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Building e-WOM through Content and Social Media Marketing at *Deutsch Lernen mit Fara*

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ABSTRACT

This research analyzed the effect of content marketing and social media marketing on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in a case study of Deutsch Lernen mit Fara (DLMF) Bandung, an educational service. Applying a quantitative method with data collected through an online survey and analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS), the results showed that content marketing and social media marketing had a significant influence on e-WOM. Social media marketing had the most significant relationship out of those two, which emphasizes the role of interaction, information and personalisation in stimulating online engagement and advocacy. The results showed that the role of content quality when combined with active social media strategies may help to increase audience trust, improve relationships and finally lead to positive e-WOM for educational services.

SARI PATI

Penelitian ini meneliti pengaruh pemasaran konten dan pemasaran media sosial terhadap electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) pada Deutsch Lernen mit Fara (DLMF) Bandung sebagai lembaga pendidikan. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif melalui kuesioner daring dan analisis Partial Least Squares (PLS), hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kedua variabel tersebut berpengaruh signifikan terhadap e-WOM. Di antara keduanya, pemasaran media sosial memiliki pengaruh yang lebih kuat, menekankan pentingnya interaktivitas, informativitas, dan personalisasi dalam mendorong keterlibatan serta advokasi daring. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa penggabungan antara kualitas konten dan strategi media sosial yang aktif dapat meningkatkan kepercayaan audiens, memperkuat hubungan, serta memperbesar kemungkinan terjadinya e-WOM positif di layanan pendidikan.

INTRODUCTION

During the digital transformation age, marketing practices have been greatly transformed from traditional communication to an interactive and value-oriented and customer-focused model (Fan et al., 2024; Hollebeek & Macky, 2019; Koob, 2021). One of the most prominent expressions of this transformation is content marketing, which is an approach to marketing based on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience (Bubphapant & Brandão, 2024; Fan et al., 2024; Salminen et al., 2019; L. Wei et al., 2024). Instead of aiming at immediate sales, what it really wants to achieve is a long-term trust and relationship by offering informative and emotional appealing content (Terho et al 2022; Wei, 2025). In the digital ecosystem, this intention evolves towards digital content marketing in a natural way as channels are created and the main medium used to establish audience engagement and strategic value becomes online platforms (Blanco-Moreno et al., 2024; Wang et al., 2019).

In parallel, SMM has become critical in driving digital engagement and brand communication. It is a strategic and cross functionality of social platform that delivers organization objectives and presence to stakeholders relationship (Koay et al., 2021; Masuda et al., 2022; Sohaib & Han, 2023). Unlike traditional marketing, SMM has strong dual communicative exchange between senders and receivers, emotional bonding and real-time interaction that stimulates the participation of customers and behavioral responses (Khan, 2022; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). The effectiveness of SMM is not only influenced by the visual attractiveness of content or personalization but also its integration into a marketing connected world system as well as capacity to create electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) through customer interactions (C. Ma et al., 2025; Maduku, 2024; Nurhadi et al., 2025).

The coordination of content marketing and social media marketing is critical to digital communications in the current environment. Content marketing serves as a strategic nucleus that brings out brand value and meaningful stories, while social media marketing plays the role of amplification and distribution channel for engaging with user interaction (K S & Massand, 2025; Koay et al., 2021; Zhang & Lee, 2022). When performed in unity, these two strategies complement each other and allow brands to generate e-WOM to continue digital development of traditional word-of-mouth (Akbari et al., 2022; Dehghani et al., 2024; Sahranavard et al., 2024). e-WOM consists of consumer-maintained information — opinions, reviews or experiences they have posted online — that affects the way people perceive and decide what products to buy (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2023; Osorio-Andrade et al., 2025).

Although research on the association between content marketing, social media marketing and e-WOM has increased over the years, insufficient study has been done in understanding how this process works within the educational service industry where consumers face more complex concepts about their decision with a longer process of evaluation due to trust formation. No previous studies focused on DLMF in Bandung as an exemplary case of how digital marketing can stimulate e-WOM in a language education service. The sales and marketing strategy of DLMF—mainly based on Meta- Platforms and testimonial content—has produced high visitor numbers to its website, but eventually rather poor conversion rates, therefore highlighting an existing gap towards targeted digital communication.

