Proceeding of International Business and Economic Conference (IBEC) Vol. 5 No. 1, pp. 384-396, November, 2026
http://conference.eka-prasetya.ac.id/index.php/ibec

Enhancing Customer Loyalty through Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing: Evidence from a Wrought Iron Manufacturing SME in Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Customer Loyalty is essential for business sustainability amid intense competition. However, Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop experienced a 12.71% decline in total sales from 2021 to 2025, indicating challenges in customer retention. This study examines the effects of Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty. A quantitative approach was applied to 132 respondents selected from a population of 197 customers in 2025. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, while purposive sampling was applied to customers who had previously used the workshop's services. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS. The results reveal that Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing significantly affect Customer Loyalty, with T Statistics of 7.420 and 2.794 and P Values of 0.000 and 0.005, respectively. The R-Square value of 0.378 indicates that both variables explain 37.8% of Customer Loyalty, while the remaining 62.2% is explained by other factors. Based on the F^2 values, Digital Marketing has a stronger effect (0.472) than Relationship Marketing (0.056).

Keywords: Relationship Marketing, Digital Marketing, Wrought Iron Manufacturing, Customer Loyalty, Service Usage

INTRODUCTION

Technological and infrastructure development in Indonesia, particularly North Sumatra and Medan, has increased demand for welding workshop services, intensifying competition and encouraging businesses to adopt Digital Marketing and strengthen customer relationships (Michael & Rezeki, 2025). Customer Loyalty is important for repeat purchases, trust, recommendations, and business sustainability (Rezeki et al., 2021). Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop operates in this sector, but observations indicate declining Customer Loyalty, contributing to lower total sales.

Table 1.
Sales Data of Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop

Year	Sales Total	Sales Percentage	Total Customer	Total Project	Customer Retention
2021	Rp. 895.250.000	-	225	260	-
2022	Rp. 872.150.000	-2,58%	218	252	85%
2023	Rp. 883.500.000	1,30%	221	256	87%

Year	Sales Total	Sales Percentage	Total Customer	Total Project	Customer Retention
2024	Rp. 825.750.000	-6,54%	208	241	82%
2025	Rp. 781.500.000	-5,36%	197	228	78%

Source: Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop, 2026

Based on Table 1.1, the performance of Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop declined during 2021–2025. Total sales decreased from IDR 895,250,000 to IDR 781,500,000, a 12.71% decline, while customers decreased from 225 to 197 and projects from 260 to 228. The decline in customer retention indicates difficulties in maintaining long-term relationships, highlighting the need for strategies to strengthen Customer Loyalty and sustain sales. Digital Marketing is one factor suspected to influence Customer Loyalty. According to Rezeki et al. (2023), Digital Marketing uses digital media to promote products and services, expand market reach, and improve customer communication. However, its implementation at Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop remains suboptimal due to limited promotions, inconsistent content, insufficient project information, and low social media interaction, which may hinder customer communication and reduce Customer Loyalty.

Relationship Marketing is another factor that can increase Customer Loyalty. It uses technologies such as websites, email, and social media to support effective customer communication (Rezeki et al., 2025). According to Suwanto (2023), Relationship Marketing focuses on building mutually beneficial, long-term relationships through trust, satisfaction, and commitment, encouraging customers to continue using the company's services. At Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop, Relationship Marketing is suspected to be suboptimal. The company rarely follows up with customers after completing projects, requests limited feedback, and lacks programs to retain existing customers. As a result, customer relationships tend to be transactional and focused on the ordering process. Limited post-transaction attention may reduce customer attachment and encourage customers to switch to other providers, potentially lowering Customer Loyalty.

The phenomenon observed is consistent with the study conducted by Kusuma et al. (2025), which found that Digital Marketing has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty. Similarly, Abdullah et al. (2022) found that Digital Marketing has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty. Meanwhile, Hadi et al. (2023) and Arham et al. (2025) found that Relationship Marketing has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty. In line with this finding, Nurbakti et al. (2022) also showed that Relationship Marketing has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty.

