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Using Social Media Marketing to Improve Marketing Performance: The Role of Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Capability

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Abstract
Purpose: This study clarifies the gap in research on the impact of social media marketing on marketing performance in the hospitality industry. This study advances the understanding of effective digital marketing strategies for Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the aesthetic healthcare sector and offers practical recommendations for optimizing social media for better marketing results.
Methodology: This study surveyed MSMEs in the aesthetic health services sector in Central Java. With a population of 288, a 5% margin of error required a minimum sample size of 155 respondents. Data were analyzed using the Validating a New Construct Test and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM).
Results: This study explains the variations in previous research by identifying the mediating and moderating variables. Social media use, supported by digital customer-centric intimacy, improves the effectiveness of marketing.
Conclusions: This study addresses the research gap by showing that differences in earlier findings can be explained by the mediating and moderating variables. These results offer a model that integrates previous research by including digital customer-centric intimacy capability as a mediating variable.
Limitations: The rapidly changing digital landscape and evolving consumer behavior limit the generalizability of these findings to the present context. Future shifts in social media trends or consumption patterns may yield different results in the future.
Contributions: This study extends dynamic capability theory by demonstrating that digital interactions generate new capabilities when organizations use social media to identify consumer needs, make informed decisions, and refine strategies.

Keywords: *Aesthetic Healthcare MSMEs, Digital Customer Intimacy Capability, Dynamic Capabilities, Marketing Performance, Social Media Marketing*

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1. Introduction

Social media marketing has become a dominant strategic tool in contemporary marketing practices (Fait, Cillo, Papa, Meissner, & Scorrano, 2023). Companies increasingly rely on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok to communicate with customers, gather feedback, and increase market visibility (Wibawa, Baihaqi, Nareswari, Mardhotillah, & Pramesti, 2022). Through interactive features, social media enables two-way communication and real-time engagement, allowing companies to better understand customer preferences and tailor marketing strategies accordingly (Minerva, Astuti, & Asih, 2019) and (Novandari, Suliyanto, & Yunanto, 2025). As a result, social media is no longer just

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a communication channel but an integral component of a competitive marketing strategy (Hasibuan, Suliyanto, & Novandari, 2025; Troise, Dana, Tani, & Lee, 2022).

Despite its widespread adoption, empirical findings on the impact of social media marketing on marketing performance remain inconsistent (Zubielqui & Jones, 2023). Some studies have reported positive and significant effects on sales growth, customer acquisition, and brand performance (Adeyemo, 2025; Al Htibat et al., 2024; Das, 2024; Khan & Matali, 2024; Mwaanga & Hapompwe, 2024). However, others have found insignificant or weak relationships (Gbandi & Iyamu, 2022; Suryani & Yacob, 2021; Wibawa et al., 2022). These contradictory findings suggest that the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance may not be entirely straightforward (Jadhav, Dighe, & Jarolia, 2025). Prior research has largely emphasized platform usage intensity and technology adoption but has paid limited attention to the underlying organizational capabilities that translate digital engagement into performance outcomes (Guha, Mandal, & Kujur, 2021).

This inconsistency reveals a theoretical gap in the literature. While social media provides access to customers, it does not automatically translate into superior marketing performance (Troise et al., 2022) (Shafira, Zaman, & Anisa, 2026). Firms must possess specific capabilities that enable them to transform digital interactions into relational and economic value (Melović, Jocović, Dabić, Vulić, & Dudic, 2020) (Rayo, Rayo, & Mandagi, 2024). However, the existing literature has not clearly identified the types of dynamic capabilities that explain this transformation process, particularly in service-based MSMEs operating in a digitally competitive environment (Oyewobi, Adedayo, Olorunyomi, & Jimoh, 2021).

This study addresses this gap by introducing customer-centric digital intimacy as a new dynamic capability in social media marketing. Unlike traditional customer intimacy, which focuses on offline relational strategies, this concept captures a firm's ability to build personalized, emotionally embedded, and trust-based digital relationships through social media interactions. By conceptualizing digital intimacy as a dynamic capability, this study extends Dynamic Capabilities Theory beyond technology adaptation to relational digital transformation. The relevance of this capability is particularly evident in aesthetic healthcare MSMEs, where services are intangible, and trust-based relationships are crucial. In such contexts, customers rely heavily on digital communication, testimonials, and personalized interactions before making purchasing decisions (Silvano & Mbogo, 2022). Therefore, the ability to develop digital intimacy can serve as a crucial mechanism linking social media marketing to its performance.

Therefore, this study develops a theoretical model grounded in Dynamic Capabilities Theory to examine (1) the influence of social media marketing on marketing performance, (2) the mediating role of digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities, and (3) the moderating role of environmental factors. Thus, this study refines the microfoundations of dynamic capabilities in a digital context and offers empirical evidence from MSMEs in the aesthetic healthcare industry.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis/es Development

2.1 Theory of Dynamic Capabilities

Dynamic capabilities are the processes by which businesses adapt, integrate, and/or reconfigure their internal and external competencies and resources in response to changing business environments (Teece, 2007). These are pivotal processes for securing sustainable competitive advantages. A better understanding of dynamic capabilities enables businesses to respond appropriately to changing marketplaces (Teece, 2007). In a volatile business environment, dynamic capabilities enable businesses to remain competitive. That for an organization to develop dynamic capabilities, the environment must first undergo some changes (Parida & Örtqvist, 2015). Businesses that quickly adapt to new environments outperform their competitors.

This is of particular importance to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the service area, as they tend to be resource constrained and rely on adaptability. Parida and Örtqvist observed that dynamic capabilities tend to level competition for smaller enterprises (Parida & Örtqvist, 2015). By developing dynamic capabilities, service-sector MSMEs can better meet customer demands. The daily

operational use of Information Technology (IT) enables dynamic capabilities for these businesses. IT facilitates the management of a business's information and knowledge and allows for easy realignment to the changing marketplace. The growth of dynamic capabilities is positively influenced by the development of effective knowledge management systems aided by information technology. Therefore, information technology is an important area of investment for service-sector MSMEs to improve their competitiveness (Syed, Song, & Junaid, 2024).

