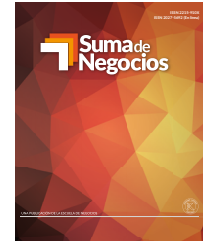SUMA DE NEGOCIOS

Research Article

Analysis of digital marketing and its effect on the positioning of Peruvian universities in 2023

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ABSTRACT

Introduction/Objective: Any change and strategic advertising and/or commercial planning carried out by means of digital media is called digital marketing, which helps universities to position themselves, which is why Peruvian universities create and share relevant content on digital platforms. The objective of this study is to determine how digital marketing affects the positioning of Peruvian universities.

Methodology: A quantitative approach and a deductive, non-experimental research design were used. A survey instrument was applied to 433 students studying at the Universidad Continental (located in Arequipa, Cusco, Huancayo, and Lima), and the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) model was used, a multivariate statistical method for analysing the independent variable of digital marketing and the dependent variable of positioning.

Results: The study found that the variation in units of Customer Acquisition, Customer Conversion, and Content Distribution generates a variation in positioning of 0.36, 0.24, and 0.20 units, respectively.

Conclusions: Customer Acquisition is the most determining factor for positioning, followed by Conversion and, finally, Content Distribution. Additionally, it is established that Customer Acquisition primarily impacts the Service level, while Content Distribution has a greater influence on the Staff level.

Análisis del marketing digital y su efecto en el posicionamiento de las universidades peruanas en 2023

RESUMEN

Introducción/objetivo: Todo cambio y planificación estratégico publicitario o comercial que se realice en los medios digitales se denomina marketing digital, lo que ayuda a las universidades a posicionarse, por lo que las universidades peruanas crean y comparten contenido relevante en las plataformas digitales. El objetivo de este estudio es determinar cómo el marketing digital afecta la posición de las universidades peruanas.

Metodología: Se empleó un enfoque cuantitativo y el diseño de investigación fue deductivo, no experimental. Se aplicó la herramienta de encuesta a 433 estudiantes que estudian en la Universidad Continental (Arequipa, Cusco, Huancayo y Lima), y el modelo utilizado es el de Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), un método estadístico multivariado para analizar la variable independiente marketing digital y la variable dependiente posicionamiento.

Resultados: El estudio tuvo como resultado que la variación en unidades de captación de clientes, conversión del cliente y distribución de contenidos genera una variación en el posicionamiento de 0.36, 0.24, y 0.20 unidades respectivamente.

Conclusiones: la adquisición de clientes es el factor más determinante para el posicionamiento, seguido por la conversión y, finalmente, la distribución de contenido. Además, se establece que la adquisición de clientes impacta principalmente el nivel de servicio, mientras que la distribución de contenido influye más en el nivel de personal.

Introduction

The use of mobile devices in Peru in recent years has increased; according to the "The Supervisory Board for Private Investment in Telecommunications" (OSIPTEL, by its acronym in Spanish, 2023), four out of every five Peruvian households own a smartphone, laptop or tablet, which represents 84.1% of the country's families with at least one mobile device connected to the Internet. Likewise, according to the Movistar Telefónica Foundation report (2021), mobile devices are the main tool to connect to the Internet; the primary use they give is social networks (91.7% Internet users) and information search platforms (60.4% Internet users). During 2021, Peru invested around $16,373,094 dollars in digital advertising; its universities and higher education ranked third with a participation of 2.14% (Admetricks, 2022). Likewise, according to Data Reportal platform (2024) in the latest report of Peru Digital 2024, digital advertising will have an interannual increase by 2024, showing a growth in the use of social networks by 8.5%, searches by 13% and digital programmatic advertising by 11.4%.

The term "positioning" derived from the competitiveness in the market; Coca (2007) mentions that positioning strategy is essential for the market segmentation process since marketing strategies will be developed depending on the company, brand, and product/service positioning; it also refers to how present they are positioned in the minds of potential clients and customers, unlike the competition. Furthermore, according to Seminario et al. (2020), positioning is a strategic tool that has gradually increased over the years; strategies that satisfy the needs and desires of the customer are used and implemented in more than 80% of companies. For Kerin & Hartley (2020), positioning refers to the characteristics that customers see compared to the competition.

Digital marketing acts as an instrument that allows you to easily reach an informed and interested audience by creating news, reviews, discussions and promotions related directly or indirectly to your published work. Digital marketing refers to technologies or tools such as web applications, websites, email (both traditional and mobile) and social networks. The key to digital marketing is to attract the masses, and there has to be an interaction between the advertising campaign and the masses who receive it; some of the characteristics of digital marketing are interesting content and environments where people can find information; for example, social networks are increasingly investing in traditional advertising methods and almost all popular websites already contain effective advertising formulas (Salazar et al., 2017).

