



**The mediating role of Customer Engagement  
in the relationship between Content  
Marketing and Electronic Word of Mouth:  
A case of online food ordering and delivery  
applications in Egypt**

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يناير ٢٠٢١ م

رابط المجلة : <https://csj.journals.ekb.eg>



**Abstract:**

**Purpose** – Content Marketing (CM) is among the strategies used to create consumer brand loyalty and improve consumer word-of-mouth, yet it lacks scientific research. Therefore, to narrow the gap, this paper intends to explore the effect of customer engagement(CE) as a mediator in the relationship between content marketing (CM) and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) specially in Egyptian online food ordering and delivery service applications. In this study, content marketing comprises three factors, which are content format, Combination of Content Tools, and complexity of the content. This paper is reviewing the content of online food ordering and delivery service applications in Egypt (Otlob/Talbat, Glovo, Uber Eats, Akelni, Elmenus, Mrsool).

**Design/methodology/approach** – The design of this research is descriptive and quantitative that uses two data types. For the overall theoretical view, secondary data were obtained from numerous databases and academic papers dealing with the present research. For achieving the research goals, primary data were used and obtained using the E-Questionnaire tool provided by Google models for using the questionnaire across the Internet and filling it out by different users. A total number of 398 valid responses were obtained. Hypotheses were tested employing the Path Analysis method using the Amos Ver.18 program. The researchers used the Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) method using the path analysis program, which is one of the regression programs, by using the AMOS program with the Maximum Likelihood Estimates (MLE) method. Where it can test the mediating influence of customer engagement on the correlation between content marketing and electronic word of mouth. Table (8) shows the results of the AMOS model for the impact of customer engagement as a mediating variable on the relation between content marketing and electronic word of mouth.

**Findings** – The current findings showed that content marketing (CM) has a substantial positive effect on both customer engagement (CE) and electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM). customer engagement (CE) also mediates the association between content marketing(CM) and electronic word of mouth(E-WOM) in a positive and statistically significant correlation.

**Originality/value** – This study further broadened existing understanding by showing that the impact of Content Marketing(CM) on electronic word-of-mouth(E-WOM) is influenced by customer engagement (CE). This study has used the power of the Path Analysis Method and the Structural Equations Modeming (SEM) method used by the Amos software to deal with higher-order structures, enabling us to create and validate a suitable methodology that is useful for practitioners.

Keywords- Content Marketing, Customer Engagement, Electronic Word-of-Mouth, User Generated Content (UGC), Content Format, Content Complexity.

Paper Type- A research paper.

### **Introduction:**

Years earlier, before social media and smartphone apps, corporations used contact points such as tv, radio, newspapers, and ads to communicate and connect with their clients. They have reached out to consumers via mass media and have overseen the advertisements they have delivered. At that point, consumer engagement implied enticing them with the fantastic promotions' prospect and bringing them to the checkout as soon as possible. Nowadays, however, there is a reason to think that the pattern of declining investment in conventional marketing strategies is influenced by the shift in consumer behaviors (Opreana & Vinerean, 2015; Rancati et al., 2015).

It was suggested that customers do not like to be distracted, thus they disregard promotional advertisements that sound disruptive, such as TV commercials, lists of unsubscribed emails, and "Don't call" phone number entries (Malthouse et al., 2013; Rancati et al., 2015). Consumers now have a tight link to social networks, so, they focus more on the knowledge provided by other social media and networks' users, when considering an online purchasing decision (Thoumrunroje, 2014). In addition, not only customers but the sellers too benefit from Egyptian online food ordering and delivery applications and social media marketing activities. The latter can invest in online food ordering applications development to reap higher sales. Also, these applications help sellers in many ways like cost-cutting, online presence, and customer engagement.

Alternatively, the growing emergence of digital technologies and the extensive use of the Internet in interacting have contributed to innovative improvements in the way companies try to fulfill the needs and expectations of their shareholders. Consequently, in 1996, Bill Gates published a paper called "Content is King" in which he expected that Internet success would be accomplished by content. Since then, that phrase has turned into a common motto in the digital market (Rancati et al., 2015).

Besides, Van Doorn et al. (2010) and Żymkowska et al. (2017) referred to an organization's competitive advantage as the ability of the organization to be able to identify, retain, sustain, and continue to nurture their relationships with customers, or in other words to "Engage Customers". Based on that, online organizations realized that to involve clients online they must apply softer marketing methods or non-direct sales fields in the form of either storytelling or

content marketing(CM) (Gorry & Westbrook, 2011; Pulizzi, 2012), as content marketing(CM) draws possible customers and enhances their engagement and motivation (Kucuk & Krishnamurthy, 2007).

Customer engagement (CE) term has originated from the amount of data related to the phenomenon of successful customer presence in the process of collaborative development of new value, a part of the marketing partnership (Vivek et al., 2012). Additionally, as evidenced in the Marketing Science Institution's recognition of consumer/ customer engagement (CE), the significance of conducting more studies regarding customer engagement (CE) has been commonly recognized by both academics and professionals as a primary field for further research (Marketing Science Institute, 2016).

Because of the widespread social media sites' popularity, more and more organizations are using it as a method to create and maintain strong customer relations. Thus, organizations would like their customers to make positive comments and create enthusiastic electronic word-of-mouth (E-WOM) across social media like Facebook and Twitter.