Hence, the purpose of this research is to analyze the influence of content marketing and social media marketing on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) in the context of DLMF Bandung. The study has theoretical implications as it developed empirical knowledge about e-WOM formation in service-related educational context, an area that is not well explored in existing digital marketing literature. Operationally, it offers clear guidance for

campuses that wish to fine-tune digital strategy at the various levels of the marketing funnel in order to turn interest into authentic advocacy.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Content Marketing

Content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant content to attract and engage a clearly defined audience (Wei, 2025). Instead of directly selling, it tries to gain trust and establish long-term relationships by providing information that educates, entertains or solves the customer's problems (Bubphapant & Brandão 2025). Content marketing refers to any content designed and distributed across digital or print platforms to promote a brand and help organizations achieve their strategic objectives (Koob, 2021).

Content marketing also includes creation of multimedia formats, like text, video, pictures and infographics that educate or entertain target customers (Salminen et al., 2019). It also demands a view into the buyer journey, with content designed to speak effectively in various decision-making conversations (Terho et al., 2022). In total, content marketing enhances consumer confidence and engagement via the value-added communication, which in turn facilitates positive EWOM.

Content Marketing includes three aspects- Attractiveness, Emotional Appeal, and Trustworthiness -which measure the visual attractiveness, emotional stimulation and trust of marketing content (Wei, 2025). e-WOM, the fourth factor, was omitted from this study because it is a dependent variable, ensuring there were no problems with multicollinearity.

Social Media Marketing

On a practical level, SMM is a mixture of undertaking and sharing interesting content, targeting ads to certain users, tracking customer participation as well as working with influencers to create brand awareness and sales (K S & Massand, 2025; C. Ma et al., 2025). It also promotes two-way communication and emotional bonding among audiences, cultivating empathy as well as brand attachment (Khan, 2022; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2020). Additionally, social media marketing becomes efficient when organizations are assimilated into social media and so it becomes part of organisations' daily marketing activities and routine business practices (Maduku, 2024).

The strategic interdisciplinary process of using social media platforms to accomplish organizational objectives and create stakeholder value is known as social media marketing (SMM) (Masuda et al., 2022). It is an intrinsic part of the current marketing mix as well, a supplement to traditional strategies (Sohaib & Han, 2023; Zhang & Lee, 2022). At heart, social media marketing (SMM) entails serving up, pitching and providing online marketing goods through social media systems as a means to establish and maintain relationships with the stakeholders in an effort to induce engagement and stimulate WOM activity (Koay et al., 2021).

Social media marketing is conceptually about how consumers perceive a company's attempts to engage with and understand them, keep pace with the rapidly changing world, as well as foster word-of-mouth communication (Koay et al., 2021; Nurhadi et al., 2025). By providing continuous engagement, customization and social exposure, SMM adds value which has a long-term impact on sustaining relationships between stakeholders and business providers.

Four dimensions of social media marketing: Interactivity, Informativeness, Personalisation, and Trendiness are used to measure the degree of user engagement, as proposed by (Koay et al., 2021). The Word-of-Mouth factor was not included for identical methodological reasons.

Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM)

e-WOM is generally considered to be the Internet counterpart of conventional WOM, which describes

informal communication among consumers concerning products, services, brands or sellers through social media (Sun et al., 2021; Wei, 2025). It refers to consumer-created messages that are distributed on the internet reporting their positive or negative assessment of products (Kumar et al., 2023; Sahranavard et al., 2024).

e-WOM involves any comment by potential, current or ex-customers that is available to a significant number of people and organizations on the internet (Gelashvili et al., 2024). Further, e-WOM is defined as an evolving and continuing transfer of information among consumers with reference to their product or service experience (or brand) (Akbari et al., 2022). e-WOM is defined as the digital form of interpersonal communication, with users sharing opinions, experiences and ideas on social media and other online platforms (Osorio-Andrade et al., 2025).

