THE EFFECT OF CONTENT MARKETING ON BRAND ENGAGEMENT WITH BRAND EXPERIENCE AS A MEDIATING VARIABLE

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ABSTRACT

The development of digital marketing has driven a shift in marketing strategies from conventional approaches toward content-based marketing that is more interactive and focused on the consumer experience. This study aims to analyze the effect of content marketing on brand engagement, the effect of content marketing on brand experience, the effect of brand experience on brand engagement, and the role of brand experience as a mediating variable. The subject of this study is the collaboration between Diam.id and Kopi Aksi through the digital content of the mini-series "Senja," published on Instagram. This study employs a quantitative approach using an associative research design. Data were collected via a questionnaire administered to Instagram users who had viewed or interacted with the content. Data analysis employed SEM-PLS. The results indicate that: (1) content marketing has a significant effect on brand experience; (2) brand experience has a significant effect on brand engagement; (3) content marketing does not have a significant direct effect on brand engagement; and (4) brand experience significantly mediates the effect of content marketing on brand engagement. These findings indicate that brand engagement is not formed directly from content exposure, but rather through the experience created by interaction with that content. The effectiveness of content marketing depends heavily on a brand's ability to create a meaningful brand experience for its audience.

Keywords : *Digital Marketing, Content Marketing, Brand Experience, Brand Engagement, Kopi Aksi, Diam.id*

INTRODUCTION

The rapid development of digital technology has fundamentally transformed the way individuals communicate, access information, and interact with brands. The widespread adoption of social media platforms has shifted marketing practices from conventional one-way communication toward more interactive and consumer-centered digital approaches. In the current digital environment, consumers are continuously exposed to large volumes of information, causing their attention to become increasingly fragmented. Consequently, marketing success is no longer determined solely by the ability to reach a broad audience but also by the ability to generate meaningful interactions and sustained engagement. This phenomenon has increased the importance of content marketing as a strategic approach that focuses on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and meaningful content tailored to audience needs (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2016; Schaefer, 2015). Unlike traditional promotional activities that emphasize direct persuasion, content marketing seeks to provide educational, informational, entertaining, or inspirational value that can attract consumers organically and foster long-term relationships with them (Kingsnorth, 2016; Lieb, 2011).

Within the broader framework of marketing strategy, content marketing represents a crucial component of contemporary digital marketing practices. Marketing strategy itself refers to a long-term plan designed to achieve organizational objectives through market segmentation, targeting, positioning, differentiation, and value creation processes (Assyaukani & Farisi, 2025; Kotler & Keller, 2016). As digital platforms continue to dominate consumer interactions, organizations increasingly rely on digital marketing tools to establish communication with consumers in a more personalized, measurable, and interactive manner (Charlesworth, 2021; Prasetyo et al., 2020). Digital marketing encompasses various techniques, including social media marketing, search engine optimization, video marketing, influencer marketing, and content marketing, all of which aim to enhance brand awareness, customer relationships, and business performance (Appel et al., 2020; HubSpot, 2024). Among these approaches, content marketing has emerged as one of the most influential strategies because modern consumers tend to avoid intrusive advertising and instead prefer authentic content that delivers practical and emotional value (Kingsnorth, 2016).

The effectiveness of content marketing depends not only on the quantity of content distributed but also on its quality and relevance. High-quality content should be relevant to audience interests, provide accurate information, deliver tangible value, and be easily understood by consumers (Lieb, 2011; Septiawan & De Yusa, 2023). Furthermore, social media environments have transformed consumers from passive recipients into active participants who can interact with, share, and even create brand-related content. This phenomenon has increased the strategic importance of collaborative content marketing initiatives, where multiple brands work together to develop creative content capable of reaching broader audiences and enhancing authenticity perceptions (Fernanda & Dwita, 2024; Hapsari et al., 2024). Research has shown that collaborative content marketing can strengthen consumer engagement through increased credibility, wider exposure, and more meaningful audience interactions (Fernanda & Dwita, 2024).