Businesses can gain benefits from digital marketing services such as product management, e-commerce, influencer marketing, SEO, SEM, search engine marketing, content marketing, campaign marketing, social media marketing, direct email marketing, spot display, and digital books. According to Salonen et al. (2024), the benefits of marketing in digital content management improve when the content is correctly oriented; likewise, more significant investments improve the capacity of marketing strategies. Content distribution is an important factor since it is considered a fundamental digital marketing tool; it is used to communicate about a service or product competently through various channels that provide valuable information regarding the brand to the target audience. When searching on the Internet, users look for specific information, so their attention has to be captured through content that provides value (Porras, 2019). Furthermore, Sordo (2022) states that it is essential since it is the development of creating, sharing, publishing, and promoting high-quality, interesting, and innovative content. According to Lajam and Mohamed (2024), the distribution of content is reflected through texts, videos, and audio, which reach out to users through devices that operate within the network.

Customer acquisition is vital for a company or institution; the biggest challenge for the trader is to implement the most appropriate system to achieve this defined objective; companies that follow this plan every day have a thorough and detailed sales performance and automatically increase their intervention in the market and the brand position with great potential for expansion; customer acquisition highlights that "it consists of developing a key process of building long-term solid relationships with people or organisations that ensure the notoriety of the company's activities, it is considered that to establish relationships with customers you have to "focus on attracting, developing, maintaining and retaining users (Loor et al., 2021)

Conversion is a process established in advance for the website visitor to complete the action they want to take; that is, people stay and finally confirm and do something on the website. Converting visitors into customers is more valuable than the traffic generated by the website (Selman, 2017).

There are studies that show that to position yourself in the market, you have to have marketing strategies. Siguenza et al. (2020), in their research, conclude that virtual marketing tools implementation is essential to increase positioning. Likewise, Urrutia and Napán (2021) explain in their study that there is a significant and positive relationship between positioning and various networks that make up digital marketing. Furthermore, Chaowarat and Shafiq (2023) aver that companies that use effective digital marketing strategies obtain better product placement, faster revenue growth and greater brand awareness; the study also emphasised the relevance of digital marketing techniques in producing these positive results in companies.

For all of the above, this study aims to demonstrate that "digital marketing influences the positioning of higher education institutions in Peru" in the case of the Universidad Continental in its four locations in Peru, determining the effect on the positioning dimensions in digital marketing dimensions. Additionally, it determines how digital marketing strategies could affect the positioning of the Universidad Continental in Peru.

The general hypothesis proposed is "The use of digital marketing positively affects the positioning of the Universidad Continental in the Arequipa headquarters in 2023."

Specific hypotheses are the following:

- The digital marketing dimensions positively affect the positioning dimensions of Continental University 2023.

Table 1. Description and abbreviation of the variables of the structural model

Variable	Variable description	Grades	Abbreviation
Y1	Image	Valuation from 1 to 5	IM
Y2	Product	Valuation from 1 to 5	PR
Y3	Service	Valuation from 1 to 5	SE
Y4	Staff	Valuation from 1 to 5	PE
X1	Content distribution	Valuation from 1 to 5	DC
X2	Customer acquisition	Valuation from 1 to 5	CC
X3	Customer conversion	Valuation from 1 to 5	CO

Source: own elaboration.

Methodology

Data

Participants

The study selection is exclusively for face-to-face modality students at the Universidad Continental to know

and observe in detail, which means they chose to study and continue in the institution. The results of the questionnaire revealed that the most influential factors in students' decision-making are closely related to the level of advanced technology available. This preference underscores the importance of integrating cutting-edge technologies into the educational process. To reach its target market, the Universidad Continental invested in digital and traditional marketing in order to capture its market segment and position itself as one of the universities with greater use of technology; the European Commission has published a report on the quality of education and student welfare.

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion. The research criteria for data collection were considered all students in the face-to-face modality of the four locations (Arequipa, Huancayo, Lima, Cusco). The total number of students at the University was estimated at 32,524, and a distribution based on the total number of students per school was made for applying the questionnaire, Huancayo has 21,029 students and the questionnaire was applied to 279 students, Cusco has 6,022 students and 87 were surveyed, Arequipa has a total of 3,811 students, of which 46 were surveyed and in Lima there are 1,662 students and 21 answered the survey. The surveys were conducted randomly, considering all university careers of different academic cycles from the freshman to the last year of study for the 2023 period.

Exclusion. The criteria that will not be considered for this research are students of the following modalities: semi-face-to-face, distance learning, and graduates of the Universidad Continental in 2023.