Marketing wise, e-WOM is significant in that it impacts consumers' decision making through authentic, peer-to-peer generated reviews which form their perceptions and trust towards a brand (Chatzipanagiotou et al., 2023; R. Ma & Zhang, 2025). Positive e-WOM can enhance brand creditability and purchase intention, but on the contrary, negative e-WOM damages consumer attitudes and engagement (Dehghani et al., 2024). In the digital marketing ecosystem, e-WOM is the primary conduit for enhancing consumer experiences and promoting brand discussions within online communities (Akbari et al., 2022; Gelashvili et al., 2024; Osorio-Andrade et al., 2025; Sahranavard et al., 2024; Wei, 2025).

HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

Content Marketing and e-WOM

Content Marketing is the practice of creating and delivering valuable, relevant content in a consistent manner to a specifically defined audience to drive profitable customer action (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). By providing both informational and emotionally engaging content that motivates consumers to interact, companies can foster positive attitudes and cognitive beliefs about the brand. Previous research indicates that well-structured content marketing increases consumer or stakeholders' engagement and stimulates online sharing actions which are relevant electronic word of mouth (Akbari et al., 2022; Bubphapant & Brandão, 2024; Sohaib & Han, 2023). With education services, content that delivers credibility and expertise with the help of learner's success stories can influence trust levels and encourage audience to advocate for the institution online. Accordingly, content marketing is assumed to positively influence e-WOM.

H1: Content marketing positively influences electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM).

Social Media Marketing and e-WOM

Social media marketing consists of organized actions directed at consumers on social network sites and includes interaction, information sharing and relationship development (Koay et al., 2021; Sohaib & Han, 2023). Successful SMM enables organizations to convey brand value, initiate participation and encourage user conversation which may lead to e-WOM. Previous studies highlight the fact that social media engagement, influencer engagement and content customization lead to improve willingness of consumers to share their experiences and opinions over the Internet (K S & Massand, 2025; C. Ma et al., 2025; Maduku, 2024). For educational services such as DLMF, active social media communication may help to promote a sense of belonging among the community and encourage recommendation.

H2: Social media marketing positively influences electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM).

METHODS

This study employed a causal research design (ex post facto) to examine the effects of content marketing and social media marketing on electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). The target population consisted of active students and alumni of Deutsch

Lernen mit Fara (DLMF), comprising approximately 300 active students and more than 2,000 alumni. Data were collected using a non-probability purposive sampling technique through an online questionnaire. Respondents were selected based on specific criteria, namely being active students or alumni of DLMF. A total of 101 valid responses were obtained.

The sample size was considered adequate for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Following the minimum sample size guideline proposed by Barclay et al. (1995) and discussed by Hair et al. (2022), the required sample size should be at least ten times the maximum number of indicators used to measure a construct or the maximum number of structural paths directed at a latent construct. In this study, the largest construct, e-WOM, was measured using seven indicators, resulting in a minimum sample requirement of 70 respondents. Therefore, the sample size of 101 exceeded the recommended threshold and was considered sufficient for model estimation.

Data were collected for one week between September 29th and October 7th, 2025 using an online questionnaire administered through Google Forms. The instrument's measurement items were derived from established scales and were assessed on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). The research was a cross-sectional survey type in nature, which is used to collect data from respondents at one time frame (Malhotra et al., 2020).

