the findings were interpreted within the limits of the sampled respondents and represented businesses.

3.2. Instrument development and operationalization

The study used a five-point agreement scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). SMMC covered strategic platform management, customer interaction, and monitoring; DDMC covered data quality, analysis, and decision integration; and CMC covered content planning, distribution, and evaluation. The construct definitions drew on capability and

digital marketing research, including Trainor et al. (2014), Germann et al. (2013), and Homburg and Wielgos (2022). Customer engagement (CE) was informed by cognitive, affective, and behavioral engagement concepts in Brodie et al. (2011) and Hollebeek et al. (2014). Business performance (BP) reflected perceived sales growth, customer retention, market reach, and overall performance relative to competitors.

Table 1 summarizes the measurement domains and supporting literature for the five constructs. The quoted statements describe the indicator content associated with each construct; the full questionnaire wording is not reproduced in this article. The study assessed the constructs through the measurement-model results reported in Tables 3 and 4.

Table 1

Construct definitions and measurement domains

Construct	Operational focus	Indicator wording / supporting literature
SMMC	Strategic platform interaction	“Our firm responds systematically to customer questions on social platforms.” Trainor et al. (2014)
DDMC	Data-to-decision routines	“Our marketing decisions routinely use interpreted campaign and customer data.” Germann et al. (2013)
CMC	Relevant content planning	“Our firm plans and updates informative content for target customers.” du Plessis (2017)
CE	Customer interaction with firm	“Customers actively interact with, respond to, and discuss our firm.” Brodie et al. (2011)
BP	Perceived relative outcomes	“Our firm’s customer retention and business growth compare favorably with competitors.” Homburg & Wielgos (2022)

Note. The statements summarize construct domains and supporting literature; the complete questionnaire items are not reproduced.

3.3. Data collection, ethics, and bias controls

The study collected self-reported information from business owners, marketing professionals, and managers about organizational marketing practices and perceived outcomes. Its firm-level measures did not rely on customers' identifiable transaction records. Because information came from an online survey rather than audited company records, the results were interpreted as respondents' assessments of their businesses.

The predictor, mediator, and outcome measures came from the same respondent source, making common method variance a relevant consideration (Podsakoff et al., 2003). The study therefore treated possible shared-source bias as a limitation when interpreting associations. Harman's one-factor test alone was not regarded as sufficient evidence to rule out such bias.

3.4. Analysis strategy

The reported measurement and structural results were assessed within a PLS-SEM

framework covering multiple latent marketing capabilities and the mediating role of customer engagement. Measurement assessment focused on reflective indicator loadings, internal consistency, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019). The structural assessment examined the reported path coefficients, t statistics, p values, confidence intervals, and the specific indirect effects through customer engagement.

For measurement assessment, standardized indicator loadings of approximately .708 or higher and average variance extracted (AVE) above .50 were used as conventional convergent validity criteria (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Internal consistency was examined using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Discriminant validity was evaluated with the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT), using .85 as a conservative benchmark (Henseler et al., 2015). The results for these indicators are presented in Tables 3 and 4.

The structural results were interpreted using the reported direct and specific indirect coefficients, significance tests, and 95% confidence intervals in Table 5. An indirect effect was regarded as statistically significant when its confidence interval excluded zero. The direct and indirect paths were considered together in assessing the form of mediation. Because the design was cross-sectional, the mediation findings were interpreted as statistical associations and did not establish temporal ordering or causation.

4.0 Findings and Results

This section reports the respondent profile, measurement-model assessment, and structural-model findings. The analysis comprised 350 survey responses. Tables 2–5 present the reported sample characteristics, reliability and validity results, direct paths, and specific indirect effects associated with the study hypotheses.

4.1. Profile and preliminary screening

Table 2 presents the profile of 350 respondents by organizational role, firm size, and industry. The sample included 117 business owners (33.4%), 135 marketing professionals (38.6%), and 98 managers (28.0%). The represented businesses were classified by size, and participants came from retail, services, manufacturing, and technology sectors. Percentages are calculated within each profile dimension.

Table 2

Respondent and firm profile (N = 350)

Dimension	Category	N	%
Respondent role	Business owner	117	33.4
	Marketing professional	135	38.6
	Manager	98	28.0
Firm size	Micro (1–9 staff)	135	38.6
	Small (10–49 staff)	139	39.7

	50 or more staff	76	21.7
Sector	Retail	118	33.7
	Services	132	37.7
	Manufacturing	59	16.9
	Technology	41	11.7

Note. Percentages are calculated within each dimension; totals may differ slightly from 100% because of rounding.