According to López & Sicilia (2014) and Pourabedin & Migin (2015): The faster and broad spreading of E-WOM deeply affects customer decision-making. In comparison to the conventional word-of-mouth, E-WOM has demonstrated more influence than the firm-generated Internet knowledge resources, also more efficient than conventional media advertising, which seems to have a declining efficacy.

In addition to the above, the appearance of the Coronavirus pandemic (Covid-19) in 2020, and precautionary measures in all the world that led to reduced opportunities for face-to-face dealing, and the closure of many places of product distribution, and based on the above, there was a need to study the impact of content in online food ordering and delivery applications on customer engagement and their purchasing decisions. Finally, as there are no Arab and foreign studies within the limits of the researcher's knowledge studying the relationship between the variables of the study combined. Accordingly, the problem of the study is in the following question: Is there a significant positive effect of content marketing(CM) on electronic word-of-mouth(E-WOM) thorough the mediating effect of customer engagement(CE) in online food ordering and delivery industry.

## Literature Review:

### Content Marketing (CM)

Content marketing (CM) is not a new concept it was there even before the internet revaluation came into existence. The internet has just made it a buzzword in the modern marketing era. In particular, the digital aspect has given new birth to concepts like digital content marketing that reflects on the improvements the technical advancement has brought to production, distribution, and content (Koiso-Kanttila, 2004; Rowley, 2008; Rakic et al., 2014; Rancati & Niccolo, 2014).

Content Marketing(CM) means to produce quality content, unique, significant, valuable, dynamic, and more relevant than its competitors' competitors (Handley & Chapman, 2010; Lieb, 2011; Jefferson & Tanton, 2013; Rancati & Niccolo, 2014).

Pažeraite & Repoviene (2016) in their research, demonstrated that content marketing(CM) is a tactical marketing approach centered on producing and delivering important, appropriate, and reliable content to draw and maintain a precisely identified audience and potentially lead successful consumer decisions. Often, being an activating agent for interaction, CM is used to draw consumers, as it is quite beneficial to help quickly navigate the brand while paying less (Frambach & Krishnan, 2007).

Trying to define CM could be tricky as the meaning varies based on the context. As described by Content Marketing Institute (2013), the term CM relates to the Internet as a communicating networking technique for online consumers through the development of useful knowledge. Also, Pulizzi (2013) illustrated the distinction between content produced and posted online and CM, representing content marketing(CM) as the business or financial objectives of the company. Moreover, CM can be described as a managing process through which, an organization defines, analyses, and meets the consumer demands for profiting by using digital content delivered via digital platforms (Rowley, 2008; Rancati, 2014). In general, customer-to-customer experiences, in either offline or online contexts, influence people's behaviours, preferences, and, ultimately, purchasing attitudes (Berger & Milkman, 2012).

The importance of CM and its tools is confirmed by many studies. The tools like (blogs, videos, social media, mobile application, case study, sponsored articles, online presentation, and infographic) help create better content, and the better the content, the more visible the product/service is, and that any person reached by CM must be interested in the subject which the content relates to (Rowley, 2008; Gorry & Westbrook, 2011; Lieb, 2011; Rancati & Niccolo, 2014; Pulizzi, 2012; Smith et al., 2012).

## Content Format

Recently, sharing online material is seen as a fundamental element of everyday life. Modern CM format can also be called “digital content marketing format” as it is done through digital media. Digital content marketing includes providing relevant content to consumers through digital media sources like blogs, websites, videos, social media posts, web pages, search engine optimization, review sites, etc. (Kucuk & Krishnamurthy, 2007; Rancati & Niccolo, 2014).

People forward articles from magazines and newspapers to relatives and friends, send them YouTube videos and submit reviews of coffee shops and restaurants. 59% of individuals also report frequently sharing online content with others (Allsop et al., 2007). Internet advertising has multiple formats across social media, including Twitter tweets, user feedbacks, Facebook updates, and ads, to name a few (Smith et al., 2012).

User-generated content (UGC) is known to be a published content on either a publicly available blog or a social media platform developed beyond technical routines and activities that requires conveying a particular level of creativity (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010). UGC could be collaboratively or independently generated, updated, shared, and accessed (Estrella-Ramón & Ellis-Chadwick, 2017). Videos can be amusing or instructional, based on a single subject associated with a product or service. That content approach varies from tutorials, endorsements, demonstrations, case studies, etc (Jefferson & Tanton, 2013).

Consumers trust user-generated content (UGC) rather than content generated by producers (Cheong & Morrison, 2008; MacKinnon, 2012), which is developed and posted by marketers, as they expect that other consumers can post both positive and negative product impressions with a view to full transparency and presumed non-commercial involvement, making them neutral evaluators of the quality of a product or a service. It is also known to be a convincing source of knowledge because it is viewed as highly reliable and credible (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004).

## Combination of Content Tools

Content marketing (CM) is a well-known marketing tactic that has risen in popularity with technological innovation and Internet expansion in the last decade. Gajanova (2018) mentioned that out-of-date Internet marketing types have become unattractive and dazing that a modern method of marketing is coming, utilizing content to support, entertain and inform Internet consumers. That successful CM is focused on a well-formulated content tactic,

considering detecting the right types of content as an essential part of that tactic.

According to Salminen et al. (2019) in the sense of a multitude of social networks and UGC channels, the variety of data, both in type and quality, is an overwhelming obstacle as the amount of data requiring to be processed. Also, users can be co-generators or generators themselves and feel a connection to the brand or company. Examples for collaborations are corporate blogs, Twitter, or product reviews. A company that provides relevant, educational, engaging, and sometimes entertaining content can attract customers at the right time when they look for information (Lieb, 2012).

