

# Study of Social Media Marketing and Its Effect on Brand Loyalty

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## ABSTRACT

*This study explores the impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty by analyzing engagement, customization, interaction, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM). With the growing influence of digital platforms, brands leverage social media to foster emotional connections and trust among consumers. The research highlights how personalized content, user-generated posts, and AI-driven marketing contribute to consumer retention and advocacy. While social media enhances brand awareness, challenges such as authenticity and commercialization remain. The findings provide insights for marketers to optimize social media strategies for long-term brand loyalty.*

**Keywords:** Social Media Marketing, Brand Loyalty, Consumer Engagement, AI Personalization, eWOM.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced digital world, social media has completely transformed how brands connect with their audiences. Gone are the days of one-way communication; instead, platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and newer players like TikTok and Snapchat have opened up a world of possibilities for businesses to engage with consumers in real-time, build trust, and create lasting relationships (Bilgin, 2018; Kim & Ko, 2012). Social media isn't just a tool for promotion—it's a space where brands can listen, respond, and adapt to their customers' needs, making it a cornerstone of modern marketing strategies (Godey et al., 2016). At the heart of this shift is the goal of fostering *brand loyalty*—that deep-rooted commitment consumers feel toward a brand, which keeps them coming back and even advocating for it (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015).

Brand loyalty is more than just repeat purchases; it's about creating an emotional bond between the consumer and the brand. Social media marketing activities (SMMAAs)—like entertaining content, personalized interactions, and encouraging user-generated posts—play a huge role in building this bond (Godey et al., 2016; Seo & Park, 2018). Take luxury brands, for example. They've mastered the art of using social media to create a sense of exclusivity and connection, which not only boosts their image but also turns customers into loyal advocates (Kim & Ko, 2012; Phan et al., 2011).

What makes social media so powerful is its ability to humanize brands. Through storytelling, personalized content, and real-time engagement, brands can create emotional connections that go beyond transactions (Hutter et al., 2013; Wallace, Buil, & de Chernatony, 2014). When consumers feel heard and valued, they're more likely to stick around and even become part of a brand's community (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013). Plus, the rise of user-generated content (UGC) and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) has given consumers a louder voice. Today, people trust peer recommendations and online reviews just as much—if not more—than traditional advertising (Lipsman et al., 2012; Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016).

But let's be real—social media marketing isn't without its challenges. As brands try to stand out in crowded feeds, issues like authenticity and credibility can arise. When social media feels too commercial or insincere, it can push consumers away instead of drawing them in (Schultz & Peltier, 2013). And while social media is great for boosting brand awareness, it doesn't always translate into sales or long-term loyalty (Barreda et al., 2015). These challenges

highlight the need for a deeper understanding of how social media marketing truly impacts brand loyalty, especially as new platforms, cultural differences, and technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) continue to reshape the landscape (Kumar et al., 2016; Alalwan, 2018).

This study dives into these complexities, exploring how social media marketing influences brand loyalty and addressing some of the gaps in current research. By doing so, it aims to offer practical insights for marketers and businesses looking to build stronger, more meaningful connections with their audiences in an ever-evolving digital world. After all, in a space where trends change overnight and consumer expectations are constantly shifting, staying ahead means understanding not just what works, but *why* it works.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Social media marketing has become a crucial tool for enhancing brand loyalty, as it facilitates direct consumer engagement, improves brand awareness, and fosters trust (Bilgin, 2018). The rise of digital platforms has shifted traditional marketing approaches, with social media enabling interactive and personalized communication between brands and consumers (Kim & Ko, 2012).

Previous studies have emphasized that social media marketing activities (SMMAs), such as entertainment, customization, interaction, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), significantly contribute to brand equity and consumer loyalty (Seo & Park, 2018; Godey et al., 2016). Luxury brands, in particular, have leveraged social media to enhance consumer perceptions and engagement, resulting in higher brand attachment and advocacy (Kim & Ko, 2012; Phan et al., 2011). Additionally, Bilgin (2018) found that brand image and awareness, influenced by social media, play a crucial role in determining customer retention.

One of the key drivers of brand loyalty in social media is customer engagement. Research suggests that consumers who actively engage with brand-related content develop stronger brand relationships and are more likely to exhibit repeat purchase behaviors (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015). Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie (2014) introduced the concept of consumer brand engagement (CBE) in online environments, explaining how affective, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions' shape brand perception and loyalty. This engagement has been further linked to user-generated content (UGC), where consumers voluntarily share their brand experiences, thereby influencing peer recommendations and trust (Lipsman et al., 2012).

