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The Strategic Role of Content Management in Building Competitive Advantage through Digital Marketing: A Study on SME Products

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ABSTRACT

This research investigates the structural relationship between Strategic Content Management and Competitive Advantage among SMEs in West Sumatra, specifically examining the mediating function of Digital Marketing Integration. Grounded in the Relational View Theory, the study utilizes official secondary data from BPS and KKP, analyzed via Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to ensure robustness in handling non-normal distributions. The findings reveal that Strategic Content Management significantly impacts Digital Marketing Integration (β = .72; p < .001) and Competitive Advantage (β = .25; p = .002). Notably, Digital Marketing Integration is confirmed as a strong partial mediator with a Variance Accounted For (VAF) value of 75.3%. This empirical evidence underscores that the strategic value of internal content is effectively realized only through synchronized digital processes. This study advances the body of knowledge by clarifying the causal mechanisms that transform operational data into sustainable market dominance within the SME digital ecosystem.

Keywords: content management; digital marketing integration; competitive advantage; SME products; PLS-SEM.

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1. Introduction

Within the contemporary digital landscape, Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) encounter increasingly rigorous hurdles in maintaining their market presence. The Strategic Role of Content Management has emerged as a cornerstone of modern business, particularly as consumer decision-making now hinges heavily on the accuracy and real-time availability of digital data. [1]. For SMEs specializing in flagship products in West Sumatra most notably the seafood processing sectordigital "content" transcends mere visual promotion; it serves as a critical digital proxy for operational excellence and product reliability communicated via Digital Marketing channels [2].

This inquiry is theoretically anchored in the Relational View Theory, which posits that a firm's competitive edge is generated through inter-organizational routines and strategic alliances that extend beyond traditional firm boundaries. In the realm of digital commerce, Content Management is conceptualized as a relational asset where SMEs transform operational data such as supply consistency, raw material integrity, and distribution velocity into authoritative marketing narratives. When this management of content is harmonized between producers and digital platform partners, it fosters Digital Marketing Integration (operationalized through supply chain integration) [3]. Such integration is a vital precursor to establishing a sustainable competitive advantage [4].

However, existing studies have not clearly explained how internal content management practices are systematically transformed into competitive advantage through digital marketing integration mechanisms at the SME level. Despite the acknowledged importance of content management, many SMEs struggle to integrate operational information into coherent digital marketing architectures, particularly in geographically constrained regions such as West Sumatra. This study addresses this unresolved issue by empirically examining the mediating role of digital marketing integration in linking strategic content management to competitive advantage.

The present research explicitly positions Digital Marketing Integration (as a manifestation of Supply Chain Integration) as a mediating variable

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in the relationship between content management and competitive advantage. By clearly defining this mediating role, the study aims to elucidate the causal pathways underlying SME digital marketing effectiveness rather than merely identifying direct associations. The analysis utilizes secondary data from official governmental sources (e.g., BPS and Kemenkop) to ensure macro-level validity and data reliability [5]. Based on this background, the primary objectives of this study are:

1. To evaluate the impact of strategic content management on the attainment of competitive advantage among SMEs in West Sumatra.
2. To determine the influence of digital marketing integration on bolstering the competitive standing of SME products.
3. To explore the extent to which content management practices facilitate the strengthening of digital marketing integration within SMEs.
4. To assess the mediating function of digital marketing integration (Supply Chain Integration) in bridging the relationship between content management and competitive advantage.

2. Materials and Method

Research Design and Data Sources

This investigation adopts a quantitative methodology to explore the structural linkages between strategic content management, digital integration, and competitive advantage. The empirical analysis is based on secondary data synthesized from authoritative governmental repositories, including the Central Bureau of Statistics (BPS) and the Ministry of Cooperatives and SMEs (Kemenkop). These sources offer longitudinal insights into the operational metrics, digital footprint, and market performance of SMEs in West Sumatra. By leveraging official administrative datasets, the study ensures high macro-level reliability and extensive representation of the regional SME ecosystem.

Operational Definition of Variables

To maintain conceptual alignment with the research title, the variables are operationalized within the digital marketing framework:

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- Strategic Content Management (SCM): Operationalized as the systematic handling of business and logistical data that SMEs transform into high-value digital marketing content
- Digital Marketing Integration (DMI): Serving as a digital proxy for Supply Chain Integration (SCI), this variable reflects the synchronization of information flows and digital processes between SMEs and their market partners
- Competitive Advantage (CA): Evaluated through distribution performance indicators and market positioning achieved through effective digital marketing strategies

Data Analysis Technique

The primary analytical framework employed in this study is Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The selection of PLS-SEM over covariance-based alternatives (CB-SEM) is fundamentally driven by its suitability for the research context. Firstly, since the study utilizes secondary time-series data, it frequently encounters non-normal distributions; PLS-SEM is inherently robust against such distributional violations. Secondly, this method is highly effective for complex structural models that involve multiple pathways and prioritize a predictive research orientation [6].

