



Conceptualizing the Impact of Digital Marketing on Customer Loyalty through Brand Awareness and Customer Engagement

*Ria Prasetyaningsih¹ Ambar Lukitaningsih²

^{1,2}Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa, Yogyakarta, Indonesia
[1*rhea.setya@gmail.com](mailto:rhea.setya@gmail.com), [2ambar.ita@ustjogja.ac.id](mailto:ambar.ita@ustjogja.ac.id),

* Corresponding Author

Abstract. The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of digital marketing on customer loyalty through brand awareness and customer engagement. Organizations are deploying digital marketing as a strategic tool to access and engage customers, create brand awareness, and maintain sustainable customer loyalty. In spite of receiving considerable attention because of the fact that various studies have indicated a positive role played by digital marketing on customer loyalty, there remains an ambiguity in terms of understanding how this effect is driven. This research aims to fill that gap by exploring how digital marketing influences brand awareness and customer engagement, which in turn affect customer loyalty. The study focuses on POLYTRON, a local electronics brand, to explore how their digital marketing efforts in Indonesia impact customer relationships. The results indicated that digital marketing has a significant impact on customer loyalty via increasing brand recognition and enhancing customer attention. The implications of the study were found to be relevant for companies willing to formulate their digital marketing strategy better with respect to customer loyalty.

Keywords: Digital Marketing, Brand Awareness, Customer Engagement, Customer Loyalty, Mediating Effects, Marketing Strategy.

1 Introduction

Digitalization has changed the way companies interact with consumers. A global survey shows that more than 80% of companies use Digital Media as the main tool to reach the audience. In this context, brand awareness is one of the main metrics of the success of a digital strategy [1]. On the other hand, customer engagement, which reflects the level of customer engagement with the brand, is also gaining more attention as an important performance indicator [2]. Digital marketing has become an important element in modern business dynamics. In a digital era full of technological transformation, companies are competing to create a competitive advantage through technology-based marketing approaches. In this context, brand awareness and customer engagement emerge as the main factors that play an important role in building Customer Loyalty [3].

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There is a positive and significant influence between perceived influence on brand engagement and brand expected value, and ultimately affects intention to purchase. Meanwhile, the results of the study [4] highlighting the importance of the role brand awareness and brand image in building brand loyalty to consumers. The results of the study show that the higher the level of brand awareness that consumers have, the greater the chance of trust in the brand, which ultimately strengthens customer loyalty to the products or services offered. However, the role of digital marketing strategy, brand awareness, customer engagement, and customer loyalty still requires more in-depth exploration, especially in understanding the role of customer engagement as a mediator [2].

In the context of local electronics companies such as POLYTRON, digitalization has also been a key driver of the transformation of its marketing strategy. As one of the leading electronics brands in Indonesia, POLYTRON faces the challenge of maintaining consumer loyalty amid stiff competition with global brands such as Samsung, LG, and Sharp. Through its digital marketing strategy, POLYTRON seeks to strengthen brand awareness by displaying a brand image that is modern, innovative, and close to Indonesian consumers through various digital platforms, including social media, marketplaces, and interactive content-based campaigns. These efforts not only aim to expand market reach, but also to increase customer engagement through two-way communication that builds emotional closeness with consumers. But the success of marketing tactics depends to a large extent on how much involved consumers feel with and how satisfactory personal experience is with the brand, leading to the building of sustainable customer loyalty to POLYTRON in the digital age. Although Digital Marketing can growth your brand awareness, sustainability is hinged on the customer's level engagement [5].

A number of studies show that digital marketing strategies that include content personalization, two-way interaction through social media, and quick response through digital channels can increase brand loyalty. As research from [6], [7], [8] which explains that digital marketing has an effect signifikan to customer loyalty. In addition, a study from [9] It also found that digital marketing and personalization were shown to have a correlation signifikan to customer loyalty. However, other studies have shown less consistent results: for example [10] It was found that digital marketing shows a negative influence but insignificant to customer loyalty. Then research from [11] an exposure of fashion goods "Second Kita" shows that digital marketing does not influence the loyalty and customer satisfaction significantly, but product quality positively influences them, and the level of satisfaction has same positive effect on loyalty. This implies that the loyalty builders of digital marketing need to be backed with other elements.