There are many tools the company can use to distribute its content such as on its website, through custom magazines, newsletters, blogs, white papers, roundtables, or events to inform the target audience about key issues and their solutions (Patruti, 2015).

### **Content Complexity**

Complexity has often been regarded as a key product feature that affects customer behaviours in the current e-commerce and advertising literature (Wang & Lu, 2014). The complexity of a product is described as the extent to which a service or a product is viewed by customers as quite difficult to comprehend or utilize (Rogers, 1995).

Furthermore, the poor nature of e-commerce systems could lead to weak virtual interactivity between consumers, goods, and e-commerce vendors in the sense of promoting material sophistication. These poor connections thus prohibit customers from accessing knowledge that can assist them in evaluating the true functionality and value of the product offered, thus posing a major obstacle to the capacity of e-commerce retailers to advertise and retail their products (Jahng & colleagues, 2000).

However, a clear understanding of the web content output to obtain the market benefit can be a difficult challenge. Due to the complex nature of the data included regarding its quantity and dynamics, it is scattered over multiple networks and might be correlated with plenty of diverse parameters (Chun, 2018; Clarke & Jansen, 2017).

Consequently, the content grouping, meaning the content separation into topics, is essential in such a way where individual content units are thematically consolidated to improve the interpretation of choices concerning digital marketing interpretation for decision-making practices like content production, distribution, and administration (Salminen et al, 1919).

In their research, Nadal et al. (2010) demonstrated that, when the complexity increased, people's appreciation of things diminished. They also stated that the attractiveness ranking of objects declined with increasing the complexity, given the elements' number and the variation. Yet, there is continuing controversy as to whether basic or complicated content is extra advantageous for optimizing customer reaction, including the purchasing decision or the desire to reconsider.

### Customer Engagement (CE)

The use of customer engagement (CE) concept becomes accustomed use in many fields like Public relations, services, and marketing. Engagement is regarded as a complex topic due to the high number of publications in the last years about customer engagement (CE), the lack of consensus on the conceptualizations and scales to measure the construct, the different contexts where the concept is applied, and the different actors involved. (Rosado-Pinto & Loureiro, 2020).

The reason behind this observed change is the increasing empirical awareness of the active, instead of passive, positions, and attitudes of contemporary customers in certain brand-centered processes. (Hollebeek, Glynn & Brodie, 2014). The Marketing Science Institute (MSI) had a good role in encouraging researchers and shedding light on this topic by considering it a priority for the period 2010-2012. (Vivek et al., 2012; Brodie et al., 2013), and 2016–2018. The Marketing Science Institute asks for studies on how to reach and engage customers at every touchpoint (Bowden et al., 2017). The studies priorities for 2018–2020 also refer to engagement, by centering on the most influential strategies to guarantee that customer engagement (CE) with the organization, relating it to the optimization of media strategy and highlighting the “moments” in the data that could signal a special engagement (Marketing Science Institute, 2018).

In marketing contexts, engagement refers to the activity level the customer has for the organization, like: “intent to spend time, do energy or other resources” beyond the purchase of the brand (Bergkvist & Bech-Larsen, 2010; Vivek & Morgan 2012). customer engagement (CE) represents a modern attempt to obtain several measures by which consumer conduct, outside purchases, may affect the company (Van Doorn et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2011). customer engagement (CE) is referred to as a psychological disorder that arises by interactive, collaborative consumer contact with a specific object/agent (e.g., a brand) (Brodie et al., 2011). it has been strongly related to corporate revenue (Kumar et al., 2010), constructive referral (Hollebeek et al., 2014), and potential purchasing or use intention (Brodie et al., 2011).

customer engagement (CE) is defined by Van Doorn et al. (2010) as a one-dimensional element. they conceptualized it as the interpersonal representation of the consumer towards a brand or an organization, beyond purchasing, arising from motivations. Likewise, Jaakkola and Alexander (2014) regarded CE as a one-dimensional concept and described it as attitudes in which consumers make volitional contributions that are brand /firm- based but go beyond what is basic to transactions, originate from encounters with the focal objects and/or various stakeholders, and arise from motivations.

The level of interaction ranges from simplistic forms of engagement, as liking an Instagram post, to higher forms of consumer involvement in co-creation practices, as posting a review (Muntinga et al., 2011; Malthouse et al., 2013).

Besides, CE is known to be noticeable in the attitudes that may be either beneficial or not to the company (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Besides, a consumer's positive involvement can be characterized as positive brand-interrelated intellectual, emotional, and social involvement either during or related to central brand/customer experiences, whereas consumer's negative involvement can be characterized as undesirable brand-related perceptions, emotions, and attitudes during focused brand encounters (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

Mollen & Wilson (2010) pointed to the involvement of the consumer brand as the "Holy Grail" when it comes to online marketing. Moreover, the Network and more precisely, online network-centered communities provide a framework where individuals can discuss their desire to fit in (Gangadharbatla, 2008). Observational evidence has also reported that online environments have shown that consumers are encouraged to participate in non-transactional activities as they look forward to gains such as improved awareness, credibility, social advantages, and financial advantages such as cost savings (Füller, 2010; Nambisan & Baron, 2009). Organizations could make it easier for consumers to partake in actions by providing successful knowledge sharing and engagement channels (Dholakia et al., 2009; Nambisan & Baron, 2009).

