Global Academic Journal of Economics and Business

Available online at https://www.gajrc.com
DOI: https://doi.org/10.36348/gajeb.2026.v08i04.009

ISSN: 2706-9001 (P)
ISSN: 2707-2584 (O)

Original Research Article

Digital Marketing Strategies and Brand Loyalty among Quoted Food and Beverage Firms in Nigeria

Akhigbe Doris Emila[1]*, Prof., O.V. Olulu-Briggs[1]
[1]University of Port Harcourt Business School, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

***Corresponding Author**
Akhigbe Doris Emila
University of Port Harcourt Business School, Port Harcourt, Rivers State

Article History
Received: 26.05.2026
Accepted: 14.07.2026
Published: 16.07.2026

Abstract: The study examined the impact of digital marketing strategies on brand loyalty of the quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria using brand trust as a moderating variable. The study was prompted by the prevailing competition among food and beverage businesses in Nigeria and the fact that businesses need to leverage on digital marketing to boost customers' engagement and retention. The study was based on the Relationship Marketing Theory. A cross-sectional survey research design based on the positivist philosophy was adopted. Primary data was obtained from the structured questionnaires which were administered to the customers of the selected companies namely Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Cadbury Nigeria Plc, Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc and Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc. The sample size was 384 respondents using Cochran's formula for an infinite population and 362 valid questionnaires were analyzed. Descriptive statistics, Spearman's rank correlation coefficient and partial correlation were used in the analysis of the data at 5% level of significance. The results indicated that social media marketing, online advertising, and content marketing had positive and significant relationship with brand loyalty. Additionally, brand trust also enhanced the relationship amidst digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty after the inclusion of the moderator. The study found that digital marketing strategies are a significant contributor to customer commitment, especially with high brand trust. It called for greater investment in digital engagement that is interactive, online advertising that is personalised, value-based content marketing, and trust-building activities. The study added value by proving that brand trust is a moderating variable amidst Digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty in the food and beverage industry in Nigeria.

Keywords: Social Media Marketing, Online Advertising, Content Marketing, Brand Loyalty and Brand Trust.

INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has reshaped the ways companies reach their customers, engage with them and keep them loyal, particularly in consumer-goods markets, where there are myriad options to choose from and low barriers to switching. Digital marketing methods now enable companies to shift the paradigm from a one-size-fits-all promotional approach to a model that is interactive, measurable, and relationship-oriented. In that context, the use of social media marketing, online advertising and content marketing becomes important means to build customer engagement and brand loyalty (Almeida *et al.*, 2019; Budiman, 2021; Sriram *et al.*, 2022). These practices are becoming more strategic for quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria as consumers engage with brands via search engines and other digital channels such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube and TikTok before buying them. This recent Nigerian evidence demonstrates that the application of digital marketing communication affects consumer patronage and purchase behaviours, especially when the companies utilize social media and content-based marketing communication effectively (Eyika, 2026; Etuk & Udonde, 2023).

Social media marketing allows food and beverage companies to build a community online, engage with customer questions, introduce new products, and build a relationship of emotional commitment through engagement. As stated by Budiman (2021), social media marketing has a positive impact on brand image and brand loyalty and by Sriram *et al*., (2022) social media engagement drives customer relationships. Nkpurukwe (2024) in Nigeria reported Facebook and Instagram usage significantly affected the success of the CWAY Food and Beverages Company, and social media marketing had a positive effect on customer patronage as evidenced in Nigerian beverage companies (Goodluck *et al.,* 2026). Brand visibility is also achieved with the help of online advertising with targeted messages, search advertising, sponsored posts and display campaigns. Likewise, content marketing is valuable by delivering informative, entertaining and relevant brand messages that enhance customer interest and commitment (Almeida *et al*., 2019; Sriram *et al*., 2022).

Brand loyalty continues to be one of the most important factors in the survival of a firm because loyal customers continue to buy, ignore the competition and tell others to buy. Some authors have defined loyalty as a strong, attitudinal intention to reload a preferred brand in spite of external factors (Oliver 1999) or have connected brand affection and brand trust with increased brand loyalty and market outcomes (Chaudhuri and Holbrook 2001). In this study, brand loyalty is indicated by customer commitment because commitment is a measure of how willing customers are to be in a long-term relationship with a brand. But, if they don't trust the brand, it's not necessarily going to create loyalty through digital marketing. Delgado-Ballester *et al*., (2003), stated that the brand trust involves the confidence on the reliability and integrity of the brand. Hence, brand trust can be used to improve the relationship between digital marketing practice and commitment of customers of the quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

The study of digital marketing and its impact on consumers in Nigeria has been explored, but there are still significant gaps. Etuk and Udonde (2023) explored customer patronage towards digital marketing dimensions in fast-food companies in Akwa Ibom State and Eyika (2026) assessed digital marketing communications and patronage of Made-in-Nigeria fast food products in Abuja, but both examined patronage and not brand loyalty by measuring customer commitment. Nkpurukwe (2024) highlighted the study of social media marketing and business success in CWAY Food and Beverages Company with a focus on market share and innovation and not on loyalty. Likewise, research in the food and beverage sector in Lagos has focused on social media advertising, web advertising and brand equity or awareness, but not in relation to the overall impact of social media marketing, online advertising and content marketing on customer commitment (Adegbola *et al*., 2022; Ogunnaike *et al*., 2024).

