OPTIMIZING BRAND LOYALTY: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF INFLUENCER MARKETING AND DIGITAL CONTENT CAMPAIGNS MEDIATED BY CONSUMER TRUST

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ABSTRACT
This study explores how influencer marketing and digital content campaigns affect brand loyalty, with consumer trust acting as a mediator, within Polewali Mandar Regency. Using a quantitative approach and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), data were gathered from 100 local consumers who interacted with these marketing tactics. The findings indicate that influencer marketing and digital content campaigns significantly boost consumer trust, which in turn, greatly impacts brand loyalty. The model accounts for 52% of the variance in consumer trust and 62% in brand loyalty, underscoring the success of these digital strategies. Direct effects show strong connections between influencer marketing, digital content campaigns, consumer trust, and brand loyalty, while indirect effects highlight the essential role of consumer trust as a mediator. These results support existing research that emphasizes the importance of trust in building lasting consumer relationships. The study suggests that businesses should focus on trust-building in their digital marketing strategies to enhance brand loyalty. By creating engaging and credible content, businesses can foster consumer trust, leading to higher customer retention and long-term business success. This research offers valuable insights for local businesses in Polewali Mandar Regency to optimize their digital marketing efforts, ensuring lasting customer engagement and loyalty.

Keywords: Influencer Marketing, Digital Content Campaigns, Brand Loyalty, Consumer Trust, Digital Marketing Strategies.

1. INTRODUCTION
In the contemporary business landscape, digitization has fundamentally transformed various sectors, enabling more efficient operations and enhancing customer engagement. The digital era has ushered in a new paradigm of marketing, characterized by the widespread use of digital platforms to reach and interact with consumers (Wan, 2023). Digital marketing harnesses data analytics, social media, and other digital tools to create personalized and targeted marketing campaigns, thereby enhancing consumer experiences and engagement (Mohammad, 2022). Moreover, the shift toward digital marketing has provided businesses with unprecedented opportunities to build strong relationships with their customers through sustained interaction and engagement (Parwal & Kumar, 2023). The dynamic interaction facilitated by these digital platforms significantly contributes to brand loyalty development, which is crucial for long-term business success (Gupta et al., 2023). Understanding these dynamics, companies can leverage...
digital tools to cultivate brand loyalty by engaging consumers through meaningful and personalized content (Khoa & Huynh, 2023).

Brand loyalty is a critical component in ensuring long-term business success, as it directly influences repeat purchases and customer retention (Dandis & Al Haj Eid, 2022; Kurnianingsih & Riorini, 2021). Essentially, brand loyalty reflects a customer's commitment to repurchase or continue using a particular brand, often in the face of competitive pressures and marketing efforts from other brands (Chauhan, 2023). This loyalty can be driven by many factors, including brand trust, perceived quality, and emotional connection with the brand (Sumarmi & Wijayanti, 2023). Customer satisfaction plays a vital role in fostering brand loyalty, as satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal to a brand and recommend it to others (Ooko et al., 2023).

Furthermore, in the digital age where content significantly influences consumer behavior, engaging and relevant content can enhance brand loyalty by fostering deeper relationships with the brand (Anto et al., 2023). Research has shown that perceived brand credibility and reputation also significantly contribute to brand loyalty, as they build trust and positive attitudes toward the brand (Haq et al., 2022). Additionally, brand loyalty is not static but evolves, influenced by various factors including consistent positive experiences and effective brand management strategies (Parris & Guzman, 2023).

Customer trust is a fundamental component in building long-term relationships between consumers and brands (Glaveli, 2021; Villagra et al., 2021). Trust is built through consistent positive interactions and reliable performance, which help instill a sense of security and confidence in the brand (Munawaroh & others, 2021). Trust can significantly be influenced by customer engagement, which in turn impacts brand loyalty through customer satisfaction and trust (Tuti & Sulistia, 2022). In the context of service firms, trust in the brand, which encompasses brand characteristics and company reputation, is crucial for maintaining brand loyalty (Sethi et al., 2024). Furthermore, trust plays a mediating role in the relationship between brand interactivity and brand loyalty, enhancing overall customer experience and brand loyalty (Cahyadi & Tunjungsari, 2023). Ultimately, customer trust not only enhances satisfaction but also acts as a critical mediator strengthening brand loyalty (Chairunnisa & Ruswanti, 2023).

