

Meta Ads as a Mediating Variable in the Relationship Between Consumer Behavior and Engagement to Enhance Marketing Performance at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak

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Abstract

This study examines the role of Meta Ads as a mediating variable in the relationship between consumer behavior and engagement in the context of digital marketing at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak. The research applies a quantitative approach using a causal associative design, supported by qualitative insights to strengthen the analysis. Data were collected from 120 respondents who are active social media users and have interacted with the hotel's digital content. The analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares (PLS). The findings reveal that consumer behavior has a positive and significant effect on both Meta Ads effectiveness and consumer engagement. Furthermore, Meta Ads demonstrate a strong positive influence on engagement and serve as a significant mediating variable between consumer behavior and engagement. These results indicate that personalized, relevant, and interactive digital advertising enhances consumer involvement and strengthens brand relationships. The study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence on the mediating role of Meta Ads in the hospitality industry, emphasizing the importance of data-driven digital strategies to improve marketing performance and customer engagement.

Keywords: consumer behavior, Meta Ads, engagement, digital marketing, hospitality industry.

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INTRODUCTION

Digitalization has brought significant changes across various industries, particularly in the tourism sector. Bali, as one of Indonesia's leading destinations, increasingly relies on digital marketing strategies to maintain its attractiveness to tourists. This transformation has shifted the focus of marketing from transactional marketing to relationship marketing, where the success of a brand is no longer measured solely by sales volume, but also by the level of consumer engagement and loyalty. This is consistent with the findings of Cao et al. (2021), which emphasize that consumer engagement on social media plays a significant role in building long-term relationships between brands and customers.

In this context, digital advertising technologies such as Meta Ads have become highly important. Meta Ads enable brands to reach audiences with precision through algorithm systems based on user behavior, interests, and preferences. As explained by Kumar Sharma (2023), personalized social media advertising can enhance

message relevance and strengthen consumers' emotional connection with the brand. The hospitality industry is one of the sectors that most readily adopts digital technology.

Digital transformation has changed how consumers search for, select, and book hotel services. Findings by Kothari et al. (2025a) indicate that the effectiveness of digital advertising in the service industry is strongly influenced by content credibility, message relevance, and brand visual consistency. Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak, a four-star hotel located in the center of Seminyak, faces significant challenges in remaining competitive amid the rapid digitalization of hotel marketing. In this context, a strong and communicative brand image becomes a key asset in attracting global tourists who are increasingly digital-savvy. Through the implementation of Meta Ads, the hotel has a great opportunity to utilize authentic visual storytelling to expand promotional reach and stimulate potential customer engagement digitally. As noted by Ebrahim (2021), the effectiveness of digital strategies is largely determined by the level of understanding of consumer behavior and their interaction preferences with digital content.

Consumer behavior (variable X) in the digital era involves an interaction between psychology, technology, and digital culture. Kaur et al. (2024) state that consumer behavior in digital spaces is influenced by factors such as trust, experience, and social engagement that emerge during the information search process up to post-purchase evaluation. Therefore, understanding digital consumer behavior is fundamental in developing effective marketing strategies. Meta Ads act as a mediating variable that connects consumer behavior (X) and engagement (Y) through the delivery of relevant, personalized, and interactive advertising content. Personalized digital advertisements tend to attract attention more quickly, and recent studies show that a high level of ad personalization can increase consumer engagement by providing conversational value and social motivation (Kothari et al., 2025b).

Engagement (variable Y) is a crucial aspect of digital marketing that reflects the emotional and cognitive relationship between consumers and brands. In the hospitality industry, engagement is not only measured through direct interactions such as likes or shares, but also through active participation in co-creating brand narratives in digital spaces. High engagement in the tourism context can strengthen customer loyalty and enhance perceived experiential value.

In the context of Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak, digital engagement can be understood as the emotional involvement of consumers, reflected in their willingness to interact with hotel content, share experiences, and become part of the brand's online community. This study offers novelty by addressing the research gap regarding the role of Meta Ads as a mediating variable in the relationship between consumer behavior and engagement in the hospitality sector. Therefore, this research introduces a new approach to analyzing the influence of digital consumer behavior on engagement through the mediation of Meta Ads within the hotel industry context.