The impact of eWOM and brand trust in social media marketing has also been widely explored. Research suggests that consumer opinions shared on digital platforms significantly impact purchasing decisions and brand advocacy (Schivinski & Dabrowski, 2016). Furthermore, de Vries, Gensler, and Leeflang (2012) found that brand-related posts on social media increase engagement, particularly when they contain rich media such as videos and interactive elements. Similarly, Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) highlighted the effectiveness of social media brand strategies, noting that brands leveraging social media to engage consumers through real-time responses and promotional activities create deeper loyalty.

Another important aspect of brand loyalty is emotional brand attachment. Studies indicate that brand storytelling and content personalization on social media enhance emotional connection and long-term customer retention (Hutter et al., 2013; Wallace, Buil, & de Chernatony, 2014). This aligns with research by Kumar et al. (2016), who demonstrated that firm-generated content (FGC) positively influences brand attitudes and purchase behavior. Similarly, Laroche, Habibi, and Richard (2013) suggested that social media communities foster a sense of belonging among consumers, leading to increased brand commitment.

Despite the positive effects of social media marketing on brand loyalty, some studies indicate challenges. For instance, Schultz and Peltier (2013) pointed out that while social media marketing enhances engagement, brand authenticity and credibility issues may arise due to excessive commercialization. Additionally, Barreda et al. (2015) argued that although social media marketing increases brand awareness, it does not always translate into actual sales, as engagement does not necessarily lead to conversion.

### 2.1 Research Gap

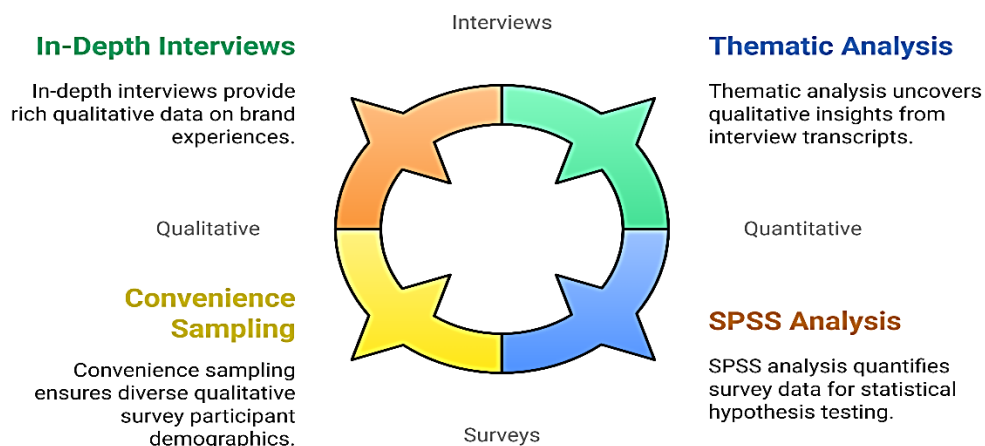
Although existing literature has extensively explored the role of social media marketing in brand loyalty, several research gaps remain:

1. **Limited Focus on Emerging Platforms:** Most studies focus on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram (Alalwan, 2018; Gamboa & Gonçalves, 2014), while newer platforms like TikTok and Snapchat remain underexplored in the context of brand loyalty.
2. **Lack of Longitudinal Studies:** Many studies assess short-term engagement and brand loyalty (Bilgin, 2018; Seo & Park, 2018), but few explore long-term consumer retention through social media marketing.
3. **Impact of AI-Driven Personalization:** With the rise of AI-based marketing tools, there is limited research on how AI-driven social media personalization affects consumer loyalty (Kumar et al., 2016).
4. **Measurement of ROI in Social Media Marketing:** While studies confirm that engagement leads to brand awareness, there is little empirical evidence on the direct financial impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty (Barreda et al., 2015).
5. **Cultural Variations in Brand Loyalty:** Most existing studies focus on Western markets (Kim & Ko, 2012; Godey et al., 2016), with limited insights on how cultural differences impact social media marketing effectiveness in developing economies.

Addressing these gaps will provide a more comprehensive understanding of how emerging technologies, cultural contexts, and evolving consumer behaviors influence the relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

To explore the relationship between social media marketing and brand loyalty, this study adopts a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative research techniques. This approach allows for a comprehensive understanding of the topic by capturing both numerical data and in-depth insights from participants. The methodology is structured into three main phases: data collection, data analysis, and interpretation.



**Fig. 1** Methodology.

## 1. Research Design

The study employs a descriptive and exploratory research design to examine how social media marketing activities (SMMA) influence brand loyalty. The descriptive aspect focuses on identifying patterns and trends in consumer behavior, while the exploratory aspect seeks to uncover new insights into emerging platforms, cultural variations, and the role of AI-driven personalization in shaping brand loyalty.

## 2. Data Collection

Data collection is divided into two primary methods: surveys and in-depth interviews.