Influencer marketing and digital content campaigns significantly influence customer trust and brand loyalty. Influencer marketing leverages the credibility and reach of popular social media personalities to enhance brand awareness and consumer trust, thereby fostering stronger emotional connections with the brand (Hudders & Lou, 2022). Digital content marketing, through various formats such as blogs, videos, and social media posts, enhances customer engagement and perceived value, which is crucial for building trust and loyalty. Consistently delivering valuable and engaging content enhances trust and fosters long-term loyalty among customers (Mohammad, 2022).

Effective influencer marketing requires a careful selection of influencers who resonate with the target audience and can create compelling and authentic content, leading to increased brand loyalty (Leung et al., 2022). Additionally, digital content marketing on platforms like social media significantly influences customer satisfaction and loyalty by enhancing perceived value.
and quality (Siswadi et al., 2023). These strategies collectively enhance customer trust and reinforce brand loyalty, ensuring sustainable business success.

In recent studies, various dimensions of influencer marketing, digital content campaigns, and their impact on consumer behavior and brand loyalty have been extensively explored. Influencer marketing has been shown to significantly increase brand awareness and consumer trust (Pandey et al., 2023). Influencer credibility is crucial for effective marketing and building consumer trust (Kim & Kim, 2021; Shamim & Islam, 2022). Digital content campaigns enhance customer engagement and perceived value, which is crucial for building trust and loyalty (Mohammad, 2022). Customer trust mediates the relationship between brand awareness, brand association, and brand loyalty, particularly in the context of social media marketing (Haudi et al., 2022).

Social media marketing activities have a significant impact on customer loyalty by enhancing trust and perceived quality (Ebrahim, 2020; Puspaningrum, 2020). While these studies highlight the importance of influencer marketing and digital content campaigns in increasing brand awareness, engagement, and loyalty, they often do not explicitly examine the mediating role of customer trust. The potential for trust to mediate the effects of influencer marketing and digital content campaigns on brand loyalty is underexplored. Most research focuses on direct effects rather than examining how trust can function as a crucial mediating variable enhancing the overall impact on brand loyalty.

Polewali Mandar Regency, located in West Sulawesi Province, has experienced rapid development in the utilization of digital technology and social media. With the increasing internet penetration, communities are becoming more connected through various digital platforms, creating significant opportunities for digital marketing. Influencer marketing and digital content campaigns have become primary strategies for many local businesses to increase brand awareness and consumer trust. The success of these strategies is heavily influenced by consumer trust, built through consistent interaction and relevant content. However, businesses often face challenges in determining the appropriate metrics to measure the impact of their digital marketing efforts on brand loyalty and consumer trust. This research aims to address these challenges by exploring how influencer marketing and digital content campaigns can be optimized to build consumer trust and brand loyalty. This study aims to provide deeper insights into effective strategies in the local context of Polewali Mandar Regency, enabling businesses to maximize the potential of digital marketing for long-term success.

This research is significant as it addresses gaps in the existing literature by exploring the mediating role of consumer trust in influencer marketing and digital content campaigns, which have been relatively under-researched. Through in-depth analysis in the local context of Polewali Mandar Regency, this research offers new insights into how digital marketing strategies can be optimized to build strong consumer trust and brand loyalty. The novelty of this research lies in a holistic approach considering consumer trust as a key mediating variable, providing a fresh perspective in understanding the dynamics of digital marketing and its interaction with consumer behavior. The findings of this research are expected to assist local
businesses in designing more effective and relevant marketing strategies, as well as enhancing long-term success through strong brand loyalty.

2. THEORY

2.1 Brand Loyalty

According to (Atulkar, 2020), brand loyalty is a deep commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service consistently in the future, despite situational influences and marketing efforts that may cause switching behavior. This loyalty can be divided into several levels: cognitive loyalty, affective loyalty, conative loyalty, and action loyalty. Brand loyalty is the tendency of consumers to repeatedly purchase products from a particular brand, even when there are other options available in the market (Qothrunnada, 2022; Thabroni, 2022). Brand loyalty is not just about habits but also involves consumer satisfaction with the product quality, user experience, and their perception of the brand's value and identity (Darmawan, 2023).

2.2 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a form of social media marketing that involves endorsements and product mentions from individuals who have social influence in a specific field (Handayani, 2024; Riadi, 2024). According to (Lin et al., 2021), influencers have the ability to affect the attitudes and behaviors of their audience, which in turn can influence brand loyalty. Influencer marketing is a marketing strategy where companies or brands collaborate with individuals who have significant influence or many followers on social media or other digital platforms (Tasim, 2023; Team, 2024). The goal of this approach is to leverage the reach and influence of these influencers to promote products or services to a broader and more targeted audience.

