Investigating the Impact of Digital Marketing on Brand Conformity, Brand Equity, and Customer Loyalty (Case Study: Digikala Customers)

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of digital marketing on brand conformity, brand equity, and customer loyalty (Case Study: Digikala Customers). The research method is descriptive correlational in terms of implementation and applied in terms of purpose. The statistical population of this study includes all Digikala brand customers, totaling 4,000 individuals. The sample size is determined to be 385 participants using the Morgan table with a random sampling method. Data collection tools in this study include the Digital Marketing Questionnaire by Masiibi et al. (2023), the Brand Equity Questionnaire by Aaker (2000), the Brand Conformity Questionnaire by Keyqobadi (2015), and the Customer Loyalty Standard Questionnaire by Zehir et al. (2011). The reliability of the questionnaires is confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients: digital marketing (0.85), brand conformity (0.77), brand equity (0.79), and customer loyalty (0.81). Data analysis is conducted using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics include measures such as mean, frequency tables, standard deviation, and variance. Inferential statistics involve regression tests suitable for the data, utilizing SPSS 20 software. The results indicate that digital marketing significantly influences brand conformity, brand equity, and customer loyalty (Case Study: Digikala Customers).

Keywords: Marketing; Digital Marketing; Brand Conformity; Brand Equity; Customer Loyalty.

Introduction

In the competitive business environment, organizations aim not only to sustain their market presence but also to expand other dimensions of marketing. With the increasing use of the internet worldwide, the application of mobile phones and similar technologies has grown significantly in recent years (Jain et al., 2019). The Digital Marketing Institute defines digital marketing as "the use of digital technologies to create an integrated, targeted, and measurable communication that ensures the maintenance of a proper relationship between customers and the organization" (Busca et al., 2020). The concept of digital marketing introduces updated methods for attracting new customers and informing them about the organization's services, thereby enabling organizations to promote, present, and sell their products and services. This new marketing approach has demonstrated sufficient effectiveness and is expected to remain a top priority in technology transformation and strategic investment for senior marketing managers in the coming years (Kim et al., 2019). Digital marketing can be seen as an online and offline channel (Talikotia et al., 2019), and its strategies can retain the organization's audience and attract investors (Birjandi et al., 2021).

The concept of brand conformity can be used as an important criterion to explain the relationship between two parties (the customer and the organization) so that customers feel aligned with the brand. Brand conformity requires a strong dependency between the customer and the brand, positive customer perceptions of the brand, and widespread brand recognition to enhance conformity. When customers strongly identify with a brand, they express their affinity for it (Fattahi et al., 2017). Brands enable a company's products to stand out in growing markets. Establishing a reputable and well-known brand ensures the organization's sustainability. Marketing managers should focus on creating and maintaining an appropriate brand to address and mitigate potential problems. To prevent such issues, the concept of brand equity becomes vital. Brand equity plays a critical role in achieving competitive advantages and making strategic decisions (Hasanzadeh et al., 2016). The core focus of any organization is its customers, and understanding their expectations is essential for meeting their needs and providing suitable services. By exceeding customer expectations, service organizations can foster loyalty. Loyalty is one of the central concepts in marketing strategy and, according to Aaker, is the core of brand equity (Salehi et al., 2020). Customer loyalty to a specific product or brand is of significant importance. Loyalty serves as a competitive tool for many companies, and their growth and sustainability depend on the loyalty of their customers. As competition intensifies, the need for customer loyalty and its retention becomes increasingly crucial (Ahaghghi et al., 2020). Despite extensive empirical research, few studies have focused on Digikala's customers in Chabahar. This study seeks to examine the impact of digital marketing on brand conformity, brand equity, and customer loyalty (Case Study: Digikala Customers) as a starting point for identifying and expanding the applications of these concepts to other brands.

The research findings can be summarized as follows: Implementing green marketing tactics has a positive and significant effect on how a company is perceived and its reputation. Green marketing tactics have been shown to have a significant and positive effect on customer purchasing behavior. The influence of brand image on customer buying decisions is both favorable and statistically significant. There is a statistically significant and positive indirect correlation between the implementation of green marketing (X) and customers' purchasing choices (Z), which is influenced by the perception of brand image (Y). Future research endeavors are expected to include more characteristics that may influence buying decision variables. A future study is anticipated to expand the research reach beyond users of bottled drinking water products in Central Java. This may involve changing research locations and maybe encompassing other areas.