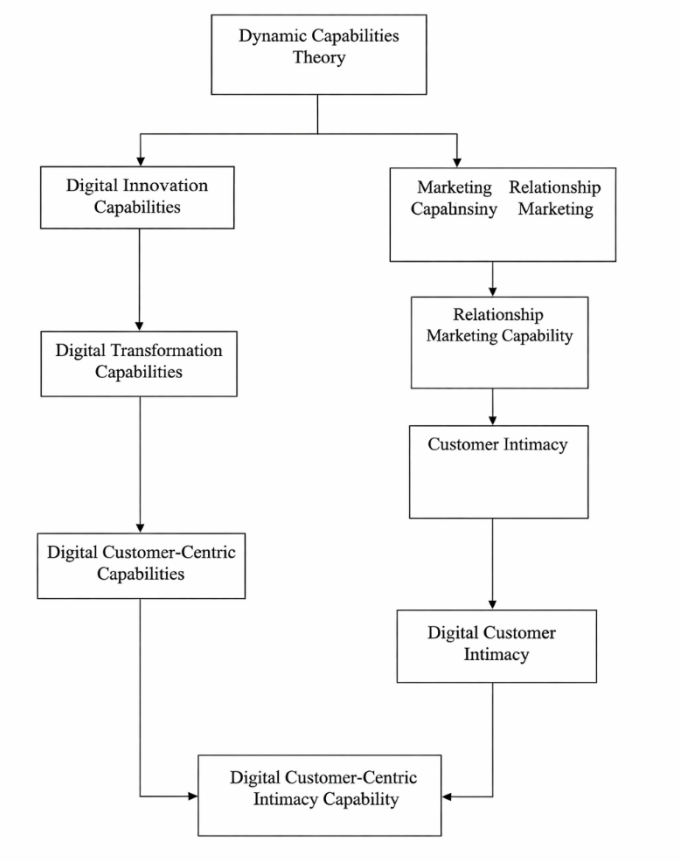


Figure 1. Theorytical model

2.2 Using Social Media for Marketing

Social media platforms help connect individuals who share similar interests, enabling them to exchange ideas and experiences (Isman & Maulidizen, 2025; Novandari et al., 2025). Additionally, it allows users to market blogs, goods, or services and reach a wider audience than traditional marketing methods (Manzoor, Baig, Hashim, & Sami, 2020). Research explains that the term "social media" is a combination of the term "social" which refers to the interactions of people or groups. and "media" which refers to the creation and dissemination of content (Chawla & Chodak, 2021).

Social media marketing can improve marketing performance (Ao, Bansal, Pruthi, & Khaskheli, 2023). For instance, social media marketing in UK hotel businesses improved outcomes (Fait et al., 2023), and businesses achieved improved marketing and financial performance (Cao, Meadows, Wong, & Xia, 2021). As a result of these advantages, businesses are increasingly adopting social media marketing (Joshi, Lim, Jagani, & Kumar, 2025). Social media marketing also helps SMEs enhance their stakeholder engagement and performance (Kikawa et al., 2022; Tarsakoo & Charoensukmongkol, 2019).

Performance can be improved by social media marketing when it is paired with other methods that enhance stakeholder engagement (Zubielqui & Jones, 2023). The integration of social media marketing and CRM processes improves CRM outcomes (Foltean, Trif, & Tuleu, 2019; Hasibuan et al., 2025). It also builds strategic capabilities, fosters creativity in marketing, and improves the effectiveness of

digital marketing (Alalwan, 2018). Involvement in social media marketing builds organizational capabilities, improves marketing performance, and strengthens stakeholder engagement (Bai & Yan, 2023; Ye, Yu, Zheng, & Zheng, 2022). However, despite substantial empirical support, previous studies have several limitations. Many studies conceptualize social media marketing primarily in terms of usage intensity, platform adoption, or content frequency without examining how firms translate digital interactions into relational and strategic value. Furthermore, most empirical models treat social media marketing as a direct antecedent of marketing performance, thus ignoring the capability development processes that may mediate this relationship. This assumption of a direct effect may partly explain the inconsistent findings reported across industries and firm sizes, particularly for resource-constrained MSMEs.

From a Dynamic Capabilities perspective, social media marketing can serve as a sensing and engagement mechanism that enables companies to gather market information and interact with customers in real time. However, digital interactions alone do not automatically lead to superior marketing performance unless companies develop specific relational capabilities to interpret, personalize, and strategically respond to customer feedback. Therefore, understanding the mechanisms through which social media marketing translates into performance outcomes is crucial.
Based on the theory and findings, the researcher proposes the following hypotheses:

H1: Social media marketing has a positive effect on marketing performance
H2: The use of social media marketing improves digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities

2.3 Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Capability

Customer Intimacy is one of the three core values of the value discipline framework. This value is centered on knowing the specifics of the individual customer, including their needs (Treacy & Wiersema, 1995). To gain a competitive edge, businesses implementing this strategy collect customer information to analyze the data and refine their offerings by customizing their products and/or services to the most granular customer segment. This strategy fosters customer retention and embeds a sense of appreciation by overproviding to the customer (Treacy & Wiersema, 1995). In Liu, Chen, and Li (2024) proposed an updated version of traditional Customer Intimacy called Digital Customer Intimacy (Liu et al., 2024). This concept emphasizes the role of technology in close engagement and relationships with customers. Organizations utilize technology to maintain close engagement with personalized data.

Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Capability enables organizations to establish personalized, close relationships with individual customers by focusing on the customer. By utilizing data, organizations can predict, manage, and satisfy individual customers' needs. The core aspect is establishing a sense of emotional bonding and loyalty through personalization (Gigih & Asyhari, 2025). Despite the evolution from traditional customer intimacy to digital customer intimacy, previous research remains fragmented.