Moreover, most literature available on Nigeria (Nkpurukwe, 2024; Eyika, 2026; Etuk & Udonde, 2023) focuses on SMEs or fast-food outlets, students or single beverage company or unquoted food and beverage companies, leaving the evidence on quoted companies in the food and beverage sector limited. Furthermore, there is limited empirical research on the moderating effect of brand trust in the context of digital marketing in Nigeria even though it is theoretically relevant to the formation of loyalty. Thus, the relationship between digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty of the quoted food and beverage firms in Nigeria is examined, using brand trust as a moderator.

LITERATURE REVIEW

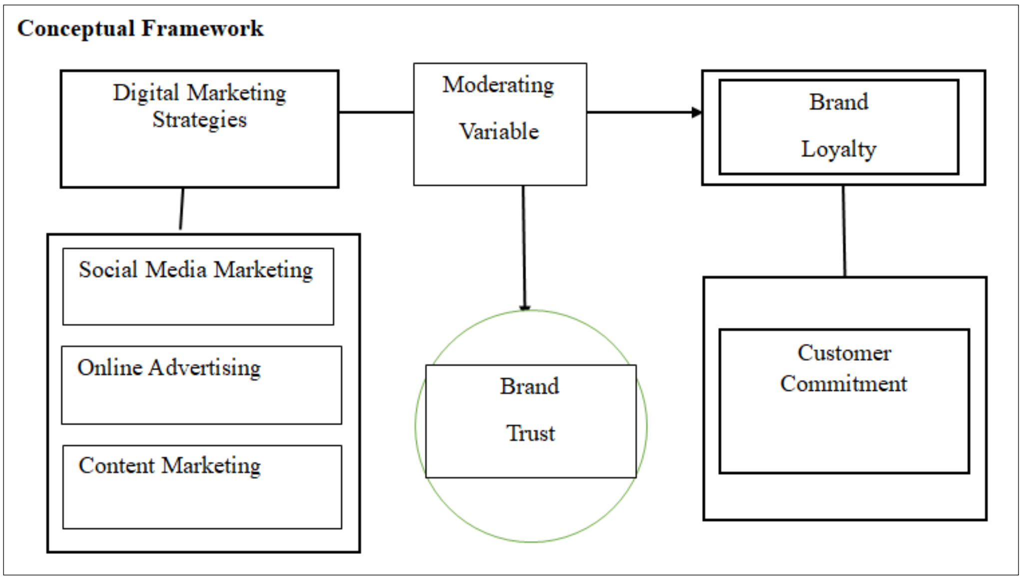

Figure 2.1: Conceptual Framework Showing the Relationship between Digital Marketing Practices and Brand Loyalty

Sources: Digital Marketing Practices: Social media marketing, online advertising, and content marketing (Budiman, 2021; Sriram *et al.*, 2022; Almeida *et al.*, 2019). Brand Loyalty: customer commitment (Almeida *et al.*, 2019; Budiman, 2021; Oliver, 1999; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001), Moderating variable: Brand Trust (Delgado-Ballester *et al.*, 2003; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Digital Marketing Strategies

Digital marketing strategies are defined as the effective and systematic application of digital technologies, internet-enabled platforms, and electronic communication channels for organizational marketing objectives, through value creation, communication and delivery. While traditional marketing is mostly a push strategy using print and broadcast media, digital marketing is a more interactive, personalized, participatory and real-time measurable effort. They allow businesses to target audiences, create custom-made marketing strategies, track consumer reaction, and constantly enhance marketing initiatives via digital analytics. Digital marketing strategies are the systematic use of digital media, technologies and data-driven methods to attract, engage, convert and retain customers, as well as to support overall business goals, according to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022). Likewise, Kotler *et al.*, (2021) argue that digital marketing combines online communication tools with customer relationship management to deliver better customer experiences and provide a competitive edge.