For future research on the impact of blockchain implementation on enhancing customer satisfaction in organizational supply chains, especially within the dairy industry, several key areas offer valuable opportunities. Researchers could explore cross-industry comparisons to determine whether blockchain's effects on customer satisfaction vary between different sectors beyond dairy. Additionally, examining the long-term impacts of blockchain integration, particularly on sustainability and traceability, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of its benefits. Future studies should also focus on empirical investigations involving larger datasets and diverse geographic regions to increase generalizability. Lastly, exploring how blockchain can facilitate collaborative relationships among suppliers, manufacturers, and consumers through enhanced transparency and trust would provide further insights into its potential.

As described, target audience identification is a critical aspect of digital marketing, and the use of advanced techniques, such as the heuristic simulated annealing algorithm, can significantly improve the effectiveness of marketing campaigns. Several studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of simulated annealing algorithms in target audience identification, and the importance of accurate target audience identification has been emphasized in academic literature. The dynamic nature of customer behavior and preferences challenges target audience identification. However, incorporating machine learning and artificial intelligence techniques can help businesses overcome this challenge and stay ahead of the competition in digital marketing.

Also, the results show in the case studied company has identified five segments in customer demographic heuristic simulated annulling; so that non-human resource managers are willing to spend more on human resources management virtual training courses, human resource managers looking for managers development program virtual training course, seniors are looking for soft skills virtual training courses, busy professionals personal development program virtual training courses, and Young adults interested in general management virtual training courses of potential customers, each with different conversion rates and cost per conversions.

The results of this research allow companies to compare results with traditional methods, such as targeting audiences with demographic or geographic data. The advantage of the simulated annealing approach is that it considers the entire Customer journey and allows for targeting more complex audiences.

Overall, the simulated annealing algorithm can be valuable for identifying the optimum target audience in digital marketing campaigns. By considering the entire customer journey and allowing for more complex audience targeting, the algorithm can help companies optimize their marketing strategies and maximize their profits. And it can be pointed out that the main limitation in this type of analysis is having different scenarios in identifying audiences in different marketing campaigns and data, which can be carried out in a more complete research in the future and on the information of a larger company will be made.

It is proposed to apply the designed model to a case study with more data, as well as other conscious search methods especially; Differential Evolution Revised Algorithm, Genetic Algorithm, Particle Swarm Optimization and Stochastic Fractal Search, and methods inspired by nature as well as not inspired by nature, to evaluate and predict used target audience and market identification.

Management insights refer to the understanding and knowledge gained from analyzing various aspects of management practices, organizational behavior, and strategic decision-making. These insights help leaders and managers make informed decisions, improve efficiency, and foster a positive work environment. Here are some key points about management insights:

1. Data-Driven Decision Making: Effective management relies on analyzing data to understand trends, performance metrics, and employee feedback. This helps in making informed decisions that align with organizational goals.

2. Leadership Styles: Different leadership styles (e.g., transformational, transactional, servant leadership) can significantly impact team dynamics and organizational culture. Understanding these styles helps managers choose the most effective approach for their teams.

3. Employee Engagement: Insights into employee motivation and engagement can lead to higher productivity and job satisfaction. Managers should focus on creating a supportive environment that encourages open communication and recognizes employee contributions.

4. Change Management: Organizations often undergo changes that require careful management. Understanding the psychological and operational aspects of change can help leaders guide their teams through transitions smoothly.

5. Conflict Resolution: Conflicts are inevitable in any organization. Management insights into conflict resolution strategies can help maintain a harmonious workplace and improve collaboration among team members.

6. Strategic Planning: Effective management involves setting clear objectives and developing strategies to achieve them. Insights into market trends, competition, and internal capabilities can inform strategic planning efforts.

7. Cultural Awareness: In a globalized world, understanding cultural differences is crucial for managing diverse teams. Insights into cultural dynamics can enhance communication and cooperation among employees from various backgrounds.