Research on Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing has largely been conducted in the retail, e-commerce, banking, and service sectors, while research on service-based manufacturing businesses, particularly welding workshops, remains limited. Previous studies have also generally examined the two variables separately regarding their effects on Customer Loyalty. Therefore, this study integrates Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing to analyze their effects on Customer Loyalty at Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop. This research is important because the decline in sales indicates a potential decrease in Customer Loyalty that may affect business sustainability. The results are expected to provide empirical evidence and serve as a basis for the company in developing digital marketing strategies and effective customer relationship management to sustainably improve customer loyalty.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Grand Theory
This study integrates Digital Marketing, Relationship Marketing, and Customer Loyalty theories to explain customer retention in service-based manufacturing businesses. Digital Marketing supports effective communication and customer interaction, while Relationship Marketing builds trust, commitment, and long-term relationships. Together, these factors contribute to Customer Loyalty through positive experiences, repeat purchases, recommendations, and sustained relationships.

Digital Marketing
Digital Marketing is a marketing strategy that utilizes digital technology and the internet, such as websites, social media, email, search engines, and digital advertising, to promote products or services, expand markets, increase interaction, and build customer relationships (Budiman et al., 2024; Musnaini et al., 2020; Rahman, 2024). In addition to supporting increased sales and brand awareness, Digital Marketing enables companies to adapt marketing activities to consumer needs and measure their effectiveness more accurately (Ramadian et al., 2024; Rezeki et al., 2023). In welding workshop businesses, Digital Marketing is also used to display portfolios, build trust through project documentation, facilitate communication, and make information more accessible to customers. The indicators of Digital Marketing include fulfillment/reliability, website design, customer service, and security/privacy (Suma & Siregar, 2023).

Relationship Marketing
Relationship Marketing is an approach focused on establishing, developing, and maintaining long-term relationships between companies and customers rather than merely facilitating transactions (Kurniulah, 2021; Suwanto, 2023; Darsana et al., 2023). This approach emphasizes trust, commitment, cooperation, and the creation of mutual value to retain customers and support sustainable profitability (Hakimah et al., 2023; Rizal, 2022). In project-based welding workshop businesses, long-term relationships are important because customers tend to choose service providers they trust based on work quality, timeliness, and service. Therefore, Relationship Marketing can increase Customer Loyalty, customer retention, and business sustainability. The indicators of Relationship Marketing include trust, familiarity, and professional awareness (Rizal, 2022).

Customer Loyalty
Customer Loyalty refers to a customer's commitment to consistently continue using a company's products or services over the long term. Loyalty is formed through positive experiences, satisfaction, trust, and emotional attachment that encourage repeat purchases, recommendations, and resistance to competitors' offers (Mujito et al., 2026; Sari et al., 2024; Baroroh, 2023; Jatmiko, 2025). Loyalty also reflects customers' willingness to continue choosing a company voluntarily and can support customer retention and business sustainability (Tjiptono & Diana, 2021; Angelia & Rezeki, 2020). In welding workshop businesses, Customer Loyalty is reflected in repeated use of services, recommendations to other customers, and long-term relationships influenced by work quality, timeliness, service, and customer experience. The indicators of Customer Loyalty include choice sequence, proportion of purchase, preference, and commitment (Firmansyah, 2023).

Relationships Among Variables
Customer Loyalty is an important factor in business sustainability and competitiveness, particularly in the digital era, which requires the use of technology to reach, retain, and build relationships with customers (Mohammad, 2022). Digital Marketing enables companies to deliver information, establish communication, and create effective

interactions, thereby improving customer experience, trust, and loyalty. Meanwhile, Relationship Marketing focuses on establishing and maintaining long-term relationships through trust, commitment, communication, and quality service, thereby encouraging customers to make repeat purchases, provide recommendations, and maintain relationships with the company (Nurbakti et al., 2022). Thus, the effectiveness of Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing is expected to increase Customer Loyalty at Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop.

