

Building Brand Loyalty Through Digital Marketing: The Mediating Role Of Brand Trust

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ABSTRACT

This article examines how the rise of online communities has impacted the ability of businesses to acquire trust and loyalty from consumers. Here, we'll look at how marketing through social media and brand communities may improve the usability of brands, influence consumer sentiment, and, in the end, boost sales and loyalty. We investigated 85 participants on critical criteria such as brand consumption, social media, impression management, and brand communities using a quantitative survey-based method. Having trust in the brand is the connecting factor that makes all of these factors, according to our research, contribute to consumer loyalty. If the study's findings hold, marketers will have more information about their customers and their online behaviour to work with.

Keywords: - Brand Loyalty, Brand Trust, Brand Use

INTRODUCTION

Brand loyalty is more important than it has ever been for businesses to flourish in today's competitive market and to win and keep customers over the long term. As a result of the rapid advancement of digital technology in our period, digital marketing has emerged as an indispensable tactic for acquiring and maintaining valuable clients. Modern organizations make use of content marketing, social media, email, and search engines in order to expand their customer base, establish the reputation of their brand, and cultivate connections that will stay. It is possible for businesses to strengthen their relationships with their customers through the use of digital marketing; but, the success of these efforts is contingent on one essential component: the reliability of the brand among consumers. Understanding the role that brand trust plays in mediating the connection between digital marketing and customer loyalty is essential for every company that aspires to transform one-time contacts into devoted customers for life.

The Importance of Digital Marketing in Cultivating Customer Loyalty

Digital marketing plays an intricate part in building brand loyalty since it allows brands to engage with consumers, educate them, and meet their demands. Brands may establish themselves as industry leaders by embracing content marketing, which allows them to provide clients with relevant and engaging information based on their needs and interests. Brands have a great chance to become market leaders because of this. Social media marketing's meteoric ascent has, in turn, created a new avenue of contact between brands and the consumers they aim to attract. This allows companies the choice to receive feedback and interaction quickly. By delivering consumers information and offers that are specifically designed to satisfy their needs, email marketing allows firms to engage with customers on a more personal level and encourages them to make repeat purchases. An important advantage of digital marketing that contributes to the growth of customer loyalty is personalization. This is due to the fact that it improves the customer service standard. Companies may create personalized experiences for their clients through data segmentation, which helps them build a personal relationship with those consumers. Using targeted marketing, selected product ideas, and tailored content, customers are made to feel understood and valued. As a result, their bond with the brand becomes stronger. Digital marketing also allows businesses

to build customer loyalty programs that reward consumers for returning to the site. This allows them to turn one-time customers into lifelong advocates. Digital marketing is great for getting people to notice your business and buy something, but it won't cut it when it comes to turning them into loyal customers. In order to establish trust with customers, it is critical to provide assurances on the brand's integrity, principles, and ability to fulfill its promises. In order to build credibility, this is essential. The moderating role of trust in a brand may be found in this situation. You can find this function inside this structure, and it has the potential to greatly impact the performance of digital marketing in developing loyalty.

The Mediating Function of Consumer Confidence in Online Advertising

Trust in the brand acts as a mediator between digital marketing and their ability to retain customers. For this reason, it is not an unrealistic assumption to believe that digital marketing has the potential to increase customer loyalty by increasing brand identification, interaction, and appreciation with customers. Trust is often the determining factor in whether or not these efforts result in a commitment that is long-lasting. In the event if a firm is not dependable, for instance, it will not matter how responsive a company is on social media or how quickly it responds to queries from consumers; customers will still be hesitant to suggest or purchase from that company again. Several studies have been conducted to investigate the relevance of brands that can be trusted in the context of internet advertising. It is more likely that consumers would interact with brand content, participate in promotions, and offer positive evaluations when they have a positive perception of the brand. Digital marketing activities are more effective when customers have a positive perception of the brand. Advertisements that are trustworthy, employ language that is consistent throughout, and display concern for the audience in question are likely to accomplish the goal of gaining their confidence. In situations when customers have trust in a firm, they are more likely to remain loyal to that company during both good and bad times.