The growing importance of content marketing is closely associated with the concept of brand experience. Contemporary marketing literature emphasizes that consumers do not merely evaluate products based on functional attributes but also through the experiences generated during interactions with brands. Brand experience refers to the internal responses and impressions consumers develop when exposed to brand-related stimuli, encompassing sensory, affective,

intellectual, and behavioral dimensions (Brakus et al., 2009; Kumar & Hsieh, 2024). Traditionally, brand experiences were primarily formed through direct interactions with products or physical stores. However, advances in digital technology have expanded the sources of brand experience to include social media content, storytelling, digital videos, visual branding, and other online touchpoints (Butcher & Sung, 2024; Wedel et al., 2020). As a result, consumers can develop meaningful experiences with a brand even without direct product consumption or physical contact.

Recent studies indicate that well-designed digital content is capable of stimulating all four dimensions of brand experience. Sensory experiences can be triggered through visual aesthetics, sound, and multimedia elements, while affective experiences emerge through emotional storytelling and relatable narratives. Intellectual experiences are generated when content encourages consumers to think critically or creatively, whereas behavioral experiences arise when consumers are motivated to participate, interact, or take action related to the brand (Brakus et al., 2009; Chevtchouk et al., 2021; Iglesias et al., 2019). Consequently, content marketing serves not merely as a communication tool but also as a mechanism for creating meaningful brand experiences that shape consumer perceptions and emotional connections with brands (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019).

The significance of brand experience becomes even more apparent when examined in relation to brand engagement. Brand engagement is defined as the level of consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with a brand (Hollebeek, 2011). Unlike traditional measures such as awareness or loyalty, brand engagement reflects a deeper and more active relationship between consumers and brands. According to Brodie et al. (2013), engaged consumers demonstrate cognitive attention toward the brand, emotional attachment to brand values, and behavioral participation through interactions, advocacy, and recommendations. In digital environments, engagement extends beyond passive loyalty and includes active participation in brand narratives through commenting, sharing, creating user-generated content, and contributing to brand communities (Walter & Gioglio, 2018). Such engagement is strategically important because it has been consistently linked to positive outcomes, including customer loyalty, word-of-mouth communication, advocacy behavior, and long-term brand performance (Dessart et al., 2016; Hanif, 2025).

The relationship between content marketing, brand experience, and brand engagement has attracted increasing scholarly attention. Existing research suggests that valuable and relevant content can enhance consumer engagement by fostering emotional and cognitive connections with brands (Fernanda & Dwita, 2024; Nasution et al., 2023). Simultaneously, content marketing contributes to the development of brand experience through visual, emotional, and intellectual stimulation embedded within digital content (Chevtchouk et al., 2021). Furthermore, positive brand experiences have been found to strengthen consumers' attachment to brands, thereby increasing engagement levels (Iman & Kurniawati, 2023; Iglesias et al., 2011). These findings indicate that brand experience may function as an important mediating mechanism through which content marketing influences brand engagement.

Despite substantial theoretical support, empirical evidence regarding the mediating role of brand experience remains limited, particularly in emerging regions and local business contexts. Previous studies have predominantly focused on industries such as e-commerce, fashion, technology, and consumer electronics operating at national or international scales (Na et al., 2023; Sahin et al., 2011). Moreover, many studies have emphasized mediating variables such as brand trust, brand love, or brand awareness rather than brand experience (Ashari & Sitorus, 2023; Na et

al., 2023). Although research has demonstrated the importance of brand experience in influencing loyalty and engagement outcomes, investigations examining brand experience as a mediator between content marketing and brand engagement remain relatively scarce, especially within local food and beverage businesses operating in developing regions (Chevtchouk et al., 2021; Martina & Masnita, 2024).

This research gap is particularly relevant in the context of local brands in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Local food and beverage businesses often possess strong potential to establish emotional connections with local communities but simultaneously face limitations in digital infrastructure, marketing literacy, and creative resources. Consequently, their content marketing efforts may generate awareness and visibility without necessarily creating meaningful brand experiences or sustained engagement. Understanding how content marketing contributes to brand experience and engagement in such contexts is essential for developing more effective digital marketing strategies tailored to local business environments.

A notable example of this phenomenon can be observed in the collaboration between Diam.id and Kopi Aksi. Through Instagram-based digital storytelling, the two brands developed a mini-series entitled Senja, which integrates product representation into emotionally driven narratives about young adults' romantic experiences. Rather than employing direct promotional messages, the series utilizes cinematic visuals, storytelling techniques, and relatable life situations to communicate brand values and create emotional resonance among audiences. Such an approach is expected to stimulate sensory and affective dimensions of brand experience through visual aesthetics, narrative immersion, and lifestyle representation. However, despite generating approximately 121,000 views and achieving an average engagement rate of 4.37%, audience interactions remain largely passive and concentrated on viewing and liking behaviors rather than deeper forms of participation such as meaningful commenting, sharing, or advocacy (Welsh, 2025). This situation suggests a potential disconnect between the brand experiences generated through content marketing and the level of brand engagement ultimately achieved.

