Decision Science Letters 14 (2025) 817–826

Contents lists available at GrowingScience

Decision Science Letters

homepage: www.GrowingScience.com/dsl

# The guidelines for content creators creating a competitive advantage over online media industry

**Jakkrin Kaopattanaskul[a*], Sunee Wattanakomol[b] and Thanin Silpcharu[c]**

[a]*Candidate for DBA. Faculty of Business Administration, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Bangkok, Thailand*
[b]*Associate Professor of Business, Faculty of Business Administration, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand*
[c]*Professor of Business, Faculty of Business Administration, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thailand*

**C H R O N I C L E**

*Article history*:
Received: May 6, 2025
Received in revised format: May 26, 2025
Accepted: June 4 2025
Available online: June 4 2025

*Keywords:*
*Content creators*
*Competitive advantage*
*Online media industry*
*Cost effectiveness*
*Data-driven*
*Differentiated creation*
*Agile marketing*

**A B S T R A C T**

This study aimed to develop strategic guidelines for content creators to achieve a competitive advantage in the online media industry by constructing a structural equation model (SEM). A mixed-methods approach was used, combining qualitative interviews with nine industry experts, a focus group with eleven specialists, and a quantitative survey of 500 executives from industrial businesses. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, inferential tests, and multivariate techniques. The analysis identified four key strategic components: (1) cost effectiveness, (2) data-driven, (3) differentiated creation, and (4) agile marketing. Cost effectiveness emerged as the most critical factor. Hypothesis testing indicated that business duration significantly influenced the prioritization of these components ($p < 0.05$). The refined SEM demonstrated strong model fit, with CMIN–p = 0.062, CMIN/DF = 1.142, GFI = 0.955, and RMSEA = 0.0173. The findings confirm the model's applicability in supporting strategic planning and enhancing competitiveness among online content creator businesses.

© 2025 by the authors; licensee Growing Science, Canada.

## 1. Introduction

The digital era has profoundly transformed consumer behavior and business operations, especially in online media and content creation. With increasingly diverse digital access (Khotcharee & Chirapravati, 2013), Thailand has experienced significant growth in internet usage. Between 2014 and 2023, the number of internet users increased by a factor of three, reaching 63.2 million. By 2024, 88% of the population was online (We Are Social and Meltwater, 2024), demonstrating widespread digital adoption. Social media platforms play a central role in daily life. Facebook leads with 58 million users, followed by LINE, TikTok, YouTube, Instagram, and X (Twitter). These platforms are integral to communication, entertainment, and content consumption. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital adoption and online engagement. Internet and social media usage increased with online advertising, which grew by 9.12% in 2022 (Nielsen, 2024). In 2024, digital ad spending is projected to reach 114.4 billion baht, with growth in internet, out-of-home, mobile, and cinema media, while traditional media such as newspapers and TV continue to decline (BrandAge Online, 2024).

These developments present new opportunities for social media content creators. However, creators must continuously adapt strategies to meet evolving consumer expectations and platform-specific demands. In 2024, the Thai content creator market was

* Corresponding author.
E-mail address jakkarin.kaopattanaskul@gmail.com (J. Kaopattanaskul)

ISSN 1929-5812 (Online) - ISSN 1929-5804 (Print)
© 2025 by the authors; licensee Growing Science, Canada.
doi: 10.5267/j.dsl.2025.6.999

valued at approximately 45 billion baht, representing a 25–30% increase from the previous year. High-growth content categories include news, science, education, and family. Notably, 80% of creators on TikTok use the platform for product sales, indicating their expanding economic role (The Standard Wealth, 2024). The creative industry now contributes 6.8% to Thailand's GDP, or 1.1 trillion baht, and generates over 960,000 jobs. Additionally, content that reflects Thai culture promotes cultural diplomacy on global digital platforms (Bangkok Post, 2024). Despite rapid growth, creators face challenges in audience engagement, differentiation, and sustaining authentic interactions. Competition intensifies as traditional media shifts to digital platforms and everyday users become creators. This context highlights the need to develop competitive strategies that enhance content creators' adaptability, management capabilities, and long-term sustainability. Therefore, the research objectives were set as follows:

1. To examine the structure and operational characteristics of the online content creator businesses.
2. To identify the strategic components for building a competitive advantage for online content creator businesses.
3. To develop a structural equation model to guide competitive strategy for online content creator businesses.

## 2. Theoretical and Literature Review

### *2.1 Data Driven*

The data-driven approach emphasizes using high-quality data and in-depth analysis to support informed strategic decision-making (Provost & Fawcett, 2013). This approach includes collecting insights from multiple sources and applying Big Data Analytics (BDA) to examine consumer behavior, competitors, and external factors such as economics, politics, and technology (Shao et al., 2024). Systematic data management enables comprehensive cost analysis and improves organizational efficiency (Gold et al., 2022). Moreover, integrating big data enhances adaptability and strengthens sustainable competitiveness. Developing AI-powered data strategies also plays a vital role in enabling the creation of products and services that more precisely align with consumer demands (Adikari et al., 2021).