Stimulus Organism Response (SOR)

In this study, Meta Ads function as the stimulus (S) in the form of digital advertising content presented on platforms such as Facebook and Instagram. This stimulus triggers consumer reactions, including perceptions of advertising value, trust in the brand, and emotional responses to visual content (organism). These

internal processes then lead to a response (R), namely consumer engagement with Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak, which can be reflected through interactions with content, comments, shares, and user recommendations.

Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

In digital marketing, this theory serves as a foundation for understanding how consumers respond to promotional messages delivered through social media. A study by Dwi Rusti and Masnita (2024) suggests that consumers' positive attitudes toward creatively designed and relevant digital content can increase their intention to interact or engage with a brand through digital activities. Therefore, the application of TPB provides a theoretical basis in this study to explain how Meta Ads function as a factor that shapes positive consumer attitudes, reinforces digital social norms, and enhances perceived behavioral control over online interactions.

Consumer Behavior (X)

In the digital era, consumer behavior is influenced by various digital stimuli such as social media content, online advertisements, user reviews, and recommendations from online communities. A study by Azlinda Herawati et al. (2025) states that social media, as a digital marketing strategy, plays a crucial role in influencing consumer behavior from the exploration stage to the evaluation of purchase decisions. According to Ilyas et al. (2025), consumer behavior in digital marketing can be measured through four indicators: digital information search, evaluation and content credibility perception, emotional response to digital content, and digital customer journey engagement.

Meta Ads (M)

Within the context of social media marketing, Meta Ads are closely associated with visually appealing content, the level of advertisement interactivity, and the relevance of the message delivered to the target audience. Ginting and Insandi (2024a) found that social media marketing strategies, including targeted advertising, content personalization, and interactive features, significantly increase consumer engagement across various industries. According to Afthoruddin and Alldila Nadhira (2025), the effectiveness of Meta Ads can be measured using four indicators: advertising reach, message clarity, visual attractiveness, and call to action.

Engagement (Y)

Engagement is a variable that represents the level of consumer involvement with a brand or digital content within the marketing ecosystem. In hotel marketing, consumer engagement plays a strategic role as a precursor to increasing brand loyalty and purchase intention. Marketing content designed to create two-way interactions significantly enhances the consumer experience and strengthens brand relationships (Tiara Ranti, 2025). According to Matusin et al. (2023), engagement effectiveness can be measured through four indicators: emotional engagement, cognitive engagement, behavioral engagement, and social sharing intention.

H1: Consumer behavior has a positive effect on the effectiveness of Meta Ads at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak.

H2: Meta Ads have a positive effect on consumer engagement at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak.

H3: Consumer behavior has a positive effect on engagement at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak.

H4: Meta Ads mediate the relationship between consumer behavior and engagement at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak.

METODOLOGI

This study employs a quantitative approach using a causal associative research design. The quantitative method is selected to examine the relationships between variables through statistical analysis, specifically the effect of consumer behavior (X) on engagement (Y) with Meta Ads (M) as a mediating variable. In addition, this study is supported by qualitative methods as complementary data to enrich and strengthen the analysis of the three research variables.

The research focuses on Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak, a hotel located in Seminyak. The selection of this hotel is based on its relatively high level of digital activity, particularly in utilizing Meta Ads to expand market reach and enhance customer engagement. In this context, the population consists of digital users who have interacted with Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak through social media, especially via paid Meta Ads. The sample is selected to represent the actual behavior of digital users targeted by the hotel's advertisements. Therefore, the sample includes consumers who actively use social media and have seen, interacted with, or responded to the hotel's Meta Ads content.

This study was not conducted directly at the hotel location but through the distribution of online questionnaires to respondents who are social media users in the Badung area and have interacted with the digital content of Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak. The sampling method used is non-probability sampling with a purposive sampling technique. This technique is applied because not all individuals in the population have an equal chance of being selected as respondents, but only those who meet specific criteria, namely:

1. Residing in the Badung area;
2. Primarily using platforms such as Instagram or Facebook;
3. Being at least 18 years old and active social media users;
4. Having engaged at least once with the hotel's digital content, such as liking, sharing, commenting, or clicking a link.