According to Kotler et al. (2022), awareness alone does not automatically translate into active engagement. Consumers may consume content and recognize a brand without developing meaningful emotional attachment or behavioral commitment. Similarly, Hollebeek (2011) and Islam and Rahman (2017) argue that exposure to content does not guarantee the formation of strong engagement unless consumers experience deeper emotional, cognitive, and behavioral connections with the brand. Therefore, investigating the mediating role of brand experience becomes crucial for understanding how content marketing can be transformed into sustainable brand engagement outcomes.

Based on these theoretical foundations, empirical findings, and contextual challenges, examining the relationships among content marketing, brand experience, and brand engagement within the collaboration between Diam.id and Kopi Aksi offers both theoretical and practical significance. The study contributes to the growing literature on digital marketing by extending existing models of consumer engagement and providing empirical evidence regarding the mediating role of brand experience in a local food and beverage context. Furthermore, it offers valuable insights for local businesses seeking to leverage collaborative content marketing strategies to create meaningful consumer experiences and foster stronger brand engagement in increasingly competitive digital environments.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach with an explanatory research design to examine the causal relationships among content marketing, brand experience, and brand engagement. Quantitative research is grounded in the positivist paradigm and emphasizes objective, measurable, systematic, and empirical investigation of phenomena through statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2024). The explanatory approach was selected because the study aimed not only to describe the observed phenomena but also to test the direct and indirect effects among the proposed constructs. Specifically, the research investigated the influence of content marketing on brand engagement and assessed the mediating role of brand experience within this relationship (Sugiyono, 2024; Wahyuni, 2020).

The study was conducted among Instagram users in Kupang City, East Nusa Tenggara, who had previously viewed, liked, commented on, or otherwise interacted with collaborative content produced by Diam.id and Kopi Aksi. This population was considered appropriate because brand experience in the present context was formed primarily through exposure to digital content rather than through direct physical consumption experiences. Consequently, audience perceptions, emotions, and responses toward the collaborative content served as the basis for evaluating brand experience and engagement outcomes (Sugiyono, 2024).

The sample size was determined using the Lemeshow formula for an unknown population size. With a confidence level of 95% (Z = 1.96), an estimated population proportion of 0.50, and a margin of error of 10%, the minimum required sample size was calculated as 96.04 respondents and subsequently rounded to 100 respondents. This sample size was considered sufficient to represent the target population and support multivariate statistical analysis (Sugiyono, 2024).

Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed to 100 Instagram users who had interacted with the collaborative content between Diam.id and Kopi Aksi. Secondary data were obtained from books, scholarly journals, theses, and other relevant academic sources that supported the theoretical and empirical foundations of the study (Sugiyono, 2024). In addition to questionnaire data, interviews and documentation were utilized to obtain contextual information regarding the collaborative content strategy and audience engagement characteristics. Interviews were conducted to gain deeper insights into the research context, while documentation included digital records, archives, reports, and other supporting materials relevant to the study (Sugiyono, 2024).

The questionnaire employed an ordinal measurement scale using a five-point Likert format ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”) (Sugiyono, 2024). The content marketing construct was measured using indicators related to content relevance, ease of understanding, and perceived value, reflecting the conceptualization of content marketing as the creation and distribution of relevant and valuable content designed to attract and retain customers (Lieb, 2011). Brand engagement was measured through contingency interactivity, self-company connection, and behavioral attachment dimensions, representing the extent of consumers’ cognitive, emotional, and behavioral involvement with the brand (Kotler et al., 2017). Brand experience was operationalized through four dimensions: sensory experience, affective experience, behavioral experience, and intellectual experience, consistent with the conceptualization of brand experience as consumers’ overall perceptions and responses resulting from interactions with brand-related stimuli (Chevtchouk et al., 2021).