### *2.2 Cost Effectiveness*

Social media content businesses face growing challenges in cost control to maintain competitiveness in rapidly changing markets. The classic management functions—planning, organizing, directing, and controlling—are crucial to improving operational efficiency (Certo, 2003; Robbins & DeCenzo, 2004). Competitive advantage can be achieved through cost leadership, differentiation, and responsiveness (Porter, 1990). Furthermore, a clear social media communication strategy can reduce wasted budgets on ineffective digital campaigns (Kolesnyk, 2022). Systematic cost analysis, encompassing platform fees, human resource management, and content production, can minimize losses and enhance long-term performance (Gold et al., 2022).

### *2.3 Differentiated Creation*

Content differentiation on social media can be effectively achieved through personalization based on user data. Creating and sharing valuable content enhances long-term relationships and brand equity (Pulizzi, 2020). Relevant, engaging, and action-inspiring content helps drive consumer behavior (Greenberg & Kates, 2014). Content types significantly influence audience reach and follower growth (Poecze, 2019). A past study emphasized that diverse and platform-aligned content marketing helps sustain a competitive advantage and achieve long-term outcomes (Rodkasikum, 2015). The content strategies significantly influence online purchasing behavior (Nastiti & Nugroho, 2020). Similarly, natural, easy-to-understand content presentation fosters audience engagement and community building (Poopoolsup, 2020).

### *2.4 Agile Marketing*

Marketing 5.0 leverages technology and data to deliver personalized, meaningful customer experiences that address the most profound consumer needs. Data-driven marketing processes analyze large-scale behavioral data to develop targeted and precise strategies. Delivering personalized, needs-specific experiences is central to this approach. Real-time strategy adjustment allows businesses to respond swiftly to shifting demands through Agile Marketing, emphasizing flexibility, iterative workflows, and continuous product or service alignment in dynamic markets (Kotler et al., 2021). Additionally, the strategies that leverage customer data allow marketers to tailor offerings and communication to everyone, boosting satisfaction and brand loyalty (Rosário & Dias, 2023). Table 1 summarizes the key concepts, practical applications, and supporting literature for each theoretical component discussed, providing a clear foundation for developing the research model.

**Table 1**
Key concepts, practical applications, and supporting literature

| Key Concept | Definition / Focus | Applications / Benefits | Key References |
|---|---|---|---|
| Data Driven | Strategic decision-making based on high-quality data, insights, and Big Data analytics. | Enables in-depth cost analysis, supports adaptability, enhances competitiveness, and aligns products with consumer demands. | Provost & Fawcett, 2013; Adikari et al., 2021; Gold et al, 2022; Shao et al., 2024. |
| Cost Effectiveness | Efficient cost control using classical management functions and strategy. | Minimizes losses, improves operational performance, and reduces budget inefficiencies in digital campaigns. | Porter, 1990; Certo, 2003; Robbins & DeCenzo, 2004; Gold et al, 2022; Kolesnyk, 2022. |
| Differentiated Creation | Developing unique and personalized content to enhance brand value and audience engagement. | Drives user engagement, increases follower growth, supports purchasing behavior, and sustains brand communities. | Greenberg & Kates, 2014; Rodkasikum, 2015; Poecze, 2019; Nastiti & Nugroho, 2020; Poopoolsup, 2020; Pulizzi, 2020. |
| Agile Marketing | Real-time, flexible marketing using behavioral data and customer-centric strategies from Marketing 5.0. | Supports fast adaptation, personalized experiences, interaction, improvements, and increased customer satisfaction and loyalty. | Kotler et al., 2021; Rosário & Dias, 2023; Sukhawatthanakun & Supapon, 2024. |

## 3. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses Development

Based on research objectives and relevant literature, the researcher formulated six research hypotheses, as illustrated in the conceptual framework in Fig. 1.

