The Role of Social Media Marketing and Web Design in Increasing Brand Awareness and Its Impact on Customer Loyalty in E-Commerce

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the causal relationship between Web Design (DW) and Social Media Marketing (PMS) on Customer Loyalty (LP), by using Brand Awareness (BA) as a mediating variable. The data was analyzed using the Structural Equation Model (SEM). The results of the analysis showed very significant and specific findings. First, there is a perfect correlation (1.00) between *Web Design* and *Social Media Marketing*, indicating the integration of strong digital strategies. Second, *Brand Awareness* was found to have a very strong and dominant positive influence on *Customer Loyalty* (Path Coefficient = 1.02). Third, Web Design has proven to be the main driver of *Brand Awareness* with a positive path coefficient that is also very high (1.01). In contrast, the direct influence *of Social Media Marketing* on *Brand Awareness* was found to be very weak and negative (-0.03). Overall, Brand Awareness acts as a very effective mediator in this model. These findings conclude that Web Design is the most effective digital initiative in growing Brand Awareness, which in turn is an almost perfect predictor of achieving Customer Loyalty. This research advises companies to prioritize the quality and optimization of *Web Design* as the foundation of their digital marketing strategies to increase brand awareness and maintain customer loyalty.

Keywords: *Web Design, Social Media Marketing, Brand Awareness, Customer Loyalty, Structural Equation Model (SEM)*

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Background of the Problem

The Dynamics of Competition and the Need for Customer Loyalty in the E-commerce Industry are very important, because the *e-commerce* industry in Indonesia is in a very intense competition phase. With the emergence of various *new platforms* and massive investments from old players, customers have almost unlimited options. In this condition, Customer Loyalty is no longer just a bonus, but a key sustainability factor. Acquiring new customers is much more expensive than retaining old ones. Therefore, *e-commerce* is required to invest in strategies that not only attract attention, but also foster long-term bonds with consumers. As a challenge in Building Strong *Brand Awareness* and amidst a flood of information and digital advertising, *e-commerce platforms* face a huge challenge to stand out. Low Brand Awareness results in *the platform* easily sinking and difficulty entering the *consideration set* of potential buyers. Without strong brand awareness, marketing and promotional efforts become less effective.

Likewise, the Key Role of Digital Platforms: Social Media Marketing and Web Design can overcome the above challenges, *e-commerce platforms* rely on two main digital *touchpoints*, namely: Social Media Marketing (PMS): social media has become the main channel of interaction and *engagement* between the brand and the consumer. However, the effectiveness of STDs is often questionable; whether activity on Instagram/TikTok really translates into *strong Brand Awareness* and ultimately drives loyalty. Web Design: As a digital "store", the quality of Web Design (ease of navigation, loading speed, aesthetics) is first and foremost for customers. Poor design can lead to high *bounce rates*, hinder conversions, and negatively affect brand perception.

Although PMS and Web Design are theoretically important, there is a gap that needs to be addressed in the current *e-commerce* context is the Linkage Gap: How does Brand Awareness act as a *psychological* bridge that connects digital *marketing* efforts (PMS and Web Design) with long-term business outcomes (Customer Loyalty)? How effective are PMS and Web Design in building brand awareness, before it ultimately affects customer engagement? Specificity Gap: Research that tests *simultaneously* and structured the dual role of Social Media Marketing and Web Design on Customer Loyalty through Brand Awareness in a single model is still limited, especially on *e-commerce platforms*. Therefore, this study is important to: Empirically test how much Social Media Marketing and Web Design contribute in growing Brand Awareness in *e-commerce*. Analyze the role of Brand Awareness as a mediating variable that determines whether digital marketing efforts really have a positive and significant impact on Customer Loyalty.

The results of this study are expected to provide strategic recommendations for *e-commerce* management in allocating their marketing resources more effectively, both in terms of social media interaction and optimizing the user experience on the *platform* itself.

Literature Review

2.1 Social Media *Marketing*

Social media marketing refers to the utilization of various social media platforms (such as Instagram, Facebook, TikTok) by companies to achieve marketing goals, including increasing visibility, interacting with customers, promoting products, and building brand communities (Mangold & Faulds, 2009; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

It is typically measured through content activities and strategies, including: Interactivity: The level of dialogue and *e-commerce* response to customer comments and messages, entertainment: The value of content that audiences find enjoyable or interesting. Suitability of Information: The relevance and accuracy of the product information shared. Customization/Personalization: The ability to target content to specific audience segments.