Most studies conceptualize digital intimacy either as a technology application or as an outcome of digital engagement rather than as a high-level organizational capability. Furthermore, the existing literature often overlaps digital customer intimacy with customer orientation or CRM practices without clearly distinguishing their dynamic and strategic dimensions. This conceptual ambiguity limits our understanding of how digital customer intimacy contributes to a sustainable competitive advantage, particularly in MSMEs operating in highly personalized service industries such as aesthetic healthcare. To successfully implement this, organizations must closely track customer preferences and behaviors.

According to Tuominen, Reijonen, Nagy, Buratti, and Laukkanen (2023) customer-oriented strategies help firms create improvements and expansions in foreign markets. Customer-oriented strategies are also linked to enhancing a firm's innovation, which can positively impact a firm's marketing performance depending on the firm's business strategy (Thoumrungroje & Racela, 2022). Small firms stand to gain a lot from a customer-oriented strategy because such a strategy improves both the innovation and marketing of the firm, resulting in enhanced marketing and financial performance.

From a Dynamic Capabilities perspective, digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities can be understood as a company's ability to sense individual customer needs through digital data, capitalize on

relational opportunities through personalized engagement, and reconfigure internal processes to maintain long-term customer relationships. Unlike customer orientation, which reflects a strategic stance, digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities represent actionable and adaptive mechanisms that integrate data analytics, digital interactions, and relationship management. Therefore, these capabilities should be conceptualized as dynamic capabilities rather than simply marketing philosophies. One study states that customer-oriented strategies positively and strongly impact a firm's business performance (Abd El & Arslan, 2024).

Other studies have shown that customer-oriented strategies improve marketing performance (Fotiadis & Vassiliadis, 2017). Putting consumers first is a great way to improve marketing performance also (Andaleeb, Rashid, & Rahman, 2016). Businesses benefit from social CRM in the sense that customers can create their own experiences (Kamboj, Yadav, Rahman, & Goyal, 2016). Social media marketing enhances marketing effectiveness and is linked to increased purchase intentions (Karunasingha & Abeysekera, 2022). In the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance, trust is an intervening factor. Social media marketing helps hotels manage customer relationships better, which in turn enhances their performance (Khaki & Khan, 2024).

According to Rahman et al. (2025), digital communication channels positively impact sales by providing consumers with additional options. Zulqarnain identified social media marketing as an advantageous strategy for businesses, noting that the enjoyment people derive from it can facilitate that advantage (Zulqarnain, Iqbal, & Muneer, 2023). The mediating role of digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities remains unexplored in previous studies. Although social media marketing facilitates customer interaction and engagement, it does not inherently guarantee relationship depth or emotional bonding. Without developing the ability to transform digital interactions into personalized relational value, companies may fail to translate engagement into Measurable Marketing Performance (MMP). Thus, digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities may serve as the missing mechanism that explains how social media marketing translates into superior marketing outcomes. Based on the research, theory, and evidence, the following hypothesis is proposed.

H_3: Digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities positively influence marketing performance

H_4: Digital customer intimacy mediates the impact of social media marketing on marketing performance

2.4 Things that affect the environment

The use of social media by Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) can be influenced by several environmental factors. These factors include government support, customer expectations, and competition among SMEs. Customer expectations and competitive pressure can drive SMEs to use social media as a means of staying competitive and meeting the needs and wants of customers by engaging them on virtual platforms (Sani, AbdulKadir, Palladan, & Abubakar, 2023). Environmental factors are important when businesses face the adoption of new technologies, as they can influence the decisions and effectiveness regarding the use of technologies (Nguyen, Le, & Vu, 2022). These factors are also significant when it comes to the adoption of Online Retailing (ORE) by businesses.

Such environmental factors consist of the overall business climate, competitive landscape, governmental regulations, and emerging technologies that can ease or hinder the utilization of online digital tools by online retailers (Nguyen et al., 2022). Although environmental influences have been consistently recognized, previous research has largely treated environmental factors as direct predictors of technology adoption rather than as contextual contingencies that shape strategic outcomes. Many studies emphasize adoption decisions but pay little attention to how environmental conditions alter the strength or direction of the relationship between strategic marketing actions and performance. Consequently, the moderating role of environmental factors in explaining performance variability remains underexplored, particularly in resource-constrained MSMEs in highly dynamic service industries.

Onngam and Charoensukmongkol say that the use of social media as a tool is beneficial to small and medium-sized businesses (Oyewobi et al., 2021). Environmental factors reinforce the relationship

between social media and business outcomes (Song et al., 2022). Environmental factors also influence social media marketing and its effectiveness (Reimer, 2023). Other researchers have also found that factors influence social media marketing and business outcomes (Nuseir & Aljumah, 2020). The studies conducted so far indicate that environmental factors have a remarkable influence on social media use and business growth in the long run (Basit et al., 2024).

Relative advantage, cost efficiency, compatibility with technology, and interactive features are technological factors as having a significantly positive impact on both social media adoption and use (Qalati, Ostic, Sulaiman, Gopang, & Khan, 2022). Integrating internal and external cooperation improves social media use and the effectiveness of social media in achieving business goals (Syed et al., 2024). Social media marketing and environmental factors influence the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance (Bartoloni & Ancillai, 2024).

Factors aid the adoption of social media and the marketing performance of Nigerian SMEs (Sani et al., 2023). From a Dynamic Capabilities perspective, environmental dynamics shape the extent to which firms can effectively leverage their digital marketing initiatives. In highly competitive or regulatory-driven environments, the benefits of social media marketing may be amplified because of the increased pressure to innovate and differentiate. Conversely, in stable or less competitive environments, the impact of social media marketing on performance may be less significant. Therefore, environmental factors serve as external drivers and contextual moderators that influence the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H_5: Environmental factors positively moderate the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance.

