

CONTENT MARKETING AS A DRIVER FOR CUSTOMER RETENTION AND BUSINESS GROWTH

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Abstract— This study was conducted to examine the influence of content marketing on customer retention and business growth among selected micro-enterprises in Santiago City. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was employed using a survey questionnaire to gather data from 60 business owners and 60 customers. The study assessed the extent of implementation of content marketing strategies, the level of business growth in terms of financial, strategic, structural, and organizational aspects, and the level of customer retention. Results revealed that content marketing strategies are extensively implemented, and business growth is generally high. Customer retention was also found to be high. Significant positive relationships were found between content marketing and financial, strategic, and organizational growth. However, no significant relationship was observed between content marketing and customer retention, nor between business growth and customer retention. The findings suggest that while content marketing effectively supports certain aspects of business growth, additional strategies may be necessary to enhance customer loyalty.

Keywords— *Content Marketing, Business Growth, Customer Retention, Micro-enterprises, Digital Strategy*

I. INTRODUCTION

Content marketing has become essential for firms seeking long-term development and consumer retention in the 21st century. material marketing uses useful, relevant, and consistent material to attract and engage a specific audience, unlike conventional marketing. This strategy builds trust and loyalty, boosting company. information marketing involves creating and delivering relevant, consistent information to attract and keep target audiences and generate lucrative consumer action. Content marketing is to educate and engage prospective consumers, fostering trust and loyalty, ultimately leading to

conversion. This may be done via different platforms, including blogs, social media, email marketing, videos, and podcasts. Effective content marketing involves a deliberate strategy and persistent dedication to delivering meaningful material to the target audience (Savitha et. al, 2023).

Customer retention has traditionally been a key business factor. Loyal clients have better lifetime value and recurrent income streams, making them cheaper to maintain than acquire, according to Kotler and Keller (2016). Content marketing helps build long-term consumer connections. Businesses may build emotional ties and make consumers feel appreciated and understood by continuously offering information in their interests.

Content marketing improves consumer experience and engagement, boosting retention. Customers may get relevant information and enjoyment via well-curated blogs, videos, infographics, and social media postings. This generates confidence and establishes the brand as trustworthy. Content Whale (2024) found that content marketing improves customer retention by fostering ongoing connection and conversation between organizations and their audiences. Polls, quizzes, and user-generated material have also revolutionized content marketing. Julaehe (2024) notes that such techniques strengthen consumer-brand relationships, building customer loyalty and community. Two-way communication lets companies include consumers in their story, making them part of the brand.

Beyond retention, content marketing serves as a significant driver of business growth. A well-executed content marketing strategy enhances brand visibility, generates leads, and converts prospects into loyal customers. As businesses expand their digital presence through engaging and relevant content, they

gain a competitive edge in an increasingly crowded marketplace. Moreover, content marketing contributes to organic growth by fostering word-of-mouth referrals, where satisfied customers share their positive experiences, attracting new clientele.

Despite the expanding collection of research on content marketing, many gaps persist. Current research often emphasizes the immediate benefits of content marketing on customer acquisition or digital engagement metrics, although it fails to provide a thorough examination of its long-term influence on customer retention and its function as a growth accelerator for businesses. Furthermore, a significant portion of the study focuses on Western markets, resulting in a lack of exploration about the applicability of these tactics in developing countries. The influence of cultural and regional differences on the efficacy of content marketing is a mostly unexplored domain. This research seeks to fill these gaps by examining the impact of content marketing on customer retention and company development, specifically targeting businesses in varied economic environments.

Hence this study is conducted to determine the influence of content marketing on customer retention and business growth in selected businesses in Santiago City. It seeks to evaluate the extent of implementation and effectiveness of content marketing strategies, assess business growth across financial, strategic, structural, and organizational dimensions, and analyze relationships between content marketing strategies, customer engagement, and business growth.

II. METHODS

This study employed a quantitative research design. It further utilized a descriptive-correlational approach to examine the influence of content marketing on customer retention and business growth among selected micro-enterprises in Santiago City. The descriptive component of the study provided a comprehensive overview of how businesses implement content marketing strategies and the extent of their growth and customer retention. The correlational aspect explored whether a relationship exists between the implementation of content marketing and the levels of business growth and customer retention, offering insights into the strategic role of content in achieving business objectives.