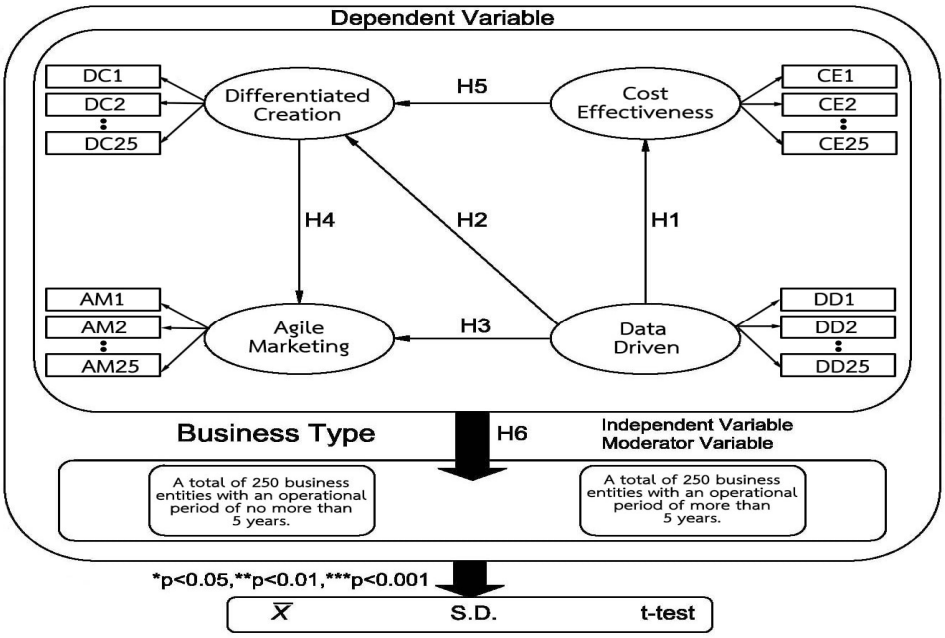


**Fig. 1.** Conceptual Framework

*Hypothesis 1:* Data-driven decision-making enhances cost efficiency by leveraging quality data for strategic planning (Provost & Fawcett, 2013). Organizations that utilize analytics tools can reduce unnecessary expenses, enhance marketing return on investment (ROI), and gain valuable insights into their cost structures (Gold et al., 2022; Borges, 2021). Firms optimize resource allocation and operational performance by identifying variable and fixed costs. Examples include smart cities using data to reduce resource expenditures and promote sustainability (Bibri, 2021). Efficient data use thus improves cost control and enables precise decision-making. Based on these theoretical and conceptual foundations, the researcher proposes the following hypothesis:

**$H_1$:** *Data Driven' components directly influence 'Cost Effectiveness' components.*

*Hypothesis 2:* Data-driven strategies help organizations understand customer behavior and market trends and tailor marketing efforts to meet specific needs (Provost & Fawcett, 2013). This strategy enables content personalization, enhances engagement, and improves brand loyalty (Hong, 2024). Big data allows real-time insights and marketing customization (Luca et al., 2021). Effective analytics supports innovation, strategic alignment, and long-term brand value creation. Personalized offerings enhance customer satisfaction and differentiate brands. Based on these theoretical foundations, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

**$H_2$:** *Data Driven' components directly influence 'Differentiated Creation' components.*

*Hypothesis 3:* Data-driven approaches support rapid marketing decisions essential for Agile Marketing. Using AI and diverse data enhances responsiveness to consumer behavior and market shifts (Marr, 2016). Real-time data enables campaign adjustments and improved customer experience (Sherwin, 2024). This approach enhances forecasting, decision agility, and responsiveness (Rosário & Dias, 2023). Agile Marketing thrives on real-time responsiveness, empowering marketers to quickly adapt strategies, leading to efficient, personalized, and timely engagement (Luca et al., 2021). Based on these theoretical insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**$H_3$:** *'Data Driven' components directly influence 'Agile Marketing' components.*

*Hypothesis 4:* Differentiation strategies, especially in digital content, enhance a firm's responsiveness to market change (Porter, 1990; Kotler et al., 2021). Valuable and engaging content fosters long-term relationships and enhances brand identity (Greenberg & Kates, 2014). Personalized marketing enhances customer engagement and fosters brand loyalty (Kotler et al., 2021). Social media and well-curated content expand audience reach and foster growth (Rodkasikum, 2015). Strategic content creation thus supports agility and sustained competitiveness in digital markets (Rosário & Dias, 2023). Based on these theoretical foundations, the following research hypothesis is proposed:

**$H_4$:** *'Differentiated Creation' components directly influence 'Agile Marketing' components.*

*Hypothesis 5:* Cost-effectiveness management enables innovation and content differentiation in the digital economy, particularly in creator-based platforms. Combining cost leadership with differentiation strategies enhances responsiveness and efficiency (Porter, 1990). By leveraging both strategies, SMEs saw improvements in sales and operations during crises. A cost analysis of platform and content expenses supports the long-term value (Gold et al., 2022). Reducing costs without sacrificing quality enables greater investment in communication innovation (Kim & Mauborgne, 2015). Based on these theoretical insights, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**$H_5$:** *'Cost Effectiveness' components directly influence 'Differentiated Creation' components.*

*Research Hypothesis:* The duration of business operations significantly influences online content creators' competitive strategies. Businesses with longer experience tend to develop stronger capabilities in marketing, innovation, and adaptability (Rosário & Dias, 2023). A solid online presence enhances market competitiveness (Lányi et al., 2021), while accumulated experience improves brand image, customer trust, and responsiveness (Shafaat & Tariq, 2024). Strategic learning and organizational knowledge further support sustained differentiation and performance (Sukhawatthanakun et al., 2023; Isabirye et al., 2024). According to Lizardo et al. (2020), continuously evolving content and business strategies are crucial for improving outcomes and market adaptability. Experience is crucial in developing competitive capabilities through strategic adaptation and alignment with digital trends. Based on these theoretical and empirical foundations, the following hypothesis is proposed:

**$H_6$:** *The importance of strategic components for achieving competitive advantage among online content-creator businesses when classified by business operation duration differs significantly.*

## 4. Data and Methodology

### *4.1 Mixed-methods research*

This research was designed to generate new knowledge through a mixed-methods approach (Silpcharu, 2024), which integrates qualitative and quantitative methodologies to enhance the depth and validity of the findings. The research was conducted in three phases: qualitative research via in-depth interviews to gather rich, contextual insights from the nine experts; quantitative research via surveys to collect measurable data from a large sample and analyze patterns statistically from 500 samples; and Qualitative research via focus group discussions to validate findings and the conceptual model through collective expert deliberation from 11 executives to validate the research model. The data from the qualitative outputs were analyzed using the content analysis method, and the researchers then improved the research report based on the suggestions.