2.5 Marketing Performance

Marketing performance as the value stemming from the satisfaction of customer needs and wants with a product. Marketing performance is assessed by analyzing a business's processes, outcomes, and achievements, namely the success of the business as a whole (Hasibuan et al., 2025). Luo indicates that marketing performance is a form of appreciation from companies toward the effectiveness of the marketing activities performed and the resultant return, which enables the organization to control the marketing activities and make further informed decisions an essential consideration for organizational sustainable growth and competitiveness (Hasanah et al., 2025; Luo, Guo, Benitez, Scaringella, & Lin, 2024).

Various authors have discussed the multiple dimensions that make up marketing performance, from customer acquisition and retention, the results of the product in the market, and the financial dimensions of marketing performance, which include the growth of sales an essential determinant of the effectiveness of a firm's marketing strategy (Adinda, Swandewi, Adyatma, & Wikan, 2025). Marketing performance encompasses sales growth, acquisition of new customers and customer satisfaction.

Despite its widespread use in marketing research, the conceptualization of marketing performance remains heterogeneous across studies. Some researchers emphasize financial indicators, while others integrate relational and market-based outcomes. This inconsistency complicates comparisons across studies and may contribute to variations in the empirical findings. In service-based MSMEs, financial performance alone may not fully capture the relational and experiential outcomes generated through digital engagement strategies. Therefore, a multidimensional perspective that integrates sales growth, customer acquisition, and customer satisfaction provides a more comprehensive representation of marketing performance in a digitally mediated context.

From a Dynamic Capabilities perspective, marketing performance represents the outcome of a company's ability to perceive market opportunities, capture customer engagement, and effectively reconfigure internal processes. It is not simply a financial outcome but also a reflection of how well a company aligns its strategic capabilities with environmental demands and customer expectations. In this regard, marketing performance is an appropriate outcome variable for assessing the effectiveness

of social media marketing and customer-centric digital engagement capabilities in a dynamic business environment.

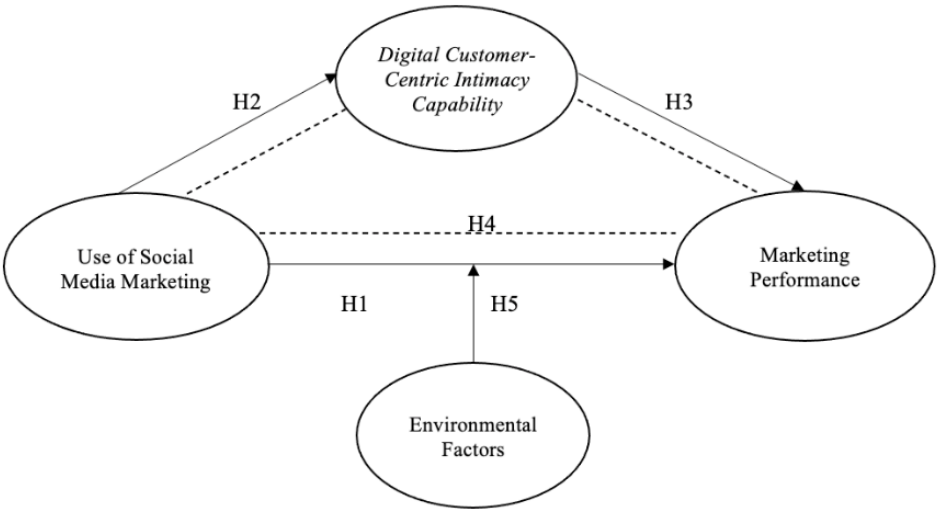


Figure 2. Research model

3. Methodology

3.1 Population and Sample

This study focused on MSMEs in the aesthetic health services industry in Central Java. Specifically, MSMEs in the aesthetic health services industry are small and medium-sized enterprises that offer aesthetic health services to individuals and/or corporate clients. They do so by (specializing in) direct services and personal interactions. According to Badan Pusat (2025), there are 288 MSMEs in the aesthetic health services industry in Central Java Province. Central Java was selected as the research setting due to its growing concentration of aesthetic healthcare MSMEs and increasing digital adoption among small service-based enterprises.

This region represents a competitive yet moderately dynamic market environment, making it suitable for examining the interaction between digital marketing strategies, relational capabilities, and performance outcomes. Furthermore, the aesthetic healthcare sector is characterized by high levels of customer interaction, personalization, and trust-based service delivery, making it particularly relevant for investigating digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities. The sampling technique applied in this study was proportional sampling (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

The researcher examined the population of MSMEs in Central Java Province's aesthetic health services sector and found the business characteristics to be homogeneous. Preliminary observations and industry mapping indicate that MSMEs in this sector exhibit similar service characteristics, pricing structures, digital marketing practices, and reliance on social media platforms for customer engagement. This relative homogeneity reduces the risk of structural bias across districts and supports the assumption that the population can be treated as a single analytical framework. Hair Jr et al. (2021) stated that if the population size is known at a specified level of significance, one can refer to their table to determine the minimum number of samples that can be obtained to achieve statistical validity.

Hair Jr et al. (2021), the population size was 288, and at a 5% margin of error, 155 respondents were the minimum sample size required. In addition to the minimum sample requirement based on population size, the adequacy of the sample was evaluated by considering the complexity of the structural model. Following the rule of thumb for PLS-SEM, the minimum sample size should exceed ten times the maximum number of structural paths directed at any latent construct. The obtained sample size satisfied this requirement, ensuring sufficient statistical power for hypothesis testing.

