The Effect Of Digital Marketing On Customer Satisfaction Of Online Stores

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Abstract

Customer satisfaction with products and services plays an important role in marketing. Customer satisfaction monitoring provides a basis for adopting important policies to survive in the competitive environment and plays an important role in this market. The present research examined the effect of digital marketing on customer satisfaction in the Online Stores. The research had a descriptive-correlational method and its statistical population consisted of the age group under 25 years of age who consumed Digikala goods in East Tehran. According to Morgan's table, 384 individuals were selected, and 392 individuals were selected using the non-random convenience method. Most of the respondents were in the age group of 13 to 18 (49.23%). The research tools included digital marketing and customer satisfaction questionnaires. Questionnaires were designed on the Porsline website, and the experts examined the face and content validity of both questionnaires and evaluated their construct validity and hypotheses using the confirmatory factor analysis with Smart-PLS 3 software. The research results indicated the effects of search engine optimization marketing (β=0.461), content marketing (β=0.384), social network marketing (β=0.315), influencer marketing (β=0.305), search engine marketing (β=0.295), mobile marketing (β=0.271), viral marketing (β=0.250), and email

marketing (β=0.220) on the customer satisfaction under the age group of 25 years. According to the results, marketing managers are suggested to strengthen customer satisfaction using the mechanisms considered in various marketing communications.

Keywords: Digital Marketing; Customer Satisfaction; Structural-equation modeling.

1- Introduction

Today's digital marketing has origins in the mid-1980s when computer complexity allowed massive storage of customer information [1]; however, the term "digital marketing" was first used in the 1990s when the Internet and web platforms began to operate. Marketers started to use digital platforms when new technologies such as clickable banners, web, and search engines entered the digital market from 1993 to 1998 [2]. Web development can turn users into active participants by enabling them to interact with other users and businesses. The emergence of pioneering social media websites such as MySpace and Facebook provided new opportunities for companies to promote their brands. Due to the growth of search engines, companies began to optimize their websites to obtain higher ranks in search results [3]. According to Monnapp (2015), digital marketing increased in 2006 when search engine traffic reached 6.4 billion per month. Despite the complexities, which have been recently assumed by the digital economy, statistics of 2013 indicate that digital marketing is still a growing field [4].

Digital marketing, in its simplest form, is the marketing of products or services using digital technologies or channels. This type of marketing uses the Internet as its primary advertising medium but develops to channels such as mobile phones, display advertising, and any other digital medium that does not require the Internet. Similarly, Merisavo (2006) [5] defined digital marketing as "communication and interaction between a company or brand and its customers using digital channels (e.g. the Internet, email, mobile phones, and digital television) and information technology". Various terms have been used to

describe it, such as electronic marketing, online marketing, one-to-one marketing (1:1 marketing), and interactive marketing. However, this terminology does not reflect digital marketing in its entirety [6]. Customer interaction with brands is the main goal of digital marketing [7]. It is worth noting that digital marketing does not invalidate the basic principles of marketing and traditional methods. As Yannopoulos (2011) [8] believes, the success of the digital age is to apply basic principles and learn new rules. Since digital marketing relies heavily on technology, it is always under rapid changes and evolution. Given the volatility of the digital market, digital marketers are obliged to keep up with these changes with new methods and development. Digital marketing is a high-potential sector of any marketing plan, which is used by successful businesses to achieve desired results [9]. Using cost-effective and fast internet is an advantage of digital marketing [10]. Types of digital marketing in this research are explained as follows.

Mobile Marketing: The creation of the mobile device has made it a suitable tool for marketing activities. According to the official definition by the Mobile Marketing Association (2009), mobile marketing is "a set of practices that enable companies to communicate and engage with their customers in an interactive and meaningful way via any mobile device or network". Since it includes advertisements that appear on mobile devices, terms such as mobile advertising and wireless advertising are used instead [11]. The interactive nature of mobile marketing distinguishes it from marketing media such as television, radio, and newspapers, while its constant access to consumers separates it from the Web "anytime, anywhere" [12]. Marketing methods available on mobile devices include short message service (SMS), multimedia messaging service (MMS), quick response (QR) codes, location-based services (LBS), push notifications, and mobile advertising. SMS is the most widely-used messaging tool for mobile marketing. The unique features of mobile marketing are as follows: ubiquity, personalization, localization, and two-way communication [1]. Ubiquity refers to the users' ability to receive information and perform transactions wherever they are and whenever they want.