Expert instrument validation

The questionnaire was validated by Percy Hansel Cárdenas Vargas, master's in digital marketing and Master in Communication and Marketing, DNI (national identity document) 44753386, who currently holds the position of professor at the Universidad Continental; the instrument will be valid in Arequipa in 2023. His cell number is 915163877.

Type, scope, and design

The method of the research study is quantitative because data collection is carried out in order to measure, analyse, and test hypotheses based on numerical measurements and statistical analyses to test theories (Hernández & Baptista, 2014). The type of research is basic and explanatory, and the design is not experimental since the variables studied will not be manipulated. In addition, it states that the study is conducted over a specific time period.

Procedure

A pre-survey was randomly conducted with students from different campuses, focusing on the face-to-face modality, across various faculties and academic years. The objective was to validate the study instrument. For review and approval, it underwent a process of observations and suggestions from the expert and advisor, who provided comments that refined the collected data and led to a thorough investigation of the study topic.

To begin data collection, the consistency matrix and operationalisation of variables in the questionnaire were sent to an expert in digital marketing for validity and approval. Once the instrument was approved, closed surveys were conducted using a simple random probabilistic sampling model to determine the number of students at different campuses of the Universidad Continental.

Data collection took place in April and May 2023 at the Arequipa campus. Following the expert and advisor's recommendation, data collection was extended nationally to enhance the study's impact. Consequently, in December, surveys were conducted in person to achieve better information reach and perception from students at the Cusco, Huancayo, and Lima campuses.

The questionnaire was distributed through an online platform in two modalities: first, a link was shared via a WhatsApp QR code to access the questionnaire; second, printed questionnaires were distributed. This dual approach aimed to improve efficiency and appreciation in data collection, acknowledging that students use both digital and traditional media. This strategy allowed for a broader reach and adherence to the established sample size. Additionally, students were assisted during the questionnaire completion process to ensure accuracy. The strategy positively impacted understanding, explanation, and communication, with prior explanations given about the study's topic and methodology. Participants were also informed about the study's general and specific objectives. To achieve more accurate results, we considered increasing the number of respondents.

Participants took about 10 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The total number of participants by campus was: Huancayo with 279 students, Cusco with 87 students, Arequipa with 46 students, and Lima with 21 students, in 2023.

Ethical considerations

Before starting the questionnaire, participants are informed about the study's objectives, reliability, and the anonymity of the data (only general data was collected, not personal data), with the aim of gaining students' time and trust so they can answer the questions with complete transparency and honesty.

Data analysis

For the present study, the model used is the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM), which is a multivariate statistical method classified as the second generation, so it is not based on the existence of normal distribution and is robust against collinearity; the fact that the data provided by the surveys are categorical does not pose a problem for their processing. Moreover, since dimensions are not measured directly, this statistical method allows us to contain each observation of the dimensions in latent variables. The same variables allow their effect on other latent variables corresponding to the dimensions of the dependent variable to be analysed.

For the respective data processing and analysis, a measurement model has to be designed in principle, which consists of modelling the latent variables considering their observations based on a formative approach, which is validated considering the convergence, collinearity, significance, and relevance of the observations used to measure latent variables. Subsequently, after the measurement model is validated, a structural model is designed considering the interaction between the measured latent variables. Finally, to validate these results, the collinearity, significance, and relevance of the latent variables within the structural model are evaluated.

Structural equation modelling, a multivariate statistical analysis technique, is used to analyse how each dimension of the "digital marketing" variable affects the dimensions of the "positioning" variable. Based on this, closed surveys were used through a simple probabilistic and random sampling model. These surveys were applied to 433 students from the Universidad Continental at the branches of Arequipa, Huancayo, Lima, and Cusco so that these data are processed in the R - Studio software.

Structural analysis is a data analysis technique that allows identification of patterns in the data, linking them to each other; this is a fundamental stage of design process in which the calculation, design and verification of the structure of the dimensions studied is carried out. This scientific technique allows us to determine whether the structure is adequate to fulfil its purpose or objective and to validate or reject the hypotheses (Gimena, 2004).

The dimensions of the independent variable, digital marketing, are: Customer Conversion, Customer Acquisition, and Content Distribution; while the dimensions determine the development of the dependent variable of positioning: Image, Product, Staff and Service. In addition, abbreviations were used for the structural model, the descriptions of the abbreviations are on Table 1.

These were taken into account in the 433 surveys, which consisted of 25 questions. 11 questions were used for the independent variable and 14 questions for the dependent variable. A Likert scale was used indicating 5 "totally agree", 4 "agree", 3 "neither agree nor disagree", 2 "disagree" and 1 "totally disagree".