2.2 Web Design

Web Design in the context of *e-commerce* is all the visual, functional, and structural aspects of a site that facilitate user interaction with *the platform* and product. It is a digital representation of the physical store environment (Loiacono et al., 2202; Zeithaml et al., 2002).

Closely related to *E-Service Quality* and *Usability*, including: Aesthetics/Visuals: Professional attractiveness and layout.,Navigation: Ease and clarity of users in finding the information or product they are looking for.,*Loading Speed*: The time it takes for the site to load content.,*Security*: The user's perception of data protection and transactions, Functionality: The site is working correctly (e.g., *the link* is not broken, the search feature is fine).

2.3 *Brand Awareness*

Brand Awareness is the ability of potential buyers to recognize or remember that a brand is part of a certain product category. This is the first level of brand equity (Aaker, 1991). In *e-commerce*, this is the extent to which *platforms* easily appear in consumers' minds when they think of online shopping. Usually measured hierarchically, it includes: *Brand Recognition* : The ability to identify a brand when looking at a logo or name, *Brand Recall* : The ability to remember a brand without a clue, *Top of Mind*: The first brand that comes to mind when a category is mentioned.

2.4 Customer Loyalty

Customer Loyalty is a commitment that is held to consistently repurchase a preferred product or service in the future, thereby leading to the purchase of the same brand over and over again, despite the situational influence and marketing efforts of competitors that have the potential to lead to behavioral changes (Oliver, 1999).

Involves behavioral and attitude aspects, including: Behavioral *Loyalty*: The frequency and number of repurchases from the *platform*., Attitudinal Loyalty: *Positive attitudes, recommending intent (*Word of Mouth), and brand ownership, *Cross-buying Intention*: The desire to buy different types of products from *the same* platform.
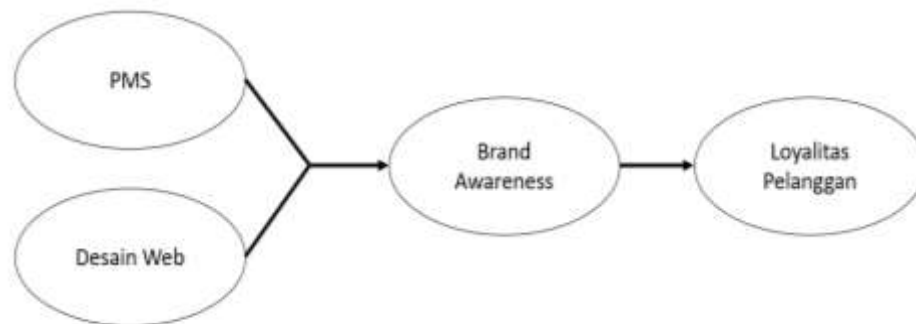

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Methods

This study uses an associative-quantitative approach with the aim of analyzing This study applies an associative method with a quantitative approach, which aims to test and analyze the influence relationship between independent variables and dependent variables through the processing of numerical data obtained from the distribution of questionnaires (Setiawan et al., 2019). The location of the research was determined at PT. Ghania Advertising which is located in Medan, North Sumatra.

The research population includes all employees of PT. Ghanaians who have worked for more than 1 year, with a total of 215 people. Based on calculations using the Slovin formula, a

sample of 69 respondents was obtained which was considered representative to represent the population with a significant level of 10% with the formula:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N.e^2}$$

$$n = \frac{215}{1 + 215 \cdot 0.01^2}$$
$$n = 68$$

Operational Definition

| No	Variable	Definition	Indicator
1	PMS (Social Media Marketing) (X_1)	All strategic activities and measurement systems carried out by the company to plan, implement, and supervise marketing efforts to achieve business goals.	1. The effectiveness of promotional/discount offers. 2. Consistency in meeting market expectations. 3. Timeliness of delivering new product information. 4. Quality of after-sales service.
2	Web Design (X2)	The quality of appearance, functionality, ease of navigation, and overall aesthetics of the digital platforms (websites or apps) that brands use in interacting with customers.	1. Attractive aesthetics and visual design. 2. Ease of navigation and menus. 3. Technical performance (*loading speed*). 4. Quality and completeness of product information. 5. Efficiency of the transaction process (*checkout*).
3	Brand Awareness (M)	The ability of consumers to recognize, remember, or identify a brand under different conditions, connecting it to a specific product category.	1. Ease of logo recognition (*Brand Recognition*). 2. The first brand that comes to mind (*Top-of-Mind*). 3. Ability to remember names and slogans (*Brand Recall*). 4. Perceived brand popularity. 5. Ease of differentiation from competing brands.
4	Customer Loyalty	The psychological and behavioral commitment of the customer to keep buying a product or service consistently and recommending it to others, despite the driving factors for switching.	1. Repurchase commitment (resistant to competitors' low prices). 2. Intent to recommend (*Word-of-Mouth*). 3. Brand preference (best choice). 4. Future repurchase intentions. 5. Customer retention (no intention of switching).