Email Marketing: In its simplest form, email marketing, which is alternatively called direct email marketing, is the use of emails as a means of promoting products or targeting consumers. It generally includes sending advertising emails to attract new customers or persuade existing customers to make an immediate purchase, improve customer relationships, and add advertising to another company's email, usually in partnership, to gain views in a new market. This includes sending commercial emails to a group of people who have subscribed to an email list, but they can also be directed to an individual. It is often associated with data mining and is an evolved digital form of traditional direct email marketing [13]. Email is an effective marketing tool when consumers voluntarily sign up to receive emails from companies. It means that email marketing is permission-based. Unsolicited emails are considered spams and many consumers use anti-spam filters to prevent unauthorized emails from appearing in their inboxes. Different types of email marketing include welcome emails, newsletter emails, summary emails, personalized emails, lead development, sponsorship emails, and transactional emails. Each of these email formats has advantages and disadvantages in marketing strategy [13].

Search engine marketing (SEM) is an element of digital marketing that is related to researching, submitting, and positioning a website or web page in search engines to achieve maximum view and increase the number of referrals [14]. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a part of SEM that helps a website to be ranked higher in search engine results, or without paying. Common examples of search engines are Google, Bing, and Yahoo. The higher a website naturally ranks in the search results, the more users visit it [7].

SEM and SEO are used interchangeably. Search marketing is generally based on content marketing strategies. The marketing technique is to create and distribute valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and gain an audience [15]. Content is limited by words, keywords, articles, and terms; hence, it is reasonable that the practical application of search marketing is the essence of content marketing because they cannot be separated.

Social Media Marketing includes entertainment, interaction, up-to-dateness, customization, and word-of-mouth

advertising. Social networks provide unique opportunities for marketers to reach customers in social networks and build relationships [16]. They are a set of bases that provide the possibility for users to share their thoughts, interests, and activities with others, and also for others to share these thoughts and activities with them [17]. These networks have created power for online relationships with customers and creating brand images [18] and play an essential role in the branding of companies and the success of luxury brands [19]. Instagram is among these social networks with increasing users. It has emerged as a growing marketing tool [20]. Entertainment, social interaction, and up-to-dateness are strong motivators for using content created by users of social networks [21, 22]. Customization is for customer satisfaction, and thus brands can be customized and uniquely presented and create stronger brand communication and loyalty using the website personalization [23]. Social networks are ideal tools for electronic word-of-mouth advertising because customers create and disseminate information about a brand to friends, acquaintances, and other people without restrictions [24].

Viral marketing: Since 1989, when the term viral marketing was first used in a computer journal [25], the main form of viral marketing has been based on word-of-mouth communication. Word-of-mouth communication is an important source for customers [26]. This marketing refers to a process during which the company's advertising message is sent through the customers to colleagues, acquaintances, relatives, and friends, and it continues until the message spreads like a virus among many groups of potential customers and quickly creates a huge wave. The main goal of viral marketing is to use person-to-person communication contrary to customer-to-company communication to disseminate information about a product or commodity resulting in rapid, widespread, and more effective acceptance in the market where volume, attraction, critical characteristics, and visual features of the message are important [27].

Influencer marketing: Influencer marketing is defined in five stages, namely planning, recognition, alignment, motivation, and coordination when interacting with an influencer [28]. Marketing influencers can be used as a part of integrated marketing communications and among other tools [29]. Influencer marketing affects individuals' subconscious minds and emotions. Therefore, marketers use methods that products and brand names are completely and unconsciously exposed to the audience and customers, thereby influencing the customers' minds and choices. This marketing is affected by various factors. The influence of micro-influencers and macro-influencers in communication is affected by social, economic, socio-cultural, and ideological group-thinking situations that are influenced by factors such as household economy, lifestyles, and personal factors in the consumer's life. After purchases, people seek to confirm their purchases and taste and want to obtain the level of cognitive dissonance of purchases by encouraging and praising the purchase and obtaining the approval of others about their purchases [31]. Social media influencers can strategically support them and create a strong brand by communicating and interacting with audience [32].

Content marketing affects the consumers' knowledge management as well as the quality of service delivery and development. Finally, consumers' purchase intention can increase by enhancing competitiveness. Content marketing is very important for attracting and retaining customers due to the production and distribution of valuable content. The key goal of content marketing is to raise awareness and strengthen the brand, to turn customers into loyal customers [33].