The primary research instrument used in this study was a structured survey questionnaire, adapted from previously validated instruments in related literature on content marketing, business growth, and customer retention. The questionnaire was divided into four sections: demographic profile, content marketing strategies, business growth dimensions (financial, strategic, structural, and organizational), and customer retention. Items were selected and modified for relevance and contextual fit based on the business environment of Santiago City. A Likert scale format was used to measure the extent of implementation and levels of agreement, allowing for quantitative interpretation of participant responses.

The actual data gathering was conducted between January and February 2025, following the finalization and validation of the questionnaire. Ethical standards and institutional protocols were strictly observed throughout the research process. Respondents were informed of the study's purpose, and their participation was voluntary and confidential. The researchers were available during the data collection period to provide clarification, assist participants, and ensure the smooth and accurate completion of the survey.

Data Analysis

The data gathered in this study underwent thorough analysis using several statistical tools. Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, percentage distribution, and mean scores were used to summarize the responses of both business owners and customers. To examine the relationship between content marketing, customer retention, and business growth, Pearson's r was utilized. This tool helped determine the strength and direction of linear relationships between variables. A Likert Scale was used in the questionnaire to capture the participants' level of agreement, making it easier to interpret their views accurately.

Range	Qualitative Description
3.50 – 4.00	Extensively Implemented
2.50 – 3.49	Implemented
1.50 – 2.49	Moderately Implemented
1.00 – 1.49	Least Implemented
3.50 – 4.00	Very High
2.50 – 3.49	High
1.50 – 2.49	Low
1.00 – 1.49	Very Low

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. The Extent of Implementation of Content Marketing Strategies Among Micro-Enterprises in Santiago City

ITEMS	MEAN	D.I.
Establishes credibility by creating and sharing valuable content.	3.65	Extensively Implemented
Enhance customer engagement with videos and infographics.	3.52	Extensively Implemented
Storytelling content helps us build emotional connections with our audience.	3.43	Implemented
Use social media and influencers to promote our brand.	3.55	Extensively Implemented

Educational content keeps customers informed about industry trends.	3.52	Extensively Implemented
Interactive content like quizzes and polls boosts audience participation.	3.35	Implemented
Track engagement to refine our marketing strategies.	3.40	Implemented
Efforts improve customer retention and drive business growth.	3.58	Extensively Implemented
General Weighted Mean	3.50	Extensively Implemented

Table 1 presents extent of implementation of content marketing strategies. It can be seen that there is a strong commitment among selected micro-enterprises in Santiago City to implement various content marketing strategies, with a General Weighted Mean of 3.50 which interpreted as "Extensively Implemented." The highest mean score is for establishing credibility by creating and sharing valuable content with mean score of 3.65, highlighting that building trust with the audience is the top priority for these businesses. Conversely, the lowest mean score is for interactive content like quizzes and polls with mean score of 3.35, which while still implemented, suggests it is the least utilized strategy among those measured. Other highly rated strategies include enhancing customer engagement through videos and infographics, leveraging social media and influencers, and providing educational content all showing extensive implementation and contributing to effective content marketing that supports customer retention and business growth.

Lopez (2024) emphasized that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) actively implement content marketing strategies, particularly in building customer relationships through storytelling and educational content. However, similar to Santiago City, Lopez noted that interactive content and performance tracking remain underutilized despite their potential to drive higher engagement. This parallel underscore a national trend among Philippine SMEs, suggesting that while foundational content marketing practices are strong, there is room for development in interactivity and analytics to maximize strategic impact.

Table 2. Level of business growth in terms of Local Food Service Providers in terms of financial growth

ITEMS	MEAN	D.I.
Has consistently achieved positive revenue growth over the years.	3.50	Very High
Sales forecasts and revenue projections align with actual performance.	3.47	High
Observed consistent positive cash flow from operating activities, demonstrating the ability to generate revenue that translates into actual cash inflows.	3.45	High
Maintains a balanced approach to financing that supports revenue growth without excessive reliance on debt over the years.	3.48	High
Observed high Return on investment (ROI) on key investments, indicating revenue growth initiatives yield favorable financial returns. (ex. Marketing investment/product development)	3.38	High
General Weighted Mean	3.46	High

Table 2 presents the status of business growth across financial aspects, showing a generally positive outlook among the selected micro-enterprises. The General Weighted Mean of 3.46 indicates that respondents mostly agree with statements reflecting strong financial growth. The highest-rated statement, "Has consistently achieved positive revenue growth over the years" with mean score of 3.50, highlights a consistent increase in income as a key strength. The lowest mean score is for "Observed high Return on Investment (ROI) on key investments" with mean score 3.38, which, while still positive, suggests that some businesses may see room for improvement in maximizing returns from investments like marketing and product development. The findings imply that these results indicate steady financial progress, which supports the growth and sustainability of these businesses.