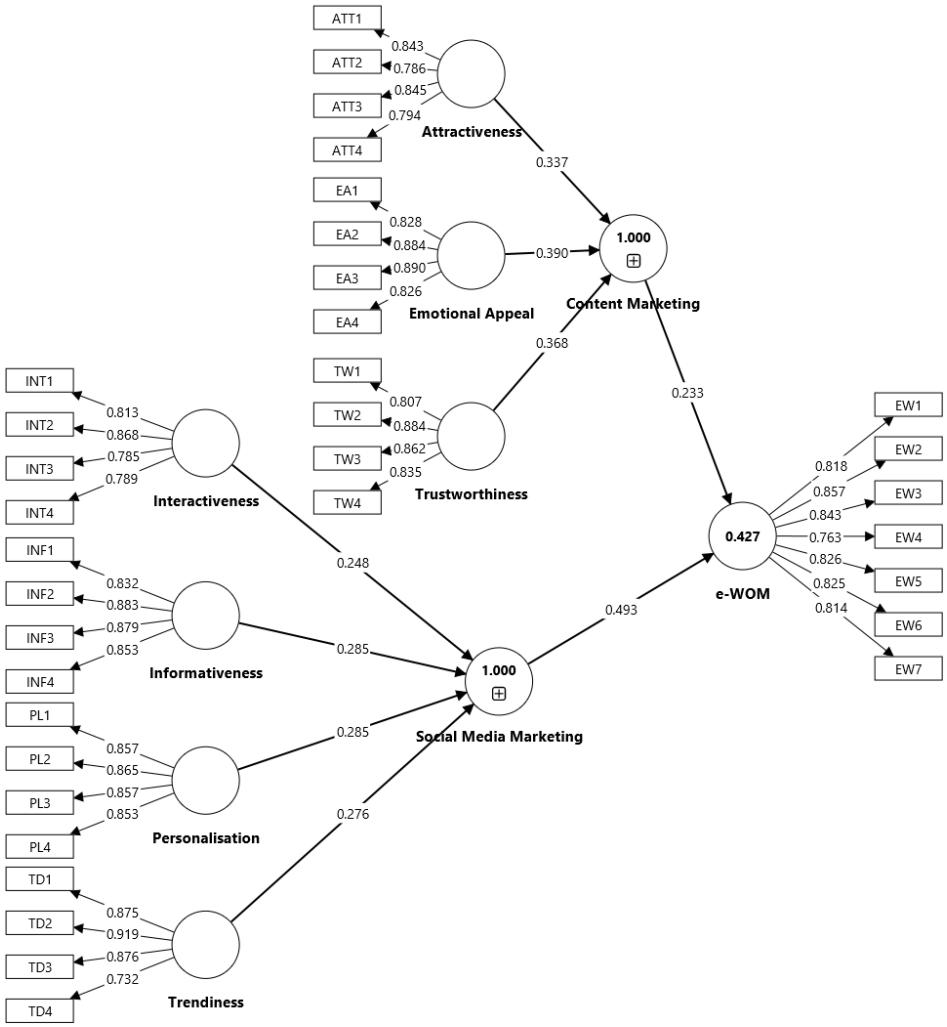


Figure 1. Research Model

The partial least squares (PLS) approach to path modeling was used to test the hypothesized relationships and bootstrap resampling technique employed at 5% level of significance in determining the significance of path coefficients. The model (Figure 1) included lower-level constructs to improve precision of measurement and account for multi-dimensionality of the Content Marketing and Social Media Marketing constructs (Hair, Jr. et al., 2022).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

A sample size of 101 in Table 1 (69.3% student respondents and 30.7% alumni) contributed to this study. Regarding gender, the participants were mainly male (60.4%) and female participants comprised 39.6%. Other demographic characteristic showed that, in terms of age, most of the subjects were 17-21 years old (56.4%), then were aged 22–26 years old (22.8%) and younger than 17 years old (10.9%). Respondents aged 27–31 years accounted for 9.9%, and there were no respondents over the age of 31 years. This shows that DLMF participants are late adolescents and young adults, exactly those at a very high level of education and skill development (language learning particularly).

By educational level, most of them graduated from senior high school (57.4%), followed by undergraduate (16.8%) and junior high school graduates (15.8%), with those holding diploma accounted for 5.9% and postgraduate degree received 4%. Regarding occupation, the majority were college students (38.6%), freelancers (16.8%), unemployed people (16.8 %), school students (15.8 %), employees (9.9%) and business owner represented 2%.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Profile		Frequency	%
Gender	Male	61	60.4%
	Female	40	39.6%
Age	<17	11	10.9%
	17-21	57	56.4%
	22-26	23	22.8%
	27-31	10	9.9%
	31-35	0	0.0%
	>35	0	0.0%
Education	Elementary School	0	0.0%
	Junior High School	16	15.8%
	Senior High School	58	57.4%
	Diploma	6	5.9%
	Undergraduate Degree	17	16.8%
	Postgraduate Degree	4	4%
Occupation	Student	16	15.8%
	College Student	39	38.6%
	Employee	10	9.9%
	Freelance	17	16.8%
	Business Owner	2	2%
	Unemployed	17	16.8%
Category	Active Student	70	69.3%
	Alumni	31	30.7%

Model Fit

The model goodness of fit (Table 2) indices suggests the measurement model has a good overall fit. The SRMR (Standardized Root Mean Square Residual) value of 0.040 is below the commonly used threshold of 0.08 which means a small discrepancy between the observed- and predicted-correlations. This indicates that the estimated model is an acceptable representation of our observed data. In the same vein, d_ULS (0.057) and d_G (0.082) provide further evidence that the model has a high level of fit between empirical and theoretical covariance matrices (degree of congruence), thus indicating stability in the theory itself.