Digital marketing strategies include multiple practices that can be used in tandem, with social media marketing, online advertising and content marketing being particularly well researched. Social media marketing provides a way to communicate and build relationships, such as YouTube, Instagram, LinkedIn, X, TikTok, and Facebook. By using online advertising, companies can tailor promotional messages to specific target audiences, such as through search engine marketing, display ads, email marketing, influencer marketing, and sponsored content, which can enhance the effectiveness of advertising and expand reach to customers. Content marketing is about providing and disseminating valuable, relevant, consistent information that provides education, information or entertainment to consumers, while also, and perhaps subtly, promoting the value of a brand (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). By thoughtfully incorporating these practices, companies can boost customer engagement, ensure brand visibility, and foster long-term customer relationships, especially as purchasing habits shift to a more digital landscape. Therefore, digital marketing tactics have transformed from promotional tactics to strategic organisational capabilities for customer acquisition, retention and sustainable brand performance (Sriram *et al.*, 2022).

Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is one of the most studied constructs in marketing as it is an indicator of the strength and durability of the relationship between consumers and brands. It is a customers' stable inclination to buy a product or service from a specific brand when competing options are available, when promotional offers are available, and when market conditions change. Although, early conceptualizations thought of brand loyalty as simply repeat purchase behavior, today's scholars believe that brand loyalty is more than just repeat purchase behavior, it is a psychological attachment, emotional commitment, trust, and positive attitudes towards a brand as well. Oliver (1999) explains brand loyalty as an attitude of a customer to re-purchase or continuously patronize a product or service in the future despite the impact of situations and marketing activities that have the ability to trigger switching behaviour. This definition highlights that loyalty is more than just behaviour, it is about attitude as well.

Brand loyalty is a multi-dimensional phenomenon and is reflected in the cognition, affect, conation and action loyalty in the modern marketing literature. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) also made a distinction between attitudinal loyalty (the emotional attachment and psychological preference) and behavioural loyalty (repeated purchasing behaviour). In the field of relationship marketing, commitment has been widely considered as one of the most effective forms of behavioural evidence of brand loyalty because committed customers intentionally try to build long-term relationships with preferred brands and are willing to recommend them to their friends. These customers are less sensitive to price changes, more resistant to competitor's marketing tactics, and have more advocacy behaviours. The growing significance of brand loyalty has been further amplified by digital interactions, as consumers constantly assess brands online, via electronic word-of-mouth and social media engagement. As a result, organizations are starting to invest more in digital marketing strategies that provide better customer experiences that can help them to gain customer commitment and long-term brand loyalty (Budiman, 2021; Kotler *et al*., 2021).

Brand Trust

Brand trust is the consumer's confidence in the brand to deliver what it promises, consistently, due to reliability, honesty, competence, etc. When involved in a purchase decision, especially in competitive markets with a lot of alternatives and information asymmetry, trust decreases uncertainty and perceived risk. Trust serves as a psychological mechanism that helps individuals make a purchase decision with confidence and helps build a meaningful and sustained relationship between the consumer and the organization(s) because consumers cannot evaluate all of its attributes prior to buying. According to Delgado-Ballester *et al*., (2003), brand trust is the assurance and expectations that consumers have when a brand is perceived as uncertain and risky. As per this definition, trust is "cognitive judgment of competence and an emotional conviction of organizational integrity."

Brand trust is considered as one of the key determinants of customer satisfaction, commitment, loyalty and advocacy in relationship marketing. Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) showed that the brand with a higher level of trust will build attitudinal and behavioural loyalty since consumers are more willing to repurchase and recommend trustworthy brands. Trust is even more crucial in digital spaces, where brand-consumer engagement happens via websites, social platforms, online ads, mobile apps and digital marketplaces, where issues around privacy, misinformation, product authenticity and security are common. By ensuring clear communication, accurate information, reliable service delivery, genuine customer interaction, and credible brand experiences, effective digital marketing strategies enhance customer trust. As a result, brand trust is often perceived as a moderating effect as it will dictate the degree to which the digital marketing program can lead to increased customer commitment and brand loyalty. This means that the organizations that are more trusted by the consumer will be able to generate sustainable competitive advantages as a result of investments in digital marketing strategies (Morgan & Hunt, 1994; Delgado-Ballester *et al*., 2003).

Theoretical Framework

Relationship Marketing Theory

Berry (1983) was the first person to introduce the theory of relationship marketing and Grönroos (1994) and Gummesson (1994) added more to the theory. A major reason for the theory is that the traditional transactional marketing concept, which focused on attracting customers and on maximizing short-term sales, was not enough to ensure sustainable success for the organization in an increasingly competitive world. Berry (1983) stated that a marketing emphasis should be given to attracting, cultivating and deepening relationships with customers since retaining customers is more profitable than continually acquiring new ones. Grönroos (1994) also clarified that relationship marketing is the process of identifying, building, maintaining and enhancing mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and customers by constantly creating value for customers and communicating effectively. Thus, Relationship Marketing Theory moved the marketing philosophy from exchange transactions to building relationships, meaning that customer satisfaction, trust and commitment, communication, and value are the bases for competitiveness in organizations.

