

# The Relationship Between Content Marketing, E-Promotion, E-WOM and Intentions to Book Hotel Rooms in Thailand

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**Abstract** – *This study explores the relationship between content marketing, electronic promotion (E-Promotion), electronic word of mouth (E-WOM), and intentions to book hotel rooms in Thailand. The online questionnaires of 212 were employed for the quantitative research through convenience sampling. The complete collected data were analysed using the PLS-SEM program for hypothesis testing. The results reveal that content marketing significantly influences E-WOM and intentions to book hotel rooms. E-WOM is a significant mediator between content marketing, E-Promotion, and intentions to book hotel rooms. Moreover, E-Promotion can predict E-WOM better than content marketing. Hotel owners, hotel managers, and marketers should consider content marketing, E-Promotion, and E-WOM to improve individuals' intentions to book hotel rooms. The implication could be applied to online marketing companies and businesses to increase customer loyalty. The recommendation is to expand more sampling to other countries to understand the relationship better. Also, a qualitative study could give more insight to explain the relationship results.*

**Keywords** – *Content Marketing, Electronic Promotion (E-Promotion), Electronic Word of Mouth (E-WOM), Intentions to Book, Hotel Rooms*

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## INTRODUCTION

The introduction must include the rationale and the The hospitality sector, especially the hotel industry, is one of Thailand's most essential economic sectors, and it is currently a highly competitive market [1]. Furthermore, an effective marketing strategy, such as promotion, is essential for gaining a sustainable competitive advantage and customer behaviour in a highly competitive marketplace [2-3]. A hotel cannot survive in this competitive environment unless it responds to its customers' needs and expectations [3]. Besides, in this digital era, digital marketing is one of the biggest and best markets for communication with audiences through the internet, digital technologies, and social media platforms to increase sales, build brands, and drive more product or service traffic [4]. Promoting digital marketing activity (E-Promotion) and sharing information, such as marketing content and promotions, on digital platforms can influence customer cognition, emotion, and behaviour [5-6]. Furthermore, electronic word of mouth (E-WOM) influences customer purchasing behaviour. A positive E-WOM influences customers and may persuade them to buy because it is an honest unpaid opinion from a previous customer [7]. Therefore, it is critical to evaluate the relationship between content marketing, E-Promotion, E-WOM, and customers' intentions to book hotel rooms in Thailand.

## RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

This study explores the relationship between content marketing, E-Promotion, E-WOM, and intentions to book hotel rooms in Thailand. This study could assist hotel managers, including other hospitality industry businesses, improve digital marketing strategies to respond to customers' needs and expectations and increase customers' intentions to book hotel rooms. Besides, it may aid in digital marketing to develop effective marketing strategies. Consequently, high business performance will incur.

## RESEARCH QUESTION

Is there any relationship between content marketing, E-Promotion, E-WOM, and intentions to book hotel rooms in Thailand, and how?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Content Marketing

Content marketing is a business process and critical strategic marketing that focuses on disseminating valuable, creating, relevant, and

consistent content to retain and attract a clearly defined audience and, ultimately, stimulate profitable customer activities [8]. Hidayanto et al. [9] investigated the factors influencing customers' intentions to increase online group buying. It was established that there was a link between content marketing and E-WOM. Also, there was a relationship between content marketing and customers' intention to engage in online group buying. Moreover, Bu et al. [10] confirmed a relationship between content marketing and E-WOM in food tourism. Therefore, there is an association between content marketing and E-WOM.

*H1: Content marketing significantly influences the intention to book hotel rooms.*

*H2: Content marketing significantly influences electronic word of mouth.*

### Electronic Promotion (E-Promotion)

Electronic promotion, a vital marketing activity, can attract frequent and existing visitors and new customers and persuade them not to switch to a competitor [11]. The ease of searching, the information from web content, the product and service, and the effectiveness and speed are all important indicators of E-Promotion [12]. Napawut et al. [6] investigated the role of E-WOM in mediating the linkage between digital marketing activities and purchase intent among Thai Shopee customers. There was a relationship between E-Promotion and E-WOM. Moreover, Hidayanto et al. [9] also confirmed a relationship between promotion and E-WOM. Therefore, there is a relationship between E-Promotion and E-WOM.

*H3: Electronic promotion significantly influences electronic word of mouth.*

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

Electronic word of mouth is a type of communication that has evolved from physical communication to electronic word of mouth. Its role is to persuade customers to provide feedback and share it with others [13]. Ismagilova et al. [14] confirmed a relationship between E-WOM and individuals' buying intentions. Moreover, Al-Gasawneh and Al-Adamat [15] confirmed that E-WOM influenced the relationship between content marketing and green purchasing intentions. Hence, it is critical to increase customer intent to buy green products through word-of-mouth and the presentation of appropriate marketing content. Therefore, there is a relationship between content

marketing, E-Promotion, E-WOM, and intentions to book hotel rooms.