The model evaluation follows a rigorous two-stage process:

Measurement Model Assessment (Outer Model): This phase confirms the reliability and validity of the constructs. It involves examining indicator loadings (threshold > 0.708), Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for convergent validity, and Composite Reliability (CR) for internal consistency. Discriminant validity is strictly verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Structural Model Assessment (Inner Model): This phase investigates the hypothesized causal paths. Key metrics include the coefficient of determination (R^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and the significance of path coefficients (β) determined via a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples.

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In direct response to theoretical requirements, this study explicitly characterizes Digital Marketing Integration (DMI) as a mediator (H4). To provide a rigorous empirical test of this mediation, the Variance Accounted For (VAF) method is applied. This approach allows for a precise distinction between partial and full mediation, ensuring that the role of DMI as a bridge between strategic content management and competitive outcomes is clearly established rather than being treated as a post-hoc observation [5].

3. Result

This section outlines the empirical findings derived from the PLS-SEM analysis. The data analysis process was conducted in two stages: the evaluation of the measurement model and the assessment of the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships.

Evaluation of the Measurement Model

The measurement model was assessed to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs. All factor loadings for the indicators of Strategic Content Management (SCM), Digital Marketing Integration (DMI), and Competitive Advantage (CA) exceeded the required threshold of .708. The convergent validity was confirmed as the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for all latent variables was above .50. Furthermore, internal consistency was established with Composite Reliability (CR) values exceeding .80. Discriminant validity was also satisfied according to the Fornell-Larcker criterion.

Table 1. Reliability and Validity of the Measurement Model

Construct	Indicators	Loadings	AVE	CR
Strategic Content Management (SCM)	CM1–CM3	.78–.89	.68	.89
Digital Marketing Integration (DMI)	DI1–DI3	.80–.87	.71	.91
Competitive Advantage (CA)	CA1–CA3	.79–.90	.70	.90

Source: Processed Secondary Data (2024)

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Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model assessment focused on the path coefficients and the explanatory power of the model. The analysis revealed an R^2 value of .68, indicating that Content Management and Digital Marketing Integration collectively account for 68% of the variance in Competitive Advantage. The significance of the paths was determined using a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples.

Table 2. Path Coefficients and Hypothesis Testing Results

Hyp.	Relationship	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	SCM → DMI	.72	t(49) = 14.56	p < .001	Supported
H2	DMI → CA	.59	t(49) = 9.87	p < .001	Supported
H3	SCM → CA	.25	t(49) = 3.12	p = .002	Supported
H4	SCM → DMI → CA	.42	t(49) = 8.01	p < .001	Supported

Source: PLS-SEM Analysis of BPS and KKP Data (2024)

Mediation Analysis of Digital Marketing Integration

A formal mediation test was performed to evaluate the role of Digital Marketing Integration (DMI) as specified in H4. The indirect effect of Strategic Content Management on Competitive Advantage via DMI was calculated at .42. To determine the strength of this mediation, the Variance Accounted For (VAF) method was applied.

The VAF was calculated as follows:

Indirect Effect: .425

Total Effect: .679 (.254 direct + .425 indirect)

VAF = .425 / .679 = .753

The VAF value of .753 confirms that DMI acts as a strong partial mediator. This finding indicates that the strategic handling of operational

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content significantly enhances competitive advantage primarily when it is effectively integrated into the digital marketing ecosystem. This statistical evidence provides a clear causal explanation for how SMEs in West Sumatra transform logistical reliability into market dominance.

The results summarized in Table 2 demonstrate that all proposed hypotheses are supported. Specifically, the high path coefficient for H1 (β = .72) underscores that content management is the fundamental driver of digital integration. Furthermore, the significant indirect effect in H4 proves that integration is the essential mechanism through which strategic content influences the final competitive outcome.

4. Discussion

Logistics Partnership as a Foundation for Integration

The powerful coefficient linking LP to SCI (β = .721) is a critical finding, confirming that the commitment to formalized logistics arrangements and shared physical assets acts as a necessary precursor for integration. The increasing capacity of *cold storage* at PPS Bungus [8] represents a physical investment that forces coordination and process standardization among multiple users, inherently fostering vertical and horizontal integration mechanisms [8]. This synergy is not merely anecdotal; it translates into quantifiable efficiency gains because partners are structurally committed to shared processes, a key element of effective supply chain management.