Bayaua and Gonzales (2024) revealed in their study that local businesses prioritize sustainable growth through strategic cost management and accurate financial forecasting. Their research highlighted that maintaining financial stability and aligning operational goals with market realities were key drivers of long-term viability—a pattern also evident in the financial performance of thrift stores. The study reinforces the idea that local enterprises in Santiago City are building resilience through disciplined financial practices, while still facing opportunities to improve in areas like investment efficiency and innovation.

Table 3. Level of business growth of Local Food Service Providers in terms of strategic growth

ITEMS	MEAN	D.I.
Is adaptable to changing market conditions.	3.57	Very High
Observed the impact of recent innovative projects on the business's overall growth, indicating strategic advancements.	3.42	High
Observed success of recent market expansion initiatives.	3.60	Very High
Market share has grown over the years.	3.42	High
Target market has expanded.	3.60	Very High
General Weighted Mean	3.52	Very High

The results demonstrate that thrift stores in Santiago City are largely adaptable to changing market conditions, as reflected by a general weighted mean of 3.52. The highest rated indicators of adaptability are the success of recent market expansion initiatives and the expansion of the target market, both with a mean of 3.60. These suggest that thrift stores are actively capitalizing on new market opportunities and broadening their customer base. Additionally, thrift stores show notable strategic innovation, evidenced by the observed impact of recent innovative projects on growth with mean score of 3.42 and the steady increase in market share with mean score of 3.42. These findings indicate that thrift stores are effectively adapting and positioning themselves strategically for long-term success in a dynamic retail environment. Nevertheless, focusing on further scaling and closely monitoring the effectiveness of these strategic initiatives could enhance their adaptability and expand their market reach even more.

This observation is supported by Bayaua and Gonzales (2024) as their research highlights how adaptability through market expansion and strategic innovation are essential components of sustaining a competitive advantage, especially in local business settings. Similar to the thrift sector, homegrown restaurants demonstrated that embracing change and innovating around customer needs contributes to steady growth and market resilience. Thus, the thrift stores' adaptability mirrors a broader trend among Santiago City's local businesses toward agile and forward-looking strategies in an evolving retail landscape.

Table 4. Level of business growth of Local Food Service Providers in terms of structural growth

ITEMS	MEAN	D.I.
Enlarged office spaces to accommodate more staff/customers.	3.52	Very High
Expanded manufacturing facilities to boost production capacity.	3.35	High
Invested in employee training programs and professional development initiatives.	3.37	High
Expanded physical space (office space, manufacturing facilities, warehouses, etc.).	3.43	High
Adopted automation technologies and processes.	3.38	High
General Weighted Mean	3.41	High

The structural growth indicators show a general weighted mean of 3.41, reflecting a moderate but steady expansion of physical and operational capacity among thrift stores in Santiago City. Among the structural growth indicators, the highest-rated aspect is the enlargement of office spaces to accommodate more staff and customers, with a mean of 3.52. This highlights a clear priority among thrift stores to expand their immediate operational environment, enhancing both workforce capacity and customer experience. On the other hand, the lowest mean score of 3.35 is observed in the expansion of manufacturing facilities to boost production capacity. While still positive, this suggests that investment in back-end production infrastructure is comparatively limited, indicating potential areas for growth to better support overall business operations.

The results are supported by the study of Bayaua and Gonzales (2024) which emphasized that structural growth through improvements in infrastructure, technology integration, and workforce development is a key pillar of long-term competitiveness. The study revealed that local businesses that invested in expanding physical capacity and internal systems were better equipped to sustain operational excellence and adapt to changing market demands. Thrift stores in Santiago City reflect this same strategic mindset, balancing customer-facing improvements with foundational growth in operations and personnel development.