The preservation of the "students" privacy and confidentiality is one of the ethical aspects considered in the current research after obtaining the informed consent of the study subjects: likewise, manipulation of data is rejected, and efforts are made to guarantee transparency in the dissemination of the results.

Evaluation of the measurement model

The convergence of values for each latent variable constructed by considering training measures is evaluated by means of a regression where each of these variables explains each of the alternative measures for each latent variable. The results show that the indicator, which is the result of the coefficient of estimation, is greater than 0.7, as can be seen from Table 2, and indicates that the degree of convergence of each latent variable with its alternative measure is high in all cases; considering this, it is accepted that the convergence of each latent variable with its alternative measure is valid.

Table 2. Convergence indicator

Variable	Indicator
Content distribution	0.955
Customer acquisition	0.951
Customer conversion	0.954
Services	0.966
Image	0.957
Product	0.971
Staff	0.945

Source: own elaboration.

Collinearity

Another important assumption that must be considered when estimating a structural model is the non-existence of collinearity between the components used for the formative measurement of each latent variable. In effect, it is considered that a VIF (variance inflation factor) indicator lower than 3 or 5 is a favourable signal to consider the non-presence of collinearity between the components of each latent variable. That said, it is observed that each VIF of the components used for the formative measures is less than 3, as seen on Table 3; therefore, based on this result, it is asserted that the formative construction of each latent variable does not contemplate the problem of collinearity and consequently the latent variables are well identified.

Significance and relevance

Another very important consideration is that the observations used for the construction of latent variables are statistically significant since each of them must contribute to the construction of the latent variables; Table 4 shows the statistical T at 95% confidence, of which it can be stated that all observations of the variables "Content Distribution", "Customer Engagement", "Services" and "Product" are significant since they have a T-Stat greater than 1.96.

On the other hand, it is also interpreted based on Table 3 that the observations corresponding to IM2 for measuring the variable "Image" are not significant at 90%, 95%, and 99% confidence; the other observations to measure this variable are, however, valid. Likewise, it is observed that the observations of PE3 to measure the variable "Personal" are not significant at 95% confidence. However, it is substantial at 90% confidence as the observations of CO4; additionally, it can be stated that the other observations to measure the variables "Personal" and "Customer conversion" are significant at 95% confidence.

Table 3. VIF (variance inflation factor) for each measured variable

Content Distribution			
DC1	DC2	DC3	DC4
1.466	1.778	1.557	1.464
Customer acquisition			
CC1	CC2	CC3	
1.425	1.355	1.191	
Customer conversion			
CO1	CO2	CO3	CO4
1.659	1.639	1.593	1.372
Services			
SE1	SE2	SE3	
1.759	1.829	1.68	
Image			
IM1	IM2	IM3	IM4
1.983	2.207	2.211	1.846
Product			
PR1	PR2	PR3	
1.535	1.819	1.5	
Staff			
PE1	PE2	PE3	PE4
2.144	2.586	2.86	2.298

Source: own elaboration.

Indicator FIL (Formative Indicator Loadings)

Given that the results show that the CO4, IM2, and PE3 observations are not significant at the 95% confidence level, it is crucial to establish a criterion for evaluating their potential omission from the formative measurement model. To this end, Table 5 presents the "Formative Indicators Loadings" (FIL) indicator, which must exceed the value of 0.5 to avoid the mandatory exclusion of observations that are not significant at the 95% level. This precaution is necessary because their omission could reduce the pressure of the variable measurement or an overfitting of the model.

Based on the above, it can be argued that the FIL indicator for all cases is greater than 0.5, therefore, the decision criterion does not require elimination of the observations regarding CO4, IM2 and PE3 since they do not represent a major problem in the efficiency of the construction of latent variables.

Table 4. Significance and relevance of the measure for each latent variable

	T Stat.		T Stat.
DC1 -> Content Distribution	2.649	SE3 -> Services	3.892
DC2 -> Content Distribution	4.495	IM1 -> Image	5.941
DC3 -> Content Distribution	3.543	IM2 -> Image	1.269
DC4 -> Content Distribution	6.992	IM3 -> Image	4.573
CC1 -> Customer acquisition	13.505	IM4 -> Image	4.078
CC2 -> Customer acquisition	6.014	PR1 -> Product	9.146
CC3 -> Customer acquisition	5.327	PR2 -> Product	6.48
CO1 -> Customer acquisition	2.187	PR3 -> Product	3.729
CO2 -> Customer acquisition	6.164	PE1 ->Staff	3.428
CO3 -> Customer conversion	6.187	PE2 -> Staff	2.656
CO4 -> Customer conversion	1.91	PE3 -> Staff	1.914
SE1 -> Services	7.855	PE4 -> Staff	3.548
SE2 -> Services	3.041		

Source: own elaboration.