When consumers have confidence in a brand, they are more likely to have a favourable response to digital marketing activities. Personalized product recommendations, as well as marketing sent via email or social media, are examples of things that are more beneficial to customers who have confidence in a certain business. There is a correlation between people's emotional investment in a product or service and their level of brand loyalty to that product or service. Consequently, it is imperative for firms to concurrently focus on establishing trust with their clientele while simultaneously devising effective strategies for managing digital marketing. Consequently, the connection between advertising and repeat business will become more robust as a consequence.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Passent Tantawi (2024) The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact that social media marketing has on brand loyalty in Egyptian private hospitals, with a particular emphasis on the aspect of customer experience that acts as a mediator. With the use of a questionnaire that was sent out to 416 consumers and examined via the use of structural equation modelling (SEM), the findings reveal that social media marketing has considerable direct effects on both customer experience and brand loyalty. Additionally, the link between social media marketing and brand loyalty is somewhat mediated by the manner in which customers encounter the brand. It is clear from these data that social media plays an important part in fostering patient loyalty within the healthcare industry.

Amel Pintol (2023) The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence that social media marketing activities (SMMA) have on brand equity for bottled water companies in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with a particular emphasis on the role that brand trust plays as a mediator. According to the findings of the study, which involved the examination of data from 518 customers, SMMA has a direct impact on both brand trust and brand equity, with brand trust serving as a mediator in this connection. The findings are intended to better knowledge of the role that social media plays in brand equity and to aid companies in making successful use of social media; nevertheless, the results may vary depending on the cultural context in which they are used.

Noha Bendary (2017) The elements that contribute to increased brand loyalty in Egypt's mobile operations industry are investigated in this article. The trust-loyalty relationship is supported by a number of essential variables, including the brand experience, brand associations, and perceived quality, according to this study. According to the findings of a survey conducted on consumers of mobile service providers,

brand experiences and associations, in addition to perceived quality, are key contributors to brand loyalty. On the other hand, brand awareness did not demonstrate any impact on this connection.

ShubhapriyaBennur (2016) In this study, a comparison is made between the United States of America and India to investigate how customer perceptions of advantages from garment brands impact brand loyalty. More than utilitarian benefit perceptions, it is shown that hedonic benefit perceptions are more effective in enhancing brand trust and brand affect, with brand affect serving as the primary mediator for loyalty. Furthermore, country-specific effects demonstrate that these correlations are greater for consumers in the United States than they are for consumers in India, which serves to highlight substantial implications for both academics and corporate managers.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To assess how social networking site usage impacts brand loyalty.
2. To evaluate the mediating role of brand trust in the relationship between social networking site usage and brand loyalty.

HYPOTHESIS

- H1: Social networking sites have a significant positive impact on brand loyalty among users.
- H2: Brand trust plays a mediating role in the relationship between social networking site usage and brand loyalty.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Theoretical assumptions are put to the test in this quantitative research piece through the use of a deductive methodology. The data was gathered from real Facebook users using a non-probability convenience sampling method, which is frequently employed in studies examining brand communities. Since college and university students are more likely to be active on SNS and Brand Communities and have the technical know-how to make the most of these platforms, they were surveyed to get primary data. There were a total of 95 surveys sent out to people who were active in online brand groups, with 85 usable replies. There were two parts to the survey: one had a set of demographic questions, and the other had six constructs totalling twenty-three items. The Social Networking construct had eight components, the Brand Community build had six, the Impression Management construct had three, the Brand Use construct had two, the Brand Trust construct had two, and the Brand Loyalty construct also had two. The researchers used a 5-point Likert scale to assess each component.

Sampling Technique

This study followed standard practice in brand community research by using a non-probability convenience sample method. Since college and university students are more likely to be active on social media and have the background knowledge to make good use of these sites, they made up the bulk of the sample. We chose this group to learn about students' brand perceptions and engagement in online forums.

Data Collection

Among members of online brand communities, 95 surveys were sent out. Data analysis was conducted using 85 of these surveys that were filled out. The survey consisted of two primary parts:

Demographic Variables: Respondents' basic demographic information was gathered in this area.

Construct Variables: Section 2 measured several facets of social media and brand engagement using six constructs and twenty-three items in total. Some of the components were:

Social Networking Construct: 8 items

- Brand Community Construct
- Impression Management
- Brand Use
- Brand Trust
- Brand Loyalty

DATA ANALYSIS

The constructs were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale, which ranges from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree." Because of this, we were able to quantify the replies and study the correlations between the variables statistically. In order to analyze the data, the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used. The reliability and validity of the constructs were evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha. Hypotheses were examined using regression, mediation, and correlation analyses once the questionnaire was validated. The following hypotheses are tested in this study:

H1: Social networking sites have a significant positive impact on brand loyalty among users.