H_1: Digital Marketing has an effect on Customer Loyalty at Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop.

H_2: Relationship Marketing has an effect on Customer Loyalty at Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop.

Accordingly, the conceptual framework used in this study is presented in the following figure:

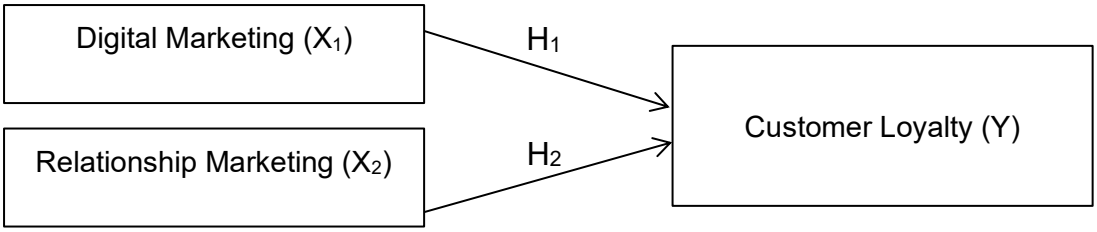


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach to analyze the effects of Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty at Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop. A quantitative approach was used because the study aims to test hypotheses and examine measurable relationships among variables using numerical data analyzed through statistical methods.

The population of this study consisted of all customers of Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop in 2025, totaling 197 customers. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% error level, resulting in 132 respondents selected from 197 populations. This sample size also meets the recommendation of Hair et al. (2022) regarding adequate sample size for reliable statistical analysis. The sampling technique used was purposive sampling, in which respondents were selected based on specific criteria established by the researcher. The criteria were customers who had used the services of Paris Wrought Iron Welding Workshop at least once and were willing to complete the research questionnaire.

This study consisted of two independent variables, Digital Marketing (X1) and Relationship Marketing (X2), and one dependent variable, Customer Loyalty (Y). Digital Marketing was measured by fulfillment/reliability, website design, customer service, and security/privacy; Relationship Marketing by trust, familiarity, and professional awareness; and Customer Loyalty by choice sequence, purchase proportion, preference, and commitment. All variables were measured using questionnaire items on a Likert scale.

The data used in this study consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained directly from respondents through questionnaire distribution, while secondary data were obtained from company documents, literature, journals, and other relevant supporting sources. A questionnaire pilot test was conducted with 30 respondents to assess the clarity, validity, and reliability of the research instrument using SmartPLS 4. The main analysis involved 132 respondents and applied SEM-PLS through SmartPLS,

consisting of outer and inner model evaluations. The outer model was assessed using outer loading, AVE, HTMT, Cronbach's Alpha, and Composite Reliability to evaluate validity and reliability. The inner model was evaluated using R^2, f^2, Q^2, and SRMR, while hypothesis testing used bootstrapping to examine path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values.

RESULTS

A total of 132 respondents who met the established criteria were included in the analysis. The characteristics of the 132 respondents in this study include gender, age, frequency of service use, and length of relationship with the company. The majority were male (78 respondents), aged 31 to 40 years (46 respondents), used the services 2 to 3 times (58 respondents), and had maintained a relationship with the company for more than 3 years (51 respondents). These characteristics indicate that the respondents had sufficient experience with the company to assess Digital Marketing, Relationship Marketing practices, and Customer Loyalty.

Outer Model

Convergent Validity Test

Convergent validity assesses whether indicators consistently measure the same construct. In SmartPLS 4.0, it is evaluated through outer loading and construct validity (Hair et al., 2022). An indicator is considered valid when its outer loading value exceeds 0.7, indicating a strong relationship between the indicator and the latent construct.