Table 5. Indicator FIL (Formative Indicator Loadings)

	Indicator FIL	T. stat 95%		Indicator FIL	T. stat 95%
DC1 -> Content distribution	0.688	10.317	SE3 -> Services	0.799	18.202
DC2 -> Content distribution	0.841	21.025	IM1 -> Image	0.874	29.31
DC3 -> Content distribution	0.759	15.926	IM2 -> Image	0.777	18.672
DC4 -> Content distribution	0.806	21.706	IM3 -> Image	0.859	25.839
CC1 -> Customer acquisition	0.919	49.317	IM4 -> Image	0.827	22.653
CC2 -> Customer acquisition	0.717	16.56	PR1 -> Product	0.879	31.071
CC3 -> Customer acquisition	0.617	11.572	PR2 -> Product	0.865	26.145
CO1 -> Customer conversion	0.732	14.067	PR3 -> Product	0.7	14.494
CO2 -> Customer conversion	0.856	24.81	PE1 -> Staff	0.864	21.284
CO3 -> Customer conversion	0.825	21.365	PE2 -> Staff	0.863	24.753
CO4 -> Customer conversion	0.584	11.076	PE3 -> Staff	0.871	23.646
SE1 -> Services	0.922	36.284	PE4 -> Staff	0.873	25.314
SE2 -> Services	0.792	19.488			

Source: own elaboration.

Structural model evaluation

Collinearity

The constructed latent variables do not present exact linear relationships, given that the VIF indicator of each of them is less than 3, as seen on Table 6, for all cases. In fact, it can be stated that there is no presence of collinearity between the variables evaluated, therefore, the estimates made do not present instability in the estimated parameters of the structural model.

Table 6. VIF (Variance inflation factor) of the independent latent variables

Var. Latent Exogenous	VIF
Content Distribution	2.083
Customer acquisition	2.161
Customer conversion	1.888

Source: own elaboration.

Results

For a complete interpretation, as seen in Figure 1, a diagram is presented below where everything is specified in relation to the calculation of the formative and structural measurement model, for which it is important to detail that the Content Distribution variables (CD), Customer Acquisition (CC) and Customer Conversion (CO) are dimensions of the Digital Marketing variable and, on the other hand, the variables of Image (IM), Product (PR), Services (SE) and Staff (PE) are Positioning dimensions. It is also important to clarify that the diagram shown in Figure 1 is a product of a structural model estimation using partial least squares. Taking into account that the assumptions of the measurement and structural model were validated, the model interpretation presented in Figure 1 is still considered.

Mainly, it is observed that the Content Distribution level has a more significant impact on the Staff level, followed by the Image, Product and Service level; it should be noted that its effect on the Service level is significant at 90% of confidence, but the other effects are significant at 95% and 99%. Additionally, it can be said that if CD increases by one level, then the level of PE, IM, PR, and SE rise by 0.246, 0.216, 0.231, and 0.109 parts of a level, respectively.

Regarding the Customer Acquisition (CA) level, it is observed that this has a significant effect at 90%, 95% and 99% confidence on all the latent dependent variables; it is also notable that the level of CA has a more significant influence above the level of SE, followed by PR, IM and PE. Additionally, it can be said, based on the diagram, that if CA increases one level, then the levels of SE, PR, IM, and PE increase by 0.395, 0.368, 0.366, and 0.310 parts of a level, respectively (Table 7).

Likewise, it is observed that Customer Conversion (CC) significantly explains all the dependent latent variables at 90%, 95% and 99% confidence levels; Individually, its effect is greater to explain at the SE level, followed by the PR, IM and PE levels; regarding the detail of the effect, it is interpreted that, if CC increases by one level, then PR, IM and PE increase by 0.286, 0.247, 0.220 and 0.194 parts of a level, respectively.

Regarding the level of adjustment of the regressions, it is observed that the latent variable best explained by the group of independent variables is first the Product level, with 53.4% of R^2; the second regression with the highest R^2 corresponds to Image, followed by Service and Staff, with R^2 goodness of fit of 51.7%, 49.1% and 43.3%, respectively. This result is relevant given that it is a sign that the variations in the Positioning dimensions are explained on average by 49.38% by the Digital Marketing dimensions; therefore, there are other aspects different from this last variable that are important to explain the "Positioning" variable.

Given the results, it can be said that, regarding the relevance of the independent latent variables, the range in Customer Acquisition has more impact on the dependent latent variables since its average effect is around 0.36 parts of the level, followed by Customer Conversion with 0.24 and Content Distribution with 0.20 level parts. In this case, if you want to improve the Positioning level, it is important to consider that making decisions in favour of Customer Acquisition contributes more to the objective, followed by Customer Conversion and Content Distribution.