H2: Brand trust plays a mediating role in the relationship between social networking site usage and brand loyalty.

There was a single dependent variable, one mediator, and four independent variables analysed.

The internal consistency reliability of each variable was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with values over 0.7 being deemed ideal. Descriptive statistics made use of frequencies to distribute data. All constructs were evaluated for sample adequacy using KMO and Bartlett's test. To assess the interrelationships of the variables, we ran correlation tests, and to find out how well our models worked, we utilized regression analysis. To investigate the mediation effects and the variables' importance, coefficients were computed.

Table: 1 Education Level Distribution of Respondents

Education Level	Frequency	Percentage
Undergraduate	55	64.7%
Graduate	25	29.4%
Postgraduate	5	5.9%
Total	85	100%

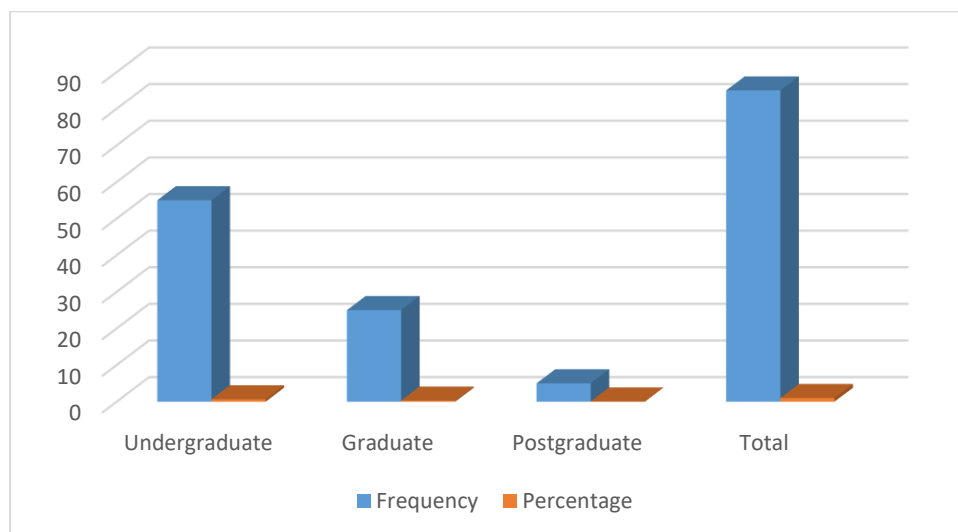


Figure: 1 Showing percentage of Education Level

Education Level data shows that 64.7% of 85 respondents are undergraduates, indicating a large digital marketing community of younger people. Only 5.9% are postgraduate, whereas 29.4% are graduate. This distribution emphasizes the significance of adapting marketing methods to this largely younger population, whose habits can greatly impact brand loyalty.

Table: 2 Social Media Usage Distribution of Respondents

Social Media Usage	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 hour/day	10	11.8%
1-2 hours/day	30	35.3%
3-4 hours/day	25	29.4%
More than 4 hours/day	20	23.5%
Total	85	100%