3.2 Indicator of Variable

Table 1. Indicator variable

Variable	Indicator
Use of Social Media Marketing	1. Indicators of social media marketing usage 2. Frequency of Use 3. Duration of Use 4. Platforms Used 5. Activities Carried Out 6. Content Consumed 7. Social Interaction
Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Capability	1. Indicators of digital customer-centric intimacy capability: 2. Perceived Digital Personalization Proximity Based on User Experience 3. Perceived Digital Proximity to Sharing 4. Perceived Closeness based on Needs 5. Perceived Emotional Connection Closeness 6. Perceived Digital Personalization Trust 7. The Perceived Relationship of Digital Conformity from User Experience 8. Perceived Digital Relevance Trust 9. The Relationship of Perceived Digital Convenience to Customer Needs 10. Perceived Digital Convenience Trust
Environmental Factors	1. Environmental factor indicators include: 2. Competitive Pressure 3. Customer Demand 4. Technological Developments 5. Perceived trends
Marketing Performance	1. Marketing performance indicators 2. Sales Growth 3. Customer Acquisition 4. Customer Retention 5. Brand Awareness 6. Brand Image

3.3 Method for Collecting Data

This study examined questionnaires as part of the survey methodology to collect data (Hair Jr et al., 2021). A structured questionnaire was selected because the objective of this study was to empirically test theoretically derived hypotheses involving latent constructs such as social media marketing, digital customer-centric intimacy capability, environmental factors, and marketing performance. These constructs represent perceptual and strategic organizational attributes that are best captured using standardized measurement scales administered to key decision-makers. Survey-based data collection enables systematic comparisons across firms and supports multivariate statistical analyses. Data were collected through questionnaires that were provided to and explained to respondents during several direct visits to MSMEs.

The respondents were MSME owners or managers, as they were directly involved in strategic marketing decisions and digital engagement activities. Their position within the firm ensures access to relevant information regarding marketing practices, environmental conditions, and performance outcomes, thereby enhancing response accuracy and reliability. To explain the survey in a coherent way, as well as to clarify the survey to respondents, the data collection process involved several direct visits to MSME in adjacent districts to capture as many responses as possible. While some data collection was done via digital questionnaires through the Google Form application, Central Java Province has vast

and distant districts. This way of combining methods allows the researcher to maintain the authenticity of the field data while attempting to capture data from all the regions involved in the survey.

The combination of direct field visits and online questionnaires represents a mixed-mode data collection strategy aimed at maximizing response rates while maintaining the authenticity of the data. Face-to-face distribution allowed clarification of questionnaire items and reduced potential misunderstandings, whereas online distribution facilitated access to geographically distant districts. This approach is particularly relevant in MSME contexts, where digital literacy levels and Internet accessibility may vary across regions.

To minimize potential common method bias, several procedural remedies were implemented in this study. Respondents were assured of anonymity and confidentiality to reduce the social desirability bias. The questionnaire items were arranged to psychologically separate the predictor and criterion variables. In addition, a statistical assessment using Harman's single-factor test was conducted to ensure that common method variance did not pose a significant threat to the validity of the findings.

3.4 Method for Analyzing Data

1. Test for Validating a New Construct

This study aims to create a new construct to address the research gap concerning the influence of social media marketing on the marketing performance of social media marketing in Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) in the aesthetic health services industry. The new construct devised in this study is termed 'digital customer- centric intimacy capability.' An analysis stage was undertaken to confirm the new construct formulated in this study, and there was ample evidence to support it. The development and validation of the digital customer-centric intimacy capability construct followed a systematic, multi-stage procedure.

First, construct conceptualization was grounded in the integration of Customer Intimacy theory and Dynamic Capabilities theory to establish theoretical domain clarity. Second, measurement items were generated based on prior literature and adapted to the MSME's aesthetic healthcare context. Third, content validity was assessed through expert evaluation involving academics and practitioners to ensure the relevance and clarity of the items. Fourth, a pilot test was conducted to assess the reliability and item consistency. Finally, construct validity was examined using measurement model evaluation, including convergent validity (outer loadings > 0.70, AVE > 0.50), internal consistency reliability (Composite Reliability > 0.70), and discriminant validity (HTMT < 0.90).

2. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Test for Data Analysis

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to analyze the structural relationships among the constructs in the proposed research model. Given the predictive orientation of the study, the inclusion of mediation and moderation effects, and the presence of a newly developed construct, Partial Least Squares SEM (PLS-SEM) was considered appropriate. PLS-SEM is suitable for exploratory model development, does not require strict multivariate normality assumptions, and performs well with relatively small-to-medium sample sizes. The analysis was conducted in two stages: (1) assessment of the measurement model to ensure reliability and validity, and (2) evaluation of the structural model to test the hypothesized relationships, including path coefficients, R^2 values, and effect sizes (f^2).

Mediation analysis was conducted using bootstrapping procedures to assess the indirect effects of social media marketing on marketing performance through digital customer-centric intimacy. Moderation analysis was performed by examining the interaction effect between environmental factors and social media marketing on the marketing performance. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was applied to ensure robust and accurate significance testing.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Analysis of the Variable Construct Test

4.1.1.1 Analysis of Internal Validity (Face Validity)
Content validity was assessed using the Content Validity Ratio (CVR) method with 15 domain experts. The CVR score of 0.75 exceeded the recommended threshold, indicating that the measurement items were relevant and representative of the construct domain.

4.1.1.2 Factor Analysis of Exploration
Exploratory factor analysis confirmed the adequacy of the measurement models. The Kaiser–Meyer–Olkin (KMO) value of 0.858 indicated strong sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant, confirming sufficient inter-item correlations for factor analysis.

4.1.1.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)
Confirmatory factor analysis demonstrated that all indicator loadings exceeded 0.70, supporting the convergent validity of this newly developed construct.

4.1.1.4 Analysis of Reliability
The reliability assessment showed a Cronbach's alpha value of 0.959, exceeding the acceptable threshold of 0.70, thereby confirming strong internal consistency.

4.1.1.5 Analysis of Construct Validity
Convergent validity was further supported by an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value of 0.754, which exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, indicating that the construct explained a substantial proportion of the variance in its indicators.