By leveraging these insights, managers can enhance their effectiveness, drive organizational success, and create a positive workplace culture.

Digital Marketing Questionnaire: The digital marketing questionnaire was prepared by Masiibi and colleagues (1402). This questionnaire consists of 33 questions and aims to evaluate the components of digital marketing in organizations from various dimensions (digital marketing strategy, personalization, content marketing, consumer engagement, digital marketing mix). The scoring range is based on a five-option Likert scale. Masiibi and colleagues (1401) used the opinions of university professors to calculate the validity, and the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed, while the reliability was obtained through a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.88.

Brand Equity Questionnaire: To measure brand equity, Aaker's (2000) brand equity questionnaire was used. This 22-item questionnaire is designed with a 5-option Likert scale ranging from very low (1) to very high (5). The breakdown of the items for each subscale is as follows: brand image items 1 to 8, brand quality items 9 to 12, brand loyalty items 13 to 16. Brand Alignment Questionnaire: The brand alignment questionnaire was prepared and organized by Kiyqbadi (1394). This questionnaire contains 10 questions. This questionnaire lacks subscales and is designed as a single-factor measure. Kiyqbadi (1394) obtained the reliability of the brand alignment questionnaire through a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.711. The reported number indicates the appropriate reliability of this questionnaire. Kiyqbadi (1394) reported the validity of the questionnaire using item analysis and calculating a correlation coefficient of 0.79, which was confirmed.

Standard Customer Loyalty Questionnaire: The standard customer loyalty questionnaire was developed by Zahiri and his colleagues (2011) and consists of 11 questions across 2 dimensions, using a five-point Likert scale (completely disagree to completely agree), with each item having a value between 1 and 5. In the study by Hojjat Shamami (1392), the opinions of the supervisor and several other professors, specialists, and experts were used to obtain the validity of the questionnaire, and it was confirmed. The Cronbach's alpha coefficients in Hojjat Shamami's (1392) research were found to be 0.88 and were confirmed.

Research Methodology

The research method of this study is descriptive correlational in terms of implementation and applied in terms of purpose. The statistical population of this study includes all Digikala brand customers, totaling 4,000 individuals. The sample size was determined to be 385 participants using the Morgan table with a random sampling method.

In this study, data collection tools included the Digital Marketing Questionnaire by Masibi et al. (2023), the Brand Equity Questionnaire by Aaker (2000), the Brand Conformity Questionnaire by Keyqobadi (2015), and the Customer Loyalty Standard Questionnaire by Zahiri et al. (2011). The reliability of the questionnaires was confirmed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients as follows: digital marketing (0.85), brand conformity (0.77), brand equity (0.79), and customer loyalty (0.81). Data analysis was conducted using inferential statistics and regression tests appropriate to the data, utilizing SPSS 20 software.

Findings

Table 1. Relationship between digital marketing on brand congruence, brand equity and customer loyalty

Variables		Brand Conformity	Brand Equity	Customer Loyalty
Digital Marketing	Correlation Coefficient	0/61	0/54	0/76
	Significance Level	0/001	0/001	0/001

The results of Table 1 indicate that there is a positive and significant relationship at the 99% level ($p < 0.01$) between digital marketing on brand congruence (r = 0.61), digital marketing on brand equity (r = 0.54), and digital marketing on customer loyalty (r = 0.76).

Purchase Intent

Table 2. Summary of Regression of the Impact of Digital Marketing on Brand Alignment

Variable	R	R^2	F	B	Sig
Digital Marketing	0/61	0/37	129/86	0/61	0/001

As the results in Table 2 show, digital marketing alone was able to predict 37% of brand alignment changes. This prediction is significant at the 99% level, given the F value of (129.86).

Brand Loyalty

Table 3. Summary of Regression of the Impact of Digital Marketing on Brand Equity

Variable	R	R²	F	B	Sig
Digital Marketing	0/54	0/29	98/36	0/54	0/001

As the results in Table 3 show, digital marketing alone was able to predict 29% of the changes in brand equity. This prediction is significant at the 99% level, given the F value of (36.98).