The important goal of any business and strategy is to satisfy customers because customers are the obvious reasons for the existence of any business. Organizations must understand this concept to survive and grow. Customer satisfaction affects profitability and is a mental state. It is often defined as the degree to which a product's performance meets customer expectations [34]. According to Hansemark & Albinsson (2004) [35], "satisfaction is the general attitude of customers towards the service provider, or the emotional reaction to the difference between what customers expect and what they receive to fulfill some

needs or desire". The expectation is a pre-purchase concept based on the belief that a product or service containing certain characteristics produces certain results. The buyer will be satisfied in cases where performance exceeds expectations. Expectations are usually not met when they reflect unanticipated or unrealistically high service characteristics. Keller & Kotler (2012) [34] believed that intelligent companies aim to satisfy customers by only promising what they can deliver and then delivering more than what they promised in today's world.

Customers usually tell people in their social circles about good or bad experiences with a product and/or company. Angelova & Zekiri (2011) [36] believe that satisfied customers are likely to tell six people, while dissatisfied customers tell their negative experiences to at least ten people. Rahim et al. (2012) [18] assumed that when customers were dissatisfied, they might complain, indulge in negative word-of-mouth, or, in extreme cases, choose a company without deficiency, especially when they feel that the alternative company/product does not offer anything better. Numerous studies have pointed out that customer satisfaction is the main driver of repeat purchases, customer retention, and loyalty. Customer satisfaction is critical because it provides criteria for marketing managers to evaluate and improve their business performance. Managers pay attention to customer satisfaction due to the main index of repurchase intention and loyalty, the point of differentiation, increasing customer lifetime value, reducing word-of-mouth advertising, reducing customer switch rates, and helping to retain customers.

The present research aimed to fill the research gap related to investigating the impact of digital marketing on customer satisfaction in the Digikala online store and similar stores. There are different types of digital marketing in encouraging consumers to buy domestic products. The research examined the effect of digital marketing on customer satisfaction in Digikala in the age group of fewer than 24 years in East Tehran (quality, product, employees, services, price, and company). The main research question was what the effect of digital marketing was on customer satisfaction with digital goods?

First hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between search engine optimization and customer satisfaction.

Second hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between search engine marketing and customer satisfaction.

Third hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between social network marketing and customer satisfaction.

Fourth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between content marketing and customer satisfaction.

Fifth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between influencer marketing and customer satisfaction.

Sixth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between email marketing and customer satisfaction.

Seventh hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between viral marketing and customer satisfaction.

Eighth hypothesis: There is a significant relationship between mobile marketing and customer satisfaction.
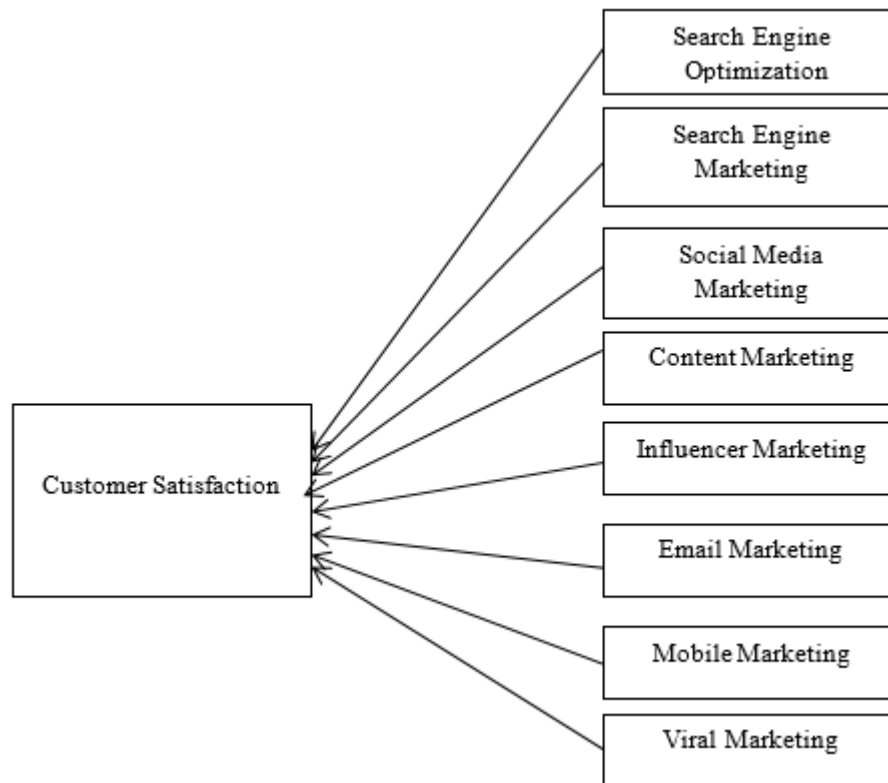
Figure (1) shows the research model.