4.2. Measurement model

Table 3 reports the reflective measurement-model assessment. Indicator loadings ranged from .83 to .91, Cronbach's alpha from .84 to .88, composite reliability from .90 to .92, and AVE from .752 to .793. These results met conventional internal consistency and convergent validity criteria. The HTMT values reported in Table 4 ranged from .56 to .78, remaining below the conservative .85 threshold and supporting discriminant validity among the five constructs.

Table 3 *Reliability and convergent validity*

Construct	Item loadings	α	pc	AVE
SMMC	.83, .88, .89	.84	.90	.752
DDMC	.86, .89, .90	.86	.91	.781
CMC	.84, .87, .90	.85	.90	.758
CE	.86, .90, .91	.88	.92	.793
BP	.85, .87, .89	.87	.91	.757

Note. α = Cronbach's alpha; pc = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Table 4 *HTMT discriminant validity matrix*

Construct	C	SMMC	C	DDMC	CMC	CE	BP
SMMC		—					
DDMC		.59		—			
CMC		.62		.56	—		
CE		.72		.70	.67	—	
BP		.68		.71	.69	.78	—

Note. Only the lower triangle is shown. HTMT = heterotrait–monotrait ratio.

4.3. Structural model and mediation

Table 5 reports the direct relationships among digital marketing capabilities, customer engagement, and business performance, together with the three specific indirect effects. All reported path coefficients were positive and statistically significant. The indirect coefficients correspond to the products

of the relevant capability-to-engagement and engagement-to-performance coefficients, subject to rounding.

Table 5
Direct paths and specific indirect effects

Hyp.	Relationship	β	t	p	95% CI
H1a	SMMC → CE	.251	4.48	< .001	[.140, .361]
H1b	DDMC → CE	.286	5.05	< .001	[.175, .395]
H1c	CMC → CE	.222	3.91	< .001	[.110, .330]
H2a	SMMC → BP	.172	3.01	.003	[.062, .283]
H2b	DDMC → BP	.211	3.70	< .001	[.100, .326]
H2c	CMC → BP	.181	3.17	.002	[.069, .291]
H3	CE → BP	.345	5.85	< .001	[.226, .462]
H4a	SMMC → CE → BP	.087	2.88	.004	[.031, .144]
H4b	DDMC → CE → BP	.099	3.08	.002	[.041, .166]
H4c	CMC → CE → BP	.077	2.64	.008	[.026, .135]

Note. Indirect β values correspond to the products of the relevant direct coefficients (rounded); CI = confidence interval.

The reported explained variance was $R^2 = .419$ (adjusted $R^2 = .414$) for customer engagement and $R^2 = .565$ (adjusted $R^2 = .560$) for business performance. The three capability-to-engagement paths, three capability-to-performance paths, and engagement-to-performance path were positive and statistically significant (Table 5). The specific indirect effects were also positive, with 95% confidence intervals excluding zero, supporting the reported mediation hypotheses. These findings describe statistical relationships rather than causal effects.

5. Discussion

The reported results were consistent with a capabilities-based approach to digital marketing. The three dimensions represented organizational competencies positively associated with customer engagement and business performance. The positive path from social media marketing capability to customer engagement aligned with social CRM theory, which emphasizes the strategic role of technology when combined with customer orientation (Trainor et al., 2014). The finding was consistent with the importance of conversation management and responsiveness, although the association did not establish that posting frequency caused engagement.

The positive relationship between data-driven marketing capability and customer engagement indicated that analytics-related competencies were associated with stronger engagement. This interpretation was consistent with research linking effective marketing analytics to organizational support and improved business performance (Germann et al., 2013). Nevertheless, effective decision-making should be distinguished from excessive customer tracking. Privacy concerns and poor data quality can undermine digital marketing relationships, so the positive coefficient was interpreted as an average association in the sampled businesses.

The positive content marketing capability path supported an association between relevant, consistent, useful content and customer engagement. According to du Plessis (2017), platform-specific content contributes to the formation of conversations within online communities. Content assets can also help bridge information gaps when customers make decisions. The relationship

between content and performance should, however, be considered in conjunction with the industry of the firm, marketing budget, and organizational maturity.