The theory states that customers are loyal when organizations are able to provide value continuously, they develop some form of interaction with customers, and they create a long-term relationship with customers that is beneficial to both the parties. The Relationship Marketing Theory treats the customers not merely as one time buyers but as strategic assets that will help the organisation perform better and gain competitive advantage when they keep buying from the organisation. The theory is even more relevant today in the context of the development of digital technologies, as digital marketing platforms make it possible for organisations to build ongoing interactions with customers via social media, websites, email marketing, mobile applications and more digital communication platforms. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022) noted that digital marketing allows for personalized communication, customer engagement and ongoing interactions to build customer relationships, and Kotler *et al*., (2022) claimed that relationship-based digital marketing helps businesses offer better customer experiences to their customers, which in turn increases customer retention and profitability.

For the present study, Relationship Marketing Theory is most suitable since the dimensions of the digital marketing strategies are relationship-oriented activities – social media marketing, online advertising, and content marketing – that aim to provide a continuous communication between the firm and the consumer. These digital interactions provide an opportunity for quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria to build better relationships with customers, which in turn can lead to increased customer engagement and loyalty. Thus, the theory accounts for the way in which an ongoing relationship with customers is built and sustained through ongoing digital interactions, which lead to long-term customer commitment.

Empirical Review

Kumar and Singh (2025) studied the various tools and techniques of digital marketing. The review found that the consumer's behavioural engagement with brands via social media has a positive effect on customer-based brand equity. Digital media is beneficial in terms of the positive impact on buyer's intention as it brings out strong relationship between customers and business. Web 2.0 based technologies allow users to create and collaborate and to share information and values.

Aliata (2025) investigated the effect of digital marketing strategy on brand loyalty of customers of Airtel network Kenya. Primary data was collected from a target population of 100 students from Tom Mboya University, Kenya. Yamane (1967) value was used to get the study sample of 80. Data was collected by the use of purposive sampling technique. Those targeted are the ones assumed to be subscribers of airtel network ltd, Kenya. Information was collected from Airtel's network on an annual basis and therefore was limited and secondary. Correlation of research design was used in this study. Results from the study showed that digital marketing explained the significant variance in customer loyalty. Meanwhile the positive significant effect of digital marketing on customer loyalty is revealed too. This means that digital marketing gets better, customers get more loyal.

Windarsari (2025) determined the best digital marketing strategies to improve customer loyalty in 2015-2025. From the 11 identified empirical studies on the relationship between digital strategies and dimensions of loyalty, a systematic literature mapping was performed, followed by a thematic analysis and bibliometric analysis. The findings indicate that the more interactive and personalized practices have the highest impact on loyalty. These factors consistently appeared as a mediator to strengthen these effects in various industries such as banking, hospitality, fashion, ecommerce, and retail. Hence, it should focus more on interaction, customization and building relationships, and less on the one-way delivery of information. However, they are not only successful because of technological aspects but also due to the ability to build trust and emotional relationships with customers.

Galib and Rijal (2025) delved into the influence of embedded finance on digital marketing strategies, user experience, and customer loyalty. The study aims to analyse the impact of financial services integration on non-financial platforms on the three aspects using the systematic literature review (SLR) method. The results showed that embed finance increases the effectiveness of marketing promotions by leveraging data to surge importance. Moreover, these integrations enhance user experience, minimizing transaction friction and boosting satisfaction, leading to up to five times higher customer loyalty. Another finding of the study was that financial-based loyalty programs that are embedded in the system can help to boost customer retention by as much as 30%, despite the hurdles to data security. Hence, the growing amount of data being gathered, however, so do the chances of data leaks and privacy breaches, making it imperative that companies have a strong system in place and meet regulatory standards to safeguard user data.

METHODOLOGY

This study used cross-sectional survey research design. The design was deemed suitable to explore the natural phenomena without interfering with the variables. Population was made up of consumers of Nestlé Nigeria Plc, Nigerian Breweries Plc, Cadbury Nigeria Plc, Flour Mills of Nigeria Plc and Dangote Sugar Refinery Plc. These companies have been chosen due to their wide-ranging presence, a significant customer base, and the active implementation of digital marketing strategies. Being infinite population, no exact population size could be determined. The Nigerian Exchange Group (2025) revealed these companies ranked among the top quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria. The size of the sample was calculated based on the Cochran's (1977) formula. The sample size calculated was 384 respondents at 95% confidence level, 5% margin of error, and maximum variability (p=q=0.50). Purposive sampling was used to select the firms and convenience sampling was used to select customers for the questionnaires, which are accessible to the selected firms. The study employed primary data which were gathered using a structured questionnaire. The instrument was made up of closed questions, using a 5-point-Likert scale, which spanned from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess the reliability of the instruments, and a value of 0.70 or higher was considered acceptable. Descriptive statistics, the Spearman's rank, and partial correlation analyses were used for data analysis.

