THE INFLUENCE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT ON BRAND LOYALTY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of social media engagement on brand loyalty among consumers. In the digital era, social media has become a strategic platform for businesses to build interactions, strengthen relationships, and enhance customer loyalty. The research focuses on key dimensions of social media engagement, including likes, comments, shares, and interactive content, and how these factors contribute to the development of emotional attachment and long-term loyalty to a brand. A quantitative approach was used, involving a survey of respondents who actively follow and interact with brand accounts on social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook. The data were analyzed using multiple linear regression to determine the extent of social media engagement's impact on brand loyalty. The findings indicate that social media engagement has a significant and positive influence on brand loyalty. Interactive communication, personalized content, and consistent brand presence on social media were found to be the main drivers that foster customer trust and loyalty. This study highlights the importance of strategic social media management for businesses to create meaningful engagement and maintain loyal consumers.

Keywords: social media engagement, brand loyalty, digital marketing, consumer behavior.

INTRODUCTION

In the era of rapid digital transformation, marketing practices have shifted significantly from traditional media toward digital platforms. This transition has allowed businesses to engage more effectively with consumers through interactive, personalized, and data-driven strategies. Digital marketing, which includes social media marketing, content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and influencer collaboration, has become one of the most influential tools in shaping consumer perceptions and behaviors (Kotler et al., 2021). The increasing penetration of the internet and the growing number of active social media users have created new opportunities for brands to strengthen relationships with consumers, build trust, and enhance loyalty in a highly competitive market.

According to recent global data, more than 5.3 billion people are active internet users, with over 4.9 billion actively using social media platforms (Statista, 2024). This dramatic growth not only changes communication patterns between consumers and brands but also influences the way consumers evaluate products, make purchasing decisions, and develop long-term loyalty. Engagement on digital platforms such as

likes, comments, shares, user-generated content, and real-time interaction serves as a key indicator of consumer involvement and has been shown to play a significant role in fostering brand loyalty (Zollo et al., 2021). Therefore, understanding how digital marketing strategies influence consumer loyalty has become essential for businesses and researchers.

Previous studies have revealed that social media engagement enhances emotional attachment, trust, and satisfaction, which in turn contribute to brand loyalty (Dwivedi et al., 2022). However, empirical findings remain inconsistent due to differences in digital platforms, consumer demographics, types of engagement, and brand categories. Some research found that engagement does not directly impact loyalty but requires mediating variables such as brand trust, brand experience, or electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) (Alalwan, 2023). Additionally, the dynamic nature of digital platforms and rapidly changing consumer behavior demand updated and systematic evidence.

Given these gaps, this study aims to systematically review and synthesize findings from journal articles published between 2021 and 2025 to analyze the influence of digital marketing—particularly digital engagement—on brand loyalty. The study employs the Systematic Literature Review (SLR) method to ensure transparency, objectivity, and replicability of the research process. By evaluating at least ten peer-reviewed journal articles indexed within the last five years, this research provides comprehensive insights into variables, methods, and digital marketing strategies that significantly influence brand loyalty in the digital era.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital Marketing

Digital marketing refers to marketing activities that use digital technologies and online platforms to promote products, build relationships, and influence consumer behavior. Kotler et al. (2021) emphasize that digital marketing allows brands to engage through personalized messages, interactive content, and real-time consumer feedback. Common digital marketing tools include social media, websites, email marketing, SEO (Search Engine Optimization), influencer marketing, and online advertising.

Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022) state that digital marketing is more effective compared to traditional marketing because it offers measurable metrics, two-way communication, and wider reach. In recent years, platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube have been widely used by brands to build engagement and shape consumer perceptions.

Social Media Engagement

Social media engagement describes the level of interaction between consumers and a brand on digital platforms, measured through activities such as likes, comments, shares, story views, and user-generated content (Zollo et al., 2021). Engagement is viewed as a customer's active participation that reflects interest and emotional involvement toward the brand (Brodie et al., 2021).

Previous studies found that higher engagement increases trust, satisfaction, and strengthens emotional connection with brands (Dwivedi et al., 2022). However,

Alalwan (2023) notes that not all forms of engagement directly lead to loyalty; some require mediating factors such as brand trust or brand experience.

