

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES AND SERVICE QUALITY ON WORD OF MOUTH THROUGH STUDENT SATISFACTION AT STIM SUKMA MEDAN

Syahrida Khairani¹, Paham Ginting², Beby Karina Fawzee Sembiring³

^{1,2,3}Fakultas Ekonomi dan Bisnis, Universitas Sumatera Utara

Email: syahridakhairani01@gmail.com

Received : 30 Juni 2025

Revised : 05 July 2025

Accepted : 29 July 2025

Published : 04 August 2025

DOI : <https://doi.org/10.54443/ijset.v4i10.933>

Publish Link : <https://www.ijset.org/index.php/ijset/index>

Abstract

This study aims to determine and analyze the effect of Content Marketing strategies and service quality on word of mouth through student satisfaction at STIM Sukma Medan. This research is quantitative research. The population in this study were students who enrolled in the 2024/2025 academic year at STIM Sukma Medan. The number of samples in this study were 71 students. The sampling technique used probability sampling, the type of sample design that will be used in this study is random sampling technique. The data analysis technique used is quantitative data analysis. The results showed that the Content Marketing strategy had no significant effect on student satisfaction, but had a positive and significant effect on word of mouth. Student satisfaction and service quality are proven to have a positive and significant effect on word of mouth, and service quality also has a significant effect on student satisfaction. Although service quality does not directly affect word of mouth, through student satisfaction, the effect is significant. In contrast, Content Marketing does not have a significant effect on word of mouth through student satisfaction.

Keywords : *Content Marketing, Service Quality, Word of Mouth, Student Satisfaction*

1. INTRODUCTION

Higher education plays a crucial role in a nation's development by producing skilled and productive human resources capable of competing in the global era. Educational institutions must be agents of change, focusing on advancements in science, technology, collaboration, and character development to ensure competent and adaptable graduates. Improving institutional competitiveness and educational quality is a key challenge amidst increasingly fierce competition for superior programs offered by many universities. The shift in higher education management trends is no longer limited to academic aspects, but also encompasses service and marketing. Content marketing has become a dominant strategy, focused on creating and distributing engaging content to build long-term relationships with prospective students. While many global institutions have successfully utilized social media and educational content to attract interest, many Indonesian universities, especially private ones, still rely on conventional marketing methods and have not fully utilized the potential of content marketing. This is exacerbated by service quality issues that directly impact student satisfaction, which in turn significantly impacts positive word of mouth (WOM), the most effective form of promotion. Therefore, in-depth research into the relationship between student satisfaction, content marketing, and service quality, particularly at STIM Sukma Medan, is crucial to increasing positive WOM. STIM Sukma Medan, STIE Eka Prasetya, and STIE IBMI adopted different marketing and service strategies to attract students. STIM Sukma emphasized a relaxed and engaging approach on social media platforms like Instagram and TikTok, with promotional content and testimonials supporting its value proposition as a "campus for aspiring managers and young professionals," supported by services that emphasized security and responsiveness. In contrast, STIE Eka Prasetya presented a more formal image through its website and local media, showcasing academic events and global networking, with services that excelled in facilities and human interaction. Meanwhile, STIE IBMI focused on flexibility and modern facilities through various digital platforms, offering content featuring tips and alumni stories, with services that could be improved through digital satisfaction surveys and staff professionalism. These different strategies provided unique advantages for each Medan university to attract prospective new students.

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES AND SERVICE QUALITY ON WORD OF MOUTH THROUGH STUDENT SATISFACTION AT STIM SUKMA MEDAN

Syahrida Khairani et al

Content marketing is a marketing approach that involves creating, curating, distributing, and amplifying engaging content for a specific audience, with the goal of creating engagement (Kotler, 2017). It is the art of communicating without directly selling, thus considered "non-interruptive" marketing (Haryanto, 2021). This strategy aims to attract and retain an audience with valuable content to encourage customers to take profitable action. Content marketing is implemented consistently to achieve desired results (Ginting, 2024). Service quality is the comparison between customer expectations and the service received (Ariyanto, 2019). This is achieved when service meets or exceeds expectations. Service quality is measured based on customer assessments of a product or service. In the retail industry, service quality is crucial for competitive advantage and influences customer purchasing decisions (Ridwan, 2024). Service quality involves delivering services that accurately meet customer needs and desires. Experts agree that quality assessments depend not only on the final result, but also on the service process and employee attitudes, as well as the resources utilized for customer satisfaction (Sembiring, 2014).

Word of Mouth (WOM) is an effective promotional strategy. WOM occurs when consumers voluntarily share information about a product or service they have received, usually due to satisfaction (Haque-Fawzi, 2022). According to Freddy Rangkuti (2017), WOM is often called "viral marketing," where enthusiastic customers recommend a product without pressure from the company. Hidayat (2023) emphasizes WOM as interpersonal communication that is trusted because it comes from consumer experience. Joesyiana (2018) states that WOM can occur in person or through electronic media, with the aim of helping other consumers consider a product or service. WOM is considered informal communication that is influential in marketing and purchasing decisions. Satisfaction is the extent to which a person feels satisfied after comparing the results received with initial expectations (Rifa'i, 2023). According to Wijaya (2022), achieving total customer satisfaction is difficult because expectations are dynamic. Student satisfaction is achieved when their expectations and needs are met by educational services (Heriyanto, 2017). This is influenced by aspects such as service quality, appreciation for knowledge, and career prospects. In conclusion, student satisfaction is a psychological state that arises when actual experiences meet or exceed expectations.