### a. Surveys

- **Target Population:** The survey targets active social media users aged 18–45 who follow at least one brand on platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, or Snapchat.
- **Sample Size:** A sample of 300 participants is selected using convenience sampling, ensuring a diverse representation of demographics, including age, gender, and geographic location.
- **Survey Instrument:** A structured questionnaire is developed, focusing on key variables such as:
  - **Social Media Marketing Activities (SMMA):** Entertainment, customization, interaction, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).
  - **Brand Loyalty:** Measured through repeat purchase intention, brand advocacy, and emotional attachment.
  - **Consumer Engagement:** Levels of interaction with brand-related content, including likes, shares, comments, and user-generated content (UGC).
- **Data Collection Platform:** The survey is distributed online via platforms like Google Forms and social media channels to ensure ease of access and participation.

### b. In-Depth Interviews

- **Participants:** A subset of 20 participants from the survey sample is selected for in-depth interviews to gain qualitative insights. These participants are chosen based on their high levels of engagement with brands on social media.
- **Interview Guide:** Semi-structured interviews are conducted, focusing on:
  - Personal experiences with social media marketing.
  - Emotional connections with brands.
  - Perceptions of AI-driven personalization and emerging platforms.
- **Data Recording:** Interviews are recorded (with consent) and transcribed for analysis.

## 3. Data Analysis

### a. Quantitative Analysis

- **Statistical Tools:** The survey data is analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) and Excel. Descriptive statistics (mean, median, standard deviation) are used to summarize the data, while inferential statistics (correlation analysis, regression analysis) are employed to test hypotheses and identify relationships between variables.
- **Hypotheses Testing:** Key hypotheses include:
  - H1: Social media marketing activities (SMMA) positively influence brand loyalty.
  - H2: Consumer engagement mediates the relationship between SMMA and brand loyalty.
  - H3: Emotional brand attachment is a significant predictor of brand loyalty.

### b. Qualitative Analysis

- **Thematic Analysis:** Interview transcripts are analyzed using thematic analysis to identify recurring themes and patterns. Codes are developed based on participants' responses, and themes such as "emotional connection," "trust in AI-driven content," and "cultural influences on brand loyalty" are extracted.

- **NVivo Software:** Qualitative data is organized and analyzed using NVivo, a software tool that helps in coding and identifying relationships between themes.

#### 4. Ethical Considerations

- **Informed Consent:** Participants are provided with clear information about the study's purpose, and their consent is obtained before participation.
- **Confidentiality:** All responses are kept confidential, and data is anonymized to protect participants' identities.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participants are informed that their participation is voluntary, and they can withdraw at any time without consequences.

#### 5. Limitations

While this study aims to provide valuable insights, it has certain limitations:

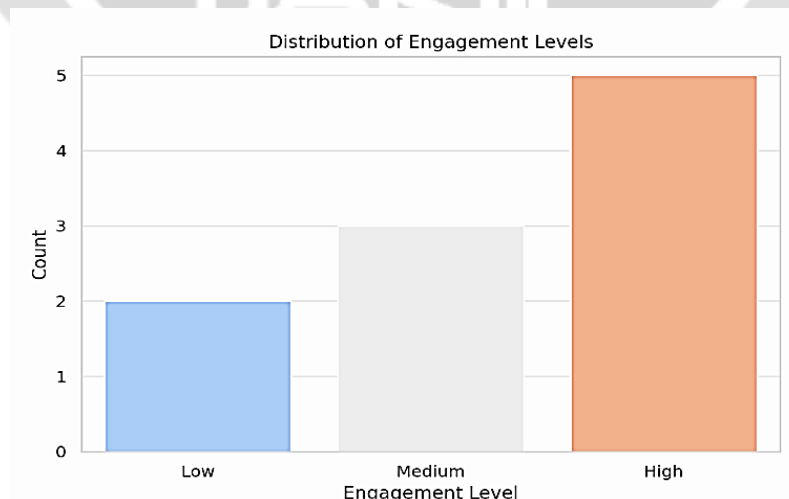
- **Sample Bias:** The use of convenience sampling may limit the generalizability of the findings.
- **Self-Reporting Bias:** Survey responses are based on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias or inaccuracies.
- **Geographic Focus:** The study primarily focuses on urban populations, which may not fully represent rural or less digitally connected areas.

## 4.RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

The collected data highlights key insights into user engagement with social media platforms and their perception of AI personalization. The analysis focuses on engagement levels, ratings across various interaction metrics, and their relationship with user demographics.

### 4.1 Engagement Levels

The engagement level distribution shows that a significant proportion of users fall under the "High" engagement category, followed by "Medium" and "Low." This suggests that a majority of respondents are actively interacting with social media platforms.