Table 2. Model Fit

	Saturated model	Estimated model
SRMR	0.040	0.040
d_ULS	0.057	0.057
d_G	0.082	0.082
Chi-square	43.283	43.283
NFI	0.932	0.932

Moreover, the Chi-square value (43.283) is sensitive to sample size, yet it remains consistent with the goodness-of-fit when assessed by other indexes. The Normed Fit Index (NFI) of 0.932 is above the commonly recommended cut-off value of 0.90, suggesting that the estimated model provides a significantly better account of the data in comparison with an independent (null) model. To summarize, these findings taken as an entirety affirm that both the saturated model and the estimated model have a good fit to data should be thus considered to support the structural integrity of the studied model.

According to the Outer Loading' convergent validity test (Table 3), all measurement items of content marketing, social media marketing, and e-WOM exceeded the cutoff value (> 0.7). This signifies that the individual variables are highly correlated with their respective latent variable, and thus are valid measures of them. Another test based on Average Variance Extracted (with a cut-off of.5) among the dimensions generated acceptable results, indicating that all dimensions met this criterion as well, thus providing support for their validity. Convergent validity reflects the degree of relatedness between different items measuring a common construct, and stronger relationships among indicators suggest that these indicators truly reflect their underlying construct.

Discriminant validity (Table 4) is tested using the Fornell–Larcker criterion, which examines whether each construct in a model is empirically different from the others. Following this guideline, each construct's square root of AVE value is compared with its correlations (outlined off-diagonally) with all the remaining constructs.

According to the table, all of them (the diagonal values) are greater than the correlations comparing in rows and columns with the diagonal value itself (ATT = 0.817 > CI in EA = 0.749; INF = 0.376 etc.; EA = 0.857>corr in ATT= 0.749). This tendency is found for all constructs (i.e., Content Marketing dimensions [ATT], [EA], and [TW]; Social Media Marketing dimensions [INT], [INF], [PL] and Trendiness (TD), and the dependent variable Electronic Word-of-Mouth) consistently.

Thus, findings indicate that each latent factor exhibits sufficient discriminant validity, suggesting that the constructs in this study are empirically independent and correspond to different conceptual domains. This confirms the structural reliability of the measurement model, and confirms that these constructs are appropriate for further structural analysis.

The path analysis (Table 5) results indicate that both CM and SMM have positive and statistically significant effects on e-WOM. In particular, CM had a significant impact on e-WOM (0.234; P=0.019). But SMM had the strongest, very significant positive effect on e-WOM with a bigger value of 0.494 (P=0.000). These results imply that, when it comes to promoting electronic word-of-mouth

Table 3. Convergent Validity and Measurement Items.