Table 2.
Outer Loading Test

	Digital Marketing	Customer Loyalty	Relationship Marketing
DM1	0,761		
DM2	0,723		
DM3	0,790		
DM4	0,816		
DM5	0,795		
DM6	0,775		
DM7	0,805		
DM8	0,772		
LK1		0,711	
LK2		0,744	
LK3		0,863	
LK4		0,845	
LK5		0,791	
LK6		0,848	
LK7		0,808	
LK8		0,755	
RM1			0,801
RM2			0,703
RM3			0,878
RM4			0,853
RM5			0,702
RM6			0,776

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

Convergent validity was evaluated using outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values. Based on Table 2, all indicators have outer loading values above 0.70,

ranging from 0.702 to 0.878. Therefore, all indicators meet the recommended criteria and are retained in the measurement model.

Table 3.
Construct Validity Test

	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Digital Marketing	0,609
Customer Loyalty	0,636
Relationship Marketing	0,622

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

Based on Table 3, the AVE values for each variable are 0.609 for Digital Marketing, 0.636 for Customer Loyalty, and 0.622 for Relationship Marketing. All values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50. Therefore, all three constructs meet the criteria for convergent validity, as each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators.

Discriminant Validity Test

The data were analyzed using SmartPLS version 4.0, with discriminant validity testing conducted as part of the outer model evaluation. This test included the Fornell-Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio test (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 4.
Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Digital Marketing	Customer Loyalty	Relationship Marketing
Digital Marketing	0,780		
Customer Loyalty	0,586	0,797	
Relationship Marketing	0,185	0,291	0,789

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

Based on the table above, the Fornell-Larcker criterion shows that the square root of AVE for each construct is higher than its correlations with other constructs. The values are 0.780 for Digital Marketing, 0.797 for Customer Loyalty, and 0.789 for Relationship Marketing, while the correlations among constructs range from 0.185 to 0.586. Therefore, all constructs meet the criteria for discriminant validity, as each construct has a higher value than its correlations with other constructs.

Table 5.
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio of Correlations (HTMT)

	Digital Marketing	Customer Loyalty	Relationship Marketing
Digital Marketing			
Customer Loyalty	0,634		
Relationship Marketing	0,193	0,268	

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

Based on the table, all HTMT values are below the 0.90 threshold, with values of 0.634 between Digital Marketing and Customer Loyalty, 0.193 between Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing, and 0.268 between Customer Loyalty and Relationship Marketing. Therefore, all constructs demonstrate good discriminant validity and are empirically distinguishable from one another.

Table 6.
Construct Reliability Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability
Digital Marketing	0,908	0,911	0,926
Customer Loyalty	0,917	0,922	0,933
Relationship Marketing	0,885	0,939	0,907

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

Based on Table 6, the Cronbach's Alpha values range from 0.885 to 0.917, while the Composite Reliability values range from 0.907 to 0.933. All values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70. Therefore, all three constructs meet the reliability criteria and demonstrate good internal consistency.

Table 7.
Outer Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

	VIF
DM1	2,035
DM2	1,872
DM3	2,179
DM4	2,387
DM5	2,248
DM6	2,090
DM7	2,188
DM8	2,094
LK1	1,880
LK2	2,112
LK3	3,505
LK4	2,666
LK5	2,319
LK6	2,981
LK7	2,533
LK8	2,099
RM1	1,950
RM2	1,667
RM3	2,658
RM4	2,097
RM5	2,008
RM6	2,173

Inner VIF	
	Loyalitas Konsumen
Digital Marketing	1,035
Relationship Marketing	1,035

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

The outer VIF values range from 1.667 to 3.505, all of which are below the threshold of 5.00. These results indicate that there are no critical collinearity issues at the indicator level in the measurement model.