Data analysis was performed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for predictive and exploratory causal analysis involving latent variables and mediation relationships. The analysis consisted of two major stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The outer model assessment focused on examining the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments. Convergent validity was evaluated through factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), with recommended threshold values of greater than 0.60 for factor loadings and greater than 0.50 for AVE (Hamid & Anwar, 2019). Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis, where the square root of AVE was required to exceed inter-construct correlations and indicator cross-loadings were expected to surpass 0.70 on their respective constructs (Ghozali & Latan, 2012; Siagian & Khair, 2018).

Reliability assessment was conducted using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients. Composite Reliability values exceeding 0.70 were considered indicative of satisfactory internal consistency and construct reliability. Because Cronbach's Alpha may underestimate reliability in PLS-SEM applications, greater emphasis was placed on Composite Reliability values (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

Following the measurement model evaluation, the structural model was assessed to examine the hypothesized relationships among constructs. The explanatory power of the model was evaluated through the coefficient of determination (R^2), where values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 indicate substantial, moderate, and weak explanatory power, respectively (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Effect size was assessed using the f^2 statistic, which measures the relative contribution of an exogenous construct to an endogenous construct. According to established guidelines, f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effects, respectively (Ghozali & Latan, 2015; Jufrizen & Hadi, 2021).

Predictive relevance was evaluated using the Q^2 statistic obtained through blindfolding procedures. A Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model possesses predictive relevance, whereas a value below zero suggests insufficient predictive capability. The relative impact of predictive relevance was further assessed using q^2 effect sizes, with values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 representing weak, moderate, and strong predictive effects, respectively (Parashakti & Putriawati, 2020). Hypothesis testing was performed through bootstrapping procedures to estimate path coefficients and their statistical significance. Relationships among constructs were considered significant when the corresponding t-values exceeded the critical thresholds of 1.65, 1.96, and 2.58 at significance levels of 10%, 5%, and 1%, respectively (Ghozali & Latan, 2015).

Finally, the overall model fit was evaluated using the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) index, which integrates the performance of both the measurement and structural models. The GoF value was calculated as the square root of the product between the average communality index and the average R^2 value. According to Tenenhaus et al. (2004), GoF values of 0.10, 0.25, and 0.36 indicate small, medium, and large model fit, respectively. This assessment provided an overall indication of the extent to which the proposed model adequately represented the observed data and the relationships among content marketing, brand experience, and brand engagement.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

A total of 100 respondents who had viewed the Senja mini-series collaboration between Diam.id and Kopi Aksi participated in this study. The respondent profile indicates that 51% were

female and 49% were male. Most respondents were between 17 and 25 years old (83%), indicating that the audience was dominated by young adults who actively use social media. In terms of Instagram usage intensity, 75% of respondents reported using Instagram daily, while all respondents (100%) had watched the Senja content. These characteristics suggest that the sample was highly relevant to the context of digital content marketing and audience engagement on Instagram.

Descriptive analysis revealed that respondents generally perceived the content marketing activities implemented through the Senja mini-series positively. The highest mean score within the content marketing construct was obtained by the statement regarding message clarity (Mean = 3.73), indicating that respondents could clearly understand the main message delivered through the content. Meanwhile, the lowest mean score was related to the perceived usefulness of the time spent watching the content (Mean = 3.17). Overall, the content marketing variable was evaluated within the moderate-to-high category, suggesting that the collaborative content was perceived as relevant, understandable, and valuable by the audience.

For the brand experience construct, respondents reported moderate to high levels of experience generated by the content. The highest-rated indicator concerned the consistency of visual elements, music, and atmosphere within the content (Mean = 3.81), demonstrating the effectiveness of audiovisual elements in creating memorable experiences. Conversely, the lowest score was associated with emotional closeness to the Kopi Aksi brand after watching the content (Mean = 3.26). These findings indicate that although the content successfully generated sensory and cognitive experiences, its emotional impact could still be strengthened.

Similarly, the brand engagement construct was evaluated within the moderate-to-high category. The highest mean score was observed for the statement indicating that the values conveyed through the Senja content aligned with respondents' personal values (Mean = 3.45). The lowest mean score concerned the perceived level of active interaction between the brand and its audience within Instagram comment sections (Mean = 3.28). These results suggest that audience engagement had been established but remained limited in terms of interactive communication and two-way participation.

Before testing the structural relationships, the measurement model was evaluated using PLS-SEM procedures. All indicators demonstrated satisfactory convergent validity, with outer loading values ranging from 0.752 to 0.856 for content marketing, 0.774 to 0.877 for brand experience, and 0.730 to 0.891 for brand engagement. Since all loading values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, all indicators were retained for further analysis (Hair et al., 2021).