Customer engagement plays a very important role in bridging the relationship between Digital Marketing and Customer Loyalty [12]. Research on Australian consumers shows that digital marketing strategies signifikan Increase customer engagement, although this engagement doesn't necessarily translate into loyalty without considering other factors [13]. Based on the AIDA (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) theory, effective Digital Marketing is able to attract customers' attention through creative and relevant campaigns [14]. AIDA's theory provides a strong theoretical foundation to support this analysis. This theory emphasizes the importance of attracting attention, building interest, creating desire, and encouraging action as the

main steps in creating a holistic customer experience [15].

In this context, customer engagement is a key element that plays a role at every stage of this process [16]. Once awareness is sparked, customers start emoting and thinking about the brand in form of interactions; comments having participated in some or other digital activity. Companies, for example, that are using social media as part of a social interaction to enable cooperation customers are likely to see improvements in customer engagement. There is evidence that this Customer Engagement has a positive affect on the customers loyalty [17]. In other words, customer engagement acts as a bridge that connects Digital Marketing with Customer Loyalty [18]. This fact is backed by data from which reveals that the impact of digital marketing goes beyond quality/relevance of product and marketing mix to increase consumer involvement in a bid to develop enhanced emotional bonds and loyalty with customers [19]. This mechanism was proposed because there is still a gap in previous research, such as digital marketing on customer loyalty, the influence is often through intermediaries (mediators) or influenced by contextual/implementation circumstances, because it is directly insignificant [20].

In this case, customer engagement is an enhancer which enhances the influence of brand awareness on loyalty[21]. For example, high interaction customers may have a feeling of strong emotional attachment to the brand, even though their brand awareness was initially passive. This mediating pathway is particularly critical when intense market competition prevails. In the retail sector, customers who interact with a brand above and beyond passive awareness – for example through social media or digital apps – are much more likely to be loyal ambassadors than customers who know of, but not about, the brand in question. This implies that customer engagement is not only an outcome of Digital Marketing, but also it plays a significant role in the successful development of brand awareness and loyalty[22].

In this study, Relationship Marketing Theory [23] is the primary theoretical base used to elucidate how digital marketing strategy, brand awareness, customer engagement and customer loyalty relate to each other. This theory highlights the creation and sustenance of long term, cooperative relations between the companies and clients.githubusercontent. In the context of digital marketing, the relationship marketing approach aims not only to attract new customers, but also to strengthen existing customer engagement and loyalty through relevant experiences and personalization of interactions.

Digital Marketing plays an important role as the main trigger (initiator) in shaping brand awareness and customer engagement (customer engagement). Through engaging content, social media campaigns, and two-way communication, companies can create a closer and more emotional connection with their customers [24]. This is in line with the thinking in relationship marketing that high customer engagement is an indicator of trust and commitment to the relationship between customers and brands [25].

Furthermore, customer engagement plays an important role as a mediator that bridges Digital Marketing and Customer Loyalty [26]. When customers feel emotionally, cognitively, and behaviorally engaged towards a brand, they are more likely to show loyalty in the form of repurchases, brand advocacy, and reduced price sensitivity [27]. Similarly, high brand awareness helps to strengthen positive associations with brands and increases the likelihood of customers staying loyal [28].

Thus, Relationship Marketing Theory provides a strong theoretical basis in explaining that the success of Digital Marketing in creating Customer Loyalty is greatly influenced by its ability to build brand awareness and strong customer engagement. Long-term success is not only determined by the frequency of digital exposure, but also by the quality of the relationships established between the company and its customers.