### *4.2 Quantitative Population and Sample Size*

A survey method was used. The study population consisted of 12,033 online content-creator businesses operating in Thailand for less than or more than five years, with a record of continuous profitability over the past three years (Department of Business Development, 2024). Businesses were stratified into two groups based on their years of operation and were selected through a probability sampling process using a lottery draw. A sample size of 500 was determined (Silpcharu, 2024), using multi-stage sampling (Babbie, 2015).

### *4.3 Quantitative Research Tool Development*

The primary instrument used in the quantitative phase was a structured questionnaire based on a five-point rating scale (Babbie, 2015). A panel of nine experts developed and validated the questionnaire, ensuring alignment with the research objectives. An Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) was calculated to assess the consistency between each item and the research goals. The questionnaire was then pilot tested with a sample of 30 participants. The results showed a standard deviation (S.D.) of 0.35–3.17, a Correlated Item-Total Correlation of 0.31–0.81, and Cronbach's alpha (reliability coefficient) of 0.98. The questionnaire was revised based on the pilot results to improve discriminant validity and internal consistency before proceeding with full-scale data collection (Babbie, 2015).

### *4.4 Quantitative Research Data Analysis*

Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize general information about the respondents. Inferential statistics were used to analyze pairwise relationships between variables related to the competitive strategy among online content creator businesses through Bivariate Correlations, with significance levels set at 0.001, 0.01, and 0.05. Then, by examining the differences in competitive strategies based on business age, independent samples t-tests were conducted with a significant level set at 0.05. The proposed model was analyzed and developed for multivariate analysis using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) technique. The model was evaluated based on the four key goodness-of-fit criteria recommended by Arbuckle to ensure empirical consistency, as outlined by Silpcharu (2024).

## 5. Research Results

### *5.1 Importance Level of Strategic Components for Competitive Advantage in Online Content Creator Businesses*

Table 2 presents the mean scores and standard deviations, reflecting the importance of strategic components in achieving competitive advantage in online content creator businesses. The overall importance level of strategic components for attaining competitive advantage in online content creator businesses was rated as "highest," with an average score of 4.51. When analyzed by component, it was found that (1) Cost Effectiveness ranked first ($\bar{X}$ = 4.54, S.D. = 0.38), with the most essential item being "Maintaining transparent and verifiable accounting records" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.72). (2) Data-driven was equally rated ($\bar{X}$ = 4.54, S.D. = 0.43), with the essential item being "Gathering and studying information from various sources for online content development" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.71). (3) Differentiated Creation followed ($\bar{X}$ = 4.51, S.D. = 0.39), with emphasis on "Broadcasting content regularly on social media" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.68). Furthermore, (4) Agile Marketing was also rated highly ($\bar{X}$ = 4.47, S.D. = 0.44), and the top item was "Building a distinctive and appealing brand enhances visibility among the target audience" ($\bar{X}$ = 4.69). These results indicate that content-creator businesses perceive all four strategic components as highly important, emphasizing operational transparency, data utilization, consistent engagement, and brand differentiation.

**Table 2**
Mean and Standard Deviation of Strategic Components for Competitive Advantage

| Component | Mean ($\bar{X}$) | S.D. | Importance Level | Most Important Item | Mean ($\bar{X}$) | Item Level |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Overall Strategic Components*** | ***4.51*** | ***0.38*** | ***Highest*** | – | – | – |
| 1. Cost Effectiveness | 4.54 | 0.38 | Highest | Maintaining transparent and verifiable accounting records | 4.72 | Highest |
| 2. Data Driven | 4.54 | 0.43 | Highest | Gathering and studying information from various sources for online content development | 4.71 | Highest |
| 3. Differentiated Creation | 4.51 | 0.39 | Highest | Broadcasting content consistently on social media | 4.68 | Highest |
| 4. Agile Marketing | 4.47 | 0.44 | High | Building a distinctive and appealing brand enhances visibility among the target audience. | 4.69 | Highest |

Table 3 presents the results of a statistical comparison examining the differences in the perceived importance of strategic components for competitive advantage in online content creator businesses based on the duration of business operation.

**Table 3**
t-Test Results for Differences in Strategic Component Importance by Business Duration

| Strategic Component | t–Value | P–Value |
|---|---|---|
| Overall Importance Level | **-5.44** | **0.00*** |
| 1. Cost Effectiveness | -5.18 | 0.00* |
| 2. Data Driven | -5.34 | 0.00* |
| 3. Differentiated Creation | -4.70 | 0.00* |
| 4. Agile Marketing | -4.70 | 0.00* |

Remark: *significance level at 0.05

As shown in Table 3, the overall importance of strategic components for achieving competitive advantage varies significantly depending on the duration of the business operation, with statistical significance at the 0.05 level. All four components—Cost Effectiveness, Data Driven, Differentiated Creation, and Agile Marketing—also show statistically significant differences. Notably, content-creator businesses operating for more than five years placed higher importance on all strategic components than those operating for five years or less. This result suggests that more experienced companies will likely have a deeper understanding of the strategic practices required to sustain competitiveness in the evolving digital landscape.