Table 7. Results of the hypotheses tested for the model variables

Hypothesis	β	Decision
H1: DC and IM	0.232	Accepted H1
H2: DC and PR	0.216	Accepted H2
H3: DC and SE	0.109	Accepted H3
H4: DC and PE	0.246	Accepted H4
H5: CC and IM	0.366	Accepted H5
H6: CC and PR	0.368	Accepted H6
H7: CC and SE	0.395	Accepted H7
H8: CC and PE	0.310	Accepted H8
H9: CO and IM	0.220	Accepted H9
H10: CO and PR	0.247	Accepted H10
H11: CO and SE	0.286	Accepted H11
H12: CO and PE	0.194	Accepted H12

Source: own elaboration.

Discussion

The present study, based on a structural analysis of digital marketing at Universidad Continental, incorporates dimensions of digital marketing that are relevant for positioning through its background and literature reviews. Through the PLS-SEM model supported by previous studies, two variables are considered "digital marketing" and "positioning the university". Based on the study's results, the dimensions of digital marketing: content distribution, customer acquisition, and customer conversion positively affect the positioning dimensions; in contrast to the results obtained, the most striking feature is the connection between customer acquisition and service. The connection and dynamic between the student and the University are appreciated based on its track record and reputation in technology, innovation, infrastructure, and educational quality. Regarding content distribution and staff, students have a positive perception of the staff due to the presence of research professors and studies in university teaching. Therefore, students show appreciation through the service.
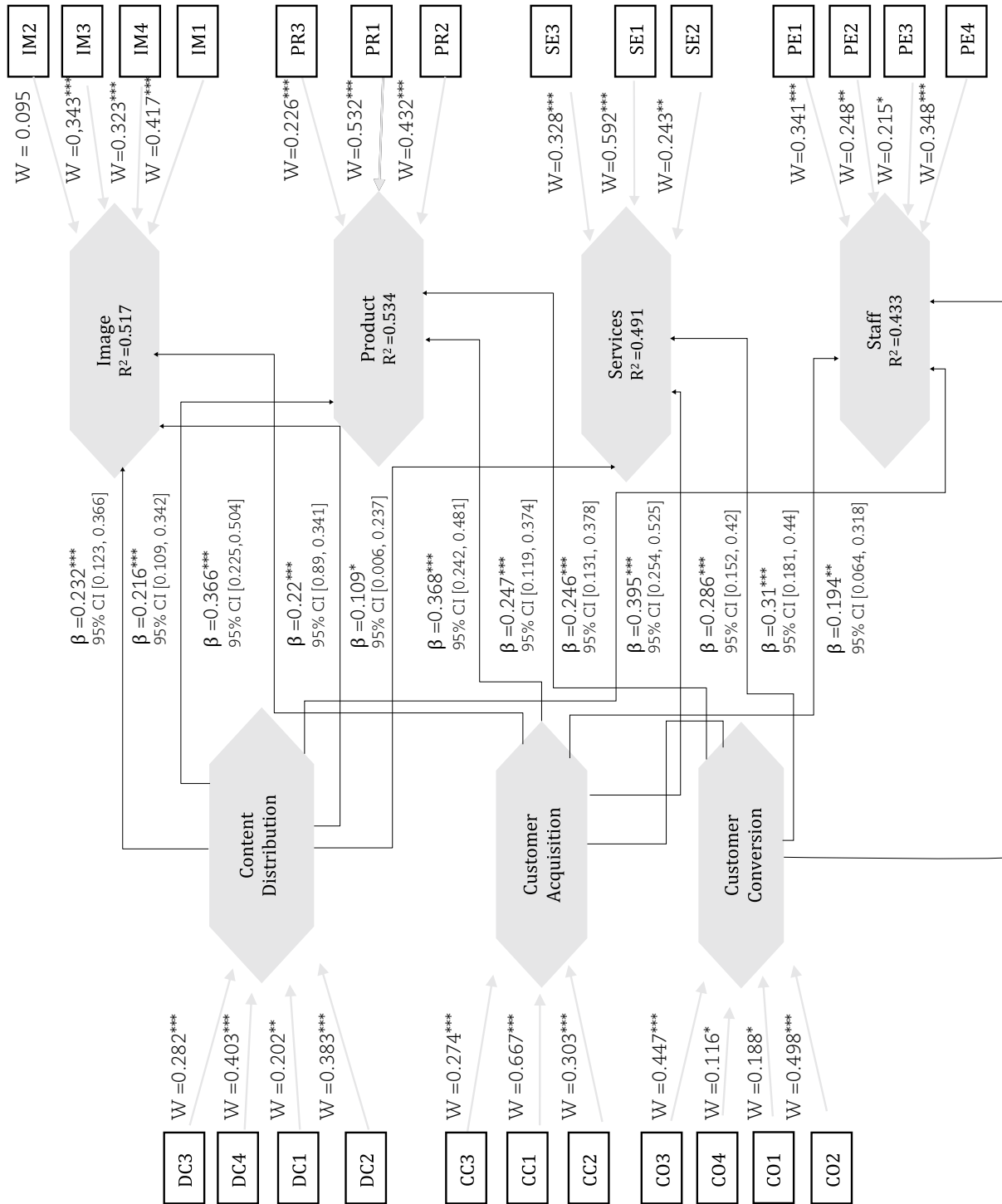
Figure 1. Structural model of digital marketing and positioning