Table 5. Level of business growth of Local Food Service Providers in terms of organizational growth

ITEMS	MEAN	D.I.
Gradually increased targeted sales figures.	3.67	Very High
Expanded into new markets or regions and new segments	3.42	High
Employed more staff to manage increased workloads and facilitate expanded operations.	3.50	Very High
Invested in the expansion of physical infrastructure.	3.43	High
Introduced new products, expanding product lines, or entering related markets.	3.60	Very High
General Weighted Mean	3.52	Very High

The organizational growth indicators reveal a strong performance overall, with a general weighted mean of 3.52, indicating successful implementation of growth strategies among thrift stores in Santiago City. The highest-rated activity is the gradual increase in targeted sales figures with mean score of 3.67, underscoring a consistent focus on driving revenue growth. Closely following is the introduction of new products and expansion of product lines with mean score of 3.60, reflecting efforts to diversify offerings and attract broader customer segments. On the lower end, expanding into new markets or regions scored 3.42, suggesting that while growth strategies prioritize sales and product development, geographical or segmental expansion is less emphasized. These findings suggest that thrift stores are effectively growing their sales and product portfolios while continuing to strengthen their workforce and infrastructure, though there remains potential for further growth through deeper market expansion.

The importance of product innovation, staff development, and infrastructure investment as strategic pillars of organizational growth has been studied and emphasized in previous studies. Research also emphasized that expanding into new markets, while often overlooked, can unlock untapped potential and bolster long-term competitiveness. Thrift stores in Santiago City appear to mirror these strategic trends, with strong internal growth and promising opportunities for external market expansion (Bayaua & Gonzales, 2024).

Table 6. Overall level of business growth in terms of its 4 dimensions

Dimensions of Business Growth	MEAN	D.I
Financial Growth	3.46	High
Strategic Growth	3.52	Very High
Structural Growth	3.41	High
Organizational Growth	3.52	Very High
General Weighted Mean	3.48	High

Table 6 shows that the overall level of business growth among selected micro-enterprises in Santiago City is consistently strong across all four dimensions. Strategic Growth and Organizational Growth both obtained a mean score of 3.52, interpreted as Very High, indicating that these businesses excel in long-term planning, adaptability, and leadership. Financial Growth received a mean of 3.46, and Structural Growth had a mean of 3.41, both falling under the High interpretation. These results suggest solid financial performance and well-established operational systems. The General Weighted Mean of 3.48, also interpreted as High, reflects an overall strong and balanced development, underscoring the micro-enterprises' ability to sustain growth, strengthen internal structures, and remain competitive in the local market.

Table 7. Customer retention of the business in Santiago City

ITEMS	MEAN	D.I.
I intend to continue using services from this business for a long time.	3.58	Very High
I am willing to say positive things about this store to other people.	3.45	High
This store has a positive image.	3.58	Very High
I plan to continue my relationship with this store in the future.	3.43	High
I would encourage friends and relatives to go to this store.	3.63	Very High
I consider this store to be my first choice.	3.52	Very High
I will go on patronizing this store.	3.40	High
The products and services offered by this store meet my needs.	3.58	Very High
I intend to continue using services from this business for a long time.	3.53	Very High
I am willing to say positive things about this store to other people.	3.58	Very High
General Weighted Mean	3.45	High

Table 4 presents customer retention indicators for thrift stores, with a general weighted mean of 3.45, reflecting an overall positive customer relationship. The highest-rated statement, "I would encourage friends and relatives to go to this store" with mean score of 3.63, highlights strong customer advocacy, suggesting that patrons are not only satisfied but willing to promote the store within their social networks on the lower end, the statement "I will go on patronizing this store" scored 3.40, which, while still positive, points to a slightly weaker level of consistent repeat patronage. This gap indicates an opportunity for thrift stores to focus on converting positive attitudes and intentions into habitual customer behavior,

possibly through loyalty programs or personalized engagement strategies. The results suggest a healthy foundation of customer trust and advocacy that can be further strengthened to drive long-term retention and sustained business growth.

As emphasized by Almohaimmeed (2019) in this study, customer satisfaction and loyalty are key drivers of retention, but they must be consistently reinforced through value delivery and relationship-building to translate into repeat behavior. In line with this, thrift stores in Santiago City exhibit strong customer satisfaction and advocacy, yet could further boost retention by strategically nurturing long-term engagement and visit frequency, ensuring that positive sentiment leads to habitual patronage.