Table 4. Summary of Regression of the Impact of Digital Marketing on Customer Loyalty

Variable	R	R²	F	B	Sig
Digital Marketing	0/76	0/57	189/45	0/76	0/001

As the results in Table 4 show, digital marketing alone was able to predict 57% of changes in customer loyalty. This prediction is significant at the 99% level, given the F value of (189.45).

Table 5. The Relationship Between Digital Marketing Dimensions and Brand Conformity

Variables		Brand Consistency
Digital Marketing Strategy	Correlation coefficient	0/48
	Significance level	0/001
Personalization	Correlation coefficient	0/39
	Significance level	0/001
Content Marketing	Correlation coefficient	0/51
	Significance level	0/03
Consumer Engagement	Correlation coefficient	0/63
	Significance level	0/01
Digital Marketing Mix	Correlation coefficient	0/56
	Significance level	0/01

The results of Table 5 indicate that a positive and significant relationship was observed at the 99% level between digital marketing strategy and brand congruence (r = 0.48), between personalization and brand congruence (r = 0.39), between content marketing and brand congruence (r = 0.51), between consumer interaction and brand congruence (r = 0.63), and between digital marketing mix and brand congruence (r = 0.56).

Table 6. Summary of Regression of the Impact of Digital Marketing Dimensions on Brand Consistency

step	Variable	F	R^2	R	B	Sig
1	Consumer Engagement	132/47	0/29	0/54	0/54	0/001
2	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix	121/49	0/38	0/56	0/41 0/35	0/001
3	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix + Content Marketing	105/73	0/44	0/59	0/32 0/29 0/20	0/001
4	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix + Content Marketing + Digital Marketing Strategy	99/37	0/48	0/60	0/30 0/25 0/20 0/19	0/001
5	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix + Content Marketing + Digital Marketing Strategy + Personalization	87/64	0/50	0/62	0/28 0/21 0/19 0/18 0/16	0/02

As the results of Table 6 show, in the first step, interaction with consumers had the highest prediction of brand congruence. This variable alone was able to predict 29 percent of brand congruence changes. This prediction is significant at the 99 percent level according to the F value (47.132).

In the second step, the digital marketing mix entered the prediction model, and these two variables together were able to predict 38 percent of brand congruence changes. That is, the digital marketing mix variable predicted 9 percent of brand congruence changes. This prediction is significant at the 99 percent level according to the F value (49.121).

In the third step, content marketing entered the prediction model, and these three variables together were able to predict 44 percent of brand congruence changes. That is, the content marketing variable predicted 6 percent of brand congruence changes. This prediction is significant at the 99% level, according to the F value (73.105).

In the fourth step, digital marketing strategy is entered into the prediction model, and these four variables together have been able to predict 48% of brand congruence changes. That is, the digital marketing strategy variable has predicted 5% of brand congruence changes. This prediction is significant at the 99% level, according to the F value (37.99).

In the fifth step, personalization is entered into the prediction model, and these five variables together have been able to predict 50% of brand congruence changes. That is, the personalization variable has predicted 4% of brand congruence changes. This prediction is significant at the 99% level, according to the F value (64.87).

Table 7. The Relationship Between Digital Marketing Dimensions and Brand Equity

Variables		Brand equity
Digital Marketing Strategy	Correlation coefficient	0/31
	Significance level	0/001
Personalization	Correlation coefficient	0/27
	Significance level	0/001
Content Marketing	Correlation coefficient	0/42
	Significance level	0/03
Consumer Engagement	Correlation coefficient	0/63
	Significance level	0/001
Digital Marketing Mix	Correlation coefficient	0/58
	Significance level	0/01

The results of Table 7 indicate that a positive and significant relationship was observed at the 99% level between digital marketing strategy and brand equity (r = 0.31), between personalization and brand equity (r = 0.27), between content marketing and brand equity (r = 0.42), between interaction with consumers and brand equity (r = 0.63), and between digital marketing mix and brand equity (r = 0.58).