Inner Model

R-Square

R-squared (R^2) is a statistical measure that represents the proportion of variance in the dependent latent construct that can be explained by the independent latent constructs in a model. A higher R^2 value indicates better model explanatory power, demonstrating

that the independent latent constructs have a stronger ability to explain and predict changes in the dependent latent construct (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 8.
R-Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Customer Loyalty	0,378	0,369

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

The R^2 value for Customer Loyalty is 0.378, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.369. These results indicate that Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing jointly explain 37.8% of the variance in Customer Loyalty, while the remaining 62.2% is explained by other factors outside the model. Therefore, the model demonstrates relatively low to moderate explanatory power.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is a statistical procedure used to evaluate the validity of a proposed statement and determine whether the statement should be accepted or rejected. Through hypothesis testing, researchers collect and analyze data as a basis for decision-making regarding the acceptance or rejection of previously formulated hypotheses or assumptions (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 9.
Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values	2.5%	97.5%	Conclusion
H_1: Digital Marketing -> Customer Loyalty	0,551	0,074	7,420	0,000	0,395	0,683	Hypothesis Accepted
H_2: Relationship Marketing -> Customer Loyalty	0,189	0,068	2,794	0,005	0,050	0,301	Hypothesis Accepted

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

Based on the hypothesis testing results, Digital Marketing has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty, with a T Statistics value of 7.420 and a P Value of 0.000. In addition, Relationship Marketing also has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty, with a T Statistics value of 2.794 and a P Value of 0.005. Since both P Values are < 0.05 and the T Statistics values are > 1.96, it can be concluded that Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing have significant effects on Customer Loyalty.

Table 10.
Effect Size (f^2)

	Customer Loyalty
Digital Marketing	0.472
Relationship Marketing	0.056

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

The effect size analysis shows that Digital Marketing has a large effect on Customer Loyalty (f^2 = 0.472), while Relationship Marketing has a small effect (f^2 = 0.056). These results indicate that removing Digital Marketing from the model would result in a greater

reduction in the variance of Customer Loyalty explained by the model compared with removing Relationship Marketing. However, this comparison should be interpreted as a difference in effect sizes within the estimated model, rather than as a statistical test to determine whether the two coefficients differ significantly.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)
Predictive Relevance (Q^2) is a measure used to assess the model's ability to predict endogenous variables. A Q^2 value greater than 0 indicates that the model has predictive relevance for the variables under study. In this study, the Q^2 test was conducted to assess the ability of Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing to predict Customer Loyalty. The results are presented below:

Table 11.
Q Square

	SSO	SSE	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Digital Marketing	1056,000	1056,000	
Customer Loyalty	1056,000	809,947	0,233
Relationship Marketing	792,000	792,000	

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

The Q^2 value for Customer Loyalty is 0.233. Since this value is greater than zero, the model demonstrates predictive relevance for Customer Loyalty. This result indicates that Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing provide useful predictive information for explaining Customer Loyalty. The Q^2 value should not be interpreted as the percentage of variance explained, as this interpretation applies to the R^2 value.

Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)
The Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) is one of the measures used to assess model fit in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS). The SRMR value indicates the magnitude of the difference between the observed correlations and the correlations predicted by the model. A lower SRMR value indicates better model fit. In general, an SRMR value of ≤ 0.08 indicates good model fit, while values between 0.08 and 0.10 may still be considered acceptable. Thus, an SRMR value closer to 0 indicates that the research model is increasingly capable of representing the empirical data adequately (Hair et al., 2022).

Table 12.
Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR)

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0,073	0,073

Source: Author's Analysis, SmartPLS Version 4.0 Output (2026)

The SRMR value is 0.073 for both the saturated and estimated models. Since this value is below the recommended threshold of 0.08, the model demonstrates an acceptable level of fit. However, SRMR is used as supporting information and should be interpreted together with the quality of the measurement model, R^2, f^2, and Q^2 values.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Digital Marketing on Customer Loyalty
The results show that Digital Marketing has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty ($t = 7.420$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H1. The large effect size ($f^2 = 0.472$) also indicates that Digital Marketing plays an important role in explaining customer loyalty at Paris Wrought Iron. Digital channels enable the company to display product designs, previous project results, service information, and customer testimonials more quickly and consistently.