Construct reliability analysis further confirmed the adequacy of the measurement model. Cronbach's alpha values exceeded 0.90 for all constructs, while composite reliability values ranged from 0.941 to 0.961. Additionally, Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.640 to 0.684, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.50. These findings indicate that the measurement instruments possessed strong reliability and convergent validity (Hair et al., 2021).

Table 1. Reliability and Validity Assessment

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Content Marketing	0.930	0.941	0.640
Brand Experience	0.955	0.961	0.672
Brand Engagement	0.941	0.951	0.684

Source: Processed research data (2026).

The structural model evaluation demonstrated strong explanatory power. The R^2 value for brand experience was 0.806, indicating that content marketing explained 80.6% of the variance in brand experience. Likewise, the R^2 value for brand engagement reached 0.808, suggesting that content marketing and brand experience jointly explained 80.8% of the variance in brand engagement. According to Hair et al. (2021), these values indicate substantial explanatory capability.

The coefficient of determination values obtained from the PLS-SEM algorithm indicate that the proposed model has substantial explanatory power. A visual representation of the structural model and its coefficient estimates is presented in Figure 1.

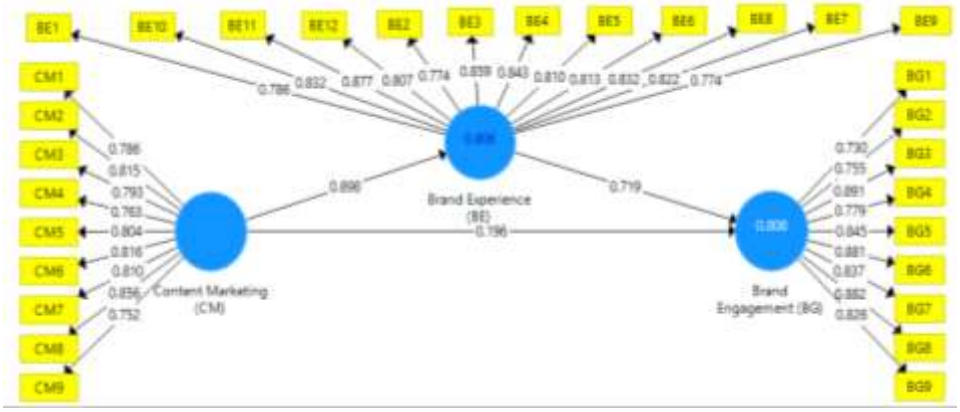


Figure 1. Output model SEM-PLS Algorithm

Effect size analysis revealed that content marketing exerted a very large influence on brand experience ($f^2 = 4.144$). In contrast, the direct effect of content marketing on brand engagement was relatively weak ($f^2 = 0.039$). The influence of brand experience on brand engagement was substantial ($f^2 = 0.524$), emphasizing the critical role of experiential factors in fostering audience engagement.

To evaluate the significance of the proposed relationships, a bootstrapping procedure was performed. The bootstrapping results, including the path coefficients and significance values, are presented in Figure 2.

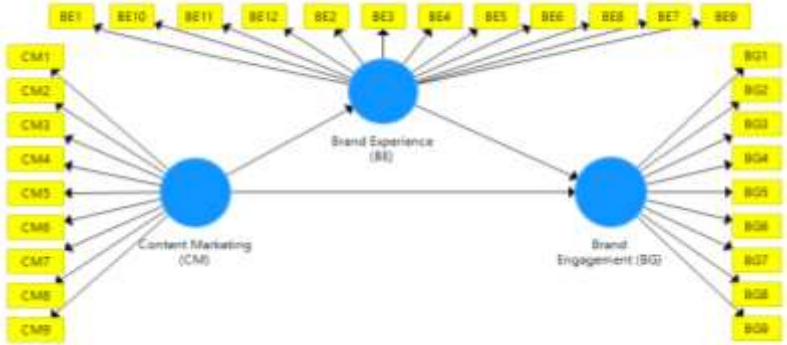


Figure 2. Latent Variable Research Model

Predictive relevance assessment produced Q^2 values of 0.542 for brand experience and 0.533 for brand engagement. Since both values exceeded zero, the model demonstrated satisfactory predictive relevance and was considered capable of accurately predicting changes in endogenous constructs.