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Results and Analyzes

Table 4.1: Questionnaire Distribution and Number Retrieval

S/No	Descriptions	Frequency	Percent
1	Questionnaires Distributed	384	100.0
2	Questionnaires Retrieved	376	97.9
3	Valid Questionnaires	362	94.3

Source: Field Survey, 2026

The distribution and retrieval rate of the questionnaires for the study is shown in Table 4.1. The questionnaires were sent to customers of the selected quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria, a total of 384 copies of the questionnaire. Of this total 376 questionnaires were retrieved (97.9%). Of the total questionnaires administered, 362 questionnaires were found valid for analysis (94.3%). The questionnaires were first screened for completeness, consistency and usability. The very high retrieval and validity rates suggest that the respondents were very cooperative and that the data were sufficient for statistical analysis. The percentage of usable responses was above the minimum response rate recommended for survey research, which minimized the potential for non-response error and increased confidence and generalizability of the study results.

Table 4.2: Demographic Results

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Gender	Female	161	44.5	44.5	44.5
	Male	201	55.5	55.5	100.0
	Total	**362**	**100.0**	**100.0**	
Age	20-35	71	19.6	19.6	19.6
	36-50	242	66.9	66.9	86.5
	51 and above	49	13.5	13.5	100.0
	Total	**362**	**100.0**	**100.0**	
Marital Status	Divorced	9	2.5	2.5	2.5
	Married	273	75.4	75.4	77.9
	Separated	11	3.0	3.0	80.9
	Single	69	19.1	19.1	100.0
	Total	**362**	**100.0**	**100.0**	
Educational Attainment	HND/Bachelor	234	64.6	64.6	64.6
	Master and above	109	30.1	30.1	94.8
	WAEC/OND	19	5.2	5.2	100.0
	Total	**362**	**100.0**	**100.0**	

Source: SPSS 28.0 Output

Demographic characteristics of the respondents are shown in table 4.2. The male female distribution showed that out of 362 respondents 201 were males (55.5%) and 161 females (44.5%). This shows that there was a good representation of both genders with a slight majority of male respondents. Concerning age distribution, most of the respondents (242 respondents or 66.9%) were in the age group of 36-50 years, 71 respondents (19.6%) were 20-35 years and 49 respondents (13.5%) were 51 and above. This indicates that the overwhelming number were from the economically active consumer group, in a position to be able to give reliable data on digital marketing practices and brand loyalty. As to marital status, 273 respondents (75.4%) were married, 69 respondents (19.1%) were single, 11 respondents (3.0%) were separated and 9 respondents (2.5%) were divorced. Another aspect of education revealed that 234 respondents (64.6%) had Higher National Diploma or Bachelor's degree, 109 respondents (30.1%) had Master's degree or higher while 19 respondents (5.2%) had WAEC or OND. The respondents were highly educated, indicating that they had sufficient literacy and digital awareness to gauge the digital marketing strategies used by the selected firms objectively.

Table 4.3: Spearman Correlation Results

Correlations						
			Customer Retention	**Social Media Marketing**	**Online Advertising**	**Content Marketing**
Spearman's rho	Customer Commitment	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.346**	.592**	.551**
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000	.000
		N	362	362	362	362
	Social Media Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	.346**	1.000	.396”	.232”
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000	.000
		N	362	362	362	362
	Online Advertising	Correlation Coefficient	.592**	.396”	1.000	.378”
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.	.000
		N	362	362	362	362
	Content Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	.551**	.232”	.378”	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.
		N	362	362	362	362
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).						

Source: SPSS Output 25

As can be seen in Table 4.3, the link amidst the dimensions of digital marketing strategies and customer commitment were obtained with the Spearman rank correlation. In this study, we found that the social media marketing had a positive and substantial association with customer commitment ($\rho = 0.346$, $p = 0.000$). This finding is inferring that there is a positive relationship amidst social media marketing and customer commitment among customers of food and beverage quoted companies in Nigeria as the level of social media marketing increased, customer commitment also increased. Despite being moderate, the relationship was substantial, indicating that the process of engaging with customers through social media platforms can significantly help in maintaining customer loyalty. The highest correlation was found amidst online advertising and customer commitment ($\rho = 0.592$, $p = 0.000$) which means that effective online advertising campaigns significantly increased customers' retention with their favorite brands. Likewise, there was a positive and significant correlation with customer commitment and the use of content marketing ($\rho = 0.551$, $p = 0.000$), indicating that good and informative content of brands positively affected the retention of customers. The p values for all of these relationships were < 0.01, meaning that all the null hypotheses would be rejected and these dimensions of digital marketing strategies were significantly related to brand loyalty.