The sample size determination follows Hair et al. (2010), which suggests that the number of samples should be 5-10 times the number of indicators. This study uses 12 indicators with a multiplier of 10, resulting in a total sample of 120 respondents ($12 \times 10 = 120$). In addition to the quantitative sample, this study also involves qualitative informants selected purposively, namely individuals directly involved in the hotel's marketing activities, such as the digital marketing team.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1. Convergent Validity Test

No.	Variable	Indikator	Outer Loading	Explanation
		X1	0.808	Valid

1.	Consumer Behavior	X2	0.843	Valid
		X3	0.835	Valid
		X4	0.854	Valid
		M1	0.820	Valid
2.	Meta Ads	M2	0.847	Valid
		M3	0.804	Valid
		M4	0.889	Valid
		Y1	0.863	Valid
3.	Enhagement	Y2	0.845	Valid
		Y3	0.814	Valid
		Y4	0.814	Valid

Source: PLS Data Processing Results 2026

The table above presents the results of the convergent validity test in the measurement model (outer model) using outer loading values for each indicator across the research variables, namely consumer behavior, Meta Ads, and engagement. Outer loading values are used to measure the extent to which each indicator represents its respective construct, with the acceptable threshold being above 0.70.

Discriminant Validity Test

Table 2. Cross Loading Test

Variable	Consumer Behavior	Meta Ads	Engagement
X ₁	0,820	0,481	0,442
X ₂	0,847	0,540	0,482
X ₃	0,804	0,402	0,465
X ₄	0,889	0,396	0,500
M ₁	0,407	0,808	0,416
M ₂	0,507	0,843	0,498
M ₃	0,444	0,835	0,417
M ₄	0,454	0,854	0,554
Y ₁	0,412	0,528	0,863
Y ₂	0,496	0,449	0,845
Y ₃	0,471	0,496	0,814
Y ₄	0,496	0,425	0,814

Source: PLS Data Processing Results 2026

The table also shows the results of the discriminant validity test using the cross-loading method, which aims to ensure that each variable in the study is clearly distinguishable from one another. It can be concluded that all variables meet the criteria for discriminant validity, indicating that the measurement model is valid and suitable for further analysis.

Reliability Test

Table 3. Reliable Test

Variable	Composite Reliability	Cronbach's Alpha	AVE	Explanation
Consumer Behavior (X)	0,902	0,856	0,707	Reliabel

Meta Ads (M)	0,906	0,861	0,697	Reliabel
Engagement (Y)	0,902	0,854	0,696	Reliabel

Source: PLS Data Processing Results 2026

The reliability test results indicate that each variable has a Composite Reliability value above 0.70, a Cronbach’s Alpha above 0.70, and an Average Variance Extracted (AVE) above 0.50. These findings demonstrate that all variables exhibit strong internal consistency in measuring the constructs under study.

R-Square Test

Table 4. R-Square Test

Variable	R-Square
Meta Ads	0,297
Engagement	0,414

Source: PLS Data Processing Results 2026

Based on the table, the Meta Ads variable has an R-square value of 0.297. This indicates that consumer behavior explains 29.7% of the variance in Meta Ads, while the remaining 70.3% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Furthermore, the engagement variable has an R-square value of 0.414, meaning that consumer behavior and Meta Ads together explain 41.4% of the variance in engagement, while the remaining 58.6% is influenced by other variables not examined in this study.

Hypothesis Test

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing and Mediation Test

Hypothesis	Original Sample	T Statistics	P values	Explanation
H ₁ <i>Perilaku Konsumen</i> → <i>Meta Ads</i>	0,374	5,415	0,000	Sig
H ₂ <i>Meta Ads</i> → Engagement	0,545	8,109	0,000	Sig
H ₃ <i>Perilaku Konsumen</i> → <i>Engagement</i>	0,358	4,816	0,000	Sig
H ₄ <i>Perilaku Konsumen</i> → <i>Meta Ads</i> → Engagement	0,204	4,572	0,000	Sig

Source: PLS Data Processing Results 2026

Consumer behavior has a positive effect on the effectiveness of Meta Ads at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak.

The first hypothesis (H1) test shows an original sample value of 0.374, with a P-value of 0.000 < 0.05 and a T-statistic of 5.415 > 1.96, indicating a positive and significant effect of consumer behavior on Meta Ads. In the digital context, consumer behavior reflects how individuals actively seek information, evaluate content credibility, and form perceptions of marketing messages. Digital consumers act not only as information receivers but also as evaluators who consider emotional aspects and content credibility before engaging further (Ilyas et al., 2025).