*H4: Electronic word of mouth significantly influences customers' intention to book hotel rooms.*

*H5: Electronic word of mouth is a significant mediator between content marketing, electronic promotion, and customers' intention to book hotel rooms.*

### The Intention to Book Hotel Rooms

Behavioural intention refers to a person's conscious plans or the likelihood that a person will

engage in a specific behaviour or not [6]. Purchase intention is the likelihood that a customer will purchase a product or service based on the factors that motivate and stimulate consumers to buy [16]. Therefore, customers' intention to book hotel rooms in this study refers to the likelihood that a customer will book hotel rooms based on the factors that motivate them. Several factors influence individuals' intentions to book hotel rooms, such as perceived ease of use, perceived usefulness, trust in online hoteliers [17], hotel rooms' scarcity, hotel popularity, and customer rating [18]. In this study, customers' intention to book hotel rooms is based on content marketing, E-Promotion, and E-WOM.

### Conceptual Framework

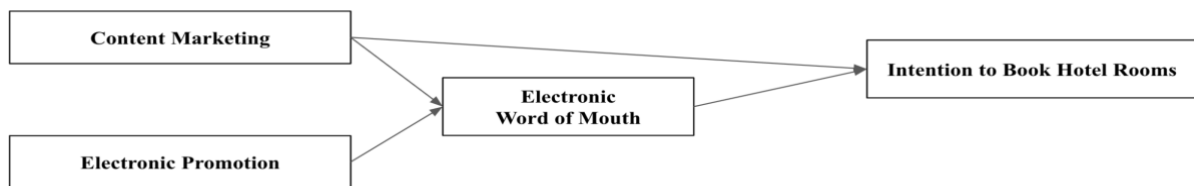


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

## MATERIALS AND METHODS

### Research Method

This study used closed-end questionnaires (Likert's Scale) for data collection. The researchers developed the questionnaire items based on previous research. Cronbach alpha coefficients are required to overcome all 0.70 constructs when assessing the reliability of measurements [19]. All the primary variables were measured using a five-point Likert Scale with the following classifications: strongly agree with a value of 5, agree with a value of 4, neutral with a value of 3, disagree with a value of 2, and strongly disagree with a value of 1. The respondents' demographics were derived from the study conducted by Sitthipon et al. [19]. The questionnaire items in content marketing, E-Promotion, E-WOM, and intentions to book hotel rooms were based on Napawut et al. [6].

### Population and Sample

The study's target population is unknown. A typical survey has a 95% confidence level. Accordingly, collecting data using a sample error of 5% and a precision level of 95% [20]. As required by inferential statistics, the sample size calculation for an infinite

population exceeded 100 and followed the recommendation of Kock and Hadaya [21]. The total number of participants in the study was 212, over the minimum required sample size of 100. The population was Thai people who had the experience of booking hotel rooms through websites. The study's samples included Thai people over 18 years old who had experience in booking hotel rooms through hotels' websites in Thailand.

### Data Collection

The researchers collected the data using self-administered questionnaires and employed convenience sampling from five regions of Thailand (Northern, Eastern, North-eastern, Central, and Southern-Western). The population was over 18 years old. Before distributing online questionnaires, the researchers explained the study's objective to the respondents and solicited their participation. Data was collected from March 10th, 2022, to March 30th, 2022, via the self-administered online survey.

**Data Analysis** The gathered data were analyzed using SPSS Version 27 and the Partial Least Squares

Structural Equation Model: PLS-SEM, ADANCO 2.3. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were examined using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage). The results and questionnaire items for each variable were analyzed using mean and standard deviation. The consistency and reliability of the data were evaluated using the Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient. The instrument's validity was evaluated by

calculating factor loadings. Cronbach's Alpha was utilized to evaluate the data set's dependability. The hypotheses were examined utilizing PLS-SEM and ADANCO 2.3. (Inferential statistics). Cronbach's Alpha and Factor Loadings were set at 0.7. AVE was set at 0.5 following the study of Sitthipon, [19] and Si Dah, [20]. SRMR was set at 0.1 following the study of Lee et al., [22].