Result

1. **Validity and Feasibility Test**
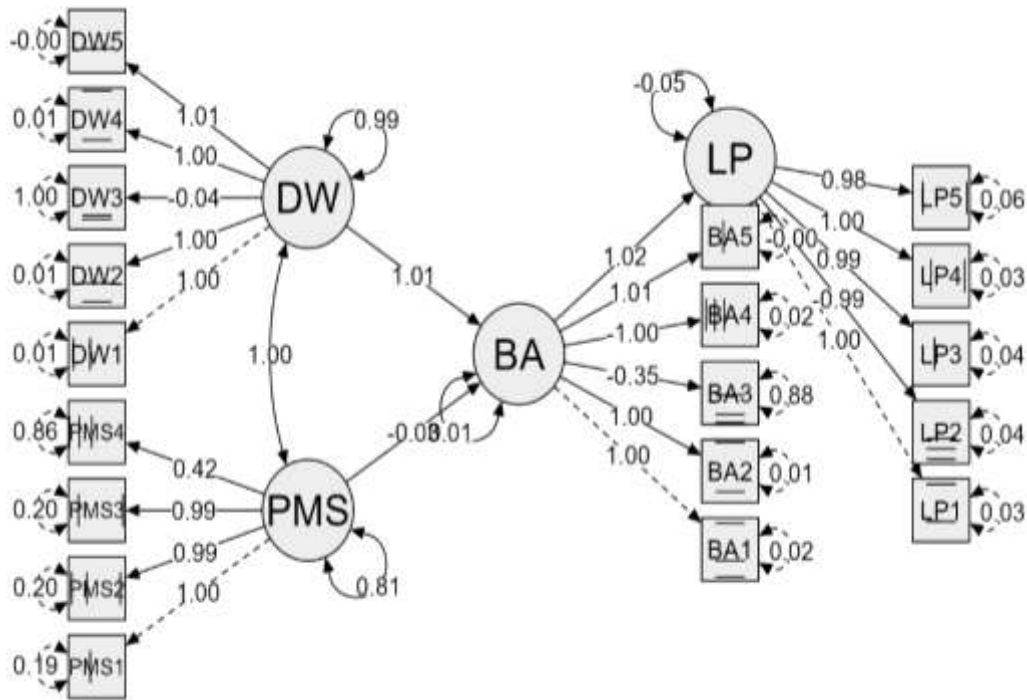
Figure 2. Outer model

Leave variable	CR	AVE	Conclusion	
PMS	0,863	0,640	Valid	
Design Web	0,880	0,797	Valid	
Brand Awareness	0,774	0,813	Valid	
Customer Loyalty	0,813	0,960	Valid	

Table 1. Leave variable

Outcome	Predictor	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval	
						Lower	Upper
BA	DW	1.015	0.027	37.632	<.001	0.962	1.067
	PMS	-0.025	0.027	-0.950	.342	-0.078	0.027
LP	BA	1.019	0.004	254.591	<.001	1.011	1.026

Table 2. Regression coefficients

	Estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval	
					Lower	Upper
DW → BA → LP	1.033	0.025	40.820	<.001	0.984	1.083
PMS → BA → LP	-0.026	0.027	-0.951	.341	-0.079	0.027

Table 3. Indirect effects

The Relationship Between DW (Web Design) and PMS (Social Media Marketing)
- Correlation Coefficient (Curved Arrow): 1.00

This relationship is very important and very strong. A correlation coefficient of 1.00 indicates that Web Design and Social Media Marketing have a perfect or near-perfect correlation. In the context of digital business, this implies:
- *A good and integrated web design greatly supports the effectiveness of social media marketing strategies.*
- Companies that have superior *web design* tend to also implement strong *social media marketing* strategies, or both variables move at the same time.