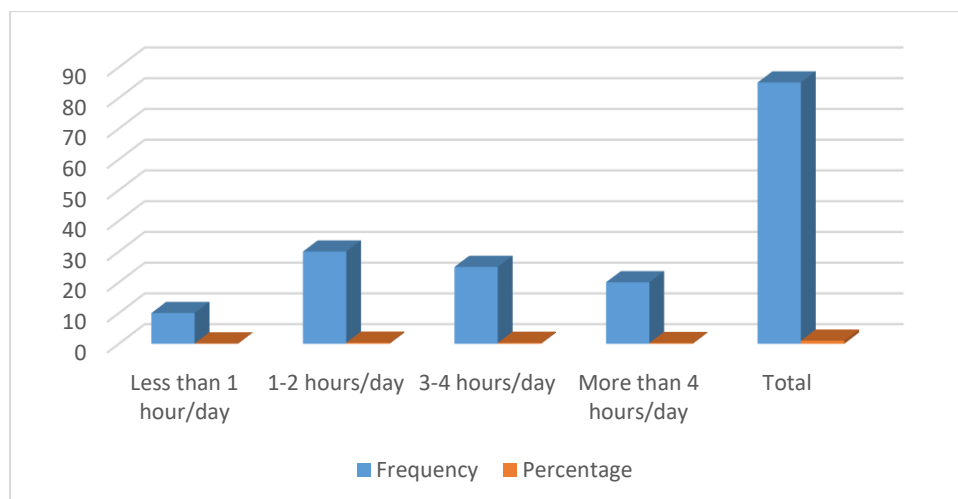


Figure: 2. Showing percentage of Social Media Usage

Social media usage statistics shows that 35.3% of 85 respondents use it every day for 1-2 hours and 29.4% for 3-4 hours. 11.8% spend less than 1 hour every day, while 23.5% spend over 4 hours. This high engagement level implies that social media strongly impacts brand views and loyalty, highlighting the necessity for tailored marketing.

Table: 3 Gender Distribution of Respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	35	41.2%
Female	30	35.3%
Other	20	23.5%
Total	85	100%

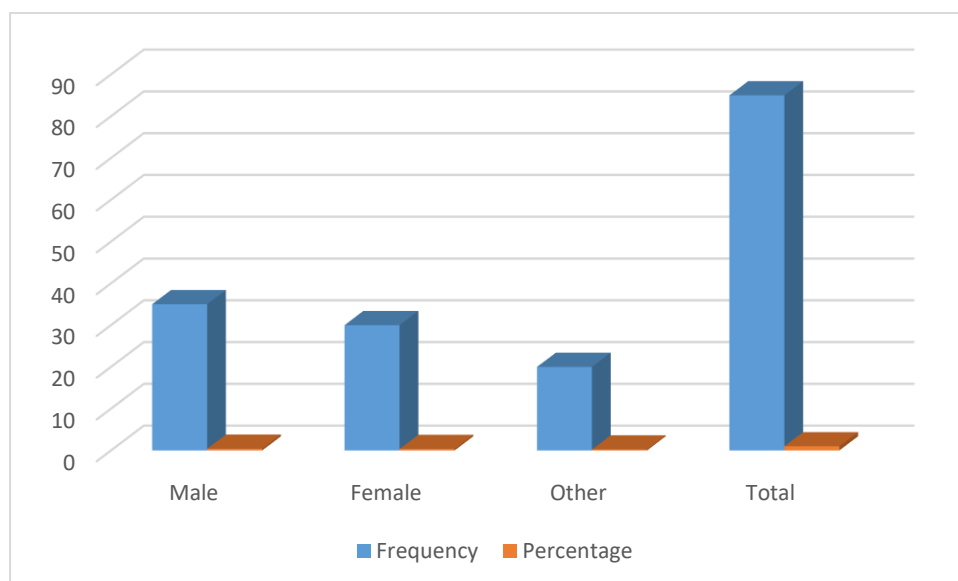


Figure: 3 Showing percentage of Gender employees

Gender data shows 41.2% of 85 respondents are male, 35.3% female, and 23.5% other. This balanced gender distribution shows a diversified demographic that might affect brand interactions and loyalty. Marketers should consider this variety when creating brand engagement and connection strategies.

Table: 4 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Under 25	40	47.1%
25-34	30	35.3%
35-44	10	11.8%