Most previous research has focused on the direct relationship between Digital Marketing and, Customer Loyalty or on the mediating role of brand awareness and customer engagement separately. However, this research offers a new contribution by integrating the dual role of customer engagement as a mediator. Thus, this study not only explains how Digital Marketing affects Customer Loyalty but also shows how customer engagement can bridge the relationship between digital marketing and customer loyalty.

Customer engagement mediate the influence of digital marketing strategy, brand awareness and customer loyalty [29]. Recognizing this dual role enables firms to develop better strategies for creating lasting customer loyalty. This study not only contributes to academic literature by addressing this gap, but also has practical implications on how companies can best leverage digital marketing.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Relationship Marketing Theory

The Relationship Marketing Theory processes, represent the base and starting point from where to analyze how Silo-Busting Digital Strategies may influence Brand Awareness, Customer Engagement process design and development of Customer Loyalty. This concept highlights the need to develop long term relationships between firms and consumers rather than concentrating on just a one off transaction [32]. With digital marketing, the relationship-based lens comes into play through interactive media's (e.g., social media) and other digital channels that offer opportunities for companies to engage in direct, two-way communication with their clients.

Through relationship-based Digital Marketing, companies can increase brand awareness by conveying brand messages consistently and relevantly across various digital channels. When customers feel cared for and involved in brand communication, the level of customer engagement will increase. Such engagement consists of emotional, cognitive and behavioral response such as posting a like or comment, sharing/forwarding an appealing experience with others. While it may not be visible in the short term, relationships created over time will result in loyal customers where they believe you have their interest at heart and can establish a relationship with your brand.

Thus, Relationship Marketing Theory provides a strong conceptual framework to explain how relationally designed Digital Marketing is not only able to increase brand awareness and customer engagement, but also create sustainable loyalty [32], [33]. This theory is relevant in today's digital era, where well-managed relationships through digital platforms have proven to be able to provide a competitive advantage for companies.

2.2 Digital Marketing

Digital Marketing is a systematic approach designed by companies to utilize digital platforms in marketing their products or services [34]. This strategy involves the use of digital technology and social media to reach the target market more effectively and efficiently. Through digital marketing, companies can expand their audience reach, increase brand awareness, and drive visitor traffic to digital platforms such as websites or mobile applications. In addition, this strategy also focuses on converting visitors into customers by utilizing the right conversion techniques, such as email marketing, paid advertising, and affiliate marketing [34]. In the ever-growing digital era, Digital Marketing has become increasingly

fundamentally compose the marketing landscape. According to research, this strategy not only enriches the tools that companies use in building relationships with customers, but also empowers customers by giving them the opportunity to interact with the company, which was previously impossible [35]. Mixed-media marketing must also take into account how all three “buckets” of digital media — owned, paid and earned — should fit together to offer a unified customer experience. In simple words thus, Digital Marketing is not all about technology, but also understanding consumer’s behavior and to ensure that value creation for customers and businesses happens sustainably.

In addition, Digital Marketing encompasses planning, executing and measuring various marketing programs with the use of digital platforms. “Getting it right in digital marketing” also relies on knowledge of consumer behaviour and use of data for decision making in marketing as well [36]. This also encompasses SEO, promotion on social media platforms, digital content and data analytics to track campaign performance as well consumer responses [34]. This enables businesses to form closer, more dynamic relationships with consumers via digital channels, including social media and email.. Thus, Digital Marketing is not only oriented towards increasing sales, but also on building customer loyalty and engagement on a sustainable basis.

In a dynamic digital era, effective Digital Marketing must be flexible and adaptive to technological changes and market trends. Companies need to integrate various digital tools and marketing techniques to create engaging and relevant user experiences [36]. Recent trends such as data-driven marketing, the use of artificial intelligence (AI), content personalization, and influencer marketing are important parts of this strategy. The success of Digital Marketing relies heavily on a company’s ability to manage consumer data, understand market segmentation, and optimize various digital platforms to effectively achieve business goals.