2. **Direct Influence on BA (Brand Awareness)**

BA (Brand Awareness) is influenced by DW (Web Design) and PMS (Social Media Marketing).
   A. The Influence of DW (Web Design) on BA (Brand Awareness)
- Path Coefficient (Straight Arrow): 1.01

This influence is positive and very powerful.
- Interpretation: A significant increase in the quality or effectiveness of *Web Design* will result in an equally significant (even slightly greater, if 1.01 is interpreted literally) to Brand Awareness. Intuitive, engaging, and informative web design is highly effective in making customers recognize and remember the brand.
   B. The Influence of PMS (Social Media Marketing) on BA (Brand Awareness)
- Path Coefficient (Straight Arrow, Dotted Arrow): -0.03

This influence is negative, but very weak (almost zero). The dotted arrow also often indicates that the coefficient is not statistically significant (although this needs confirmation from the *p-value table*).
- Interpretation: While theoretically Social Media Marketing is supposed to increase *Brand Awareness*, in this model, its direct impact on *Brand Awareness* is minimal or non-existent. This may be because the main effects *of Social Media Marketing* have been *absorbed* or mediated by *Web Design* (due to its perfect correlation of 1.00 with DW), or because this model suggests that in the entities studied, *Web Design* is the primary driver of BAs, not PMSs.

3. **Influence on LP (Customer Loyalty)**

LP (Customer Loyalty) is influenced by BA (Brand Awareness).
The Influence of BA (Brand Awareness) on LP (Customer Loyalty)
- Path Coefficient (Straight Arrow): 1.02

This influence is positive and very powerful.

- Interpretation: A strong increase in Brand Awareness will result in a very strong increase in Customer Loyalty. Customers who are highly aware and familiar with a brand will be more likely to remain loyal and make repeat purchases.

4. The Role of Mediation (Conclusion of the Relationship Flow)

This model shows the presence of a very strong full or partial mediation role:

- BA (Brand Awareness) acts as a very strong mediator in the relationship between DW (Web Design) and LP (Customer Loyalty).

A. Brand Awareness (BA) is a Key Mediator:
  - The influence of Brand Awareness (BA) on Customer Loyalty (LP) is very strong and positive (Coefficient = 1.02). This shows that the higher the customer's awareness of a brand, the more likely they are to become loyal customers.

B. Web Design (DW) is a Key Driver:
  - Web Design (DW) has a very strong positive influence on Brand Awareness (BA) (Coefficient = 1.01). This is a key driving path in the model, indicating that *the* quality of web design is the most effective factor for growing brand awareness.

C. Social Media Marketing (PMS) Has a Less Direct Impact:
  - Social Media Marketing (PMS) has a very small or negligible direct influence on Brand Awareness (BA) (Coefficient = -0.03).

D. Strategic Linkages of DW and PMS:
  - There was a perfect correlation between Web Design (DW) and Social Media Marketing (PMS) (Correlation = 1.00), suggesting that these two strategies were highly integrated or went hand in hand in the companies studied.

E. Explanatory Power of Model:
  - The variables of Web Design and social media Marketing collectively explain almost all of the variances of Brand Awareness ($R^2 \approx 99\%$).

Overall, customer loyalty is largely determined by brand awareness, and brand awareness is driven by the quality of web design.

Research and Managerial Advice

Based on these powerful findings, here are relevant suggestions:

1. **Managerial Advice (Business Application)**
   - Focus Resources on Web Design (DW): Companies should make Web Design optimization and quality a top priority because it has proven to be the strongest driver of Brand Awareness. Make sure *your website* is *user-friendly*, has intuitive navigation, and visuals that are consistent with the brand to increase awareness.
   - Integration of DW and PMS: Although the direct influence of PMS is weak, the perfect correlation with DW implies that the two should be maintained as a unified strategy. Make sure every Social Media Marketing campaign directs users to *a website* with *an optimally designed landing page (because DW is very effective)*.
   - Strengthen Brand Awareness (BA): Since *Brand Awareness* is a near-perfect predictor of *Customer Loyalty*, all marketing efforts should be geared towards

improving brand recognition and recall (e.g. through consistency of logos, *taglines*, and visual identities across all platforms).

2. **Academic Advice (Further Research)**
   - Exploring the Mediating Role for PMS: Given the negative and minor direct influence of PMS, further research should examine whether PMS has an indirect influence (mediation) through other variables, such as Brand Image or Customer *Engagement*, before reaching a BA or LP.
   - Re-Evaluate Model Structure: Coefficient numbers that are close to or exceed 1.00 and very low residual variance (0.01) or negative (-0.05) may indicate statistical problems. Researchers are further advised to:
     o Retest the model with different samples.
     o Check if there is *a common method bias* or *multicollinearity* that causes parameter estimation to be too perfect.
     o Consider *second-order factors* to group indicators.

Examining the Direct Influence of DW and PMS on LP: A more comprehensive model can test whether *Web Design* and *Social Media Marketing* also have a direct influence, in addition to Brand *Awareness*, on *Customer Loyalty*

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