Meta Ads have a positive effect on consumer engagement at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak.

The second hypothesis (H2) test yields an original sample value of 0.545, with a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a T-statistic of $8.109 > 1.96$, indicating a positive and significant effect. As part of digital marketing strategies, Meta Ads are capable of reaching broad and targeted audiences by leveraging user behavior data. Advertisements function not only as promotional tools but also as interactive media that create engaging digital experiences. Visually appealing content, clear messaging, and interactive features such as call-to-action significantly enhance consumer participation (Ginting & Insandi, 2024a).

Consumer behavior has a positive effect on engagement at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak.

The third hypothesis (H3) test shows an original sample value of 0.358, with a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a T-statistic of $4.816 > 1.96$, indicating a positive and significant relationship. Consumer behavior, which involves cognitive and emotional aspects, plays an important role in shaping engagement. Consumers who develop emotional interest and trust in digital content are more likely to interact through likes, comments, or shares. This demonstrates that engagement is the result of the digital experiences perceived by consumers (Matusin et al., 2023).

Meta Ads mediate the relationship between consumer behavior and engagement at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak.

The fourth hypothesis (H4) test shows an original sample value of 0.204, with a P-value of $0.000 < 0.05$ and a T-statistic of $4.572 > 1.96$, indicating a significant mediating effect. As an intermediary variable, Meta Ads effectively deliver personalized and interactive marketing messages, thereby strengthening the relationship between consumer behavior and engagement. This finding aligns with previous studies suggesting that effective digital marketing strategies enhance engagement by improving interaction quality and consumer experience (Afthoruddin & Alldila Nadhira, 2025).

Interview Results

The interview results with the management of Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak indicate that the hotel's digital marketing strategy based on Meta Ads is systematically designed through a data-driven approach, audience segmentation, and continuous evaluation to increase engagement and conversion. The role of the Marketing Manager is central in designing campaigns aligned with market trends, including the implementation of A/B testing to assess content effectiveness, as reflected in the statement that "digital marketing strategies are developed based on market needs and tested through various content variations to observe audience responses."

Meta Ads are positioned as the primary channel due to their ability to reach broad and specific audiences, supported by an always-on campaign approach that maintains consistent brand visibility, as indicated by the statement that "campaigns run continuously to ensure the brand remains visible to the target audience." Additionally, the strategy from prospecting to tactical campaigns demonstrates a structured flow from awareness to conversion, reinforced by content personalization tailored to audience characteristics, such as "content is adjusted to the language and preferences of the target market to increase relevance."

From the perspective of consumer behavior, it was found that audiences tend to respond positively to relevant content and are encouraged to take further actions, for example, “consumers usually visit profiles or websites immediately after seeing ads due to clear call-to-action elements.” In terms of engagement, interactions are dominated by simple forms such as likes and clicks, yet they still contribute to long-term objectives such as follows and purchase conversions, as stated that “the main target is not only interaction but also driving consumers toward purchasing decisions.”

Overall, Meta Ads are proven to function as a mediating variable that bridges consumer behavior and engagement. Meta Ads facilitate the delivery of targeted messages that encourage consumer interaction with the brand and are considered more effective than other methods due to their ability to accelerate reach, increase visibility, and generate more optimal engagement in hotel digital marketing strategies.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the study conducted at Hotel Cross Paasha Bali Seminyak, several conclusions can be drawn. Consumer behavior has a positive and significant effect on Meta Ads. This indicates that the higher the level of consumer activity in searching for information, evaluating content, and responding to digital stimuli, the more effective the performance of Meta Ads perceived by consumers.

Meta Ads also have a positive and significant effect on consumer engagement and represent the most influential variable among those examined. This finding suggests that the use of Meta Ads is highly effective in enhancing consumer engagement with the hotel’s digital content.

Furthermore, consumer behavior has a positive and significant effect on engagement. This implies that consumers who are actively involved in seeking information and show interest in digital content are more likely to engage through actions such as liking, commenting, or sharing content.

Finally, Meta Ads are proven to act as a significant mediating variable in the relationship between consumer behavior and engagement. This means that Meta Ads strengthen the relationship, allowing consumer behavior to influence engagement not only directly but also indirectly through Meta Ads, thereby enhancing overall consumer engagement.

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