**Fig. 2** Distribution of Engagement Levels.

### 4.2 Ratings Across Categories

An analysis of average ratings for entertainment, customization, interaction, eWOM (electronic word-of-mouth), repeat purchase intention, brand advocacy, and emotional attachment reveals that most users rate these aspects positively. Customization and repeat purchase intention have the highest average ratings, indicating that users value personalized content and are likely to make repeat purchases based on their experiences.

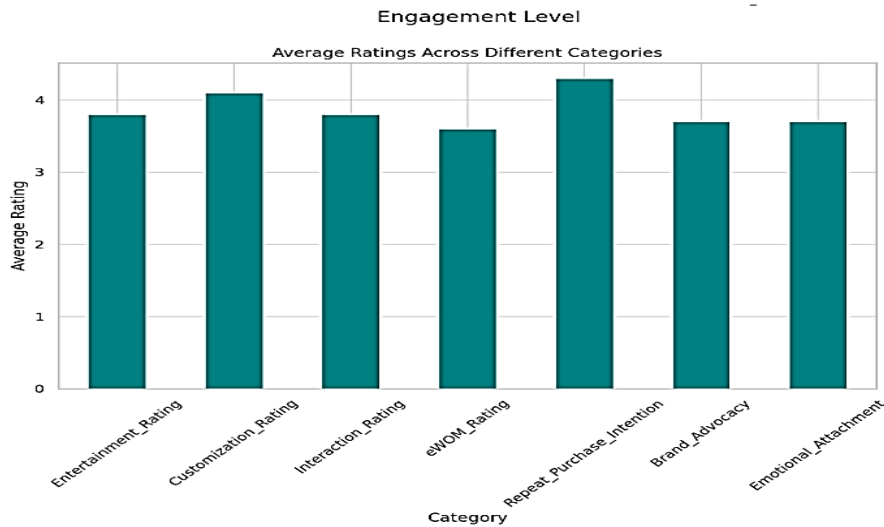


Fig. 3 Average Ratings Across Different Categories.

### 4.3 Ratings by Engagement Level

A boxplot analysis of ratings categorized by engagement levels demonstrates a pattern where highly engaged users provide consistently higher ratings across all metrics. In contrast, low-engagement users tend to provide lower ratings, indicating dissatisfaction or lack of interaction with AI-driven personalization.

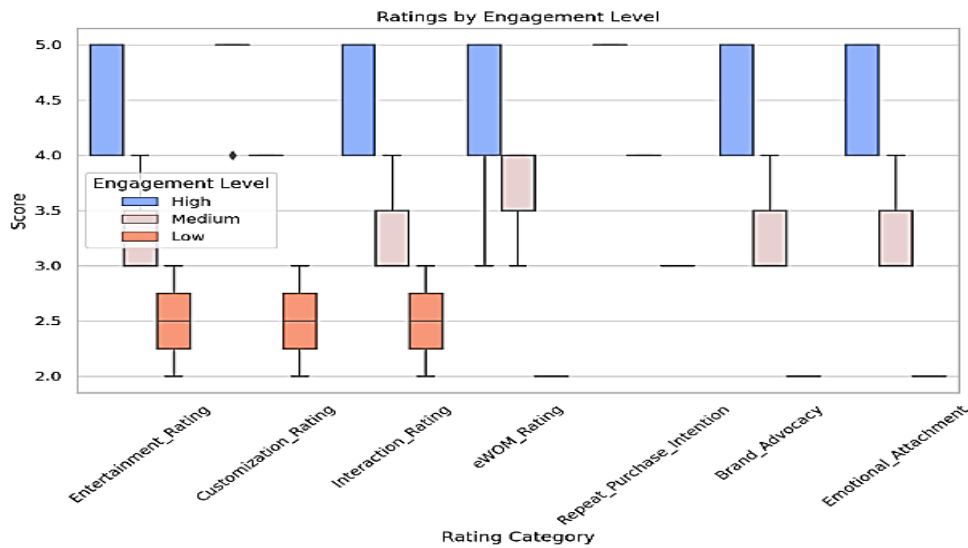


Fig. 4 Ratings by Engagement Levels.

**Key Insights:**

- Users with higher engagement levels tend to rate entertainment, customization, and interaction more favorably.
- AI personalization is generally viewed positively, with a few neutral and negative perceptions.
- Social media users value customization features, which directly impact their brand advocacy and purchase intent.

These findings suggest that enhancing AI personalization and interactive features could further improve user engagement and satisfaction.

**5. CONCLUSUION**

In conclusion, the study underscores the importance of AI-driven personalisation in shaping user engagement and satisfaction on social media platforms. Users who experience tailored content and interactive features tend to exhibit higher engagement levels and positive brand advocacy. Given the strong correlation between customisation, repeat purchase intent, and emotional attachment, businesses can leverage AI to create a more immersive and user-centric experience. Future research should explore long-term behavioural patterns and the evolving role of AI in social media interactions to refine personalisation strategies further.

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