Table 2. Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
Content Marketing → Brand Experience	0.898	42.443	0.000	Supported
Content Marketing → Brand Engagement	0.196	1.777	0.076	Not Supported
Brand Experience → Brand Engagement	0.719	6.467	0.000	Supported
Content Marketing → Brand Experience → Brand Engagement	0.645	–	<0.001	Full Mediation

Source: Processed research data (2026).

Hypothesis testing through bootstrapping revealed that content marketing had a significant positive effect on brand experience ($\beta = 0.898$, $t = 42.443$, $p < 0.001$). Therefore, H1 was supported. However, the direct effect of content marketing on brand engagement was not statistically significant ($\beta = 0.196$, $t = 1.777$, $p = 0.076$), leading to the rejection of H2. Conversely, brand experience significantly influenced brand engagement ($\beta = 0.719$, $t = 6.467$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H3.

The mediation analysis demonstrated a significant indirect effect of content marketing on brand engagement through brand experience ($\beta = 0.645$, $p < 0.001$). Because the indirect effect was significant while the direct effect remained insignificant, the mediation pattern can be classified as full mediation or indirect-only mediation (Hair et al., 2021). This finding indicates that content marketing alone is insufficient to directly generate engagement. Instead, content marketing must first create meaningful sensory, emotional, cognitive, and behavioral experiences before audience engagement can emerge.

Finally, model fit assessment indicated satisfactory overall fit. The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) value was 0.068, which is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, indicating acceptable model fit. Although the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.687 did not reach the ideal threshold of 0.90, it remains acceptable within the context of PLS-SEM analysis. Therefore, the proposed model was considered appropriate for hypothesis testing and interpretation (Hair et al., 2021).

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that content marketing has a significant effect on brand experience; therefore, the first hypothesis (H1), which states that content marketing significantly influences brand experience, is accepted. These findings indicate that the better the content marketing received by the audience, the higher the level of brand experience perceived by them. In the context of this study, the Senja mini-series not only served as an advertising medium for Kopi Aksi but was also able to provide experiences that engaged the audience's attention, emotions, and thoughts. Through the presentation of stories closely related to everyday life, attractive visuals, and messages subtly embedded within the narrative, audiences gained a deeper experience than merely receiving direct promotional information.

The substantial influence of content marketing on brand experience indicates that audiences perceive the experience obtained while consuming content as an important component in shaping their perceptions of the brand. The storytelling approach employed in the Senja mini-

series allowed audiences not only to understand the conveyed messages but also to feel connected to the story itself. This condition demonstrates that brand experience is not solely formed through direct interaction with products or services but can also be developed through the experience of consuming relevant and meaningful digital content.

Theoretically, these findings are consistent with the view of Kingsnorth (2016), who argues that content marketing focuses on creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract and retain audiences. Through content that fulfills audiences' informational and entertainment needs, companies can establish more meaningful interactions and create positive brand experiences. These findings are also supported by Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2016), who explain that digital marketing enables companies to build more personalized interactions with audiences through content that aligns with their needs and interests. Therefore, the higher the quality of content marketing received by consumers, the greater the opportunity to create a stronger brand experience.

The results of this study also support the concept proposed by Sahin et al. (2011), which states that positive experiences perceived by consumers toward a brand can become the foundation for building stronger relationships between consumers and the brand. Experiences gained through interactions with a brand shape consumers' perceptions, evaluations, and responses toward the brand in the long term. In this study, such experiences were formed through audience interactions with the Senja mini-series, which presented a combination of visual, emotional, and intellectual elements capable of creating a strong impression of Kopi Aksi.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that content marketing is an important factor in shaping audience brand experience toward Kopi Aksi. These findings indicate that the success of content marketing is determined not only by its ability to attract audience attention but also by its ability to create meaningful experiences. Therefore, Kopi Aksi should maintain the storytelling-based content marketing strategy implemented through the Senja mini-series while continuously developing relevant and valuable content so that the positive experiences perceived by audiences can continue to improve and strengthen their relationship with the brand.

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that content marketing does not have a significant effect on brand engagement; therefore, the second hypothesis (H2), which states that content marketing significantly influences brand engagement, is rejected. These findings suggest that although audiences provided positive evaluations of the Senja mini-series, it was not sufficient to directly increase their engagement with Kopi Aksi. Audiences may enjoy the storyline, understand the messages conveyed, and provide positive responses to the content they watch; however, these conditions do not automatically encourage them to develop a stronger attachment to the brand.