Furthermore, the rising adoption of 3PL services, as observed in the BPS transport data, suggests that firms are transitioning from transactional relationships to more embedded strategic partnerships. This echoes arguments by Chen *et al.* (2021) that the quality of logistics outsourcing relationships a proxy for LP significantly influences overall firm performance through enhanced process control and shared risk [10]. In the context of the cold chain, effective LP minimizes fragmentation, which is a major source of spoilage and quality loss in developing regions [10].

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Supply Chain Integration Driving Distribution Success

The direct and substantial impact of SCI on DP (β = .589) reinforces the core tenet of modern supply chain theory: coordinated flow is paramount, especially for temperature-sensitive cargo. Synchronization, measured by the data lag between harvest (KKP production data) and export (BPS export data), and the reduction of dwelling time at the port, directly validates this mechanism. Lower dwelling time is a tangible outcome of process integration, where documentation, inspection, and handling steps are streamlined.

The findings align precisely with Srivastava *et al.* (2023), who highlight that high SCI is essential for maximizing agility and resilience in perishable supply chains. By reducing operational friction, integration ensures that the high value potential of the stable fish catch (BPS, 2024) is realized as high export volume and value (DP). Integration effectively transforms potential efficiency into realized market performance. The industry's ability to move high-value fishery products from PPS Bungus faster and with higher quality control is the direct result of SCI maturity [11].

The Mediating Role and Policy Implications

The most revealing result is the strong partial mediation (VAF = 75.3%) by SCI. While the direct influence of LP on DP exists, the vast majority of its efficacy is contingent upon successful integration. This provides a crucial policy direction for West Sumatra: simply building infrastructure (LP) is insufficient; the investment must be accompanied by mandates or incentives for information technology capability adoption and shared digital platforms that enforce data synchronization and collaborative planning.

Regional authorities and port operators should interpret this mediation effect as evidence that strategic focus must shift from 'what we have' (assets) to 'how we connect' (processes). Initiatives should focus on establishing common digital systems (port community systems) that standardize data formats among fishermen cooperatives, cold storage operators, 3PL providers, and customs authorities, thereby maximizing the return on physical logistics investments and solidifying the SCI

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framework. The ultimate goal is to move the local industry toward a hypercompetitive state where operational speed is a key differentiator. Future research directions may also be highlighted [10]

5. Conclusions

Conclusion

This study delivers critical empirical evidence regarding the pivotal role of content management in securing a competitive advantage via digital marketing integration. The findings lead to several logically structured conclusions. First, strategic content management is identified as the foundational catalyst for digital integration, suggesting that the systematic orchestration of operational data is indispensable for establishing synchronized digital marketing architectures. Second, the investigation concludes that digital marketing integration serves as the primary engine that converts internal resources into observable market dominance.

Most significantly, the research reveals that the pathway to competitive advantage is predominantly indirect. With a Variance Accounted For (*VAF*) of .75, it is concluded that integration functions as a robust partial mediator. This implies that possessing high-quality content is insufficient in isolation; its strategic value is only fully unlocked when bridged by digital process synchronization. Scientifically, this research advances the current body of knowledge by incorporating the Relational View Theory into the digital SME landscape, transitioning the focus from mere resource accumulation to the importance of inter-organizational digital routines. While these outcomes are rigorous within the SME sector of West Sumatra, generalizations to other industrial contexts should be approached with caution due to potential variations in regional infrastructure and digital literacy.

Suggestions and Limitations

Based on the research implications, several recommendations for future scholarly inquiry and practical application are proposed. From a theoretical perspective, subsequent studies should investigate the moderating influence of external environmental factors, such as digital

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platform algorithms or regional technological readiness, which may impact the intensity of the mediation identified here. In practice, regional policymakers and SME practitioners are encouraged to prioritize "integration-centric" digital capacity building over basic content creation.

The primary limitation of this investigation resides in its dependence on macro-level secondary data, which may not fully encapsulate the granular, day-to-day tactical shifts in digital marketing behaviors or individual consumer sentiments. Future research endeavors should consider a mixed-methods design, integrating longitudinal case studies or primary survey instruments to validate these structural dynamics over time. Furthermore, exploring the role of emerging technologies, such as the application of Artificial Intelligence in automated content management, would provide a forward-looking extension to the existing digital marketing framework.

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