2.3 Digital Content Campaigns

Digital content campaigns are marketing strategies that utilize digital content to achieve various business goals, such as increasing brand awareness, driving traffic to websites, or boosting sales (Izza, 2023; Mahmud, 2023). Digital content campaigns involve creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract and engage a targeted audience (Collins, 2024). This content can take the form of articles, videos, images, and more. According to (Rane et al., 2023) High-quality content can build strong relationships with consumers and enhance brand loyalty.

2.4 Consumer Trust

Consumer trust is the belief that a brand or influencer will meet their expectations and act honestly (Hoffman et al., 1999). According to (Hiatt et al., 2023) trust consists of three main dimensions: ability, benevolence, and integrity. This trust is crucial in long-term relationships between consumers and brands or influencers. Customer trust is the belief that customers have in a brand, product, or service (Carnevale et al., 2018). It is crucial in the relationship between customers and companies because it influences customers' decisions to purchase, and reuse products or services, and recommend them to others. This trust can be reinforced through consistency, quality of products or services, transparency, good customer service, and positive interactions with the brand (Portal et al., 2019).
3. METHOD

This study aims to investigate the effectiveness of influencer marketing and digital content campaigns on brand loyalty, mediated by consumer trust, among the residents of Polewali Mandar Regency. This research adopts a quantitative approach to collect and analyze data from a representative sample of the local population. According to (Fauzi, 2022), the minimum sample size for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is 100 participants. Therefore, this study will utilize a sample of 100 individuals who meet the criteria of having purchased local products more than once, both online and offline, based on information provided by influencers and digital marketing campaigns. The sampling method used is non-probability convenience sampling, where participants are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate. This approach involves researchers meeting potential respondents by chance. Each selected participant will be given 15 minutes to complete a questionnaire designed to measure various indicators relevant to the study, including trust, brand loyalty, and the influence of digital marketing.

Data will be analyzed using Warp PLS, software specifically designed for Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), which is suitable for complex models and small to medium sample sizes (Sarstedt et al., 2021). The analysis will focus on examining the relationships between influencer marketing, digital content campaigns, consumer trust, and brand loyalty. All personal information obtained during interviews will be kept confidential to ensure the privacy of the participants. Steps will be taken to anonymize the data and protect the identities of the respondents, in compliance with ethical standards and privacy regulations. Findings from this analysis are expected to provide valuable insights into optimizing digital marketing strategies to enhance brand loyalty through consumer trust in the context of Polewali Mandar Regency.

The conceptual framework outlines several key relationships among the investigated variables. Influencer marketing is expected to enhance consumer trust and brand loyalty due to the high credibility and engagement of influencers. Similarly, high-quality and consistent digital content campaigns are anticipated to build consumer trust and brand loyalty through sustained engagement and positive experiences. High consumer trust, in turn, is crucial for reinforcing brand loyalty, as trusted brands are more likely to see repeat purchases and recommendations. Consumer trust serves as a mediator that enhances the positive effects of influencer marketing.
and digital content campaigns on brand loyalty. This conceptual framework helps illustrate the logical flow and interconnection among the researched variables, providing a clear foundation for further analysis in this study.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
The results of this research are the results of hypothesis testing as follows:

The path analysis results, as illustrated in the provided model, reveal a significant explanatory power of the predictor variables on consumer trust (Z) and brand loyalty (Y). This model explains 52% of the variance in consumer trust (R² = 0.52) and 62% of the variance in brand loyalty (R² = 0.62). These R² values indicate that influencer marketing (X1) and digital content campaigns (X2) collectively contribute to more than half of the variation in consumer trust, while consumer trust, alongside influencer marketing and digital content campaigns, explains the majority of the variance in brand loyalty. The high R² values underscore the effectiveness of these digital marketing strategies in influencing consumer perceptions and loyalty. Immediate Effect