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents (n=212)

Demographics		Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>	Male	152	71.70%
	Female	60	28.30%
<b>Region</b>	Northern	17	8.00%
	Eastern	29	13.70%
	North-eastern	28	13.20%
	Central	12	5.70%
	Southern-Western	126	59.40%
<b>Age</b>	18 - 25 years old	21	9.90%
	25 - 30 years old	112	52.80%
	31 - 35 years old	49	23.10%
	36 - 40 years old	14	6.60%
	41 years old or over	16	7.60%
<b>Status</b>	Single	174	82.10%
	Married	38	17.90%
<b>Education</b>	Associated Degree	8	3.80%
	Bachelor's Degree	182	85.80%
	Master's Degree	18	8.50%
	Doctorate Degree	4	1.90%
<b>Monthly Income</b>	Less than 10,000 THB	15	7.10%
	10,001 - 20,000 THB	60	28.30%
	20,001 - 30,000 THB	80	37.70%
	30,001 - 40,000 THB	30	14.20%
	40,0001 - 50,000 THB	6	2.80%
	More than 50,000 THB	21	9.90%
<b>Total</b>		212	100%

Most hotels' customers in this study were male (71.7%), visiting the hotels located in Southern-Western in Thailand, the age was between 25-30 years old (52.8%), single (82.1%), held bachelor's degree (85.8%), and earned the monthly income between

20,001-30,000 baht. The sample was representative of hotels' customers during the COVID-19 pandemic in Thailand regarding the influencing factors of content marketing, E-Promotion, and E-WOM.

Table 2. Item Loadings, Cronbach’s Alpha, and Average Variance Extracted (n=212)

Items	Factor Loadings	Cronbach’s Alpha	AVE
<b>Content Marketing (CM)</b>			
1. The hotel’s content marketing is relevant information to my interests. (Mean=4.92, SD.=0.343)	0.8497	0.8984	0.7129
2. The hotel’s content marketing is accurate information. (Mean=4.89, SD.=0.409)	0.8878		
3. The hotel’s content marketing is easy to understand. (Mean=4.88, SD.=0.413)	0.8925		
4. The hotel’s content marketing attracts consumers. (Mean=4.93, SD.=0.292)	0.8136		
5. The hotel’s content marketing benefits customers. (Mean=4.94, SD.=0.277)	0.7718		
<b>Electronic Promotion (EPRO)</b>			
1. Promotions frequently shown on the hotel’s website are easier to find information. (Mean=4.95, SD.=0.213)	0.8126	0.8209	0.7378
2. Promotion on the hotel’s website is good information for me. (Mean=4.94, SD.=0.232)	0.9204		
3. The hotel’s website promotes the room and services essential for me. (Mean=4.94, SD.=0.259)	0.8402		
<b>Electronic Word of Mouth (EWOM)</b>			
1. E-WOM regarding the hotel is helpful to me. (Mean=4.92, SD.=0.314)	0.8612	0.8253	0.7409
2. Online reviews and comments regarding the hotel influence my choice. (Mean=4.95, SD.= 0.243)	0.8628		
3. Recommendations regarding the hotel would increase my interest in more information. (Mean=4.93, SD.=0.301)	0.8584		

Table 3. R-Squared (n=212)

Construct	Coefficient of Determination (R <sup>2</sup> )	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>
Electronic Word of Mouth	0.7458	0.7433
Intentions to Book Hotel Rooms	0.7932	0.7913

Table 4. Effect Overview (n=212)

Effect	Beta	Indirect Effect	Total Effect	Cohen’s f <sup>2</sup>
Content Marketing → E-Word of Mouth	0.4009		0.4009	0.3174
Content Marketing → Intention to Book	0.4866	0.1837	0.6703	0.4543
E-Promotion → E-Word of Mouth	0.5326		0.5326	0.5603
E-Promotion → Intention to Book		0.2441	0.2441	
E-Word of Mouth → Intention to Book	0.4583		0.4583	0.403

Table 5. Total Effects Inference (n=212)

Effect	Original Coefficient	Standard Bootstrap Results					Percentile Bootstrap Quantiles		
		Mean Value	Standard Error	T-Value	P-Value (2-Sided)	P-Value (1-Sided)	0.50%	2.50%	97.50%
CM→EWOM	0.4009	0.4034	0.1236	3.2424	0.0012	0.0006	0.0883	0.1776	0.6587
CM→IB	0.6703	0.0618	0.0766	8.7467	0	0	0.4315	0.5251	0.8328
EPRO→EWOM	0.5326	0.5315	0.1209	4.405	0	0	0.1388	0.2759	0.7395
EPRO→IB	0.2441	0.2384	0.0792	3.0806	0.0021	0.0011	0.0497	0.0898	0.4042
EWOM→IB	0.4583	0.4559	0.1382	3.3171	0.0009	0.0005	0.1385	0.1996	0.7746

CM=Content Marketing; EWOM=Electronic Word of Mouth; EPRO=Electronic Promotion; IB=Intentions to Book Hotel Rooms