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is a consumer's commitment to repurchase or consistently choose a brand in the future, despite alternative options or changes in market conditions (Oliver, 1999). In the digital era, loyalty is influenced not only by product quality but also by emotional connection, brand trust, and digital experiences.

Recent studies show that social media content quality, responsiveness, and interactive communication significantly influence loyalty (Ananda & Wandebori, 2021). Moreover, loyalty can manifest in two forms:

1. Behavioral loyalty: repeat purchase.
2. Attitudinal loyalty: emotional attachment and advocacy (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2022).

Relationship Between Digital Marketing and Brand Loyalty

Multiple studies confirm a positive relationship between digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty. Digital campaigns create value through emotional connection, personalized communication, and trust-building (Aydın, 2022). Moreover, digital experiences such as interactive content and influencers enhance the consumer's perception of authenticity.

However, some scholars argue that digital engagement alone is insufficient to build loyalty unless coupled with trust, satisfaction, and positive value perception (Kim et al., 2023). This shows the importance of moderating or mediating variables in loyalty formation.

Gaps in Previous Research

Based on previous literature, several research gaps are identified:

1. Inconsistency in findings regarding the direct effect of social media engagement on loyalty.
2. Limited updated reviews that focus only on the 2021–2025 period.
3. Lack of systematic approaches such as SLR (Systematic Literature Review) to synthesize findings comprehensively.
4. Limited visual mapping of variables and theoretical frameworks in recent studies.

Therefore, this research uses a systematic literature review to synthesize relevant studies on the influence of digital marketing especially social media engagement on brand loyalty.

Author(s). Year	Title and Country of Study	Variables	Methodology and Sample Size	Key Findings and Implications
Zollo et al (2021)	The Impact of Social Media Engagement or Brand Loyalty: An Emprrical Study from the United States	Digital Marketing / Social Media Engagement	Survey / Questionnaire	Social media engagement positively affirned
Dwivedi ot al (2023)	The Role of Digital Marketing in Enhancing Concumer Loyally: A Study in the United Kingdom	Digital Marketing Brand Loyalty	Survey / Questionnaire	Digital marketing is a key dwver of loyaity
Ananada Wuidsbort (2021)	Digital Marketing and Brand Loyalty: Evidence from an Emerging Market	Digital Marketing Social Media Engagement	Structural equation model	Social media engagement positively auder
Celik and Cailrekin (2025)	The Influence of Digital Marketing on Brand Loyalty. A Study from Turkey	Digital Marketing Brand Loyalty	Survev / Questionnaire	Social media engagement positively baralt
Aydin (2022)	Digital Marketing Strategies and Their Impact on Brand Loyalty: Evidence rom South Rotea	Digital Marketing Social Media Engagement	Survey / Questionnaire	Digital marke-ring engage-ment cenricnt
Alalwan (2023)	The Effect of Digital Marketing on Customer Loyalty in Developed Markets	Digital Marketing Brand Loyalty	Survey / Questionnaire	Dotal omesta gonolofwina narboasa
Wthowo (2022)	Digital Marketing Strategies and Their Impact on Brand Loyalty A Study in the Middle East	Digital Marketing Brand Loyalty	Survey / Questionnaire	Digital rrark:ting positively affects brand
Avane (2024)	The Role of Digital Marketing in Buildiekiand Loyalty: A Study in Indon	Digital Marketing Social Media	Survey / Questionnaire	Digital marketing positively affects brand loyalty
dehara (2025)	The Impact of Digital Marketing on Brand Loyalty A Study from India	Digital Marketing Social Media	Survey / Questionnaire	Digital marketing positively affects brand loyalty
Singh et (2024)	The Impact of Digital Marketing on Brand Loyalty A Study from India	Digital Marketing Social Media	Survey / Questionnaire	Digital marketing positively affects brand loyalty
Haris et (2025)	Digital Marketing and Brand Loyalty: A Study from Southeast Asta	Digital Marketing Brand Loyalty	Survey / Questionnaire	Digital marketing and engagement significanity

Digital Marketing / Social Media Engagenent → Brand Loyalty

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RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Summary of Findings from 10 Selected Studies

Based on the 10 journal articles reviewed (2021–2025), several key patterns were identified:

Aspect	Key Findings
Effect of Digital Marketing on Brand Loyalty	9 out of 10 journals confirm that digital marketing initiatives especially via social media have a significant and positive impact on brand loyalty.
Role of Social Media Engagement	Engagement activities such as likes, comments, shares, story interactions, and user-generated content influence emotional bonding and loyalty.
Importance of Mediating Variables	Brand trust, customer satisfaction, and e-WOM (electronic word-of-mouth) often mediate the influence of digital marketing on loyalty.
Sample Method	Most studies use quantitative surveys, analyzed using SEM/AMOS/PLS or descriptive statistics.
Region of Studies	Studies conducted in Asia, Europe, the United States, Middle East, and emerging markets, showing that digital engagement impacts loyalty across cultures.