These findings indicate that the story and messages delivered may attract more audience attention than the brand itself. In the Senja mini-series, the storytelling approach successfully captured audience interest, yet it did not fully engage them with the brand. This suggests that even when content marketing successfully attracts audience attention, audiences do not necessarily develop a strong relationship with the associated brand.

Theoretically, these findings are not entirely consistent with the view of Kotler et al. (2017), who argue that relevant and valuable content can encourage customer participation and engagement with a brand. In the context of digital marketing, content marketing serves as a tool that companies can utilize to create interactions with audiences through the delivery of engaging content that meets their needs. Through such content, audiences are expected not only to receive

information but also to become more actively involved with the brand. However, the results of this study indicate that the Senja mini-series content marketing strategy has not directly increased audience brand engagement with Kopi Aksi. These findings suggest that attractive content alone may not be sufficient to encourage consumer engagement with a brand.

These findings can also be explained through the concept of brand engagement proposed by Hollebeek (2011), which defines brand engagement as the level of consumer involvement encompassing cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions toward a brand. Consumer engagement does not emerge merely from content consumption; rather, it develops through attention, interest, and stronger relationships with the brand. In this study, audiences may have engaged with the content by paying attention to the storyline and understanding the conveyed messages, yet their involvement did not fully translate into engagement with the Kopi Aksi brand. This means that audiences were engaged with the content but not necessarily engaged with the brand itself.

The results of this study are consistent with the findings of Ashari and Sitorus (2023), who demonstrated that marketing activities do not always directly increase customer engagement with a brand. According to their study, consumer engagement with a brand is often formed through more complex processes involving additional elements that support the relationship between marketing activities and engagement. Their findings indicate that consumer interest in content is not always followed by higher levels of engagement with the brand. These findings are reinforced by the fact that content marketing through the Senja mini-series was unable to directly establish brand engagement. Therefore, the effectiveness of content marketing in increasing customer engagement may depend on various other components that contribute to building relationships between audiences and brands.

Based on these findings, Kopi Aksi should not focus solely on creating attractive content but should also ensure that the content generates more meaningful interactions between customers and the brand. In this way, the presented content will not only succeed in attracting audience attention but also be capable of increasing their engagement with the brand in a stronger and more sustainable manner.

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that brand experience has a significant effect on brand engagement; therefore, the third hypothesis (H3), which states that brand experience significantly influences brand engagement, is accepted. These findings indicate that the experiences consumers encounter while interacting with a brand play an important role in shaping their engagement with that brand. The better the experiences they have while interacting with a brand, the greater the likelihood that they will pay attention to, become interested in, and engage with the brand. These findings suggest that consumer engagement is influenced not only by the information they receive but also by the experiences they perceive during interactions with the brand.

In this study, the Senja mini-series produced by Diam.id and Kopi Aksi successfully created memorable experiences for audiences through attractive visuals, storylines that were relevant to everyday life, and messages capable of stimulating audiences' thoughts and emotions. The experiences perceived while watching the content not only helped audiences become familiar with Kopi Aksi but also encouraged greater attention and interest toward the brand. This demonstrates that the experiences audiences gain while consuming content can serve as a foundation for their engagement with the brand.

Theoretically, these findings are consistent with the argument of Butcher and Sung (2024), who state that brand experience is generated through various customer interactions with a brand and can influence customers' evaluations and responses toward that brand. Experiences obtained by customers subsequently shape their impressions of the brand, which in turn can affect their level of engagement. The experiences audiences gained while watching the Senja mini-series indicate that memorable experiences can increase audiences' tendency to become more interested in and connected with the Kopi Aksi brand.

These findings are also supported by Iglesias et al. (2019), who argue that brand experience plays an important role in building stronger relationships between consumers and brands. Experiences that leave a deep impression encourage consumers to develop stronger attachment and engagement toward a brand. In the context of this study, the experiences gained through the content functioned not only as a means of entertainment or product advertising but also as a factor that strengthened the relationship between audiences and the brand featured in the content.

The results of this study are consistent with Iman and Kurniawati (2023), who found that brand experience significantly influences customer engagement. Their findings indicate that experiences perceived by consumers during interactions with a brand can encourage the formation of higher engagement levels. Although their study used customer engagement as the dependent variable, the findings remain relevant to the present study because both customer engagement and brand engagement describe forms of involvement that emerge as responses to consumers' experiences with a brand.