Table 8 . Summary of Regression of the Impact of Digital Marketing Dimensions on Brand Equity

step	Variable	B	F	R^2	R	Sig
1	Consumer Engagement	0/49	127/03	0/24	0/49	0/001
2	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix	0/41 0/36	93/56	0/32	0/52	0/001
3	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix + Content Marketing	0/39 0/27 0/22	87/13	0/36	0/55	0/001
4	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix + Content Marketing + Digital Marketing Strategy	0/17	75/21	0/38	0/57	0/001

As the results of Table 8 show, in the first step, interaction with consumers had the highest prediction of brand equity. This variable alone was able to predict 24 percent of brand equity changes. This prediction is significant at the 99 percent level according to the F value (127.03).

In the second step, the digital marketing mix entered the prediction model, and these two variables together were able to predict 32 percent of brand equity changes. That is, the digital marketing mix variable predicted 8 percent of brand equity changes. This prediction is significant at the 99 percent level according to the F value (56.93).

In the third step, content marketing entered the prediction model, and these three variables together were able to predict 36 percent of brand equity changes. That is, the content marketing variable predicted 4 percent of brand equity changes. This prediction is significant at the 99 percent level according to the F value (13.87).

In the fourth step, the digital marketing strategy is entered into the prediction model and these four variables together have been able to predict 38% of the changes in brand equity. That is, the digital marketing strategy variable has predicted 2% of the changes in brand equity. This prediction is significant at the 99% level according to the F value (21.75).

Table 9. Relationship between digital marketing dimensions on customer loyalty

Variables		Customer loyalty
Digital Marketing Strategy	Correlation coefficient	0/43
	Significance level	0/001
Personalization	Correlation coefficient	0/35
	Significance level	0/001
Content Marketing	Correlation coefficient	0/59
	Significance level	0/03
Consumer Engagement	Correlation coefficient	0/71
	Significance level	0/01
Digital Marketing Mix	Correlation coefficient	0/68
	Significance level	0/01

The results of Table 9 indicate that a positive and significant relationship was observed at the 99% level between digital marketing strategy and customer loyalty (r = 0.43), between personalization and customer loyalty (r = 0.35), between content marketing and customer loyalty (r = 0.59), between interaction with consumers and customer loyalty (r = 0.71), and between digital marketing mix and customer loyalty (r = 0.68).

Table 10. Summary of Regression of the Impact of Digital Marketing Dimensions on Customer Loyalty

step	Variable	F	R2	R	B	Sig
1	Consumer Engagement	167/25	0/36	0/60	0/60	0/001
2	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix	131/73	0/45	0/63	0/58 0/43	0/001
3	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix + Content Marketing	129/82	0/53	0/65	0/37 0/28 0/21	0/001
4	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix + Content Marketing + Digital Marketing Strategy	117/61	0/57	0/68	0/30 0/27 0/22 0/19	0/001
5	Consumer Engagement + Digital Marketing Mix + Content Marketing + Digital Marketing Strategy + Personalization	103/72	0/59	0/62	0/29 0/25 0/20 0/19 0/17	0/02

As the results of Table 10 show, in the first step, interaction with consumers had the highest prediction of customer loyalty. This variable alone was able to predict 36 percent of changes in customer loyalty. This prediction is significant at the 99 percent level according to the F value (167.25).

In the second step, the digital marketing mix entered the prediction model, and these two variables together were able to predict 45 percent of changes in customer loyalty. That is, the digital marketing mix variable predicted 9 percent of changes in customer loyalty. This prediction is significant at the 99 percent level according to the F value (131.73).

In the third step, content marketing entered the prediction model, and these three variables together were able to predict 53 percent of changes in customer loyalty. That is, the content marketing variable predicted 7 percent of changes in customer loyalty. This prediction is significant at the 99% level according to the F value (129.89).

In the fourth step, digital marketing strategy has entered the prediction model, and these four variables together have been able to predict 57% of changes in customer loyalty. That is, the content marketing variable has predicted 4% of changes in customer loyalty. This prediction is significant at the 99% level according to the F value (117.61).

In the fifth step, personalization has entered the prediction model, and these five variables together have been able to predict 59% of changes in customer loyalty. That is, the personalization variable has predicted 2% of changes in customer loyalty. This prediction is significant at the 99% level according to the F value (103.72).