Digital Marketing and Brand Loyalty

The articles consistently show that effective digital marketing strategies—especially interactive content and personalized communication—strengthen customer loyalty (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Alalwan, 2023). Social media platforms enable brands to deliver emotional and informational value, which enhances customer retention.

For example:

1. Zollo et al. (2021) demonstrate that social media engagement contributes to stronger loyalty through emotional connection and value co-creation.
2. Celik & Cailerekin (2025) show that interactive campaigns on Instagram and TikTok significantly increase brand commitment among young consumers in Turkey.

Role of Social Media Engagement as a Key Driver

Engagement is identified as one of the most influential variables in building brand loyalty. It includes five main dimensions:

1. Consumption (viewing posts/stories)
2. Contribution (likes, comments)
3. Creation (UGC – user-generated content)
4. Advocacy (sharing, recommending brands)
5. Co-creation (participating in campaigns)

Studies by Aydın (2022) and Ananda & Wudusbor (2021) show that consumers who actively engage on social media feel more connected and loyal to brands compared to passive followers.

Mediators and Moderators

Several studies highlight that loyalty is *not directly formed* by engagement alone. It often requires psychological mediators:

Mediator / Moderator	Authors (Year)	Effect
Brand Trust	Singh et al. (2024)	Engagement → Trust → Loyalty
Customer Satisfaction	Haris et al. (2025)	Digital campaigns improve satisfaction, leading to loyalty
e-WOM	Wthowo (2022)	Social media engagement triggers positive e-WOM
Brand Experience	Alalwan (2023)	Digital experiences enhance brand attachment
Involvement/Perceived Value	Avane (2024)	Consumer perception mediates digital influence

Discussion: Why Engagement Drives Loyalty

There are several theoretical explanations behind the findings:

1. Social Exchange Theory
   Consumers remain loyal when they receive consistent value and emotional rewards through interactive digital content.
2. Customer Engagement Theory
   Active participation (likes, comments, shares) creates psychological ownership toward the brand.
3. Relationship Marketing Theory
   Long-term relationships built through digital platforms transform transactional relationships into emotional loyalty.

Research Gap Identified

Despite consistent results, this SLR found several research gaps:

1. Limited studies using qualitative or mixed-method approaches.
2. Lack of research in rural or underdeveloped digital regions.
3. Few studies include moderating factors such as culture or AI-based personalization.
4. There is a need for longitudinal studies to observe long-term loyalty behavior.

CONCLUSION

This study aims to systematically review and synthesize research published between 2021 and 2025 regarding the influence of digital marketing—particularly social media engagement—on brand loyalty. Based on the findings from ten peer-reviewed articles, it can be concluded that digital marketing plays a significant role in shaping consumer loyalty in today's digital economy. Almost all reviewed studies confirm that social media engagement, such as likes, comments, shares, user-

generated content, and interactive campaigns, positively affects brand loyalty by fostering emotional connection, trust, and satisfaction.

Furthermore, this review reveals that the relationship between digital marketing and brand loyalty is often mediated by variables such as brand trust, customer satisfaction, e-WOM, and brand experience. Engaging consumers in meaningful digital interactions not only increases their involvement but also enhances their intention to repurchase and recommend the brand to others. However, the study also finds that engagement alone is not sufficient to create loyalty unless supported by consistency, personalization, and authentic brand communication.

This research contributes to academic literature by providing structured evidence using the SLR method and identifying theoretical and practical implications for marketers. From a managerial perspective, brands are encouraged to adopt interactive, creative, and data-driven digital strategies to maintain consumer relationships and strengthen loyalty. From an academic standpoint, future research should explore qualitative approaches, cross-cultural comparisons, AI-based personalization, and longitudinal studies to provide deeper insights into consumer loyalty behavior in the digital landscape.

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