Source: own elaboration.

When analyzing the background and literature reviews of digital marketing, it is observed that it has a positive impact on positioning.

Accordingly, based on other studies, Tiwari et al. (2023), indicate that digital media are the most used tools as a channel for digital marketing; this study shows that digital media are currently the most influential channels, which can be used to analyse customer profiles and needs. Therefore, it is important to encourage the use of digital marketing to achieve business success; compared with other studies where results were obtained; Cuellar et al., (2023) The development of a digital marketing plan ensures the implementation of solid and effective strategies aligned with organisational objectives and the changing demands of the market. Salonen et al., (2024). The he findings of this study confirm that digital marketing content highlights the importance of rational content, transactional content, and interactive content. The results indicate that these three types of content generate a high level of engagement. The aim is to make the content more attractive and attract the attention of the customer. These findings imply that universities should consider positive and negative outcomes to formulate client acquisition strategies, content distribution, and customer conversion in order to have a positive effect on the positioning of universities which are implementing strategies to improve the Image.

For a deeper analysis of the dimensions of digital marketing, the most accepted is the acquisition of clients, since according to the results, we see that the Universidad Continental has innovative and informative advertising because it is constantly updating its digital media and platforms in order to achieve a higher ranking through the product/service offered by the university to students interested in plans and programmes.

In the context of customer conversion in digital marketing, it is observed that students continuously explore and navigate the university's digital media in search of immediate attention. The university efficiently responds to frequently asked questions and addresses students' personal and academic needs by offering relevant updates through its digital platforms. This strategy allows the institution to evaluate its customer conversion rate while reinforcing its commitment to high-quality education. Additionally, the university stands out for its modern infrastructure and facilities, strengthening its position in the ranking of the top universities in Peru.

The dimension of digital marketing, distribution of content based on surveys, the content published on virtual platforms is of high educational value that remains in force and is easily accessible and visualised in their digital and traditional media, where they provide us with information through social media, radio and advertising boards for further content distribution, The European Commission has published a study on the role of the European Union in the field of education and training, which is being carried out by the European Commission the Universidad Continental has 298 registered researchers and investigations regarding university teaching, with years of experience, the respondents state that teachers are qualified and fit to teach the required courses, The aim is to have a positive effect on the positioning of the Universidad Continental.

Regarding the "customer acquisition" dimension and the indicators: Service, Product, Staff, and Image of the Positioning variable, the results were 0.395, 0.368, 0.366, and 0.310. Thus, Philipp (2017) states that imposing undefined service standards decreases the value of loyal customers with the company, which is why he proposes directing advertising focused on specialised customer service; similarly, the results of the research of Aguirre et al. (2021), indicates that there is a moderately significant relationship between "service quality" and "customer retention", this means that if the quality of service increases, so will customer retention, based on the "Spearman's Rho" coefficient, which is 0.691 (r = .691**, p = .000). Regarding the product, Iyer et al. (2021) indicates that the connection between customer acquisition and **products** is complicated and has many aspects, influenced by various factors that trigger the obtaining of a new product. Ocampo et al. (2021) highlight in their results that the **employees'** role in attracting customers is fundamental in a local cafeteria.

Having trained and dedicated staff focusing on improving service quality, customer satisfaction, and customer acquisition is crucial. Regarding corporate Image, according to the research by Ramos and Neri (2022), customers believe that the company is very focused on creating a clear image and fulfiling the commitments they made in their advertisements or promotions; however, we also believe that the company shows a moderate interest in making its products different from those of the competition. A valuation of 0.657 was found according to the "Spearman's Rho" coefficient, which indicates the 4 p's.