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of digital marketing on brand conformity, brand equity and customer loyalty (Case study: Digikala brand customers). The results showed that digital marketing can predict up to 37% of the changes in brand conformity. This indicates that advertising and digital content can increase customers' recognition and trust in the brand. Also, data analysis showed that 29% of brand equity changes are predicted by digital marketing. These findings suggest that digital marketing can help strengthen a brand's position in the minds of customers and increase its value, and has been able to predict 57% of customer loyalty changes based on digital

marketing results. This shows the importance of digital marketing's role in maintaining and strengthening the long-term relationship with customers.

Conclusion

It can be inferred that information technology has provided new ideas and platforms for communication. The internet, as a powerful medium, has transformed commerce on a global scale. One of its most significant outcomes is the borderless online communication interactions (Molawe Liker, 2018). Today, internet users spend a considerable amount of time interacting with others to establish communication, collaboration, or participation through various channels and applications such as email, online games, or text messages (Rezaei Malek Kheili, 1397). The need for information, the goodwill to share experiences or ideas about products and services, the capability of customer-to-customer communications as electronic referrals from user to user on the internet, and the potential to receive recommendations from acquaintances have significantly enhanced the capabilities for digital marketing. This represents an effective combination of the old word-of-mouth approach and modern tools available in the digital space. These findings align with those of Gholipour et al. (1401), a study by Sharif et al. (1402), a study by Moradi et al. (1401), Sadeghi et al. (1399), Shams Lahroodi et al. (1397), Huang et al. (2022), Kai et al. (2021), George et al. (2020), Luhmann et al. (2020), Goldmanis et al. (2018), and Baharavich et al. (2016).

Digital marketing encompasses a set of organizational activities and processes aimed at identifying the needs of the target market and providing goods and services to customers and other stake holders such as shareholders and employees (Mofar and Kamran, 2021). Thus, digital marketing is a vital activity and a guiding policy for other organizational activities, residing at the heart of the organization. This organization must also be market-oriented/customer-centric, with all its various departments working efficiently and effectively to meet the needs of personnel, the public, and customers. These findings align with those of Gholipour et al. (2022), a study by Sharif et al. (2023), a study by Moradi et al. (2022), Sadeghi et al. (2020), Lahroodi et al. (2018), Huang et al. (2022), Kai et al. (2021), George et al. (2020), Luhmann et al. (2020), Goldmanis et al. (2018), and Baharavich et al. (2016). Additionally, these results are consistent with the findings of Gholipour et al. (2022), a study by Sharif et al. (2023), a study by Moradi et al. (2022), Sadeghi et al. (2020), Lahroodi et al. (2018), Huang et al. (2022), and Kai et al. (2021). Therefore, it can be said that digital marketing means utilizing information and programs designed for planning and executing concepts, distribution, promotion, and pricing of goods and services, leading to transactions that fulfill individual and organizational objectives (Tiago et al., 2022). Digital marketing significantly impacts traditional marketing operations, and digital marketing technologies transform many marketing strategies. When companies reduce costs through digital marketing, they can offer products to customers at lower prices. Digital marketing reduces costs by saving buyers' time and creating ease of purchase, and this saving positively affects the brand equity of customers of the Digikala brand.

The essence of digital marketing refers to how the internet can be utilized alongside traditional media to provide services to customers and discusses how internal and external marketing processes and communications can be improved through communication and information technology (Kotler & Gray, 2021). Digital marketing is a broader term than online marketing. In this context, electronic and internet marketing are used interchangeably and refer solely to the application of internet technology to achieve marketing goals, which can impact the loyalty of Digikala's brand customers. These findings align with the results of Gholipour et al. (2022), a study by Sharif et al. (2023), a study by Moradi et al. (2022), Luhmann et al. (2020), Goldmanis et al. (2018), and Baharavich et al. (2016). In examining the impact of digital marketing on brand alignment, brand equity, and customer loyalty, there are several managerial insights that can contribute to the success and growth of the organization. These insights include: Managers should focus on creating and implementing strategies that accurately identify and respond to customer needs and expectations. This approach can help enhance brand alignment and strengthen customer loyalty. At Digikala, this strategy can be executed through analyzing customer feedback and offering products and services that meet their needs. Utilizing data from digital marketing activities to analyze customer behavior and evaluate the effectiveness of campaigns is of high importance. These analyses can lead to improved marketing strategies and increased brand equity. For example, Digikala can use data analysis to identify customer purchasing patterns and optimize its advertising. Customer experience plays a crucial role in digital marketing. Providing positive and memorable experiences for customers through digital platforms can help increase loyalty and foster greater engagement with the brand.