Partial Correlation Results

Correlations					
Control Variables			**Digital Marketing Strategies**	**Brand Loyalty**	**Brand Trust**
-none-[a]	Digital Marketing Strategies	Correlation	1.000	.406	.341
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	.000
		df	0	362	362
	Brand Loyalty	Correlation	.406	1.000	.499
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	.000
		df	362	0	362
	Brand Trust	Correlation	.341	.499	1.000

Correlations					
Control Variables			Digital Marketing Strategies	Brand Loyalty	Brand Trust
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.
		df	362	362	0
Brand Trust	Digital Marketing Strategies	Correlation	1.000	.573	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.	.000	
		df	0	361	
	Brand Loyalty	Correlation	.573	1.000	
		Significance (2-tailed)	.000	.	
		df	361	0	
a. Cells contain zero-order (Pearson) correlations.					

Source: SPSS Output 25

Based on the results of the partial correlation analysis in Table 4.4, it was found that brand trust plays a moderating role amidst digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty. The zero-order correlation revealed a positive relationship amidst digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty (r = 0.406, p = 0.000) and in addition, digital marketing strategies were positively related with brand trust (r = 0.341, p = 0.000). A positive correlation was also found amidst brand trust and brand loyalty (r = 0.499, p = 0.000). But, when controlling for the influence of brand trust, the correlation amidst the digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty rose from r = 0.406 to r = 0.573, and in spite of this, the relationship was still substantial (p = 0.000). The correlation coefficient after introducing the control variable was greater than before, which means that the correlation amidst digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty was improved by the addition of the control variable. This result shows that those customers who had greater confidence in the selected Food and Beverage brands were more receptive to the digital marketing activities, thus showing greater customer commitment and retention.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The result of the spearman rank correlation analysis showed that there was a positive and major correlation amidst social media marketing and brand loyalty (customer commitment) of the customers of the quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria. The positive coefficient means that as social media marketing improved, so did customer commitment, and the probability value is less than the 0.05 level of significance, meaning that the nexus is substantial. While the impact was not strong, this finding indicates that positive engagement on digital platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok and X can improve customers' willingness to have a long-term nexus with brands. This result is consistent with the empirical results from Budiman (2021), which revealed that social media marketing had a major influence on brand loyalty by increasing the engagement and emotional bonding of consumers. Likewise, Bilgin (2018) revealed that social media activities had a positive effect on customer loyalty by raising both the brand awareness and customer satisfaction. In the Nigerian context, Etuk and Udonde (2023) found that the dimensions of digital marketing positively influenced the patronage of customers of fast-food brands and Nkpurukwe (2024) revealed that social media marketing positively affected the success of businesses in the Nigerian beverage industry. The result is in line with the Nexus Marketing Theory (Berry, 1983; Grönroos, 1994), which states that ongoing contacts amidst the organisation and the customers can help to build long-term nexus and lead to customer commitment. It also fits in with Social Exchange Theory (Homans, 1958; Blau, 1964), which suggests that customers will return the favor by staying with an organization that continually offers them a great experience.

The study also found the highest positive and substantial correlation amidst online advertising and brand loyalty ($\rho = 0.592$, p = 0.000). The relatively high coefficient indicates that among the dimensions studied, online advertising was the most impactful digital marketing dimension to drive customer commitment. The mean values of personalized digital advertisements, sponsored content, search engine marketing, e-mail marketing and display advertisements showed a major increase in customers' decision to stay loyal to their top food and beverage brands. This finding is in line with the study conducted by Almeida *et al.*, (2019) that digital ads can enhance customer nexus and engagement through relevant and customised marketing messages. Similarly, Sriram *et al.*, (2022) determined the fact that integrated digital advertisements have a substantial positive effect on customer engagement, customer commitment and competitiveness of the organization. Similarly, Ogunnaike *et al.*, (2024) found that online promotional activities had a positive impact on consumer behavioural intention in the fast-moving consumer goods sector in Nigeria. The finding also confirms the principles of Nexus Marketing Theory, which posits that ongoing communication with customers and nexus customization are key to customer loyalty. Social Exchange Theory suggests that customers who are receiving messages that they find relevant, informative, and beneficial are more likely to reciprocate with increased patronage and commitment to the brand.

Likewise, there is a positive and major correlation amidst content marketing and brand loyalty. The coefficient showed that there is a moderately strong positive association amidst the usefulness, informativeness, digital value content and the commitment of consumers to their preferred brands. The statistical significance validated the fact that Content Marketing is an important strategic mechanism in building customer loyalty among quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria. This result is consistent with that of Almeida *et al*., (2019) who indicated that content marketing had a positive effect on the quality of the nexus and customer engagement by consistently providing relevant information that met the needs of consumers. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2022) also stated that when it comes to digital content, it is important to have valuable content that helps to improve customer experience, organizational credibility, and nexus continuity. The findings also align with those of Sriram *et al*., (2022), who found that organizations with integrated content marketing strategies had a greater customer engagement and customer commitment. The discovery also confirms the assumptions of Nexus Marketing Theory, which posits that value is to be created through meaningful communication on a continuous basis. Additionally, it aligns with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that customers respond to major organizational inputs by engaging in greater loyalty and commitment to brands that continuously offer beneficial information and satisfying experiences.