Figure 1: Research model (researcher's findings)

2- Methods

The research method was descriptive and correlational and the statistical population consisted of the Digikala online store users under 25 years of age in East Tehran, and the study was generalized to them. Due to the high population size, the sample size must be at least equal to 384 according to Morgan Table; hence, 392 individuals were selected as the sample. The non-random convenience sampling was performed. The data collection tools included the semi-researcher-made digital marketing and customer satisfaction questionnaires [37]. To validate the data collection tool, and the face and content validity of the questionnaire, the questionnaires were given to well-known marketing experts. Cronbach's alpha method, composite reliability, and factor loadings through factor analysis were utilized to determine the reliability of the tools. The collected data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. The value of the recommended Cronbach's alpha coefficient was determined to be 0.7. Data were analyzed using Smart-PLS 3 and SPSS 25.

3- Results

Table (1) presents the participants' demographic characteristics in the research.

Table 1: The result of the demographic characteristics of respondents (researcher's findings)

Demographic characteristics		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	214	54.59%
	Male	178	45.41%
	Total	392	100%
Age	years old < 7	2	0.51%
	years old 7-12	145	36.99%
	years old 13-18	193	49.23%
	19-24 years old	52	13.27%
	Total	392	100%

As presented in table (1), most of the respondents were female (54.59%), and from 13 and 18 years old (49.23%). The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used at an error level of 0.05% to examine the normal distribution of the variables.

Table 2: Results of Kolmogorov–Smirnov test (researcher's findings).

	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P-value
Content Marketing	0.218	0.000
Customer Satisfaction	0.302	0.000
Email Marketing	0.288	0.000
Influencer Marketing	0.259	0.000
Mobile Marketing	0.230	0.000
Search Engine Marketing	0.410	0.000
Search Engine Optimization	0.272	0.000
Social Media Marketing	0.303	0.000
Viral Marketing	0.271	0.000

According to Table (2), the assumption of normality of variables (significance coefficient less than 0.05) was rejected. The structural equation modeling was performed to examine the validity and reliability of the questions and the hypotheses. The Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, the reliability of observable variables (factor loadings), as well as convergent validity (Average variance extracted (AVE) of latent variables, and divergent validity (transverse loading or Fornell-Larcker test) were calculated to test the reliability. Table (3) presents the results.

Table 3: Results of measurement model (researcher's findings)

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Content Marketing	0.829	0.899	0.748	0.488
Customer Satisfaction	0.818	0.874	0.583	0.371
Email Marketing	0.800	0.883	0.715	0.423
Influencer Marketing	0.845	0.906	0.763	0.509
Mobile Marketing	0.786	0.874	0.699	0.379
Search Engine Marketing	0.842	0.895	0.680	0.455
Search Engine Optimization	0.822	0.882	0.653	0.417
Social Media Marketing	0.862	0.896	0.590	0.419
Viral Marketing	0.844	0.896	0.683	0.462

The reliability was greater than 0.6 considering the appropriateness of Cronbach's alpha indices and composite

reliability. AVE above 0.5 indicated internal consistency or validity, and convergent validity was established. Figure (2) shows factor loadings and Figure (3) presents the t-statistics. Questions with factor loadings less than 0.6 and t-statistics less than 1.96 were removed; hence, the questionnaire was reliable. Q^2 values above zero indicated that the observed values were well reconstructed and the model had the prediction ability. According to Table (3), the structural model had moderate quality.