2. IMPLEMENTATION METHOD

This research uses quantitative research. This research was conducted at STIM Sukma Medan which is located at Jalan Sakti Lubis No. 80 Simpang Limun Medan. STIM Sukma is a college that focuses on management and business studies. This location was chosen because STIM Sukma is active in implementing Content Marketing strategies for disseminating information, improving service quality aimed at increasing student satisfaction to create consumer loyalty through word of mouth to those closest to them in order to increase the number of new student registrations. The research period was conducted from April to July 2025 with a sample of 71 people, where the sample was new students for the 2024/2025 academic year.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1) R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
<i>Word of Mouth</i> (Y)	0.692	0.678
Kepuasan Mahasiswa (Z)	0.664	0.654

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES AND SERVICE QUALITY ON WORD OF MOUTH THROUGH STUDENT SATISFACTION AT STIM SUKMA MEDAN

Syahrída Khairani et al

2) Path Coefficient

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
X1 → Z	0.064	0.187	0.216	0.295	0.768
X1 → Y	0.305	0.244	0.130	2.341	0.020
Z → Y	0.464	0.481	0.416	3.175	0.002
X2 → Z	0.787	0.680	0.229	3.438	0.001
X2 → Y	0.225	0.258	0.319	1.625	0.105
X1 → Z → Y	0.030	0.084	0.099	0.300	0.765
X2 → Z → Y	0.365	0.334	0.166	2.196	0.029

3) Q² Predictive relevance

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Content Marketing (X1)	639.000	639.000	
Kualitas Pelayanan (X2)	426.000	426.000	
Kepuasan Mahasiswa (Z)	639.000	384.829	0.398
Word of Mouth (Y)	710.000	490.693	0.309

4. CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the explanation above, it can be concluded that:

1. Content Marketing does not have a positive and significant effect on Student Satisfaction.
2. Content Marketing has a positive and significant impact on Word of Mouth.
3. Student satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth.
4. Service quality does not have a positive and significant direct effect on Word of Mouth.
5. Content Marketing does not have a positive and significant effect on Word of Mouth through Student Satisfaction
6. Service Quality has a positive and significant influence on Word of Mouth through Student Satisfaction.

REFERENCES

- Ariyanto, A., Ghazali, Z., Munyati, Ambarwati, R., Nelly, Revita, N., Firdaus, Sudirman, A., & Pratisila, M. (2019). Manajemen Layanan Pelanggan. In *Sustainability (Switzerland)* (Vol. 11, Issue 1)
- Ginting, P., Nasution, F. A., Silalahi, A. S., & Situmorang, S. H. (2024). *The Influence Of Content Marketing, Price, Product Quality On Purchase Decisions In The Online Marketplace Tiktok Shop. In Proceeding Medan International Conference on Economic and Business* (Vol. 2, pp. 2212-2217).
- Haque-fawzi, M. G., Iskandar, A. S., Erlangga, H., Nurjaya, & Sunarsih, D. (2022). Strategi Pemasaran Konsep , Teori dan Implementasi. *Pascal Books*.
- Haryanto, T., & Azizah, S. N. (2021). Pengantar Praktis: Pemasaran Digital (1st ed.). UM Purwokerto Press.
- Heriyanto. (2017). Pengaruh Pelayanan dan Fasilitas Terhadap Kepuasan Mahasiswa Sekolah Tinggi Agama Budha Negeri Sriwijaya Tangerang Banten. *Jurnal Vijjacariya*, 4(1).
- Hidayat, A., & Arifin, K. (2023). Pengaruh *Word Of Mouth* (WOM) Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Caffe And Tea Sintesa Tanjung Tabalong. *Japb*, 6(2), 763-779.
- Joesyiana, K. (2018). Pengaruh *Word Of Mouth* Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Konsumen Pada Media Online Shop Shopee Di Pekanbaru (Survey pada Mahasiswa Semester VII Jurusan Pendidikan Akuntansi Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Islam Riau). *Jurnal Valuta*, Vol. 4(1), 71–85.

THE INFLUENCE OF CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES AND SERVICE QUALITY ON WORD OF MOUTH THROUGH STUDENT SATISFACTION AT STIM SUKMA MEDAN

Syahrida Khairani **et al**

- Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2017). *Marketing 4.0*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Rangkuti, F. (2017). Teknik Membedah Kasus Bisnis Analisis SWOT. Jakarta : PT.Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Ridwan, S., Ermansyah, M. J., & Apriyana, N. (2024). Pengaruh Kualitas Layanan Terhadap Kepuasan Dan Loyalitas Pelanggan Pada Orange Supermarket Di Merauke Town Square. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen, Ekonomi, & Akuntansi (MEA)*, 8(2), 1048–1070.
- Rifa'i, K. (2023). Kepuasan Konsumen (*1st ed.*). UIN Khas Press.
- Sembiring, B. K., Gultom, D. K., Ginting, P. (2014). Pengaruh bauran pemasaran jasa dan kualitas pelayanan terhadap kepuasan mahasiswa program studi manajemen fakultas ekonomi universitas muhammadiyah sumatera utara. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen dan Bisnis*, 14(01).
- Wijaya, M., Karnawati, T. A., & Handoko, Y. (2022). Pengaruh Kualitas Pelayanan Dan Citra Lembaga Terhadap *Word of Mouth* Dengan Kepuasan Pelanggan Sebagai Variabel Intervening Pada Lembaga Belajar Dipa Learning Center Di Kota Malang. *Jurnal Ekonomi Manajemen Dan Bisnis*, 3(2), 56–72.