*5.2 Results of Structural Equation Modeling*

Fig. 2 presents the final structural equation model (SEM) for competitive advantage strategies in online content creator businesses, displayed in standardized estimate mode following model refinement. The model was adjusted based on empirical data and fit indices to ensure alignment with theoretical expectations and statistical criteria. The standardized estimates provide a clearer understanding of the strength and direction of influence among the latent variables.

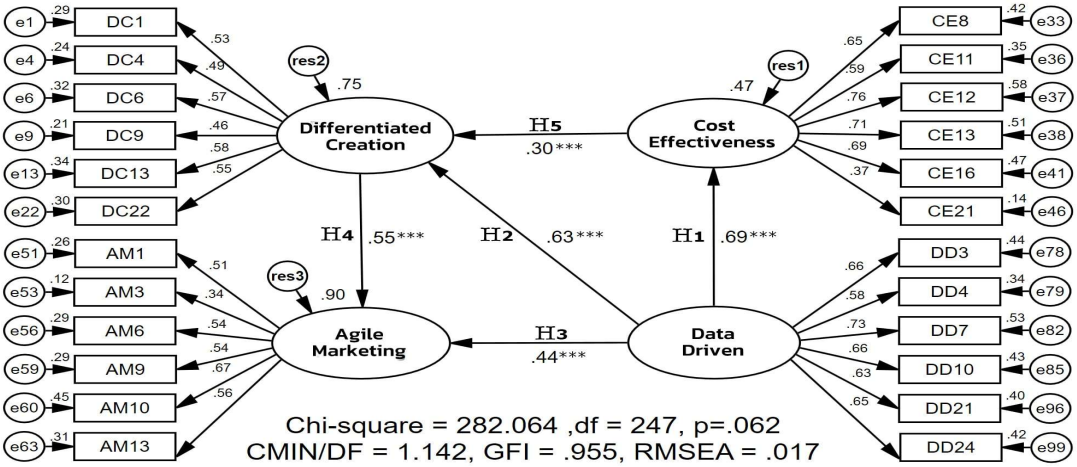


**Fig. 2.** Final Structural Equation Model (SEM)

The model was tested and validated using SEM techniques, demonstrating acceptable goodness-of-fit values. This result indicates that the conceptual framework developed from the literature is consistent with the empirical data collected from the sample.

**Table 4**
Criteria for assessing the consistency of the model

| Evaluating the Data–Model Fit | Acceptable Criteria | Before Modification | After Modification |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chi-square probability (CMIN-P) | Value > 0.05 | 0.000 | 0.062 |
| Relative chi-square (CMIN/DF) | Value < 2.00 | 2.272 | 1.142 |
| The goodness of fit index (GFI) | Value > 0.90 | 0.626 | 0.955 |
| Root means square error of approximation (RMSEA) | Value < 0.08 | 0.050 | 0.017 |

Drawing on the analysis from Figure 2 and Table 4, the researcher refined the structural equation model (SEM) by applying Modification Indices (MI) under the guidelines criteria (Silpcharu, 2024). This process involved a systematic review of both the statistical outputs and relevant theoretical frameworks, with iterative elimination of observed variables deemed unsuitable. The model was recalibrated repeatedly until all four model fit indices satisfied established evaluation criteria. The final results showed a Chi-square

probability (CMIN–p) of 0.062, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.05; a relative Chi-square (CMIN/DF) of 1.142, well below the benchmark of 2; a Goodness-of-Fit Index (GFI) of 0.955, surpassing the acceptable cutoff of 0.90; and a Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) of 0.017, which is within the acceptable range of less than 0.08. Collectively, these indicators confirm that the refined structural equation model for competitive advantage strategies among online content creator businesses exhibits a strong fit with empirical data. Next, Table 5 shows the outstanding observed variables that influence the SEM model fit in each component.

**Table 5**
Standardized Regression Weights of Observed Variables of the SEM Model Fit

| Latent and Observed Variable Description | Standardized Regression Weight |
|---|---|
| ***Data Driven*** | |
| DD3: Sharing content creation data with peers in the same industry. | 0.66 |
| DD4: Analyzing competitor data for benchmarking and planning. | 0.58 |
| DD7: Establishing a centralized database linking all organizational units. | 0.73 |
| DD10: Managing data backups and recovery to prevent data loss. | 0.66 |
| DD21: Collect viewer or sponsor satisfaction data after the service. | 0.63 |
| DD24: Presenting data through reports or dashboards for decision-making. | 0.65 |
| ***Cost Effectiveness*** | |
| CE8: Setting measurable short- and long-term goals. | 0.65 |
| CE11: Using quality-certified materials to avoid corrective costs. | 0.59 |
| CE12: Reviewing project feasibility against budget plans. | 0.76 |
| CE13: Regularly maintaining equipment for operational readiness. | 0.71 |
| CE16: Offering fair compensation to reduce turnover and hiring costs. | 0.69 |
| CE21: Delivering work to clients/sponsors on time to avoid penalties. | 0.37 |
| ***Differentiated Creation*** | |
| DC1: Creating novel content aligned with current trends. | 0.53 |
| DC4: Allowing staff to experiment and showcase creative ideas. | 0.49 |
| DC6: Adapting successful international content strategies. | 0.57 |
| DC9: Producing truthful and in-depth content exceeding competitors. | 0.46 |
| DC13: Generating interactive content to encourage audience engagement. | 0.58 |
| DC22: Applying new platform features for innovative presentation. | 0.55 |
| ***Agile Marketing*** | |
| AM1: Offering tiered pricing for sponsors. | 0.51 |
| AM3: Choosing accessible platforms for maximum reach. | 0.34 |
| AM6: Training sales teams in service-mindedness and persuasive skills. | 0.54 |
| AM9: Creating content linked to celebrities to generate attention. | 0.54 |
| AM10: Exploring new markets aligned with organizational capacity. | 0.67 |
| AM13: Providing referral incentives for sponsor acquisition. | 0.56 |