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1 -&gt; Z</td>
<td>0.371</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2 -&gt; Z</td>
<td>0.453</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X1 -&gt; Y</td>
<td>0.177</td>
<td>0.033</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2 -&gt; Y</td>
<td>0.345</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z -&gt; Y</td>
<td>0.377</td>
<td>&lt;0.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The results of the direct effects analysis reveal significant relationships between influencer marketing (X1), digital content campaigns (X2), consumer trust (Z), and brand loyalty (Y). Influencer marketing significantly influences consumer trust with a path coefficient of 0.371 (p < 0.001), while digital content campaigns also have a strong impact on consumer trust with a path coefficient of 0.453 (p < 0.001). Additionally, influencer marketing directly affects brand loyalty, albeit with a smaller effect size (0.177, p = 0.033). Conversely, digital content campaigns have a more substantial direct effect on brand loyalty with a path coefficient of
0.345 (p < 0.001). Importantly, consumer trust plays a crucial role in mediating these effects, as evidenced by its strong direct impact on brand loyalty (0.377, p < 0.001). These findings underscore the importance of influencer marketing and digital content campaigns in building consumer trust, which in turn significantly enhances brand loyalty.

The significant explanatory power of influencer marketing and digital content campaigns on consumer trust and brand loyalty reaffirms the crucial role of these digital strategies in increasing consumer engagement and loyalty. This supports the statement that digital platforms have transformed marketing paradigms by enabling personalized and targeted campaigns that enhance consumer experiences and engagement. Furthermore, the observed direct effects, where influencer marketing and digital content campaigns significantly impact consumer trust and brand loyalty, echo findings about the important role of sustained interaction and compelling content in fostering brand loyalty. The mediating role of consumer trust in these relationships further emphasizes the importance of building trust to achieve long-term customer loyalty. Thus, this research expands current understanding by highlighting the mediating effects of consumer trust, which have been relatively less explored in previous studies, providing a comprehensive view of how digital marketing strategies can be optimized to build strong brand loyalty through enhanced consumer trust (Gupta et al., 2023).

Table 2. Indirect Effects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Path</th>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>P-Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>X1 -&gt; Z -&gt; Y</td>
<td>0.140</td>
<td>0.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X2 -&gt; Z -&gt; Y</td>
<td>0.171</td>
<td>0.007</td>
</tr>
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The results of the indirect effects analysis indicate that influencer marketing (X1) and digital content campaigns (X2) significantly impact brand loyalty (Y) through the mediating variable of consumer trust (Z). Specifically, the indirect effect of influencer marketing on brand loyalty is 0.140 with a p-value of 0.021, indicating a significant mediating effect. Similarly, digital content campaigns demonstrate a stronger indirect effect on brand loyalty with a coefficient of 0.171 and a p-value of 0.007. These findings highlight the crucial role of consumer trust as a mediator, reinforcing the importance of trust-building strategies in enhancing the effectiveness of digital marketing efforts on brand loyalty.

The analysis of indirect effects underscores the importance of consumer trust in mediating the relationship between digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty. This aligns with the literature indicating that trust is crucial in fostering long-term consumer relationships. The significant indirect effects observed in this study (X1 -> Y: 0.140, p = 0.021; X2 -> Y: 0.171, p = 0.007) support the idea that influencer marketing and digital content campaigns enhance brand loyalty primarily by building consumer trust. These findings resonate with previous research emphasizing the crucial role of sustained interaction and compelling content in fostering trust and, consequently, brand loyalty. By confirming the mediating effect of trust, this research contributes to a nuanced understanding of how digital marketing strategies can be leveraged to foster brand loyalty.
The implications of this study are significant for businesses aiming to optimize their digital marketing strategies to build brand loyalty. These findings highlight that merely implementing influencer marketing and digital content campaigns is not sufficient; these strategies should also focus on building consumer trust to achieve desired outcomes in increasing brand loyalty. This research underscores the importance of trust-building initiatives as a critical component of digital marketing efforts. Businesses in Polewali Mandar Regency and similar contexts can benefit from these insights by adjusting their digital marketing strategies to prioritize trust-building through consistent, engaging, and credible interactions with consumers. Thus, they can cultivate stronger emotional connections with their brands, leading to increased customer retention and long-term business success, as outlined in the research objectives.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS
This study illustrates the important role played by influencer marketing and digital content campaigns in enhancing brand loyalty through the mediating effect of consumer trust. The findings reveal that both marketing strategies have a positive impact on consumer trust, which in turn significantly influences brand loyalty. The direct and indirect effects observed underscore the necessity of building trust as an integral part of digital marketing efforts. By focusing on creating credible and engaging content, businesses can foster stronger consumer trust, ultimately leading to higher brand loyalty. These insights provide valuable guidance for businesses aiming to optimize their digital marketing strategies, particularly in the context of Polewali Mandar Regency, to achieve sustained customer engagement and long-term success.

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