### **Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM)**

Word-of-mouth (WOM) is defined as sharing marketing knowledge exchanged by customers to the degree that it influences their attitudes and behaviors towards a product or a service (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). Other authors (Litvin et al., 2008) considered it an independent source from the commercial side, which is the most important information source in consumers' buying decisions. On the other hand, Electronic Word of mouth (E-WOM) is presented as any favourable or unfavourable comment made by future, current or former

consumers of a product or a business that is made accessible to a vast amount of people and organizations on the Internet (Hennig-Thurau et al, 2004).

Some researchers found Consumer-to-Consumer interactions, as with WOM, to have a clear and reliable effect on customer attitude (Gupta & Harris, 2010). While WOM has typically been researched from the viewpoint of face-to-face contact (Godes & Mayzlin, 2004; Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Riegner, 2007; Libai et al., 2010; Zhang & Huang, 2018), it has become widespread in the internet shopping environments as well (Chevalier & Mayzlin, 2006; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; Berger & Milkman, 2012; López & Sicilia, 2014).

Customers used both word of mouth and E-WOM for similar purposes, including information gathering to minimize risks, knowledge sources' storage to correlate with other resources, and information exchange to affect others. E-WOM then represents an extension for conventional WOM, yet it differs as the web is the channel being used to share information by customers. Consequently, E-WOM has three key characteristics distinct from the conventional WOM, including its ubiquity, its variability, and its global sense (Litvin et al., 2008).

Relevantly, E-WOM is claimed to be quite impactful than its offline equivalent (i.e., WOM), because of its potential to access a greater number of people immediately and to encourage each user to have a presence and to empower them to exchange their view of a product or a service with others who are geographically and socially different (Hennig-Thurau et al., 2004; Zhang & Huang, 2018). E-WOM was also shown to be more influencing than the company-produced sources of information across the Web. It is still more efficient than conventional advertising channels that seem to be losing their efficacy (López & Sicilia, 2014).

Based on that, many of the leading online stores, like Amazon, Office Depot, Macy's, and Home Depot, promote and endorse E-WOM by enabling an online effective content and analysis of the items (goods or services) they sell (Gupta & Harris, 2010). Moreover, other studies have demonstrated the behavioral effect on the brand perception that inevitably affects customers' purchasing behaviours (Nandan, 2005; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012). Complementary to this idea online food ordering and delivery apps in Egypt such as (Otlob/Talbat, Glovo, Uber Eats, Akelni, Elmenus, Mrsool) should use E-WOM to promote its' products.

Consumers can acquire new users by corporate -incentivized recommendation services or by affecting other consumers' views through their initiatives by blogging pages, E-WOM, and other forms of consumer-to-consumer engagement (Kumar et al., 2010; Libai et al., 2010; Brodie et al., 2013). Furthermore, negative consumer interaction including,

negative WOM, brand swapping, avoiding, refusing, and possible retaliation attitudes, deeply influences brand credibility and value (Hollebeek & Chen, 2014; Lievonen et al., 2017).

Generally, E-WOM has lately witnessed tremendous growth thanks to the advent of UGC, that content generated by the public and can be spread easily and quickly, mostly via the Web (Christodoulides et al., 2012). Besides, by delivering useful content on an ongoing basis, brands can create E-WOM, develop trust and reputation, and achieve substantial scope and effect (Muntinga et al., 2011, Plessis, 2017).

Though the market has recognized the value of content, they do not realize which content fits well for which type of company in what way and what sort of content will produce the optimal contribution and draw consumer's behaviour (Valentino et al., 2012).

On the other hand, content-centered social media marketing is essential for firms for the growing use of social media channels, which significantly affect consumer involvement and trust (Ramzan & Syed, 2018). Similarly, Vivek et al. (2012) have stated that providing good content is the most effective approach for drawing the attention of customers to products, as it creates customer brand loyalty, which will contribute to future purchasing intentions.

Besides the above, While the generation of E-WOM has received ample attention, the concept of customer engagement before an initial E-WOM communication is relatively less developed (Hennig-Thurau, 2004; Hollebeek et al., 2014)

According to the previous studies, the impact of content marketing on customer engagement unexplored in the academic literature, and there are no studies found the relationship between the current study variables. Therefore, as shown in figure (1), the hypothesis was established following the research objectives as follows:

H1: Content Marketing has a positive impact on Customer Engagement.

H2: Content Marketing has a positive impact on Customer E-WOM.

H3: Customer Engagement has a positive impact on Customer E-WOM.

H4: Customer Engagement mediates the relationship between Content Marketing and Customer E-WOM.

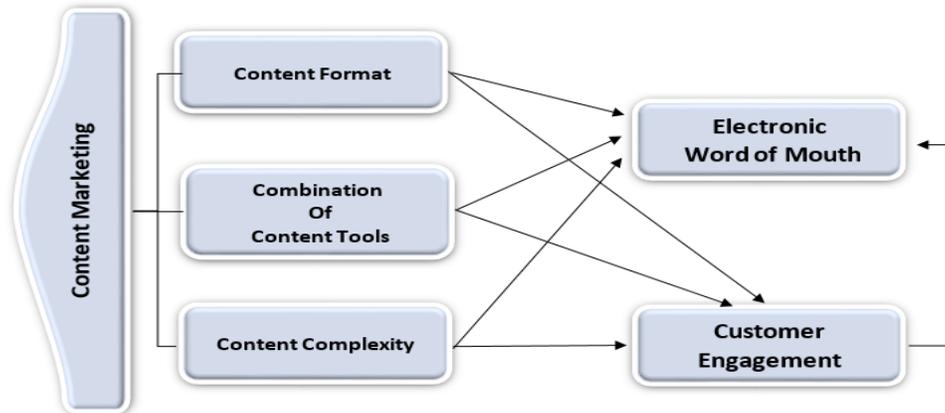


Figure 1

Conceptual diagram explaining the Research Model

### Research Methodology

The current study relies on the empirical descriptive and analytical methodology that involves the process of database surveying by the reference to earlier studies for constructing a theoretic structure for the analysis, using certain qualitative research approaches and the field survey design for collecting data by a focused survey.