The results of the partial correlation analysis also showed that brand trust had a positive moderation effect amidst digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty. The correlation amidst digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty was also positive and major prior to controlling for brand trust. But when brand trust was taken into account the correlation rose majorly. The higher value of the coefficient reflects that brand trust enhanced the link amidst digital marketing strategy and customer commitment, meaning that when customers had higher levels of brand trust, the digital marketing strategy was more effective in fostering customer commitment. The statistical significance also indicates that this moderating effect was not due to chance. Likewise, Delgado-Ballester *et al*., (2003) determined that trusted brands had a greater impact on customer commitment because customers believed that these brands were reliable, honest and were able to deliver the promised value on a consistent basis. More recently, Budiman (2021) proved that trust improved the effectiveness on digital interaction in strengthening customer loyalty. The outcome is strong empirical evidence to the Morgan and Hunt (1994) theory which assumes that commitment and trust are the two prime variables in successful long-term customer nexus. The theory posits that customer commitment is impossible if trust has not been first established, especially in the context of digital business where the information is asymmetric and consumer confidence is growing. The current study therefore establishes that quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria can go a long way to ensure that their customers' commitment is positively affected when they combine effective digital marketing strategies with those to improve their brand credibility, transparency and consumer confidence.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

The study concluded that digital marketing strategies had major effect on the brand loyalty of customers of quoted food and beverage companies in Nigeria. In particular, social media marketing, online advertising and content marketing had positive and statistically major relationships with customer commitment, meaning that the better practices of these types of marketing, the more willing customers were to form long-term relationships with their preferred brands. In addition, brand trust had a strong promoting effect on the link between digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty by highlighting that digitally marketed brands benefitted more from their digital marketing investments when they were trusted.

Recommendations

i. Food and beverage companies that are quoted on the Nigerian National Stock Exchange should build and invest in social media marketing strategies whereby interactive and more customer-centric digital communities are created on social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X and YouTube. Management should get away from product push and focus on real-time interaction with customers, personalized answers to customer queries, customers-made content campaigns, live product presentations, and online customer service. Companies should also set up special digital relationship management teams which keep an eye on the feedback, promptly address customer grievances, and encourage customers to take part in brand-building activities. These ongoing online interactions will enhance customer loyalty, foster repeat business and lead to long-term brand loyalty.

ii. Quoted food and beverage companies must spend more on using data to power online advertising, through customer analytics, behavioural targeting, search engine marketing, programmatic advertising, influencer partnerships and personalised advertising campaigns. Instead of general promotional messages, companies should segment their customers based on their demographic, buying habits, geographical location and consumption preferences, so that they can broadcast highly relevant promotional material. There should also be continuous monitoring of digital advertising performance based on key performance indicators like click-through rates, conversion rates, customer engagement, and return on advertising investment, to enhance the effectiveness of the campaigns and maximize customer retention.

iii. Management should establish in-depth content marketing plans to achieve the consistent delivery of digital content with educational, informative, entertaining, and value adding elements, instead of mainly promotion-oriented messages. Companies should create high-quality videos, blogs, infographics, podcasts, nutritional education content, product usage demonstrations, and customer success stories that focus on consumers' needs and bolster brand trust. The content should be consistent across all digital platforms to enhance customer engagement, build emotional connections and foster long-term customer commitment. Constantly monitoring customer engagement data is crucial for continually refining digital content strategies.