4.1.2 Analysis of Data
The figure shows the model according to the earlier theory-based model.

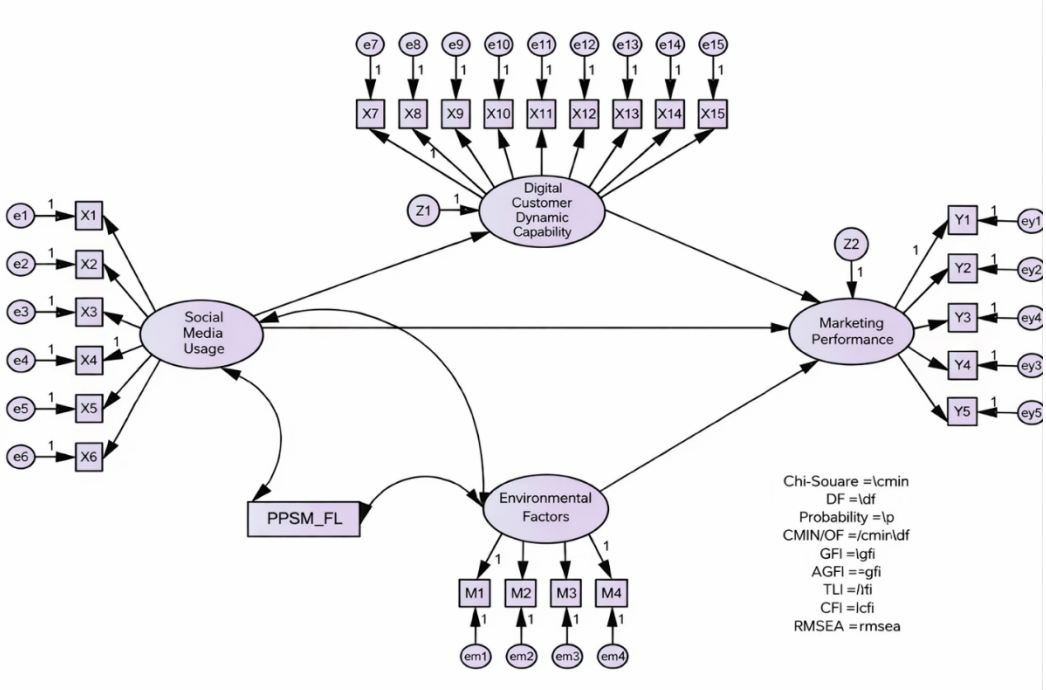


Figure 3. Path diagram of the model of social media marketing usage on marketing performance

This model includes the following external and moderating constructs:

a The initial exogenous construct posits that the utilization of social media marketing is expected to positively impact marketing performance, represented as a latent variable.
b The second exogenous construct, the use of social media marketing, is thought to have a good effect on the ability to build digital customer-centric intimacy, which is shown as a latent variable.
c The third external factor is that digital customer-centric intimacy capability is thought to have a positive effect on marketing performance, which is shown as a latent variable.

d The endogenous construct posits that marketing performance is affected by both the utilization of social media marketing and digital, customer-centric capabilities.
e The moderating construct posits that environmental factors may influence the relationship between social media marketing utilization and performance.

4.1.3 Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The first step in developing a structural equation model is to use Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) to identify the latent constructs. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was conducted to assess the overall measurement model fit. As shown in Table 2, the model demonstrated satisfactory goodness-of-fit indices. The Chi-square value ($\chi^2 = 151.696$, df = 142, p = 0.274) indicates an acceptable fit. The CMIN/DF value of 1.068 was below the recommended threshold of 2.00. Incremental fit indices also exceeded the recommended cut-off values (CFI = 0.984; TLI = 0.981), while RMSEA (0.024) indicated an excellent model fit. Although the GFI (0.884) and AGFI (0.845) are slightly below the ideal threshold of 0.90, they remain within an acceptable marginal range. Overall, the measurement model demonstrated an adequate fit and supported the validity of the latent constructs.

Tabel 2. Goodness of fit confirmatory factor analysis model

Goodness of fit Index	Cut-off Value	Results Models	Remarks
χ2- Chi-Square	Expected Small	151,696	X2 Table df (0.01,142) = 184,117 greater than 151,696 (good category) Good
Probability	≥ 0,05	0,274	Good
CMIN/DF	≤ 2,00	1,068	Good
GFI	≥ 0,90	0,884	Marginal
AGFI	≥ 0,90	0,845	Marginal
TLI	≥ 0,95	0,981	Good
CFI	≥ 0,95	0,984	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0,08	0,024	Good

The confirmatory factor analysis model in this study was generally very good, as six of the eight categories mentioned above yielded very good results.

4.1.4 Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

Following a satisfactory measurement model assessment, the full structural model was evaluated. The goodness-of-fit indices indicated that the model demonstrated an acceptable fit to the data ($\chi^2 = 151.838$, df = 143, p = 0.291). The CMIN/DF value of 1.062 was well below the recommended threshold of 2.00. Incremental fit indices were strong (CFI = 0.985; TLI = 0.983), and the RMSEA (0.023) indicated an excellent model fit. Although the GFI (0.884) and AGFI (0.845) fall slightly below the ideal cut-off value of 0.90, the overall model fit remains satisfactory based on multiple fit criteria. These results confirm that the structural model is appropriate for testing the hypotheses. The probability and AGFI are on the edge of the criteria, but Hair states that the model is fit if at least five criteria are met (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

Tabel 3. Goodness of fit

Goodness of fit Index	Cut-off Value	Results Models	Remarks
χ2- Chi-Square	Expected Small	151,838	X2 Tabel df (0,01,143) = 184,117 greater than 151,838 (good category) Good
Probability	≥ 0,05	0,291	Good
CMIN/DF	≤ 2,00	1,062	Good
GFI	≥ 0,90	0,884	Marginal

AGFI	≥ 0,90	0,845	Marginal
TLI	≥ 0,95	0,983	Good
CFI	≥ 0,95	0,985	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0,08	0,023	Good

4.1.5 Discriminant Validity Test

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). As shown in Table 4, the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeded its inter-construct correlations, satisfying the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

Furthermore, all HTMT values (Table 5) were below the recommended threshold of 0.85, indicating adequate discriminant validity among the constructs. These results confirm that each construct is empirically distinct and captures a unique conceptual domain in the model.