### Data Collection and Sample

The questionnaire approach was used, in this study, to gather data from the post-positivist viewpoint for testing the model. The purposive sampling approach used for collecting data entailed respondents to buy from online food ordering and applications for delivery service (Otlob/Talbat, Glovo, Uber Feed, Akelni, Elmenus, Mrsool) at least.

Due to the client population's large size, the time element, and cost concerns, which represent restraints in research, the sampling technique was chosen for collecting data wanted for the consumer's field study. The sample size was valued, by the act of large numbers, to be 384 individuals.

A Likert scale of five points varying from (1) representing, Strongly Disagree to (5) representing, Strongly Agree, has been used to measure each element of a situation. Data were collected via the electronic interrogation process using Google Forms to apply the online questionnaire. We collected 435 responses, 398 were kept for analysis. Data collection took about (3) months from July 2020 to September 2020. The data analysis used statistical software packages SPSS and Amos Ver.18.

## Measures

To ensure that the measures used in the present study have a high degree of reliability, it was based on Cronbach's alpha as the most significant reliability analysis methods in evaluating the degree of internal consistency between the contents of the measures. Additionally, it is used to determine the extent to which the scale items represent the target variable and not another (Tavakol & Reg, 2011).

To develop the measurement of involved variables and the number of items, some previous studies are considered as shown in table (1). The study involved three variable types, content marketing (independent variable), electronic word of mouth (dependent variable), and customer engagement (mediating variable). The questions and items employed were developed and refined depending on literature and calculated on a Likert scale of five points. Content marketing was measured using three adapted items, Content format, Combination of content marketing tools, and Complexity of the content. The scale consists of twenty items that measure the three dimensions or facets of the construct, while E-WOM was captured by five items. Finally, and ten items to measure the mediating variable which is customer engagement several closed-ended questions were used to assess the sample' demographics.

Variable	Number	Reference
Content Marketing	20	(Cheong & Morrison, 2008; Lieb, 2012; Wang & Lu, 2014; Brubaker, P. J. & Wilson, C. 2018; Gajanova, 2018; Ramzan,& Syed, 2018; Weerasinghe, 2018).
Customer Engagement	10	(Brodie et al., 2013; Bowden et al., 2017; Żyminkowska et al., 2017; Ramzan,& Syed, 2018; Weerasinghe, 2018; Rosado-Pinto & Loureiro, 2020).
E-WOM	5	(Brown et al., 2005; Gupta & Harris, 2010; Jalilvand & Samiei, 2012; López & Sicilia, 2014; Huete-Alcocer, 2017; Ramzan,& Syed, 2018 ).

The data was gathered and processed from the survey program and fed into the SPSS. Data was then cleaned by deleting incorrect answers, defective questionnaires, or data editing with a simple misinterpretation case or loss of focus. The fields were left empty for the incomplete entries.

## Reliability of Measures Used in the Field Study

To confirm the scale validity, two steps were taken; firstly, the questionnaire was presented to a group of experts and specialists in the field of marketing and their observations were considered. Furthermore, the second step in the evaluation of predictive measures is validity evaluation. Validity is

looked at by considering the convergent validity and distinguishing validity of a construct. The coefficient Alpha method represents a key important technique commonly used in calculating reliability. It retains a high precision level when calculating the degree of conformity of the various measurements used. Help for convergent validity is given when each element has outer loads above 0.70 and the Average Variance Derived (AVE) of each construct is 0.50 or greater. The AVE is the great mean value of a group of indicators 'squared loadings (Hair et al., 2014) and is analogous to a construct's communality. Put succinctly, an AVE of 0.50 indicates more than half the variance of its indicators are clarified by the building.

In the present research, Cronbach's  $\alpha$  and structural reliability were utilized for testing reliability. As seen in Table (2), all the construct composite reliabilities were more than 0.738 and Cronbach's  $\alpha$  was more than 0.83. It reveals a high-reliability degree of the data. We also evaluated both the convergent and the discriminatory validity of the results. Convergent validity can be built on two terms, the path loading factor must be  $\geq 0.7$  and the average extracted variance (AVE) must be  $\geq 0.5$  (Hair et al., 2006).

Also, when calculating reliability, the  $\alpha$  Coefficient ranged from 0.825 to 0.838 for all measurements. That value further represents the high-reliability level of the measurements employed in humanities and advertising research, as the accepted standard is 0.60 as per humanities studies (Nunnally, 1978). The  $\alpha$  and CR coefficients for Cronbach are seen in Table (2).