**Table 6**
Standardized Estimates of Direct, Indirect, and Total Effects

| Latent Variable | Data Driven | Cost Effectiveness | Differentiated Creation | Agile Marketing |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cost Effectiveness | 0.69 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Differentiated Creation | 0.84 | 0.30 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| Agile Marketing | 0.90 | 0.17 | 0.55 | 0.00 |

Based on Table 6, the analysis of total, direct, and indirect effects within the structural equation model reveals that the most substantial total effect occurs between the Data-Driven component and Agile Marketing, with a standardized regression weight of 0.90 (0.44 + 0.35 + 0.11). This influence encompasses direct and indirect paths: the direct effect is 0.44, and the Indirect Effect via Cost Effectiveness and Differentiated Creation is 0.35 + 0.11, resulting in a total effect of 0.90. This finding underscores the pivotal role of data-driven strategies in enhancing agility within digital marketing environments, particularly in the context of online content-creator businesses.

The results of causal influence testing among latent variables confirm that all five structural hypotheses are statistically significant at the 0.001 level, supporting the proposed research framework. The hypothesis testing for differences in the importance of strategic components categorized by business operation duration is also supported by statistical significance at the 0.05 level. These findings validate the model's structure and predictive power, confirming that experience and data-centric strategies are essential in achieving a competitive advantage in the digital content economy.

## 6. Conclusion and Discussion

In the digital era characterized by rapid technological advancement, the increasing use of online media has transformed content management on social media into a core strategy for strengthening consumer relationships, enhancing brand awareness, and converting followers into long-term customers. Online content creator businesses must continuously innovate and adapt to remain competitive and effectively meet the dynamic needs of their consumers.

'Cost effectiveness' is the most influential strategic component, emerging as the most critical factor in building a competitive advantage. This finding aligns with Porter's notion (Porter, 1990) that cost reduction without compromising quality enhances competitiveness. The application of technologies such as automation, artificial intelligence (AI), and data analytics can reduce production, advertising, and customer acquisition costs while improving return on investment (ROI) (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2020; Ali et al., 2021). Moreover, leveraging accounting data for accurate cost analysis enables businesses to understand their cost structures and assess strategic value systematically (Gold et al., 2022; Sukhawatthanakun et al., 2023).

Transparent and ethical accounting practices enhance expense management, a crucial aspect of maintaining financial stability and competitiveness. Ethical compliance and a commitment to financial integrity (Wattanakomol, 2023) support strategic cost control, enabling effective resource management, including planning, utilization, and oversight of limited assets (Poungsuwan et al., 2024). Differentiating between fixed and variable costs further supports strategic financial decision-making (Gold et al., 2022), especially in fast-paced digital environments (Sukhawatthanakun & Supapon, 2024).

A data-driven strategy is a key driver, and the data-driven component has the most substantial direct influence on cost-effectiveness, affirming its role as a strategic enabler in optimizing operations. Data enables real-time analysis of consumer behavior and more accurate cost planning. Advanced tools like AI, machine learning, and Big Data modeling improve data processing, reduce marketing costs, and boost ROI. The agile marketing revolution enhances firm performance (Sukhawatthanakun & Supapon, 2024). This study was supported by Porter's (1990) emphasis on cost leadership as a sustainable competitive strategy.

Furthermore, Data-Driven management had the highest total effect on Agile Marketing, reflecting its critical role in enabling businesses to respond rapidly and accurately to market changes (Luca et al., 2021; Rosário & Dias, 2023). By integrating social media and consumer behavior data into agile practices, businesses can improve campaign efficiency, strengthen customer relationships, and enhance digital market competitiveness (Poopoolsup, 2020).

Hypothesis testing revealed that business duration significantly affects perceptions of strategic component importance at the 0.05 level. Entrepreneurs with more than five years of experience rated these strategies higher than those in newer businesses. Experience enhances learning, brand positioning, and strategic adaptability (Ghapar et al., 2023). Veteran content creators communicate more effectively to build brand credibility (Isabirye et al., 2024). Human capital development is key for strategic resilience and long-term sustainability (Wattanakomol, 2023; Alrajhi, 2025). Moreover, experienced entrepreneurs are more adept at adapting to technological change, such as implementing AI and digital tools, to enhance performance, reduce costs, and gain a competitive advantage (Lányi et al., 2021; Poungsuwan et al., 2024). Thus, business duration is crucial for sustainable growth, enabling online content creators to meet their needs.