The following is the square root of the Latent Construct:

Social Media Marketing Usage = √0.954 = 0.977
Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Capability = √0.975 = 0.987
Environmental Factors = √0.817 = 0.904
Marketing Performance = √0.841 = 0.971

Tabel 4. Diskriminan validity Fornell–Larcker

Variable	Use of Social Media Marketing	Digital Customer Centric Intimacy Capability	Environmental Factors	Marketing Performance
Use of Social Media Marketing	0,977			
Digital Customer Centric Intimacy Capability	0,825	0,987		
Environmental Factors	0,311	0,346	0,904	
Marketing Performance	0,253	0,210	0,640	0,971

The table above shows that all latent variables have higher AVEs than the correlations between the other variables. This shows that the test has good discriminant validity.

The Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) approach also strengthened the discriminant validity test in this study, along with the Fornell–Larcker criterion. The HTMT is a suggested approach for evaluating discriminant validity with greater rigor, as it can more acutely identify the degree of similarity among constructs. If the HTMT value is below the recommended threshold, which is 0.85 for conceptually distinct constructs or 0.90 for conceptually close constructs, then discriminant validity is considered met. The use of the HTMT in this study aimed to ensure that each construct was clearly defined and that there was no conceptual overlap among the variables in the research model.

Tabel 5. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Variabel	Use of Social Media Marketing	Digital Customer Centric Intimacy Capability	Environmental Factors	Marketing Performance
Use of Social Media Marketing	–	0,83	0,32	0,26
Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Capability	0,83	–	0,35	0,22

Environmental Factors	0,32	0,35	–	0,66
Marketing Performance	0,26	0,22	0,66	–

The table above shows that the results of the discriminant validity test using the HTMT method show that all HTMT values between the constructs are below the recommended threshold of 0.85. This means that each construct in the research model is clearly distinct from the others and that there are no variables that are too similar. Discriminant validity was assessed using the HTMT criterion, and all values were below 0.90, confirming adequate discriminant validity among the constructs.

4.1.6 Hypothesis Testing

The structural model results indicate that all direct hypotheses were supported (Table 6). Social media marketing has a significant positive effect on marketing performance (CR = 5.469, $p < 0.001$) and digital customer-centric intimacy capability (CR = 5.747, $p < 0.001$). Digital customer-centric intimacy capability also exerts a significant positive effect on marketing performance (CR = 5.749, $p < 0.001$), confirming its strategic role as a relationship capability.

Furthermore, environmental factors significantly moderated the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance (CR = 2.628, $p = 0.008$), suggesting that the effectiveness of social media marketing varies depending on external conditions. The results of the hypothesis testing are shown in the table below:

Table 6. Direct hypothesis

No	Hypothesis	CR	P value	Conclusion
1	The Use of Social Media Marketing on Marketing Performance	5,469	0,000	Significant
2	The Use of Social Media Marketing on Digital Customer Centric Intimacy Capability	5,747	0,000	Significant
3	Digital Customer Centric Intimacy Capability to Marketing Performance	5,749	0,000	Significant
4	Environmental Factors Moderate the Use of Social Media Marketing on Marketing Performance	2,628	0,008	Significant

4.1.7 Mediation Analysis

The indirect effect of social media marketing on marketing performance through digital customer-centric intimacy capability was significant (CR = 2.04, $p = 0.041$), supporting the mediating hypothesis. This finding indicates that social media marketing enhances marketing performance directly and indirectly through the development of digital relational capabilities.

Table 7. Indirect hypothesis test (Mediation)

	Hypothesis	CR	P value	Conclusion
1	Digital Customer Centric Intimacy Capability Mediates the Use of Social Media Marketing on Marketing Performance	2,04	0,041	Signifikan

4.2 Discussions

4.2.1 The impact of social media marketing on marketing performance

The results show that social media marketing positively affects the marketing performance of MSMEs in the aesthetic health services sector in Central Java. Businesses that use social media more often tend to make more sales, attract more customers, increase purchases, outperform competitors, and build

better public images. Social media has shifted from being a mere communication tool to a key part of business strategy.

Posting content daily helps brands stay in touch with their audience. This regular contact makes it easier for customers to remember and consider aesthetic health services, keeping the brand in their minds. A steady posting schedule also looks professional and builds trust, leading to increased customer engagement and repeat business.

Planning and posting content daily show a commitment to digital marketing. Careful planning leads to focused, relevant content that is in line with current trends. This helps MSMEs adjust their marketing messages to customer needs and market changes, giving them an edge over competitors who are less consistent on social media platforms.

MSMEs can reach a broader audience by using platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp. Instagram is good for sharing attractive images, TikTok helps content spread quickly, and WhatsApp allows direct communication with customers. The use of different platforms increases advertisement reach, sales opportunities, and the number of new customers. These benefits are evident in the aesthetic healthcare market, where sales have increased and competition has intensified.

4.2.2 The Application of Social Media Marketing for Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Competence

The results show that social media marketing improves digital customer-centric intimacy for MSMEs in the aesthetic healthcare sector in Central Java. The more businesses use social media, the better they are at offering personalized experiences, building emotional connections, and gaining customer trust. Social media is not just for promotion; it also helps clinics and customers remain connected.

MSMEs can use social media's interactive features to give customers personalized experiences. Tools such as comments, direct messages, and polls make customers feel noticed and valued, helping them connect more closely with the brand. This digital intimacy leads to increased customer loyalty. When customers share their experiences on clinics' social media pages, it boosts digital word-of-mouth. Reviews, photos, and testimonials act as strong social proof for others considering the same service. This builds trust and demonstrates that the clinic offers quality services, making it more credible. Intimacy grows not just through direct interaction but also when clients share their real experiences.

4.2.3 Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Capability's Impact on Marketing Performance

The results show that digital customer-centric intimacy positively affects the marketing performance of MSMEs in the aesthetic healthcare sector in Central Java. MSMEs that build personal connections, earn trust, and offer digital experiences that meet customer needs see better marketing results, such as increased sales, new customers, and repeat purchases. Strong digital intimacy also improves the clinic's public image and its long-term relationships.