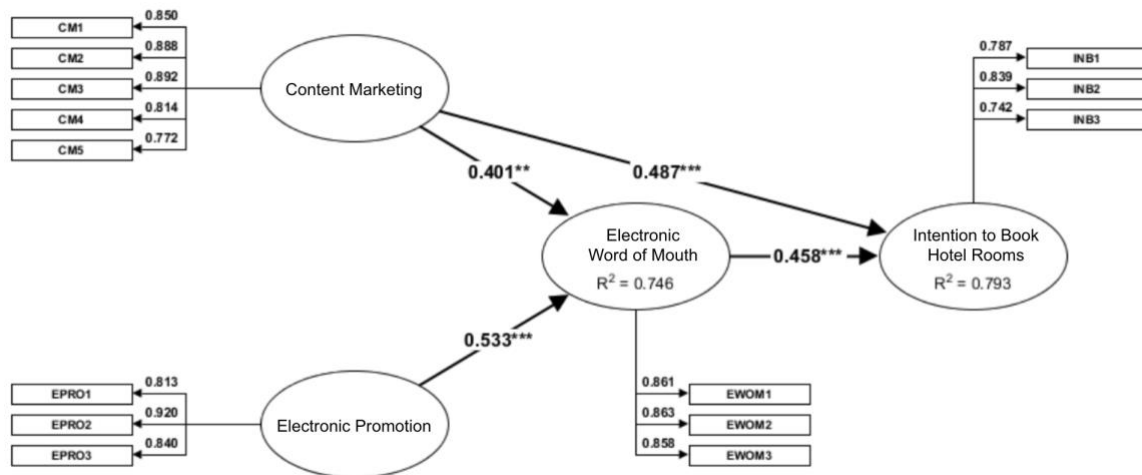


Figure 1. PLS-SEM Model of the Study (SRMR=0.0986).

Content marketing can predict intentions to book hotel rooms at  $\beta=0.487$ ,  $p<0.001$  (two tails at 0.0000 and one tail at 0.0000). Content marketing can predict E-WOM at  $\beta=0.401$ ,  $p<0.01$  (two tails at 0.0012 and one tail at 0.0006). E-Promotion can predict intentions to book hotel rooms at  $\beta=0.533$ ,  $p<0.001$  (two tails at 0.0000 and one tail at 0.0000). E-WOM can predict

intentions to book hotel rooms at  $\beta=0.458$ ,  $p<0.001$  (two tails at 0.0000 and one tail at 0.0000). E-WOM is a significant mediator between content marketing and E-WOM by about 74.6% ( $R^2=0.746$ ). Overall, the relationship phenomenon predicting intentions to book hotel rooms can be explained by about 79.3% ( $R^2=0.793$ ).

**Assumptions**

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Hypotheses	Results	Actions
H1: Content Marketing → Intentions to Book Hotel Rooms	$\beta=0.487$ , $p<0.001$	Supported
H2: Content Marketing → E-Word of Mouth	$\beta=0.401$ , $p<0.01$	Supported
H3: E-Promotion → E-Word of Mouth	$\beta=0.533$ , $p<0.001$	Supported

**DISCUSSION**

The study’s hypothesis testing results supported the proposed conceptual framework. The results indicated a relationship between content marketing, E-WOM, E-Promotion, and customers’ intentions to book hotel rooms. The findings confirmed the previous research of Hidayanto et al. [9] that content marketing significantly influences the intention to book hotel rooms. The findings supported Bu et al. [10] that content marketing significantly influences E-WOM. The findings

supported Napawut et al. [6] and Hidayanto et al. [9] that E-Promotion significantly influences E-WOM. The findings supported Ismagilova et al. [14] that E-WOM significantly influences customers’ intention to book hotel rooms. The findings supported Al-Gasawneh & Al-Adamat [15] that E-WOM is a significant mediator between content marketing, E-Promotion, and customers’ intention to book hotel rooms.

## CONCLUSIONS

Social marketing is a relatively new form of today's marketing. The study investigates customers' intentions to book hotel rooms regarding three main factors of social marketing activities including content marketing, E-Promotion, and E-WOM. The two main predictors that could motivate customers to book hotel rooms are content marketing and E-WOM. Also, E-WOM is a significant mediator between content marketing, E-Promotion, and the criterion variable of intentions to book hotel rooms. Hence, it is recommended that hotel owners, hotel managers, and marketers should consider content marketing, E-Promotion, and E-WOM to improve individuals' intentions to book hotel rooms. Hotel customers perceive the hotel's content marketing as relevant information interests are important. Moreover, promotions frequently shown on the hotel's website are easier to find information and induce their decisions to book hotel rooms. Online reviews and comments regarding the hotel's influence on their choice are the crucial measurements of E-WOM. Therefore, the intention to book hotel rooms in Thailand is significantly related to content marketing, E-Promotion, and E-WOM.

## LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study focuses on social media marketing activities affecting the intention to book hotel rooms in Thailand, it may not cover other countries. Thus, more sampling to explain other countries is recommended. Future studies could provide additional understanding of other relevant variables of quantitative research. Moreover, the qualitative findings could give more knowledge for insight and results should be considered in further study.

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