## 7. Recommendations

### *7.1 Policy-Level Recommendations*

At the policy level, several government and institutional bodies play crucial roles in supporting content creators. The Digital Economy Promotion Agency, Thailand (DEPA) should provide funding, technological support, and international research and networking opportunities. The Creative Economy Agency (Public Organization), Thailand (CEA) can build storytelling, design, and digital marketing capabilities while developing innovation spaces and resource-sharing platforms. Meanwhile, the Electronic Transactions Development Agency of Thailand (ETDA) should strengthen digital platform security, encourage transparency in the content market, and provide training aligned with regulatory standards, such as the Personal Data Protection Act (PDPA).

The Bank of Thailand is encouraged to design credit schemes tailored for content creators, and the Department of Skill Development should collaborate with private and academic sectors to certify digital workforce skills. Educational institutions must foster digital entrepreneurship by offering mentoring, market access, and collaboration with domestic and international partners to elevate the standards of content creators.

### *7.2 Operational-Level Recommendations*

On the operational level, content creators themselves should prioritize four strategic areas. For cost-effectiveness, they should maintain transparent accounting, meet deadlines to avoid penalties, allocate resources efficiently, clearly define the strategic

vision, and provide internal training in new technologies to enhance productivity. To become data-driven, creators must gather and analyze viewer behavior, apply data analytics from online platforms, integrate internal and external data, cultivate a data-centric culture, and provide staff training to manage and resolve operational issues. To strengthen differentiation, creators should consistently publish content, innovate in formats, establish a brand identity, and engage in targeted creative production and digital marketing training. Lastly, for agile marketing, businesses should enhance brand visibility, monitor digital trends, remain alert to market shifts, and regularly evaluate and adjust their campaign strategies.

### *7.3 Recommendations for Future Research*

Three key areas of research are recommended for future research. First, scholars should investigate income diversification models that support content creators in enhancing competitive advantage. Second, the correlation between viewer engagement and long-term content creator success should be explored to understand sustainability factors. Third, studying ethical content creation is crucial for enhancing trust, transparency, and social responsibility in digital media environments.

## Acknowledgments

The authors want to express their heartfelt gratitude to our two academic advisors and the dissertation committee for their invaluable guidance and support throughout this research. We greatly appreciate King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, for essential research support. We are also profoundly thankful to the nine industry experts who were interviewed to construct the questionnaire, the 500 executives who participated in the survey, and the 11 experts who contributed to the focus group discussion—their insights were formulated into strategic guidelines for content creators in the online media industry.

## References

Adikari, A., Burnett, D., Sedera, D., De Silva, D., & Alahakoon, D. (2021). Value co-creation for open innovation: An evidence-based study of the data driven paradigm of social media using machine learning. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights*, *1*(2), 100022. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjimei.2021.100022

Ali, M., Hafasnuddin, & Muslim. (2021). The effect of Program Keluarga Harapan (PKH) effectiveness on welfare with productivity as a mediation and government policy as a moderation. *International Journal of Scientific and Management Research, 4*(2), 1–10.

Alrajhi, A. S. (2025). The impact of marketing change capabilities on marketing strategic change. *Decision Science Letters, 14*, 393–400. https://doi.org/10.5267/j.dsl.2024.12.014

Babbie, R. E. (2015). *The practice of social research* (14th ed.). Wadsworth.

Bangkok Post. (2024). Content creator market set for growth. https://www.bangkokpost.com/business/general/2859841/content-creator-market-set-for-growth

Bibri, S. E. (2021). The underlying components of data-driven smart sustainable cities of the future: A case study approach to an applied theoretical framework. *European Journal of Futures Research, 9*, 13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40309-021-00182-3

Borges, M., Bernardino, J., & Pedrosa, I. (2021). Data-driven decision making strategies applied to marketing. In *2021 16th Iberian Conference on Information Systems and Technologies (CISTI)* (pp. 1–7). https://doi.org/10.23919/CISTI52073.2021.9476506

BrandAge Online. (2024). Updated advertising market figures for 2023 and projections for 2024. https://brandage.com/article/38194

Certo, S. C. (2003). *Modern management* (9th ed.). Prentice Hall.

Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2020). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation and practice*. Pearson.

Department of Business Development. (2024). *Corporate entity and financial statement data*. Business Information Service Division.

Ghapar, M.A., Shamsudin, A., Ngah, N.E., & Adenan, N.D. (2023). Social media content creation: A study of SMEs in Malaysia. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 13*(4), 413–422. https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARBSS/v13-i4/16517

Gold, H. T., McDermott, C., Hoomans, T., & Wagner, T. H. (2022). Cost data in implementation science: categories and approaches to costing. *Implementation Science*, *17*(1), 11. https://doi.org/10.1186/s13012-021-01172-6

Greenberg, E., & Kates, A. (2014). *Strategic digital marketing*. McGraw-Hill.

Hong, S. (2024). Data-driven precision marketing strategy and its effect measurement. *Transactions on Economics, Business and Management Research, 12*, 59–64. https://doi.org/10.62051/d63mm017

Kim, W. C., & Mauborgne, R. (2015). *Blue ocean strategy: How to create uncontested market space and make the competition irrelevant*. Harvard Business Review Press.

Khotcharee, Q., & Chirapravati, V. (2013). Antecedents of online perceived risk and purchasing behavior of Generation X and Y consumers. *Journal of Public Relations and Advertising, 6*(2), 39–56.