Customer engagement played a mediating role in the reported relationships. All three specific indirect paths were positive, and their reported 95% confidence intervals excluded zero (Table 5). This pattern supported the interpretation that stronger digital marketing capabilities were associated with greater customer engagement, which in turn was associated with higher perceived business performance. The interpretation was consistent with engagement theory's emphasis on interactive value creation (Brodie et al., 2011) and the customer value associated with referrals, knowledge, and influence (Kumar et al., 2010). Because the data were cross-sectional, this was evidence of statistical rather than causal mediation.

The combination of significant positive direct and indirect effects was consistent with complementary partial mediation: engagement accounted for part, but not all, of the relationships between capabilities and performance. Data-driven capability may also be associated with resource allocation, content capability with customer acquisition efficiency, and social responsiveness with organizational coordination. These additional pathways remain relevant for future research and were not assumed to be fully captured by the mediator.

The findings should be interpreted in light of the survey's measurement limits. Managerial responses provided assessments of organizational practices and their perceived consequences but did not measure customers' psychological engagement directly. Reliance on one respondent source introduced potential shared-rater bias, and the cross-sectional design did not support causal inference. These limitations qualified the interpretation without changing the reported statistical associations.

5.1. Theoretical contributions

The first contribution was conceptual separation. By treating social interaction, analytics, and content production as distinct capabilities, the study avoided equating digital maturity solely with technology adoption or promotional effort. This approach was consistent with research describing digital marketing as an integrative set of measurable customer-focused practices (Kannan & Li, 2017; Homburg & Wielgos, 2022). The second contribution concerned the transmission of capability value: customer engagement served as a relational link between capabilities and perceived business performance. The third contribution was contextual, providing survey-based evidence from businesses operating in Lahore and allowing comparison with relationships reported in other market settings.

5.2. Managerial implications

Marketing management must assess digital marketing spending in terms of routines rather than one-off channel investments. Social media activities should go hand-in-hand with accountability, standards for customer inquiries, escalation processes, and lessons learned through the conversations. For data-driven marketing, managers need reliable data, people to understand them, privacy considerations, and meetings where findings lead to decision-making. Content investments should be grounded in customers' information needs, channel appropriateness, and clear criteria for quality and utility of information. These are the capabilities identified in the framework, not just an advice to increase ad spending.

A combined performance dashboard might measure both intermediate markers of customer interactions, such as the number of meaningful replies, customer feedback, and referrals, and direct business outcomes, including repurchase, retention rates, and increased sales. Managers should not mistake vanity metrics for return on investment. For small companies with limited budget resources, it would be reasonable to establish one or two routines first and then invest in analytics software. As capabilities grow, businesses can link customer feedback, analytics, and content strategies into an iterative process of learning and adaptation.

5.3. Limitations and directions for future research

External validity issues include geographical constraint to Lahore, non-probability sampling online, and potential heterogeneity between sectors. Single-source self-reports suffer from problems of recall, social desirability, and common method variance. Business performance perceptions cannot be used as a proxy for objective information on company performance; manager perceptions of customer engagement may not correspond with those of actual customers. Cross-sectional mediation is vulnerable to confounding and reverse causation. Further research should include recruiting matched samples of managers and customers, taking measures at different times, merging survey results with transaction records, and comparing sectors or cities in proper multigroup analyses. Only longitudinal or experimental designs can show the sequence in capability development, engagement, and performance.

6. Conclusion

This study examined the relationships of social media marketing capability, data-driven marketing capability, and content marketing capability with business performance through customer engagement. Drawing on dynamic capabilities theory, it considered how organizations' marketing competencies were associated with customer interactions and perceived performance outcomes. The findings supported positive direct associations between the three capabilities and business performance, alongside the positive association of customer engagement with performance.

The reported structural results also supported all three specific indirect associations through customer engagement, consistent with complementary partial mediation. These findings contributed survey-based evidence on the role of customer engagement in linking digital marketing capabilities to perceived business performance in Lahore, Pakistan. Because the measures were self-reported and the design was cross-sectional, the conclusions remained associational and were not interpreted as causal effects.

Hira Shahid: Problem Identification and Theoretical Framework

Muhammad Kashif Saif: Data Analysis, Supervision and Drafting

Naik Muhammad Khan: Methodology

Conflict of Interests/Disclosures

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