Code	Measurement	Loading Factor
	CONTENT MARKETING (X1):	
	Attractiveness a = 0.834, CR = 0.841, AVE = 0.668	
ATT1	The learning content is perceived as appealing.	0.839
ATT2	The provided content is not perceived as monotonous	0.792
ATT3	The content presentation (images, video, or text) is visually pleasing.	0.861
ATT4	I experience enjoyment when viewing or reading content from DLMF.	0.773
	Emotional Appeal a = 0.880, CR = 0.890, AVE = 0.735	
EA1	The learning content enhances my motivation to study German language.	0.804
EA2	The content frequently evokes feelings of pleasure	0.881
EA3	I feel motivated after engaging with the content from DLMF.	0.901
EA4	The provided content fosters a sense of connection with the teacher.	0.840
	Trustworthiness a = 0.869, CR = 0.873, AVE = 0.718	
TW1	I believe the content provided by DLMF is accurate and accountable	0.810
TW2	I perceive the information conveyed in the content as sincere and not exaggerated.	0.882
TW3	The provided content is relevant to my learning needs.	0.853
TW4	I believe the content from DLMF is beneficial for improving my German language proficiency.	0.842
	SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING (X2):	
	Informativeness a = 0.885 CR = 0.885, AVE = 0.743	
INF1	The shared content provides clear information regarding the German language.	0.831
INF2	The information available on DLMF's social media is useful for expanding my knowledge.	0.885
INF3	The content facilitates my comprehension of new concepts in German language acquisition.	0.880
INF4	DLMF's social media provides information that is aligned with my requirements.	0.851
	Interactivity a = 0.830, CR = 0.839, AVE = 0.661	
INT1	I can easily provide feedback on the posted content.	0.787
INT2	I feel the administrator responds appropriately to my inquiries on social media.	0.850
INT3	I feel capable of direct interaction with the instructor via social media.	0.794
INT4	DLMF's social media enables my active involvement in the learning process.	0.819
	Personalisation a = 0.881, CR = 0.882, AVE = 0.736	
PL1	The shared content is commensurate with my German language proficiency level.	0.851
PL2	I perceive the social media content as tailored to the needs of the tutoring program students.	0.870
PL3	The content is perceived as relevant to my prior learning experiences.	0.863
PL4	I feel the content is directly addressed to me.	0.848
	Trendiness a = 0.873, CR = 0.873, AVE = 0.727	
TD1	The shared content adheres to current social media trends.	0.860
TD2	I perceive the content as modern and contemporary.	0.906
TD3	The content aligns with subjects currently popular among the youth.	0.873
TD4	DLMF's social media is up-to-date.	0.764
	e-WOM (Y):	
	e-WOM a = 0.919, CR = 0.921, AVE = 0.674	
EW1	I frequently share my learning experiences at DLMF via social media or online groups.	0.815
EW2	I enjoy sharing my positive experiences about DLMF with friends online.	0.855
EW3	I am willing to recommend DLMF to others via social media.	0.840
EW4	I have previously written a positive comment/review about DLMFon online platforms.	0.761
EW5	I feel comfortable expressing my opinion about DLMF on social media.	0.831
EW6	I would share information about this tutoring program if a friend sought recommendations for learning German language.	0.829
EW7	I believe my experience can assist others interested in learning German at DLMF.	0.813

Table 4 Discriminant Validity

	ATT	EA	INF	INT	PL	TD	TW	EW
ATT	0.817							
EA	0.749	0.857						
INF	0.376	0.464	0.862					
INT	0.434	0.500	0.821	0.813				
PL	0.464	0.471	0.786	0.787	0.858			
TD	0.397	0.502	0.730	0.792	0.752	0.853		
TW	0.720	0.771	0.508	0.545	0.519	0.529	0.847	
EW	0.444	0.504	0.560	0.539	0.615	0.574	0.463	0.821

Table 5. Path Coefficients

	Original sample (O)	T statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P values
CM -> e-WOM	0.234	2.079	0.019
SMM -> e-WOM	0.494	4.411	0.000

in the context of educational language services, interactive and socially conscious marketing methods are more significant than informative and valuable content.

This result is in line with earlier research that suggests social media marketing, as opposed to traditional content distribution, promotes two-way communication, emotional involvement, and stronger electronic word-of-mouth (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Pahlawan et al., 2025). Before choosing to enroll in educational language services, students typically look for real-world experiences, peer recommendations, testimonials, and interactive communication. Prospective students can engage directly with educational institutions and other students through social media platforms, which fosters a sense of community and trust (Favret et al., 2024) Additionally, earlier research on tutoring and educational services discovered that online evaluations and social media advertising have a big impact on students' choices and involvement (Arroji & Ruspitasari, 2022).

The stronger influence of social media marketing on e-WOM may be explained by the unique characteristics of language education services. Learning a foreign language often involves social interaction, continuous practice, and confidence-building activities. Through interactive social media platforms, learners can communicate with peers, share learning experiences, seek feedback, and reduce language anxiety. Such interactions create a stronger sense of belonging and community, which encourages students to share positive experiences and recommendations online. Therefore, social media interactivity serves not only as a marketing tool but also as a learning support mechanism that facilitates positive e-WOM among language learners.