Based on these findings, Kopi Aksi should continue providing engaging experiences, particularly through storytelling-based content marketing. Experiences that capture attention and provide meaning to audiences will help increase audience engagement with the brand. Therefore, efforts to build brand engagement should focus not only on delivering marketing messages but also on creating meaningful experiences.

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that brand experience significantly mediates the effect of content marketing on brand engagement. On the other hand, the direct effect testing using the bootstrapping method showed that content marketing does not significantly influence brand engagement. These findings indicate the occurrence of full mediation; therefore, the fourth hypothesis (H4), which states that brand experience mediates the effect of content marketing on brand engagement, is accepted.

These findings indicate that content marketing is unable to directly increase brand engagement and must first create experiences that are perceived by audiences. In other words, audience engagement with a brand is not formed merely because they watch attractive content but because they experience something while interacting with that content. This demonstrates that brand experience serves as the primary mechanism explaining how content marketing can generate brand engagement.

In the context of this study, the Senja mini-series successfully attracted audience attention through its storytelling approach. However, engagement with the brand did not emerge simply because audiences enjoyed the storyline presented. Rather, engagement was formed after audiences gained experiences through the visuals, atmosphere, and messages conveyed in each episode. The experiences perceived while watching the content subsequently shaped certain evaluations and impressions of the Kopi Aksi brand, ultimately encouraging audiences to develop closer relationships with the brand. These findings indicate that the experiences gained by audiences function as a bridge that transforms interest in content into engagement with the brand.

Theoretically, these findings are consistent with the view of Kumar and Hsieh (2024), who explain that brand experience plays an important role in connecting various marketing activities with consumer responses toward a brand. Experiences perceived by consumers during interactions with a brand can influence their evaluations, attitudes, and behaviors toward that brand. In this study, the Senja mini-series functioned as a medium that enabled audiences to gain deeper experiences, making those experiences the factor that bridged the relationship between content marketing and brand engagement.

These findings are also supported by Martina and Masnita (2024), who explain that meaningful experiences can strengthen the relationship between consumers and brands. When consumers gain experiences that capture their attention and leave a particular impression, they tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement with the brand. In this study, the experiences audiences gained while watching the Senja mini-series not only helped them become familiar with Kopi Aksi but also encouraged the development of closer relationships with the brand. This demonstrates that experiences created through content marketing play an important role in increasing audience engagement with a brand.

The results of this study are also consistent with the findings of Ashari and Sitorus (2023), who showed that marketing strategies do not always directly increase customer engagement with a brand; instead, other factors often serve as mediating mechanisms. According to their study, customer experience is one of the important components in transforming marketing strategies into customer engagement with a brand. The findings of the present study confirm that content marketing through the Senja mini-series does not directly establish brand engagement. Instead, brand experience is created first, which subsequently encourages audience engagement with Kopi Aksi. The similarity of these findings indicates that brand experience is the primary factor explaining the relationship between content marketing and brand engagement.

Based on these findings, Kopi Aksi should view content marketing as a tool for creating audience experiences. Kopi Aksi should continue providing relevant, attractive, and memorable content so that audiences not only enjoy the content but also become more engaged with the brand.

CONCLUSIONS

Based on the data analysis and discussion regarding the effect of content marketing on brand engagement with brand experience as a mediating variable in the collaboration between Diam.id and Kopi Aksi, several conclusions can be drawn.

First, content marketing was found to have a significant positive effect on brand experience among the audience of the collaboration. This finding indicates that the visual narratives and storytelling elements presented in the Senja mini-series were effective in stimulating the sensory, affective, intellectual, and behavioral dimensions of audience experience.

Second, brand experience was found to have a significant positive effect on brand engagement. Meaningful experiences perceived by audiences while consuming digital content served as the primary driver of active engagement, both cognitively and emotionally, with the brand.

Third, content marketing did not have a significant direct effect on brand engagement. The content strategy implemented in the collaboration was not able to directly generate audience attachment and involvement without first creating a meaningful brand experience.

Finally, brand experience functioned as a full mediator in the relationship between content marketing and brand engagement. This result suggests that the collaborative content marketing strategy can only foster audience engagement when it successfully creates a strong and meaningful brand experience beforehand.

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