For wrought iron services, visual information is particularly important because customers generally consider design quality and workmanship before making purchasing decisions. Regular and relevant digital communication can reduce customer uncertainty, strengthen engagement, and encourage repeat use of services and customer recommendations. This finding is consistent with Mohammad (2022), who found that effective digital marketing contributes to customer loyalty, as well as Kusuma et al. (2025), who reported that digital marketing supports loyalty by improving customer experience. This study extends these findings to a small-scale wrought iron manufacturing and workshop service business, where Digital Marketing makes a relatively substantial contribution despite the company's locally oriented market reach.

The Effect of Relationship Marketing on Customer Loyalty

Relationship Marketing also has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty ($t = 2.794$, $p = 0.005$), supporting H2. However, the effect size is relatively small ($f^2 = 0.056$). This result indicates that trust, communication, and long-term relationships remain relevant, but their incremental contribution is more limited after Digital Marketing is included in the model. One possible explanation is that customers do not purchase wrought iron products regularly because such products are durable and are generally purchased for specific construction or renovation needs. Therefore, positive relationships with customers may not necessarily result in repeat purchases within a short period. Their contribution may instead be reflected in customer recommendations, customers' willingness to return when they have new needs, and their tendency not to switch to other service providers. This finding is consistent with Hadi et al. (2023) and Nurbakti et al. (2022), who found that Relationship Marketing supports customer loyalty. However, the smaller effect observed in this study suggests that the strength of Relationship Marketing may depend on the purchasing cycle and characteristics of the service.

This study contributes to the literature on customer loyalty by demonstrating that digital communication and relationship-building efforts remain relevant in small-scale wrought iron manufacturing and workshop service businesses. The results also show that the contributions of the two variables are not equal within the estimated model, with Digital Marketing having a large effect size and Relationship Marketing having a small effect size. Practically, these findings indicate that digital visibility should receive substantial attention, while Relationship Marketing activities can focus on post-service communication, complaint handling, customer referrals, and maintaining communication during the relatively long interval between repeat purchases.

The research model explains 37.8% of the variance in Customer Loyalty, indicating relatively low to moderate explanatory power. Therefore, customer loyalty in this context is not determined solely by Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing. Other factors, such as service quality, customer satisfaction, perceived value, price fairness, trust, product quality, and customer experience, may also influence loyalty. These findings reinforce that the two variables are important factors, but they are not the sole determinants of customer loyalty. Within the estimated model, Digital Marketing demonstrates a relatively greater contribution to Customer Loyalty than Relationship Marketing, as indicated by its larger effect size. However, this difference in values should not be interpreted as a statistically significant difference between the two effects unless an additional statistical test is conducted to compare the coefficients.

CONCLUSION

Based on the hypothesis testing results, Digital Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Customer Loyalty. Relationship Marketing also has a significant effect on Customer Loyalty. Therefore, both Digital Marketing and Relationship Marketing

contribute significantly to Customer Loyalty. Together, these variables explain part of the variation in Customer Loyalty, while the remaining variation is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Furthermore, Digital Marketing has a large effect, while Relationship Marketing has a small effect. Thus, Digital Marketing is the more dominant variable in explaining Customer Loyalty within the research model.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings, the company is advised to improve its Digital Marketing strategy by providing high-quality and consistent content, utilizing interactive digital media, and delivering information that aligns with consumer needs. The company should also maintain and improve Relationship Marketing through responsive service, effective communication, trust-building efforts, and initiatives aimed at developing long-term relationships with customers. Given that the R-Square value indicates that 62.2% of Customer Loyalty is influenced by factors outside the research model, future studies are recommended to incorporate other variables that may influence Customer Loyalty, such as customer satisfaction, service quality, customer trust, brand image, perceived value, and customer experience. Future research may also expand the population, research locations, and sample size to obtain more comprehensive findings and improve the generalizability of the results.

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