According to the findings, the level of content distribution has the most significant impact on the Staff level; in second place is the Image, followed by Product and finally, the Service level, which, as observed, presents high significance levels. Thus, in similar studies such as that of Firstianti and Fajar (2023), a significant and positive relationship with a value of p < 0.05 is evident between staff performance and the integration of digital content to increase business growth. With respect to the Distribution of Content on the Image level, the research by Bui et al. (2023) highlights that the patterns of digital marketing content used, whether distributed for social, informational or entertainment purposes, have a moderate impact in relation to brand perception, identifying a value of p > 0.5 with a significant level. On the other hand, it is also noted that the higher the level of Content Distribution, the higher the level of product will be, increasing by 0.231; this is also reflected in the research by Urrutia and Napán (2021), which at a higher level of marketing of content referring to networks design and management, there is a higher level of acquisition of online products, this through the operation of digital marketing strategies and tools. Finally, regarding the Service level in which Content Distribution has less influence with respect to the other indicators, the study made by Matak et al. (2020) evidences the opposite, given that customers' knowledge of the information on the services offered on social networks increases by

presenting a more dynamic distribution of the structure of social network marketing.

Regarding the Customer Conversion (CO) dimension, it has a greater effect on the Service level, secondly on the product level, followed by the Image and staff level, likewise, as evidenced in the results obtained if the customer conversion increases by one level, then Services, Product, Image and Staff increase by 0.286, 0.247, 0.220 and 0.194 parts of a level, respectively. The research of Ariste et al. (2023) indicates that customer conversion has a significant impact on business management, which increases the service contract through social networks by 31.11%. Secondly, in relation to the Product level, the study by Joko (2023) states that sales conversions in electronic media improve the optimisation of products, which in the case study are cars. Likewise, they also improve customer experience and perception. In relation to the Staff level and the implications of Customer Conversion, in the research of Otis and Wu (2018), a conversion mechanism is developed that includes customer preferences, staff division, and staff extra-organisational entities for the valuation of their work in which urban employees are more favoured by conversions in capital. Finally, there is the Image level; this indicator is influenced to a lesser extent by Customer Conversion; the results indicate that it only increases by 0.194 parts of the level each time the CO increases. In contrast, Monroy et al. (2021) affirm that audience conversion is related to content marketing strategies that, in turn, seek to increase consumer loyalty and commitment.

Conclusions

Regarding the hypotheses raised, the dimensions of digital marketing, such as Customer Acquisition, Customer Conversion, and Content Distribution, are concluded to have an influence on positioning. Likewise, of the three dimensions presented, Customer Acquisition has the greatest influence on positioning, followed by Customer Conversion and thirdly, Content Distribution.

Likewise, in relation to the positioning dimensions, it is concluded that Customer Acquisition influences to a greater extent the Service level and to a lesser extent the Image level. On the other hand, Content Distribution has a greater influence on the Staff level and less influence on the Service level. Finally, Customer Conversion has greater effects on the Service level and occurs to a lesser extent at the Staff level.

For this research, the limitations that were presented were the collection of information, and the fact that no scientific articles and no research on digital marketing and positioning in the education sector were found; therefore, more research is needed, The European Commission has published a report on the Fifth Framework Programme for Education and Training, which is available in English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese and Spanish.

Digital marketing would not be the only variable that affects positioning, by which we find variables that slightly resemble our research such as advertising, data analysis, digital technology, strategic marketing, among other variables, but on the other hand it was not found in the same education sector, but in other financial sectors, The European Commission has been working on this subject since the beginning of the 1980s.

In the present research study based on theory and practice, digital marketing contributes to the educational training of professional students from different fields of study from all Peruvian universities that apply digital marketing; the Universidad Continental must, therefore, invest in customer acquisition to improve its positioning. Today, digital marketing is the most relevant and effective means to publicise proposals and inform students. To this end, surveys were conducted to measure the use of digital marketing at universities.

However, the dimensions considered in this study were investigated to measure the use of digital marketing and its effect on positioning; to achieve this, to explain in depth it is necessary to address other dimensions of digital marketing in order to explain the positioning of universities; this study has not managed to explain more than 55% on average, It is, therefore, preferable to consider new dimensions because as evidence of the results obtained we find that only part of the university's positioning is explained. The European Commission has already published a report on the European Union's position in the field of education and training. There are other factors that affect the positioning of the study, which is based on a series of studies carried out in the field of education and training.

Conflict of interests

There is no conflict of interest since everyone works for the same company.

Authors' contribution

Yilda Lisset Canaza Calsina: Conceptualisation, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, writing – original draft, validation, resources, (writing – review and editing, software). Aldo Jeampiere Torvisco Becerra: Conceptualisation, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, writing – original draft, validation, resources, (project administration, supervision). Harold Delfín Angulo Bustinza: Conceptualisation, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, writing – original draft, validation, resources, (visualization).

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