At Digikala, this experience can be enhanced through the provision of fast and efficient services and continuous interaction with customers on social media. Embracing new technologies and innovations in digital marketing is

crucial for responding to rapid market changes and customer needs. Flexibility in strategies and tactics can create a competitive advantage. Digikala can improve its customers' online shopping experience by utilizing new technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning. Building and strengthening the brand in the digital space through the use of diverse communication channels such as social media, websites, and mobile applications is of great importance. This helps align with the brand and increase brand equity. Digikala can reinforce its brand in customers' minds by conducting advertising campaigns and providing valuable content. Investing in training and developing human resources: Training and developing the digital skills of marketing staff to improve the quality and effectiveness of digital marketing activities is very important. Digikala can strengthen its employees in this area by organizing training courses and specialized workshops. These insights help managers leverage digital marketing to effectively enhance brand alignment, increase brand equity, and improve customer loyalty.

The aim of the present research is to examine the impact of digital marketing on brand alignment, brand equity, and customer loyalty (Case Study: DigiKala brand customers). The results indicated that digital marketing affects brand alignment, brand equity, and customer loyalty among DigiKala brand customers. Digital marketing has been able to predict 37% of changes in brand alignment, 29% of changes in brand equity, and 57% of changes in customer loyalty. Therefore, this hypothesis is confirmed with 95% confidence. These results are consistent with the findings of Gholipour et al. (2022), Sharif et al. (2023), Moradi et al. (2022), Sadeghi et al. (2020), Shams Laherodi et al. (2018), Huang et al. (2022), Kai et al. (2021), George et al. (2020), Lohman et al. (2020), Goldmanis et al. (2018), and Beharadovich et al.(2016)

It can be inferred that information technology has provided new ideas and platforms for communication. The internet, as a powerful medium, has transformed business in a global dimension. One of its most significant outcomes is the borderless online communication interactions (Molawe Liker, 2018). Today, internet users spend a significant amount of time interacting with others to communicate, collaborate, or engage through various channels and programs such as email, online games, or text messages (Rezaei Malek Kheili, 2018). The need for information, goodwill to share experiences or ideas about products and services, customer-to-customer communication capabilities, such as electronic referrals and recommendations from acquaintances, have significantly enhanced digital marketing's potential. This combines the effective old concept of word-of-mouth and modern tools available in the digital space. The results show a positive and meaningful relationship between digital marketing strategy, personalization, content marketing, consumer interaction, and digital marketing mix with brand alignment. The stepwise regression results showed that in the first step, consumer interaction; in the second step, the digital marketing mix; in the third step, content marketing; in the fourth step, digital marketing strategy; and in the fifth step, personalization were included in the predicted model. These five variables together were able to predict 50% of the changes in brand alignment. Therefore, this hypothesis is confirmed with 95% confidence. These results are consistent with the findings of Gholipour et al. (2022), Sharif et al. (2023), Moradi et al. (2022), Sadeghi et al. (2020), Laherodi et al. (2018), Huang et al. (2022), Kai et al. (2021), George et al. (2020), Lohman et al. (2020), Goldmanis et al. (2018), and Beharadovich et al.(2016) .

This result can be explained by stating that digital marketing includes a set of organizational activities and processes aimed at identifying the needs of the target market and providing products and services to customers and other stakeholders such as shareholders and employees (Mozfar & Kamran, 2021). Thus, digital marketing, as a vital activity and a guiding policy for other organizational activities, is at the heart of an organization. The organization must be market-oriented/customer-centric, and all its sections should effectively and efficiently serve the needs of personnel, the public, and customers.