2.3 Brand Awareness

Brand awareness is the extent to which consumers are able to recognize and remember a brand in various situations, either through visual recognition, name, logo, or other associations attached to the brand [37]. This brand awareness has two forms: the brand recognition and the brand recall. Brand recognition refers to the ability of consumers to recognise a brand when exposed, while brand recall relates to the ability of consumers to remember a brand without visual clues based on product category or a particular need [38]. These two aspects play an important role in the purchase

decision-making process, as consumers tend to choose brands they already know and remember over unfamiliar brands.

Brand Awareness has a strategic role in the consumer decision-making process. Consumers tend to choose brands they know and trust, even if they have limited information about the attributes of the product. A high level of brand awareness can expand the consideration set, which is the list of brands that consumers consider before buying, thus increasing the chances of the brand being chosen [39]. Therefore, various marketing strategies such as promotion, sponsorship, and customer relationship management are consistently used to build and maintain brand awareness. According to research, well-known brands are more likely to be included in consumer considerations and ultimately chosen, especially in the category of low-engagement products [37].

Facing the more and more severe market competition, constructing and maintaining brand image becomes a very important task for corporations. Good marketing practice like regular advertising, the employment of brand ambassadors and a good user experience will help with branding recall in the consumers. (c) Brand History According to [40] measuring brand awareness has to take into account that (i) the level of brand awareness changes over time and (ii) both these variables should reflect not to make mistakes in the calculation of country's contribution by using their measures. Therefore, a profound grasp of the mechanisms underlying brand awareness is needed in developing an efficient and enduring marketing strategy.

2.4 Customer Engagement

Customer engagement (CE) is an emergent concept in contemporary marketing which refers to engagement of customers with brands through communication places, including both physical and digital channels. In this regard, customer engagement is not restricted to shopping moments but encompasses customer involvement across different engagement realms such as feedback giving, active participation in social media and attendance of brand related events [41]. Recent studies emphasize that customer engagement behavior is a cognitive, emotional, and behavioral activity that has positive value and is related to the brand, either directly or indirectly, across various physical and virtual touchpoints [41].

The importance of customer engagement lies in its ability to create shared value between customers and companies. Customer engagement is seen as an investment of resources by customers—whether in the form of knowledge, skills, or emotions—into interactions with brands. Through meaningful interactions, customers not only receive value from a product or service, but also make valuable contributions to the company, such as feedback, innovative ideas, and word-of-mouth promotion. Study by [42] demonstrate that effective customer engagement can increase customer loyalty, strengthen brand equity, and drive sustainable business growth. In addition, customer engagement also plays an important role in omnichannel strategies, where consistent communication and channel coordination are key to creating a seamless and unified customer experience [43].

In the ever-evolving digital landscape, companies are required to adopt a proactive and integrated approach to drive customer engagement (CE) on an ongoing basis. Social media, as the epicenter of today's digital interaction, no longer functions

simply as a one-way communication channel, but as a dynamic space where customers transform into co-creators and content distributors that strengthen brand identity in the public mind. This transformation demands the use of technology to create personalized interactions, build a loyal community of customers, and provide a platform that encourages active participation. In line with the view [44], interactive strategies such as gamification have been proven to improve the quality of engagement by making the customer experience more engaging and meaningful. Recent studies have also shown that a consistent brand presence across digital channels allows for an open and sustainable dialogue, which is the foundation for co-creation value [41]. Therefore, CE is not only seen as a tool to drive short-term sales, but rather as a long-term relational strategy that creates a mutualistic symbiosis between customers and brands.

2.5 Customer Loyalty

Customer Loyalty is a fundamental concept in marketing that reflects a consumer's deep commitment to continue to buy or use products and services from a particular brand consistently in the future, despite various situational influences or marketing efforts from competitors that can drive rebranding behavior. [45]. This loyalty is reflected not only in repeated purchasing behavior, but also in the positive attitude and preference of customers towards the brand in question. Loyal customers tend to have a strong emotional connection with the brand, so they are more tolerant of price changes, less affected by competitor promotions, and are often advocates who recommend the brand to others [46].