Table 4: Discriminant validity of constructs (researcher's findings)

	Content Marketing	Customer Satisfaction	Email Marketing	Influencer Marketing	Mobile Marketing	Search Engine Marketing	Search Engine Optimization	Social Media Marketing	Viral Marketing
Content Marketing	0.865								
Customer Satisfaction	0.763	0.805							
Email Marketing	0.780	0.844	0.886						
Influencer Marketing	0.765	0.779	0.655	0.874					
Mobile Marketing	0.514	0.697	0.638	0.504	0.836				
Search Engine Marketing	0.730	0.8255	0.725	0.795	0.572	0.875			
Search Engine Optimization	0.839	0.808	0.777	0.756	0.511	0.764	0.858		
Social Media Marketing	0.732	0.825	0.768	0.631	0.738	0.717	0.755	0.859	
Viral Marketing	0.715	0.765	0.635	0.719	0.600	0.701	0.686	0.648	0.827

Table (4) shows the Fornell-Larcker index and each variable has the highest correlation with its variable and its divergence validity is confirmed. R^2 is a criterion to connect the measurement and structural model parts and indicates the effect of an exogenous or independent factor on an

endogenous or dependent factor. The value of R^2 is equal to 0.894; hence, the correlation is strong. Therefore, the appropriateness of the fit of the structural model is confirmed. The goodness of fit index (GOF) indicates the fit between the quality of the structural model and the measurement model. This index is as follows:

$$GOF = \sqrt{Communalities} \times \sqrt{R^2}$$
$$= \sqrt{0/511} \times \sqrt{0/894} = 0/676$$