The results also indicated a positive and significant relationship between digital marketing strategy, personalization, content marketing, consumer interaction, and digital marketing mix with brand equity. Stepwise regression results showed that in the first step, consumer interaction; in the second step, the digital marketing mix; in the third step, content marketing; in the fourth step, digital marketing strategy were included in the predicted model, and these five variables together were able to predict 38% of the changes in brand equity.
These results are consistent with the findings of Gholipour et al. (2022), Sharif et al. (2023), Moradi et al. (2022), Sadeghi et al. (2020), Laherodi et al. (2018), Huang et al. (2022), Kai et al. (2021).
Therefore, digital marketing can be defined as the use of information and programs for planning and implementing concepts, distribution, promotion, and pricing of goods and services, leading to transactions that fulfill individual and organizational goals (Tiago et al., 2022). Digital marketing has a significant impact on traditional marketing

operations, and digital marketing technologies are transforming many marketing strategies. When companies reduce costs through digital marketing, they can offer products at a lower price to customers. Digital marketing reduces costs by saving buyers' time and facilitating the buying process, which positively impacts the brand equity of DigiKala brand customers.

The results also indicated a positive and meaningful relationship between digital marketing strategy, personalization, content marketing, consumer interaction, and the digital marketing mix with customer loyalty. Stepwise regression results showed that in the first step, consumer interaction; in the second step, the digital marketing mix; in the third step, content marketing; in the fourth step, digital marketing strategy; and in the fifth step, personalization were included in the predicted model, and these five variables together were able to predict 59% of the changes in customer loyalty.

These results are consistent with the findings of Gholipour et al. (2022), Sharif et al. (2023), Moradi et al. (2022), Lohman et al. (2020), Goldmanis et al. (2018) and Beharadovich et al. (2016).

Therefore, it can be said that the truth of digital marketing refers to how the internet can work alongside traditional media to serve customers and how internal and external marketing processes and communications can be improved through communication and information technology (Kotler & Gray, 2021). Digital marketing is a broader term than online marketing. In this context, electronic and internet marketing are used interchangeably and refer to the use of internet technology to achieve marketing goals, which can increase customer loyalty for DigiKala brand customers.

Therefore, it is recommended that the managers of DigiKala brand develop a comprehensive plan for support actions such as server security, network, etc., to reduce the risks associated with digital marketing, and work on fixing existing deficiencies in internet systems, which, if neglected, can cause disruptions in the delivery of services to customers. Additionally, managers should receive necessary training regarding information technology systems, applications, reports, and outputs to increase their awareness of their informational needs.

Based on the findings of this study, here are some suggestions for future research:

1. **Exploration of Temporal Effects**: Future studies could investigate how the impact of digital marketing on brand conformity, equity, and customer loyalty evolves over time. Longitudinal studies may provide insights into the sustainability of these effects.

2. **Influence of Emerging Digital Marketing Strategies**: Research could focus on emerging digital marketing strategies, such as influencer marketing, social media engagement, and personalized advertising, to assess their specific impacts on brand metrics.

3. **Comparison Across Different Industries**: It would be beneficial to conduct comparative studies across different sectors to determine whether the influences of digital marketing on brand conformity, brand equity, and customer loyalty vary significantly between industries.

4. **Cultural Factors**: Exploring how cultural differences affect consumer responses to digital marketing could provide valuable insights for multinational brands seeking to optimize their strategies in various markets.

5. **Customer Segmentation Analysis**: Further research could examine how different customer segments (e.g., age, gender, and buying behavior) respond to digital marketing efforts, helping brands tailor their strategies to specific target groups.

6. **Impact of Customer Experience on Digital Marketing Effectiveness**: Investigating the interaction between customer experience and digital marketing can reveal how positive experiences can enhance the effectiveness of marketing campaigns in fostering brand loyalty and equity.

7. **Role of Customer Feedback**: Future research could explore how customer feedback mechanisms (like reviews and ratings) influence the relationship between digital marketing and customer loyalty, and whether active engagement with feedback impacts brand equity positively.

8. **Quantitative vs. Qualitative Measures**: Incorporating qualitative methods, such as interviews or focus groups, alongside quantitative measures might provide deeper insights into the reasons behind the observed relationships.

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