45 and above	5	5.9%
Total	85	100%

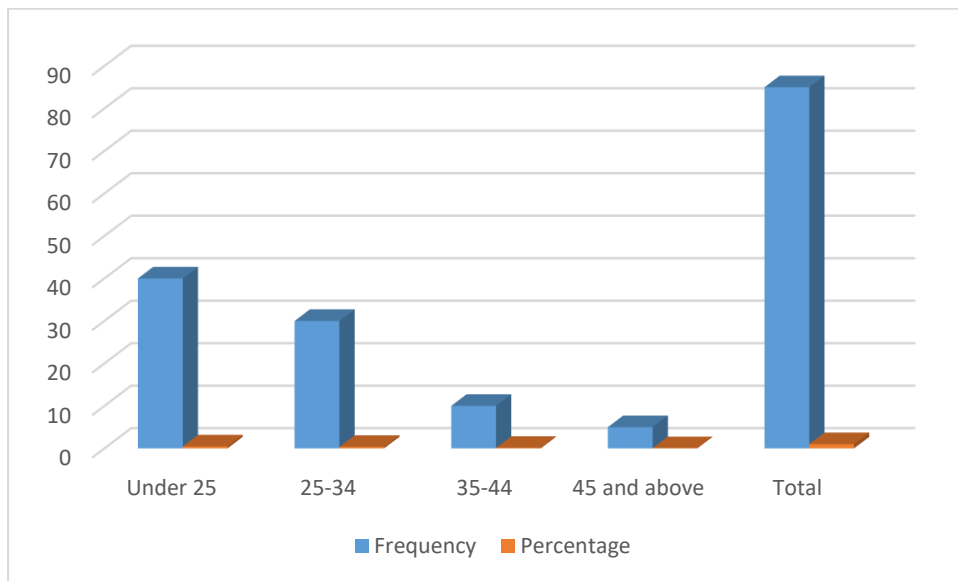


Figure: 4 Showing percentage of Age

47.1% of 85 respondents are under 25, 35.3% are 25-34, 11.8% are 35-44, 5.9% 45+. This distribution implies younger audiences prefer distinct digital marketing and brand loyalty than older audiences. Marketing to youth demands unique strategies.

Table: 5 Reliability Analysis

Constructs	No. of Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach's Alpha
Social Networking Sites	8	3.6815	0.55737	0.734
Brand Community	6	3.7145	0.51835	0.700
Impression Management	3	3.7232	0.65060	0.713
Brand Use	2	3.7957	0.54071	0.732
Brand Trust	2	3.6203	0.74553	0.795
Brand Loyalty	2	3.7435	0.77450	0.706

The table shows construct descriptive analysis and dependability. All constructs have Cronbach's Alpha values over 0.70, showing dependability. Social Networking Sites had a mean of 3.6815 and a standard deviation of 0.55737, while Brand Trust had 0.795 Cronbach's Alpha.

Table: 6 KMO and Bartlett's Test

Measure	Value
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy	0.784
Approx. Chi-Square	387.128
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity (Df)	15
Significance	0.000

The KMO sample adequacy value was 0.784, suggesting high variable correlation. The results imply factor analysis was appropriate for the constructs.

Table: 7 Correlation Analysis

	SN	BC	IM	BU	BT	BL
SN	1					
BC	0.565**	1				
IM	0.396**	0.590**	1			

	SN	BC	IM	BU	BT	BL
BU	0.430**	0.418**	0.437**	1		
BT	0.035	0.266**	0.222**	0.177**	1	
BL	0.426**	0.489**	0.412**	0.382**	0.357**	1

Variables are positively correlated in the analysis. Social Networking Sites and Brand Community are 56.5% positively correlated. Brand Loyalty correlates strongly with all dimensions, the most with Brand Community (48.9%).

Table: 8 Regression Analysis

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.604	0.365	0.351	0.624

The regression analysis shows a good model fit with R=0.604. The R-squared score of 0.365 indicates that independent factors explain 36.5% of Brand Loyalty variation, whereas the Adjusted R-squared value (0.351) explains 35.1%.

Table: 9 Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Social Networking Sites	0.232	0.097	0.167	2.396
Brand Community	0.385	0.115	0.257	3.332
Impression Management	0.155	0.085	0.130	1.829
Brand Use	0.208	0.093	0.145	2.227

Dependent variable: Brand Loyalty.

The regression supports H1, showing that Social Networking Sites affect Brand Loyalty ($t = 2.396$, $p = 0.017$). Brand Community and Use also affect Brand Loyalty. Impression Management neared significance ($p = 0.069$).

Table: 10 Mediation Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	T	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
Social Networking Sites	0.306	0.094	0.220	3.248
Brand Community	0.275	0.113	0.184	2.427
Impression Management	0.152	0.047	0.239	3.549
Brand Use	0.316	0.087	0.179	2.432
Brand Trust	0.266	0.059	0.256	4.539

Brand Loyalty Dependent.

The mediation study validates H2, revealing that Brand Trust strongly mediates Social Networking Site use and Brand Loyalty. The significance levels of all variables remain at 5%, while the standardized coefficients change after accounting for Brand Trust, indicating partial mediation.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes the importance of digital marketing, particularly social media and brand communities, in building brand loyalty. Social networking sites increase brand loyalty, but brand trust mediates this relationship. The survey shows that many respondents are students, highlighting younger consumers' digital marketing participation. Participants' high social media use shows how the medium shapes brand perceptions. Social networking sites, brand community, and brand loyalty are positively correlated, suggesting firms should prioritize trust-building in digital marketing. In conclusion, the research on brand trust's mediating function in digital marketing can improve marketing efforts.

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