Table 8. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Status of Business Growth and the Extent of Implementation of the Content Marketing Strategies

Pearson r		Financial Growth	Strategic Growth	Structural Growth	Organizational Growth
Extent of Implementation of the Content Marketing Strategies	Correlation Coefficient	.266*	.300*	.189	.319*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.040	.020	.148	.013

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above presents the significant relationships between the level of business growth and the extent of implementation of content marketing strategies. The results indicate that Financial Growth, with a correlation coefficient of .266 and a significance level of .040, Strategic Growth with a coefficient of .300 and significance of .020, and Organizational Growth with a coefficient of .319 and significance of .013, all exhibit statistically significant positive relationships with the extent of content marketing implementation, as their p-values are below the 0.05 level of significance. These findings suggest that businesses that actively implement content marketing strategies tend to experience improvements in financial performance, strategic positioning, and organizational development.

On the other hand, Structural Growth, which shows a correlation coefficient of .189 and a significance value of .148, does not demonstrate a statistically significant relationship. This indicates that improvements in structural aspects of a business, such as operational systems, processes, or physical expansion, may not be directly influenced by the implementation of content marketing strategies.

These results imply that content marketing is particularly effective in enhancing financial, strategic, and organizational dimensions of business growth, likely through

increased brand visibility, stronger customer engagement, and better internal alignment with market demands. However, structural growth may require additional internal factors or investments beyond marketing efforts. Overall, the findings emphasize the valuable role content marketing plays in supporting essential areas of business development.

Table 9. Significant Relationship Between the Level of Status of Business Growth and Level of Customer Retention

Pearson r		Financial Growth	Strategic Growth	Structural Growth	Organizational Growth
Level of Customer Retention	Correlation Coefficient	0.058	0.240	0.134	0.160
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.662	0.065	0.309	0.223

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The table above presents the significant relationship between the level of status of business growth and the level of customer retention. Based on the results, none of the aspects of business growth—namely Financial Growth, with a correlation coefficient of 0.058 and a significance level of 0.662; Strategic Growth, with a coefficient of 0.240 and significance of 0.065; Structural Growth, with a coefficient of 0.134 and significance of 0.309; and Organizational Growth, with a coefficient of 0.160 and significance of 0.223—show a statistically significant relationship with the level of customer retention, as all p-values are greater than the 0.05 level of significance. This indicates that business growth, in its various dimensions, does not have a direct or significant influence on customer retention. Even if a business achieves growth in terms of financial performance, strategic direction, structural development, or organizational capacity, such progress does not necessarily translate into improved customer loyalty or continued patronage.

The findings imply that customer retention may be more closely influenced by factors such as customer satisfaction, service quality, brand trust, engagement, and perceived value rather than internal business growth indicators. Therefore, to retain customers effectively, businesses must prioritize customer-focused strategies alongside their growth initiatives.

Table 10. Significant Relationship Between the Extent of Implementation of the Content Marketing Strategies and the Level of Customer Retention

Pearson r		Level of Customer Retention
Extent of Implementation of the Content Marketing Strategies	Correlation Coefficient	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.502

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The table above presents the significant relationship between the extent of implementation of the content marketing strategies and the level of customer retention. As shown in the results, the correlation coefficient is 0.066 with a significance value of 0.502. Since the p-value is greater than the 0.01 level of significance, the correlation is not statistically significant. This indicates that there is no sufficient evidence to support a significant relationship between the extent of content marketing implementation and customer retention. In other words, the degree to which content marketing strategies are applied does not appear to have a meaningful impact on how well businesses retain their customers.

These findings suggest that while content marketing may contribute to brand visibility and customer engagement, it alone may not be enough to ensure customer loyalty. Other factors such as personalized service, product quality, customer satisfaction, and overall experience may play a more crucial role in influencing retention. Therefore, businesses should consider adopting a more holistic approach that integrates content marketing with strong customer relationship management to effectively retain customers.

V.CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the study's findings, micro-enterprise owners in Santiago City are actively and effectively implementing content marketing strategies. Their use of tools such as social media, storytelling, and educational content has contributed to high levels of business growth, particularly in financial, strategic, and organizational areas. Customers also demonstrated strong loyalty and ongoing engagement with businesses. However, the study found no significant relationship between business growth and customer retention, nor between content marketing and customer loyalty.

Therefore, this study suggests that business owners continue enhancing their content marketing efforts with the help of data analytics to better understand customer preferences. Content creators should focus on producing

meaningful and engaging materials aligned with customer interests. Marketing consultants may assist in providing guidance, strategy development, and training in digital content delivery. Furthermore, customers should be encouraged to give constructive feedback to improve content relevance. Future researchers are advised to explore content marketing's effectiveness across different business sectors and regions using more in-depth and varied research methods.

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