iv. Food and beverage companies that are quoted should focus on building trust as well as investing in digital marketing. Management should ensure the transparency of communication on the Internet, dissemination of correct information about the product, keeping of promises made in relation to the brand, security of customer data, uniformity of the product offered and timely response to complaints of customers on the Internet. Trust can be further bolstered by providing opportunities for genuine customer feedback, engaging with trusted influencers, having robust complaint handling strategies and engaging in ethical marketing. These efforts will help boost consumers' trust in the brands and will make digital marketing campaigns more effective for ensuring customer engagement and long-term brand loyalty.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, S. M. M., Owais, M., Raza, M., Nadeem, Q., & Ahmed, B. (2025). The impact of AI-driven personalization on consumer engagement and brand loyalty. *Qlantic Journal of Social Sciences*, *6*(1), 311-323.
- Aliata, V. L. (2025). Digital Marketing Strategy and Brand Loyalty among Customers of Airtel Network, Kenya. *European Journal of Business and Strategic Management*, *10*(2), 1-11.
- Almeida, S., Costa, C., & Coelho, A. (2019). The role of social media engagement in strengthening consumer–brand relationships. *Journal of Hospitality and Tourism Technology, 10*(4), 573–589.
- Andriana, R. (2025). The influence of digital marketing and brand trust on customer loyalty through customer satisfaction of food and beverage companies. *International Journal of Education, Social Studies, and Management (IJESSM)*, *5*(1), 214-224
- Berry, L. L. (1983). Relationship marketing. In L. L. Berry, G. L. Shostack, & G. D. Upah (Eds.), *Emerging perspectives on services marketing* (pp. 25–28). American Marketing Association.
- Blau, P. M. (1964). *Exchange and power in social life*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
- Budiman, S. (2021). The effect of social media on brand image and brand loyalty. *The Journal of Asian Finance, Economics and Business, 8*(3), 1339–1347.
- Chaffey, D., & Ellis-Chadwick, F. (2022). *Digital marketing: Strategy, implementation and practice* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Chaudhuri, A., & Holbrook, M. B. (2001). The chain of effects from brand trust and brand affect to brand performance: The role of brand loyalty. *Journal of Marketing, 65*(2), 81–93.
- Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling techniques* (3rd ed.). John Wiley & Sons.
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Delgado-Ballester, E., Munuera-Alemán, J. L., & Yagüe-Guillén, M. J. (2003). Development and validation of a brand trust scale. *International Journal of Market Research, 45*(1), 35–54.
- Emerson, R. M. (1976). Social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology, 2*, 335–362.
- Etuk, A., & Udonde, U. E. (2023). The interplay of digital marketing dimensions and customer's patronage of fast food industries in Akwa Ibom State, Nigeria. *European Journal of Business and Innovation Research, 11*(3), 70–97.
- Field, A. (2018). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). Sage.
- Galib, M., & Rijal, S. (2025). Exploring embedded finance in digital marketing impact on marketing strategy, user experience and customer loyalty. *Journal Administrasi Bisnis*, *14*(1), 27-38.

- Grönroos, C. (1994). From marketing mix to relationship marketing: Towards a paradigm shift in marketing. *Management Decision, 32*(2), 4–20.
- Gummesson, E. (1994). Making relationship marketing operational. *International Journal of Service Industry Management, 5*(5), 5–20.
- Hair, J. F., Black, W. C., Babin, B. J., & Anderson, R. E. (2019). *Multivariate data analysis* (8th ed.). Cengage.
- Homans, G. C. (1958). Social behavior as exchange. *American Journal of Sociology, 63*(6), 597–606.
- Istianingsih, N., & Ariyanto, M. (2025). The influence of digital marketing strategy, brand image and sales performance with customer loyalty as a moderating variable. *Journal Ilmiah Manajemen Kesatuan*, *13*(5), 3689-3700.
- Kamal, M., Kurniadi, T. M., Sakti, L. S. T., & Chamariyah, C. (2025). Analysis of the Influence of Digital Marketing on Consumer Loyalty in the Industry 4.0 Era. *Jurnal Multidisiplin Sahombu*, *5*(5), 1234-1242.
- Kotler, P., Keller, K. L., & Chernev, A. (2022). *Marketing management* (16th global ed.). Pearson.
- Kumar, P., & Singh, G. (2025). Using social media and digital marketing tools and techniques for developing brand equity with connected consumers. In *Research Anthology on Social Media Advertising and Building Consumer Relationships* (pp. 1703-1722). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Morgan, R. M., & Hunt, S. D. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *Journal of Marketing, 58*(3), 20–38.
- Mukhopadhyay, R., & Jha, D. (2025). Building brand loyalty in the digital age: The power of social media engagement. In *Elevating brand loyalty with optimized marketing analytics and AI* (pp. 133-158). IGI Global Scientific Publishing.
- Nader, A. S., Sadiq, G. J., Nanekeli, R. J. A., Sulayman, S. F., & Kanabi, I. S. (2025). The role of strategic marketing in enhancing customer loyalty. *OTS Canadian Journal*, *4*(2), 1-13.
- Oliver, R. L. (1999). Whence consumer loyalty? *Journal of Marketing, 63*(Special Issue), 33–44.
- Pallant, J. (2020). *SPSS survival manual* (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.
- Saunders, M., Lewis, P., & Thornhill, A. (2019). *Research methods for business students* (8th ed.). Pearson.
- Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2020). *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach* (8th ed.). Wiley.
- Sriram, K. V., Kesharwani, A., & Deshwal, P. (2022). Digital marketing strategies and customer engagement: A systematic review. *Journal of Business Research, 146*, 608–630.
- Windarsari, W. R. (2025). Mapping the impact of digital marketing strategies on customer loyalty: A systematic review and bibliometric synthesis. *Journal of Studies in Academic, Humanities, Research, and Innovation*, *2*(2), 325-339.