3 Methodology

This study uses a conceptual approach to clarify theoretical constructs and develop new interpretations based on existing literature [47]. According to [48], a conceptual review helps identify research gaps and formulate frameworks for future empirical studies. Relevant literature is integrated to align with the research objectives, allowing a comprehensive understanding of relationships among key concepts. The outcome of this approach is a conceptual framework that can be empirically tested in future research. This framework aims to address several key questions: (1) Does Digital Marketing have a significant positive influence on Customer Loyalty? (2) Does Digital Marketing have a significant positive influence on brand awareness? (3) Does Digital Marketing have a significant positive influence on Customer Engagement? (4) Does brand awareness have a significant positive effect on Customer Loyalty? (5) Does customer engagement have a significant positive effect on Customer Loyalty?

4. Results & Discussion

4.1 The Influence of Digital Marketing on Customer Loyalty

An effectively designed digital strategy can increase customer loyalty by providing a consistent and personalized experience across multiple digital interaction points [49], [50] The use of technologies such as CRM, content personalization, and

marketing automation allows companies to maintain relevant and ongoing communication with customers [51]. It builds trust which is the main foundation of loyalty.

More so, digital strategies that integrate omnichannel marketing ensure that customers get a seamless experience without friction across multiple platforms. This consistency of the experience reduces friction and increases customer comfort, which in turn strengthens their loyalty to the brand [52]. With an adaptive digital strategy, companies can also quickly respond to changing customer needs and preferences.

Ultimately, loyalty built through digital strategies has high long-term value because customers not only return to buy, but also act as brand ambassadors [53]. Competitive advantage can also be obtained through the use of digital data to create added value in a sustainable manner for customers.

Several studies show that digital marketing can increase customer loyalty (Al Kendi et al., 2023; Nasti et al., 2024; Rowi et al., 2024; Rahayu, 2024). However, other findings show different results: Kusuma et al. (2025) found a negative but insignificant influence, while Fransisca & Wantara (2025) stated that digital marketing had no impact on customer loyalty or satisfaction. This indicates that digital marketing may require additional variables to effectively drive loyalty.

4.2 The Influence of Digital Marketing on Brand Awareness

Digital strategy is now the main key to strengthening brand awareness in an increasingly competitive digital era. Through the implementation of various digital platforms, such as social media, content marketing, and SEO, companies are able to reach a wider audience and significantly increase brand recognition [54]. Research shows that an integrated digital strategy can effectively accelerate the brand awareness process by delivering consistent and relevant messages to consumers [55].

In addition, adaptive digital innovations allow companies to adjust their communication strategies in real-time, thereby enhancing personalized interactions with audiences and strengthening consumers' memories of brands [55]. In this context, the use of data analytics also helps companies understand consumer behavior more deeply, so that digital strategies can be optimized to maximize brand awareness [56]. Implementing the right digital strategy not only increases brand reach and recognition, but also builds a strong foundation for long-term relationships with customers [57]. Thus, brand awareness gained through digital strategies will provide a sustainable competitive advantage in an increasingly digitalized market [58].

4.3 The Influence of Digital Marketing on Customer Engagement

An effective digital strategy is able to create more intense and meaningful interactions between brands and customers, thereby increasing customer engagement [59]. Through the use of social media, mobile apps, and interactive digital campaigns, companies can build emotional relationships and increase customer loyalty [59]. Interactions driven by digital technology enable real-time feedback and two-way communication that enhances consumer engagement [60].

In addition, relevant content and data-driven personalization are key components in a digital strategy to drive engagement [60]. Customers feel more valued

and included in the brand's journey, which ultimately strengthens their bond with the company [59]. High customer engagement also contributes to increased brand advocacy, where consumers become voluntary brand spreaders in their environment [61].

The digital context makes it easy for companies to measure customer engagement levels through various metrics such as clicks, likes, comments, and shares, so that strategies can be dynamically adjusted [62]. Thus, digital strategies not only focus on reach, but also on the quality of relationships built with customers that lead to continuous increase in engagement.