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Alpha Coefficient</b>	<b>CR</b>	<b>AVE</b>
<b>Content Format</b>	<b>0.838</b>	<b>0.847</b>	<b>0.738</b>
<b>Combination of Content Tools</b>	<b>0.825</b>	<b>0.836</b>	<b>0.782</b>
<b>Content Complexity</b>	<b>0.837</b>	<b>0.843</b>	<b>0.785</b>
<b>E-WOM</b>	<b>0.838</b>	<b>0.847</b>	<b>0.843</b>
<b>Customer Engagement</b>	<b>0.837</b>	<b>0.873</b>	<b>0.832</b>

Notes: (a) Indicative: All object loading more than 0.7, indicating convergent validity, (b) Indicative: All composite reliability (CR) more than 0.7, indicating internal consistency (Gefen et al., 2000), (c) Indicative: All average extracted variance (AVE) more than 0.5 indicating convergent reliability (Fornell & Larcker, 1981; Bagozzi & Yi, 1988). Cronbach's  $\alpha$  value for all parameters is higher than 82%, indicating that the elements have reasonably good intrinsic accuracy. Also, the value for all variables is higher

than 0.7, demonstrating a high consistency of the elements regarding that variable too.

### Data analysis and hypothesis testing:

An overview of data from the study along with a discussion of the findings and the hypothesis tested are presented as follows:

#### a) Test the relationship between Content Marketing and Consumer Engagement:

–Test the Correlations between Content marketing (as a whole and each one of them separately), and Customer Engagement:

Variable		Content Format	Combination of Content Tools	Content Complexity	Customer Engagement
Content Format	Pearson Correlation	1	.831**	.619**	.617**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	412	412	412	412
Combination of Content Tools	Pearson Correlation	.831**	1	.545**	.498**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	412	412	412	412
Content Complexity	Pearson Correlation	.619**	.545**	1	.527**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	412	412	412	412
Customer Engagement	Pearson Correlation	.617**	.498**	.527**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	412	412	412	412

**\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

The analysis of correlation explores that; There is a strong correlation at the level of significance (0.01) between the Content Marketing dimensions (Content-Format %62, Combination of Content Tools %50, Content Complexity %53), and customer engagement for all dimensions.

Thus, all sub-variables have a strong association with consumer interaction, in which the “Content Format” that activates the “variable” has the highest effect with a value = 0.617, whereas the “Content Tools' Combination”

has a low effect of 0.498. We can therefore assume that all parameters have a substantial correlation with one another, also a high association with consumer involvement.

–Test the multiple regression analysis; types, strength, and the relativity importance of the relationship between content marketing tools (as a whole and each one of them separately), and CE can be clarified in Table (4).

Table 4. Hypotheses testing relationship between Content Marketing and Customer Engagement

Variable	R	R Square	Beta	F -Test value	Sig. F.	Status
Content Format	.617a	.381	.574	252.197	.000b	Accepted
Combination of Content Tools	.498a	.248	.463	135.444	.000b	Accepted
Content Complexity	.527a	.278	.673	157.912	.000b	Accepted
<b>a. Predictors: (Constant), Customer Engagement</b>						

There is a positive and statistically significant association between consumer engagement and content marketing, at the level (1%) according to the (F) test, and this relationship has a strength of (61%) Content-Format, (49%) Combination of Content Tools and (52%) Content Complexity, evidenced by the correlation coefficient R in the model of regression analysis.

Moreover, these elements can explain a variance reaching (38%) Content-Format, (24%) Combination of Content Tools, and (27%) Content Complexity, based on the determination parameter  $R^2$  in the analysis model of regression.

Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that states a positive association between content marketing and consumer engagement. These results are consistent with the results of previous studies (Wang & Lu, 2014; Brubaker & Wilson, 2018; Gajanova, 2018; Weerasinghe, 2018; Shahbaznezhad et al., 2021).

## b) Test the relationship between Content Marketing and E-WOM:

Variable		Content Format	Combination of Content Tools	Content Complexity	E-WOM
Content Format	Pearson Correlation	1	.831**	.619**	.627**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	412	412	412	412
Combination of Content Tools	Pearson Correlation	.831**	1	.545**	.572**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	412	412	412	412
Content Complexity	Pearson Correlation	.619**	.545**	1	.551**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	412	412	412	412
E-WOM	Pearson Correlation	.627**	.572**	.551**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	412	412	412	412

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The analysis of correlation explores that; There is a strong correlation relationship at the level of significance (1%) between the content marketing dimensions (Content-Format %62, Combination of Content Tools %57, Content Complexity %55), and the electronic word of mouth for all dimensions.

Thus, all sub-variables have a strong association with the electronic word of mouth, in which the “Content Format” that activates the “variable” has the highest effect with a value = 0.627, whereas the “Content Complexity” has a low effect of 0.551. We can therefore assume that all parameters have a substantial correlation with one another, also a high association with the Electronic Word of Mouth.

Variable	R	R Square	Beta	F -Test value	Sig. F.	Status
Content Format	.627a	.393	.670	264.934	.000b	Accepted
Combination of Content Tools	.572a	.328	.612	199.742	.000b	Accepted
Content Complexity	.551a	.303	.809	178.302	.000b	Accepted

a. Predictors: (Constant), E-WOM

There is a positive and statistically significant association between the content marketing and the E-WOM at (1%) according to the (F) test, and this relationship has a strength of Content-Format (%62), Combination of Content Tools (%57), and Content Complexity (%55), evidenced by the correlation coefficient R in the model of regression analysis.

Moreover, these elements can explain a variance reaching (39%) content format, (32%) Combination of Content Tools, (30%) Content Complexity, based on the determination parameter  $R^2$  in the analysis model of regression.

Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that states a positive association between content marketing and E-WOM. These results are consistent with the results of previous researchers (López, & Sicilia, 2014; Bowden, 2017; Ramzan & Syed, 2018).

**c) Test The correlation between Customer Engagement and E-WOM:**

Table 7. Relationship between Customer Engagement and E-WOM.				
R	R Square	Beta	F -Test value	Sig. F.
.631a	.398	.157	271.090	.000b
a. Dependent Variable: E-WOM				
b. Predictors: (Constant), customer engagement				

There is a positive and statistically significant association between the customer engagement and the E-WOM, at a significant level of (1%) according to the (F) test, and this relationship has a strength of about (63%), based on the correlation coefficient R in the whole model of regression analysis.

Moreover, these elements can explain a variance reaching (39%), according to the coefficient of determination  $R^2$  in the analysis model of regression.

Therefore, we accept the hypothesis that states a positive association between the Customer Engagement and the E-WOM. These results are consistent with the results of previous studies (Bowden, 2017; Ramzan & Syed, 2018; Weerasinghe, 2018).

d) Test the mediating role of Customer Engagement in the correlation between CM and E-WOM:

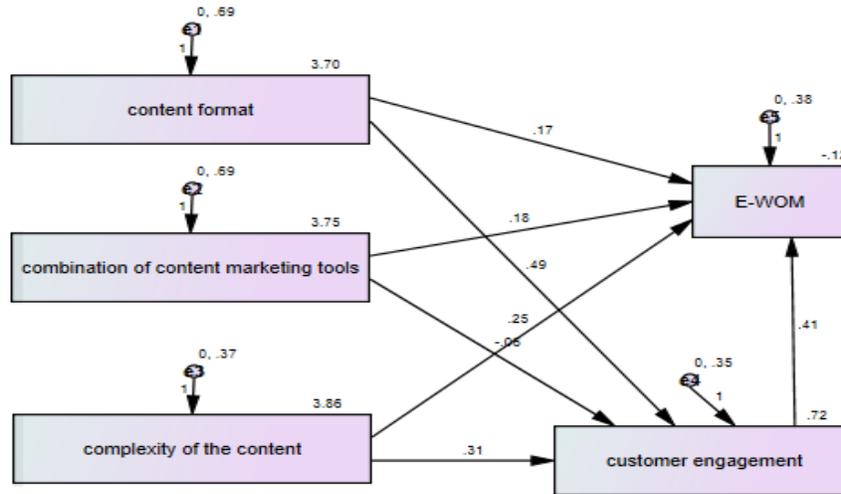


Figure 2

A measurement model for testing the mediating role of Customer Engagement in the correlation between CM and E-WOM: using AMOS

The researchers also used the Path Analysis method by using analysis of moment structures (Amos Ver.18) program, and the researchers used the Structural Equations Modelling (SEM) method using the path analysis program, which is one of the regression programs, by using the AMOS program in the method of Maximum Likelihood Estimates (MLE) Through which it is possible to test the mediating influence of the consumer engagement on the association between content marketing and the E-WOM. Table (8) demonstrates the results of the AMOS model for the impact of Customer Engagement as a moderating variable in the relationship between Content Marketing and the E-WOM.

Table 8. The multiple regression weight between constructs						
Construct	Path	Construct	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P
Customer Engagement	←	Content Format	.490	.035	13.982	***
Customer Engagement	←	Combination of Content Tools	-.064	.035	-1.841	.044

Construct	Path	Construct	Estimate	S.E.	C.R	P
Customer Engagement	←	Content Complexity	.305	.048	6.343	***
E-WOM	←	Content Format	.172	.045	3.856	***
E-WOM	←	Combination of Content Tools	.179	.037	4.857	***
E-WOM	←	Content Complexity	.251	.053	4.762	***
E-WOM	←	Customer Engagement	.412	.052	7.977	***

These results are consistent with the previous results obtained from the method of multiple regression analysis using the SPSS program, where there is a degree of compatibility between CM and the E-WOM, and that most of the regression coefficients are highly significant, which confirms that CE has a moderating influence on the association between the content marketing and E-WOM.

To identify the kind and level of the association between CE as an intermediate variable in the association between CM and E-WOM, and to verify the validity of this hypothesis, the SPSS program was relied upon and using the Multiple Regression Analysis processes in this analysis through its program related to the relationship model (Malhotra, 2011; Aaker et. al, 2014; Idris, 2016). The researchers applied regression and multiple correlation analysis approaches on the content marketing as an independent variable, and E-WOM as a dependent variable, in two cases, The first case: the case of the consumer engagement variable absence. The second case: the case the consumer engagement variable presence.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.980	.105		18.934	.000
	E-WOM	.499	.028	.662	17.601	.000
		R .662a		F 309.785		Sig. .000
a. Dependent Variable: Content marketing						
b. Predictors: (Constant), E-WOM						

– Type and strength of the relationship:

There is a positive and statistically significant association between CM and the E-WOM at a significant level of (1%) according to the (F) test, and this relationship has a strength of about (66%), based on the correlation coefficient R in the model of regression analysis.

Moreover, these elements can explain a variance reaching (43%), according to the coefficient of determination  $R^2$  in the model of regression analysis.

The unstandardized constant statistics 1.98 show that the model would foresee whether the independent variable was zero. The Coefficient B for E-WOM is 0.499, revealing that on average, if we go up by one point on the E-WOM scale, CM will increase by 0.499 units. The equation for that regression is:  $Y = 0.1.98 + 0.499 (E-WOM)$ .