GOF of this model is equal to 0.676, indicating the strong fit of the model; hence, the questions are fitted to the theoretical constructs. Figures (2) and (3) show the path coefficients of the model and factor loadings. Based on Figures (2) and (3) and Table (5), different types of digital marketing affect customer satisfaction.
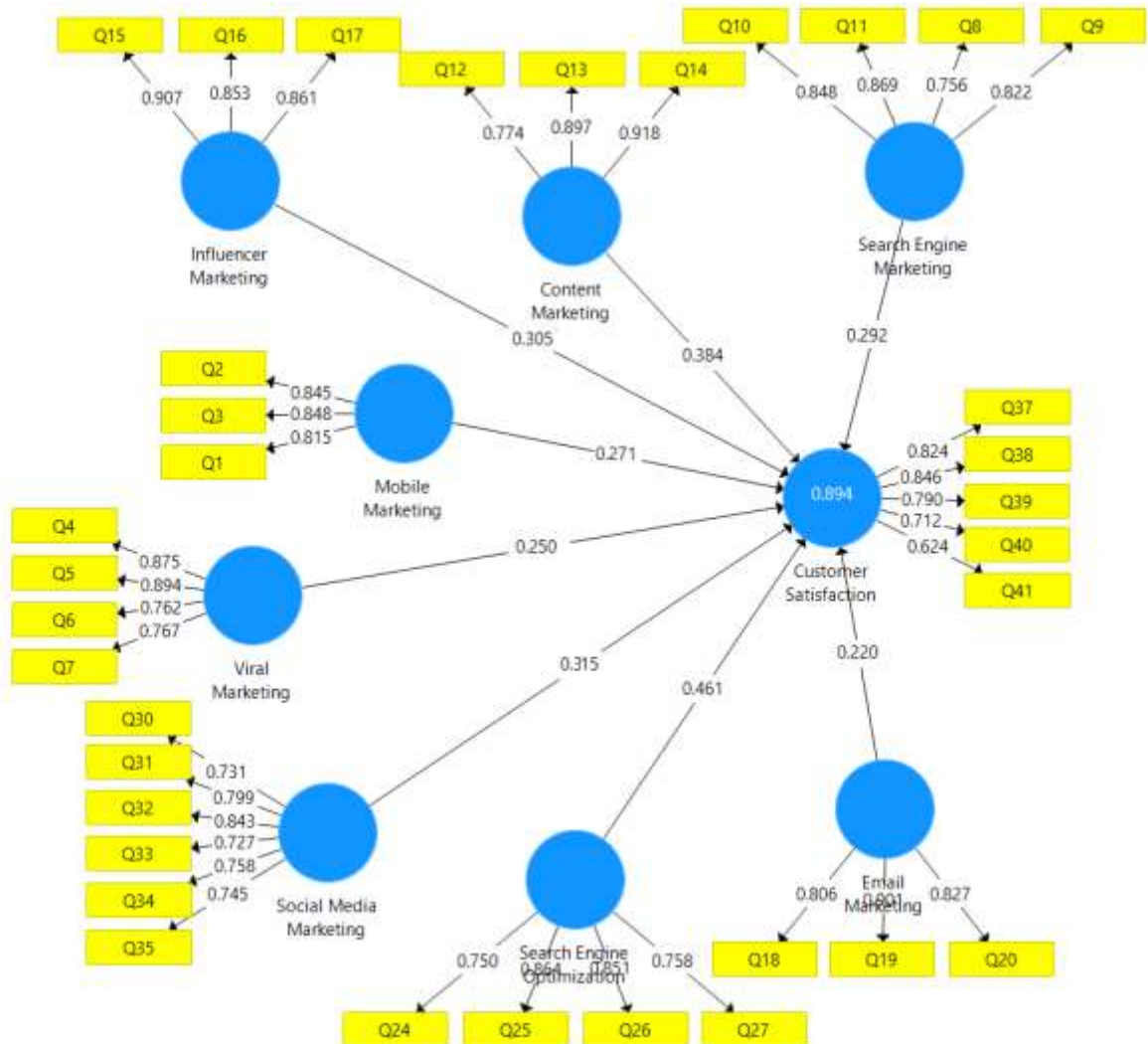
Figure 2: Path coefficients and factor loadings (researcher's findings)
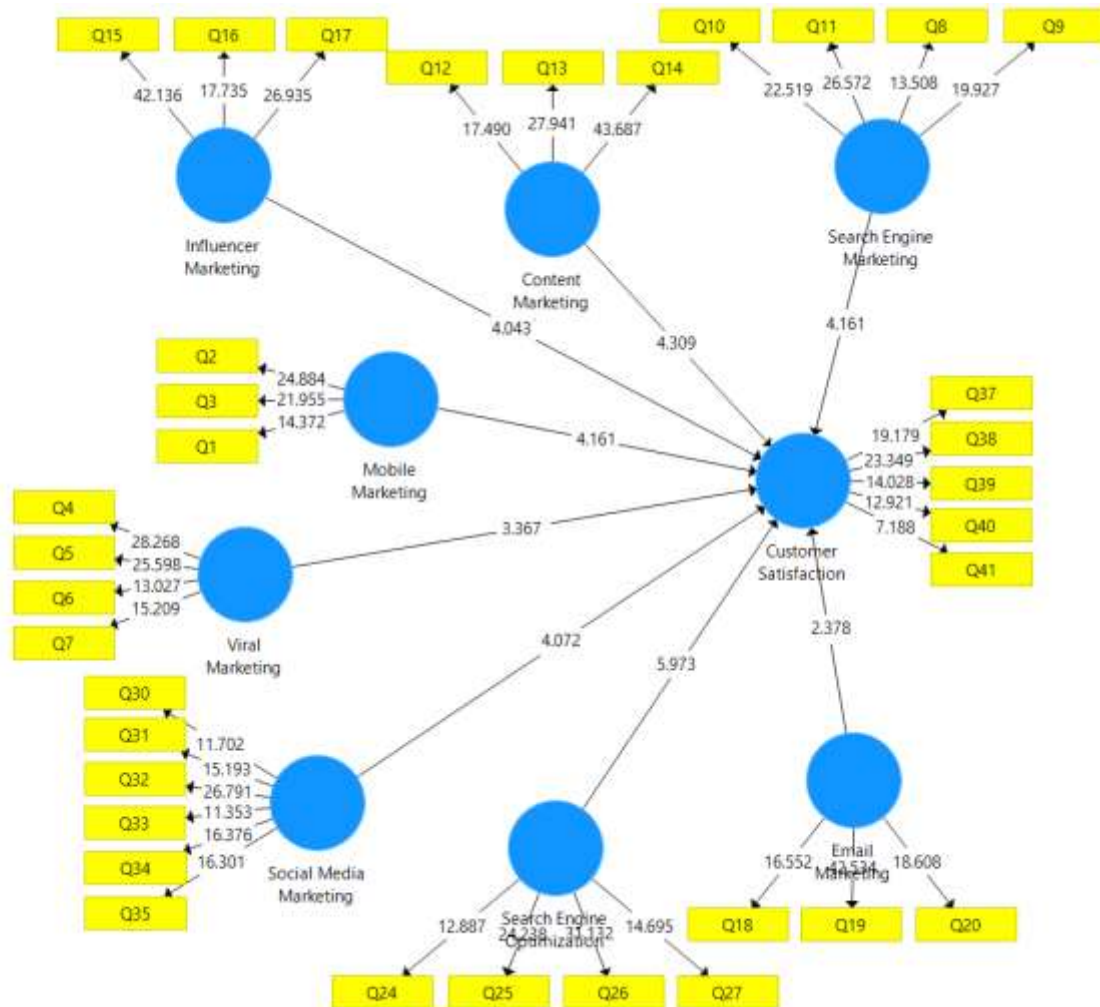