4.4 The Effect of Brand Awareness on Customer Loyalty

Brand awareness is a very important initial stage in the process of forming Customer Loyalty. High consumer awareness of brands will influence purchasing preferences and repeat decisions [63]. Customers who recognize brands strongly tend to be more trusting and comfortable choosing the same product or service over competing brands [64].

In addition, positive brand awareness helps to strengthen the brand image which contributes to the formation of an emotional connection with customers [65]. This relationship is the foundation of long-lasting loyalty because customers feel the brand consistently represents their values and needs [66]. Therefore, building strong awareness must be accompanied by good product quality and service.

Companies need to continue to maintain and strengthen brand awareness through creative and consistent marketing communication so that Customer Loyalty can continue to increase [67]. With this approach, brand awareness is not only an acquaintance, but an important factor in retaining and expanding the loyal customer base.

The Effect of Customer Engagement on Customer Loyalty

Customer engagement plays an important role in building strong Customer Loyalty. Customers who actively engage with brands through various digital platforms tend to have higher levels of satisfaction and a strong sense of emotional attachment [59]. This engagement encourages repurchase behavior as well as positive recommendations to others, which are key indicators of Customer Loyalty [68].

Furthermore, ongoing engagement creates long-term relationships that can reduce churn rates and strengthen the company's market position [69]. In longitudinal studies, customers who felt personally involved in brand communication and activities showed significantly higher levels of loyalty than those who did not. [70]. Therefore, building engagement is not just about momentary interaction, but creating meaningful experiences that bind consumers to the brand.

Companies that successfully maintain customer engagement can also get constructive feedback that plays an important role in product and service innovation [61]. This reinforces added value for customers and strengthens their loyalty, thus forming a positive cycle of sustainable business growth [61].

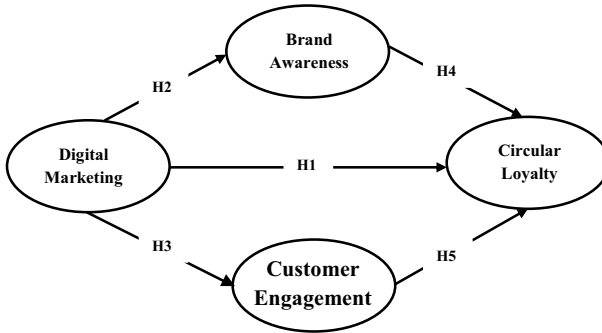


Fig. 1. Conceptual framework

The frame of mind shown in the image explains the relationship between Digital Marketing, Brand Awareness, Customer Engagement, and Customer Loyalty. In this model, Digital Marketing is assumed to have a direct influence on Customer Loyalty (H1) as well as an indirect influence through two mediation channels. The first path is through Brand Awareness (H2) which then affects Customer Loyalty (H4), and the second path is through Customer Engagement (H3) which also has an impact on Customer Loyalty (H5). Thus, this model illustrates that the effectiveness of digital marketing strategies not only shapes customer loyalty directly, but also through increased brand awareness and customer engagement as a mediating factor.

5 Conclusion

Digital marketing plays a significant role in increasing brand awareness, customer engagement, and customer loyalty. While digital marketing can increase brand exposure, long-term success relies heavily on the quality of customer engagement that creates a deep emotional and cognitive connection with the brand. High brand awareness serves as a key foundation in building customer loyalty, as well-known brands tend to be preferred by consumers, which contributes to repeat purchases and increased long-term loyalty. Customer engagement acts as an important mediator that connects digital marketing strategies with customer loyalty, because when customers feel engaged, they are more likely to show high loyalty, either through repurchase or voluntary brand promotion. Therefore, companies must design digital marketing strategies that go beyond brand exposure; Meaningful interactions, two-way communication, and personalized customer experiences are the key to strengthening customer loyalty in the digital age. Further research can delve deeper into the contextual factors that influence the relationship between digital marketing, customer engagement, and loyalty, as well as consider the role of other elements such as product quality in increasing customer loyalty.

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