The findings suggest that content marketing and social media marketing have a statistically significant positive influence on Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM). According to H1, the t-value (2.079) and p-value (0.019) in Table 6 indicates that content marketing have significant effect on e-WOM. In the same way, for H2 also t-value (4.411) and p-value (0.000) shows that social media marketing has positive relationship with e-WOM. The P-values (< 0.05) indicate that the relationships are statistically significant at 5% level. The Goodness of fit R2 reported in multivariate analysis for the dependent variable e-WOM (0.454) implies that 45.4% of e-WOM variance is caused by both content marketing and social media marketing contributing largely to driving consumers' e-WOM behavior.

Table 6. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis	Relationship	t-value	p-value	Decision	R^2
H1	Content Marketing → e-WOM	2.079	0.019	Accepted	0.454
H2	Social Media Marketing → e-WOM	4.411	0.000	Accepted	0.454

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATION

The results of this study offer several practical implications regarding the managing strategies used among educational service providers for increasing their effectiveness of digital marketing communication via electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM). The findings indicate that content marketing and social media marketing have a significant effect on e-WOM, in which the impact of social media marketing is higher ($\beta = 0.494$, $p < 0.001$) than that of content marketing ($\beta = 0.234$, $p < 0.05$). It suggests that, despite the importance of quality content, interacting on social media and targeting it to the needs of individual users are more successful in encouraging positive online discourse and recommendations. From a management standpoint, DLMF should focus on generating the interesting and credible content that demonstrates how well their students have gotten on in so far - particularly those who've managed to stay in Germany and continue their studies... or even work. This approach is consistent with the previously stated finding that testimonial-style content typically generates the highest engagement. Nevertheless, given that content marketing is less influential than social media for a DLMF context, it implies that DLMF should work carefully to incorporate such information as part of an overarching digital and social strategy where 2-way active communication rather than uni-direction communication delivery.

Since DLMF's media strategy is mostly focused on Meta platforms (Instagram, Facebook) and only uses TikTok for organic content/dissemination these results could hint at added value from enacting some strategically planned cross-platform interoperability. While the conversion rate maximization through TikTok ads is low due to characteristics of language services, TikTok's high virality could be utilized effectively as a top-of-the-funnel channel. At the same time, Meta channels can still be used to support mid- and bottom-of-funnel goals like lead nurturing and conversion. Besides, in order to raise the question of low conversion despite high engagement, offline–online integration (events for marketing/banners/LED) could have applied more widely in DLMF, as it was observed from the field observation at the outset. It'd back up digital messaging with tangible exposure, solidifying brand authenticity and reliability. Finally, managerial attention needs to be reoriented more towards marketing funnel orientation so that the specific content types and platforms serve a strategic role (e.g., improving converting the engagement into sustained advocacy and e-WOM).

CONCLUSION

This research contributes to a better understanding of how digital marketing tactics drive e-WOM, within an educational services environment such as DLMF. The results indicate that trustworthy, emotionally engaging, and attractive content, combined with interactive, informative, personalized, and trendy social media activities, are influential factors in shaping users' willingness to share positive experiences online.

Theoretically, this study contributes to and extends existing concepts of digital engagement by showing that consumer-centered as well as firm-crafted activities in digital marketing such as content marketing, social media interactivity and personalization are important antecedents for e-WOM.

Despite the satisfactory statistical results, this study has several limitations. First, the use of a non-probability purposive sampling technique

may limit the generalizability of the findings beyond the specific context of DLMF. Although the sample size of 101 respondents met the minimum requirement for PLS-SEM analysis, the respondents were selected based on predefined criteria rather than random sampling. Therefore, caution should be exercised when generalizing the findings to broader populations of educational service users. Future studies are encouraged to employ probability sampling techniques and larger sample sizes across different educational institutions to enhance external validity and provide more comprehensive insights into the formation of electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM).

These findings show the importance of platform-specific and affective digital strategies in terms of fostering online advocacy. In terms of practice, this research suggests that educational institutions that they can efficiently integrate content and social media marketing efforts to grow digital brand value and longer-term community relationships for more engaged students and alumni.

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