Figure 3: T-statistics (researcher's findings)

Table 5: Path coefficients and hypothesis testing (researcher's findings)

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values
Content Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction	0.384	4.309	0.000
Email Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction	0.220	2.378	0.000
Influencer Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction	0.305	4.043	0.000
Mobile Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction	0.271	4.161	0.000
Search Engine Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction	0.292	3.361	0.000
Search Engine Optimization -> Customer Satisfaction	0.461	5.973	0.000
Social Media Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction	0.315	4.072	0.000
Viral Marketing -> Customer Satisfaction	0.250	3.367	0.000

According to table (5), all relationships are significant and the significance coefficient is less than 0.05 for all relationships and the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 for the relationships. Therefore, all types of digital marketing are related to customer satisfaction.

4- Summary and conclusion

Marketing capabilities should be focused to gain better business performance of chain stores. Digital marketing has created competitive advantages in chain stores. Senior managers of chain stores should work in line with digital marketing in a way that it becomes a part of organizational culture and company values. Considering the effects of digital marketing components on the business performance of chain stores, their managers need to obtain digital marketing information such as their strengths and weaknesses to always respond appropriately and improve and maintain their competitive advantage and provide customer satisfaction.

The present study aimed to determine the role of digital marketing on customer satisfaction of the Digikala online store. The results of the structural equations included all indices of some types of digital marketing and customer satisfaction. The significant path coefficients indicated the relationships of the indices, and the results were in line with the results of [38, 39, 40, 41] despite differences in the statistical population. The results of table (5) indicate the effect of digital marketing on customer satisfaction. Digital marketing, including search engine optimization marketing (β=0.461, $P<0.01$), content marketing (β=0.384, $P<0.01$), social network marketing (β=0.315, $P<0.01$), influencer marketing (β=0.305, $P<0.01$), search engine marketing (β=0.295, $P<0.01$), mobile marketing (β=0.271, $P<0.01$), viral marketing (β=0.250, $P<0.01$), and email marketing (β=0.220, $P<0.01$) affected customer satisfaction. The highest effect belonged to search engine optimization marketing and all the above-mentioned marketing types had a positive impact on customer satisfaction. Based on the results, digital marketing (0.894) explained 89.4% of the variance in customer satisfaction. According to the results, mobile marketing had a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction, and since it was available at any time

and place, it provided the possibility to reduce the time of searching for product information. Furthermore, email marketing had a significant positive effect on customer satisfaction because sending emails saved time by providing relevant information and reducing the effort to search for information.

Based on the results, search engine marketing had a positive effect on customer satisfaction. The results were consistent with a study by Berman and Katona [38] who reported a positive level of search engine optimization. They were also consistent with the findings of Beal [14] who reported that search engines saved time and had price transparency. In other words, search engine marketing creates customer satisfaction when they have easy access to product information and conduct online or offline transactions. Based on the results, related conclusions are presented regarding the relationship between digital marketing elements and customer satisfaction. The uniqueness of mobile marketing is limited to its ability to create communication between marketing messages in a personal and interactive way without space and time limitations. Therefore, consumers will have favorable attitudes towards marketing messages with interactive content. Search engine optimization marketing has a positive and significant relationship with customer satisfaction (β=0.461) and causes companies, where websites have high-quality content, to be ranked higher in search engine results and have a better status in achieving superior performance in terms of customer satisfaction. According to the results, a strategy should be created to integrate mobile marketing with other digital marketing methods during its implementation. Efforts such as using keywords in page tags and web optimization are better to be made to optimize digital marketing. People who are interested in working in the field of digital marketing can acquire the necessary skills for digital marketing and plan for digital marketing according to the results of this research so that an optimal level of security programs should be considered for the implementation of digital services. Programs should be developed for adolescents for digital marketing in an integrated way and in a formal departmental and organizational process. Future studies are suggested to

examine the roles of moderating variables in the relationship between customer satisfaction and digital marketing. It is also suggested to increase the generalizability of the results of this research by conducting studies in other organizations, other statistical communities, and different educational levels by comparing their results. Therefore, future studies should be conducted on a larger scale. The geographical region should involve more respondents and include other research variables such as customer relationship quality and consumer trust that affect the success of the digital supply chain.

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