<b>Table 10. the mediating role of Customer Engagement in the correlation between CM and E-WOM</b>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.541	.115		13.419	.000
	E-WOM	.340	.034	.451	9.916	.000
	Customer Engagement	.290	.039	.334	7.357	.000
R		.711a	R Square .50		F 202.637	Sig .000
<b>a. Dependent Variable: Content marketing</b>						
<b>b. Predictors: (Constant), customer engagement, E-WOM</b>						

– Type and strength of the relationship:

There is a positive and statistically significant association between CM and the E-WOM at a significant level of (1%) according to the (F) test, and this relationship has a strength of about (71%), based on the correlation coefficient R in the model of regression analysis.

Moreover, these elements can explain a variance reaching (50%), according to the coefficient of determination  $R^2$  in the model of regression analysis.

The unstandardized constant statistics 1.54 show that the model would foresee whether the independent variable was zero. The Coefficient B for E-WOM is 0.340, revealing that on average if we go up by one point on the E-WOM scale, the content of marketing will improve by 0.340 units. The equation for that regression is:  $Y = 0.1.541 + 0.340 (E-WOM)$ . Also, The B Coefficient for consumer engagement is 0.290, revealing that on average, if we

go up by one point on the customer engagement scale, the content of marketing will improve by 0.290 units. The equation for that regression is:  $Y = 0.1.541 + 0.290 (CM)$ .

It is evident from Table (10) that CM has a significant impact on E-WOM, and when you enter the customer engagement variable, it happened that the strength of the relationship between CM and E-WOM rose from (62%) to (71%) indicated by the correlation coefficient R in the whole model of regression analysis, which indicates an increase in the strength of the relationship in the presence of the mediating variable and the level of significant significance. The interpretation of the variance increased from (43%) to (50%) according to the determination coefficient  $R^2$  in the model of regression analysis. It refers to increasing the explanatory ability of the independent variable (content marketing) if the customer engagement variable exists.

### Discussion and Recommendations

This study has analysed the major mediating role of consumer engagement in the association between content marketing and electronic word of mouth. As marketing managers should consider paying attention to content marketing tactics to build customer engagement and enhance the brand image through customer's feedback.

A lot of respondents answered the electronic questionnaire, but researchers found the most population were males with (57.54%) of them their ages vary from 20-30 years old with a percentage (30.40%). Additionally, most of them have the basic degree (bachelor's degree) as an educational status with a percentage (57.54 %) as we found that married people were more responsive to the survey than single people with a percentage (59.55%). Moreover, the most used application was Otlob (Talabat) (44%), while the least used application was Uber Eats (2%).

The results of the present study have pointed out some of the essential characteristics of content marketing that advertisers should consider when generating content for ordering food online and delivery apps to control transition and interaction. Effective content marketing maintains customers interested in the ordering and delivery service web site by affecting customer satisfaction and by positive E-WOM.

The findings also agreed with those from Brubaker and Wilson (2018), as they claimed that combining visual and textual content will lead to a higher engagement rate. Once users start interacting with this interesting and relevant content, it can cause a bandwagon effect and a rapid spreading of the brand's post.

The more time users spend browsing the websites for purchasing and delivery service applications, the more they will prefer to make transactions (Huang, 2000). To accomplish this aim, the key discovery of this research

concerns the complexity of the content. It was revealed that content marketing strategies are not the key drivers for the effectiveness of the online ordering and delivery web sites, but it is the content complexity that contributes to the purchasing and distribution service web site, making it successful. these findings were consistent with those from the study of Wang & Lu (2014) that show that perceived content complexity has a direct influence on consumer behaviour.

Ordering and delivery service application should consider that the displayed pictures must be of high quality and resolution to be attractive to the customers and it should consider the harmony between the pictures, videos, and content, in addition, provide all information needed. (the usage of the products, the price, also if there are any sales, the colours available) and video size must be suitable to be easily watched online. (The shorter the length of the video, the more engaged will the customers be, and the longer the video, the more boring it becomes).

Influencing customers with electronic word of mouth by advertising relies on quality and quantity of content delivery, along with the successful combination of high-useful and easy-to-use content marketing technologies. However, magnitude and value must be viewed with care, as it has been believed that one is inversely proportional to the other.

The present research indicated that various customers are influenced by several factors that determine their expectations, emotions, and behavioural intentions. It is, therefore, necessary for web designers to begin by attempting to understand and analyse how and why a client utilizes their purchasing and delivery service websites to build a website that suits the purchasing experience and function. Additionally, the content marketing responsible should provide ordering and delivery service applications with securing tactics for existing customers and it is better to have the potential to attract and gain new ones by increasing customer engagement.

Eventually, this research proved that the UGC does have a positive impact on customer reactions and even draws new consumers through the E-WOM of other customers. Also, artwork, photographs, and screenshots are a significant driver for product growth. Furthermore, as the UGC form gets more complicated, the findings suggest that users do not make choices depending on UGC that takes longer to learn or require more interaction. This research also offers concrete insights into how UGC greatly influences the effectiveness of products and promotes consumer experience. Finally, future studies can include other mediating variables such as brand personality, brand image, as well as the effect of customers 'culture and values as moderating variables. The same variables can also be measured with changing the practical application to other

products such as electrical appliances products, software apps, as well as comparing results and determining conclusions and indications related to that.

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