Kolesnyk, B. (2022). Analysis of the effectiveness of methods to expand the audience of the brand in its own media. *Three Seas Economic Journal, 3*(1), 85–92. https://doi.org/10.30525/2661-5150/2022-1-11

Kotler, P., Kartajaya, H., & Setiawan, I. (2021). *Marketing 5.0: Technology for humanity*. John Wiley & Sons.

Lányi, B., Hornyák, M., & Kruzslicz, F. (2021). The effect of online activity on SMEs' competitiveness. *Competitiveness Review, 31*(3), 477–496. https://doi.org/10.1108/CR-01-2020-0022

Lizardo, J., Prabowo, H., Furinto, A., & Budiastuti, D. (2020). The Roles Of Creative Content And Business Strategy In Improving Business Performance. *Psychology and Education*, *57*(9), 181-187. https://doi.org/10.17762/pae.v57i9.261

De Luca, L. M., Herhausen, D., Troilo, G., & Rossi, A. (2021). How and when do big data investments pay off? The role of marketing affordances and service innovation. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, *49*(4), 790-810. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11747-020-00739-x

Marr, B. (2016). *How big data is changing the way we live and work*. John Wiley & Sons.

Nastiti, R., & Nugroho, E. S. (2020). The effect of flash sale and discount towards impulsive buying: Study on Shopee users. *Journal Akuntansi, Manajemen dan Ekonomi, 22*(4), 1–8. https://doi.org/10.32424/1.jame.2020.22.4.3092

Nielsen. (2024). Digital ad spend in Asia jumped 64% in 2022, as overall ad investment increased by 12%. https://www.nielsen.com/news-center/2023/digital-ad-spend-in-asia-jumped-64-in-2022-as-overall-ad-investment-increased-by-12/

Poecze, F. (2019). What you post is what you get: The mediator role of reached individuals in the causal relationship of posted content types and follower counts on Facebook. *Naše Gospodarstvo/Our Economy, 65*(4), 57–71. https://doi.org/10.2478/ngoe-2019-0020

Poopoolsup, K. (2020). *Communication of television newscaster into being influencer and building popularity and credibility by social media* [Master's thesis, National Institute of Development Administration].

Porter, M. E. (1990). *The competitive advantage of nations*. Free Press.

Poungsuwan, C., Sukhawatthanakun, K., & Sanrach, R. (2024). Confirmatory factor analysis of the adaptation guidelines to technology disruption problems. *International Journal of Business Continuity and Risk Management, 3*(2), 139–158. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJBCRM.2024.139037

Provost, F., & Fawcett, T. (2013). Data science and its relationship to big data and data-driven decision making. *Big Data, 1*(1), 51–59. https://doi.org/10.1089/big.2013.1508

Pulizzi, J. (2020). *Content Inc.: How entrepreneurs use content to build massive audiences and create radically successful businesses*. McGraw-Hill.

Rodkasikum, S. (2015). *Sustainable creation of content marketing for having a competitive advantage on social media* [Master's independent study, Thammasat University].

Robbins, S. P., & DeCenzo, D. A. (2004). *Fundamentals of management: Essential concepts and applications* (5th ed.). Pearson Education.

Rosário, A. T., & Dias, J. C. (2023). How has data-driven marketing evolved: Challenges and opportunities with emerging technologies. *International Journal of Information Management Data Insights, 3*(2), 100203. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jjimei.2023.100203

Shao, J., Feng, Y., & Liu, Z. (2024). The impact of big data-driven strategies on sustainable consumer behaviour in e-commerce: A green economy perspective. *Sustainability, 16*(24), 10960. https://doi.org/10.3390/su162410960

Shafaat, Z., & Tariq, J. (2024). Exploring effective use of social media marketing by fashion brands. *Journal of Social and Organizational Matters, 3*(4), 108–121. https://doi.org/10.56976/jsom.v3i4.124

Sherwin, B. (2024). The future of data-driven marketing decisions. https://advertisingweek.com/the-future-of-data-driven-marketing-decisions/

Silpcharu, T. (2024). *Research and statistical analysis with SPSS and AMOS*. Business Science Research Institute.

Sukhawatthanakun, K., Roopsing, T., & Silpcharu, T. (2023). Guidelines for procurement management efficiency in industrial business sectors. *International Journal of Procurement Managemen*t, *18*(2), 170–187. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPM.2023.133129

Sukhawatthanakun, K., & Supapon, S. (2024). Agile marketing competency and innovation capability mediating on new product management for industrial business development guidelines. *International Journal of Product Lifecycle Management, 15*(3), 259–283. https://doi.org/10.1504/IJPLM.2024.137308

The Standard Wealth. (2024). Advertising in 2024 to grow by 2.6% with digital media leading; television remains dominant; LGBTQIA+, AI, and Sports Mania seen as key emerging trends. https://thestandard.co/advertising-year-2024/

Wattanakomol, S. (2023). Business operation strategies in epidemics of emerging diseases. *Kurdish Studies, 11*(2), 2318–2330. https://doi.org/10.58262/ks.v11i02.165

We Are Social & Meltwater. (2024). *Digital 2024: Thailand*. https://datareportal.com/reports/digital-2024-thailand?rq=Thailand

© 2025 by the authors; licensee Growing Science, Canada. This is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC-BY) license (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).