Offering personalized experiences on social media is key to better marketing strategies. When customers feel involved, they form emotional connections and are more likely to use the service. Personal interactions also improve customers' perception of service quality, making them happier and more loyal. This leads to repeat sales and gives the clinic an advantage over its competitors. Customers sharing their experiences on social media play a major role in the success of marketing. Reviews and testimonials act as digital word-of-mouth and can have a strong impact. Sharing real stories builds trust among potential customers and improves the clinic's reputation. This greater exposure attracts more new customers and encourages tech-savvy consumers to try aesthetic healthcare services sooner.

Learning what customers want through digital interactions provides clinics with a unique marketing advantage. Clinics can adjust their services based on feedback and behaviors observed on social media. This helps them meet individual needs and close the gap between expectations and realities. Adapting marketing strategies to fit customer needs increases satisfaction and improves the business's reputation.

4.2.4 The Digital Customer-Centric Intimacy Capability Serves as a Mediator Between the Use of Social Media Marketing and Marketing Performance the results show that digital customer-centric intimacy acts as a bridge between social media marketing and marketing performance for MSMEs in Central Java's aesthetic health services sector. This means that simply using social media is not enough; building personal relationships with customers is key to achieving better marketing results. Digital intimacy connects online interactions to real business outcomes, thereby making social media more effective. Posting content regularly helps reach customers, but the quality of relationships depends on how well MSMEs tailor their digital interactions with customers. This shows that social media is not just for promotion but also for building loyalty and trust.

Building intimacy helps move customers from awareness to loyalty. Replying to comments, having direct conversations, and sharing content that reflects real customer experiences make social media more meaningful. This increases the chances of repeat business and referrals to the company. The findings show that social media is most effective when used to build long-term relationships and not just for quick sales. Experience shows that MSMEs using various social media platforms to build relationships have a greater marketing impact. Instagram is good for visual content, TikTok helps reach many people, and WhatsApp strengthens personal communication. Without connecting with people across these platforms, businesses may reach audiences but fail to build emotional closeness. Focusing on intimacy makes each platform more effective in improving the marketing performance.

4.2.5 Environmental Factors Influence the Impact of Social Media Marketing on Marketing Performance the results show that environmental factors influence the relationship between social media marketing and marketing performance of MSMEs in Central Java's aesthetic healthcare sector. Digital marketing strategies are affected by market competition, customer preferences, technological changes, and digital trends. This means that social media marketing works best when MSMEs adapt their strategies to a changing environment.

As more MSMEs use digital platforms, competition increases between MSMEs. This has prompted businesses to find new ways to manage content and interact with customers. Many aesthetic clinics use Instagram, TikTok, and WhatsApp; therefore, it is important to keep marketing messages unique. MSMEs can improve their marketing performance by offering content that is unique, credible, and relevant to their customers. In contrast, repetitive strategies can get lost in a crowded digital space.

Customers now expect easy access to services through social media, highlighting the environmental factors' role. People want simple ways to make reservations, chat online, and obtain pricing or promotional information. MSMEs that use integrated digital systems to meet these needs often gain more loyal customers, higher sales, and better public images. Meeting practical needs through social media has a strong impact on employee performance.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study resolves inconsistencies in previous findings by demonstrating that social media marketing improves marketing performance both directly and indirectly through digital customer-centric intimacy. The results confirm that digital relational capabilities serve as a strategic mechanism that translates online engagement into measurable marketing results. Furthermore, environmental factors strengthen this relationship, suggesting that digital strategies are more effective when they are aligned with external market dynamics.

Theoretically, this study extends Dynamic Capabilities Theory by conceptualizing digital customer-centric intimacy capabilities as relational dynamic capabilities embedded in digital interaction processes. The findings suggest that dynamic capabilities in the digital era are driven not only by technology investments but also by a company's ability to cultivate trust-based, emotionally engaging, and personalized digital relationships. This perspective enriches our understanding of how the processes of sensing, capturing, and transforming operate within the social media ecosystem.

From a practical perspective, MSMEs in the aesthetic healthcare sector must go beyond simply maintaining a social media presence and strategically develop structured digital relationship management practices. Businesses should implement systematic customer data tracking, personalize communications based on customer preferences, and monitor engagement metrics, such as response time, repeat bookings, and interaction frequency. High-quality visual documentation of service outcomes should be integrated into content strategies to strengthen credibility and reduce perceived risks. Additionally, SMEs should establish clear response time standards (e.g., within 12–24 hours) and design retention programs, such as follow-up reminders, loyalty incentives, and post-treatment engagement initiatives. These structured digital intimacy practices can help transform social media activities into sustainable marketing performance.

5.2. Research Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, the cross-sectional design captures digital behavior at a specific point in time, whereas digital platforms and consumer interaction patterns are rapidly evolving. Second, variations in digital literacy and marketing experience among MSMEs may influence response consistency. Third, respondents were primarily social media managers and operational practitioners, not business owners, which may limit insights into long-term strategic decision making. These limitations suggest caution in generalizing the findings across contexts and timeframes.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research should adopt a longitudinal design to examine how digital customer-centric engagement capabilities develop over time and influence the long-term marketing performance. Cross-industry comparisons would help determine whether the mediating and moderating mechanisms identified in this study operate similarly in other service and product sectors. Further investigation of internal organizational drivers, such as digital culture, leadership orientation, and technology readiness, could deepen the understanding of the capability formation process.

Furthermore, integrating psychological constructs, such as trust, perceived value, or engagement, into a mediation framework could provide a more comprehensive explanation of digital marketing effectiveness. Finally, future studies should explore how varying levels of environmental turbulence shape the strength of digital relationship strategies in different competitive environments.

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Author Contributions

Author 1 conceptualized the research framework, developed the research design, conducted the data collection and analysis, and prepared the original manuscript draft. Author 1 is a doctoral candidate in Management Science at Universitas Jenderal Soedirman. Author 2 and Author 3 supervised the research process, provided theoretical direction, critically reviewed the manuscript, and contributed to refining the methodological and analytical structures of the study. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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