

## UNDERSTANDING DIGITAL MARKETING AND PUBLIC RELATIONS STRATEGIES IN BUILDING CONSUMER LOYALTY IN COFFEE SHOPS IN KENDARI CITY

**Muh. Husriadi<sup>1\*</sup>**

Halu Oleo University, Kendari, Indonesia  
[husriadiadi@gmail.com](mailto:husriadiadi@gmail.com)

**Maulidia Berlianti**

Sriwijaya State Polytechnic, Palembang, Indonesia

**Aini Ashary**

Halu Oleo University, Kendari, Indonesia

### ABSTRACT

The development of digital marketing and public relations have changed the way coffee shops build relationships with consumers, especially amidst increasingly fierce business competition in Kendari City. However, few studies have explored how consumers understand and interpret these two strategies in depth to foster loyalty. This study aims to analyze the experiences and interpretations of coffee shop managers and consumers. shops in Kendari City regarding digital marketing and public strategies relationships in building customer loyalty. This study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation with managers and active coffee consumers. A shop in Kendari City was then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman model. The results showed that consumer loyalty is formed through the intensity of social media use, the quality of visual content, honesty of communication, speed of response, comfortable atmosphere, friendly service, and consistency of experience between digital promotions and real-life conditions. These findings confirm that loyalty is determined not only by product quality but also by trust, emotional experiences, and ongoing relationships between businesses and customers. The implications of this research provide a practical basis for coffee shop to develop a more authentic, responsive, and consumer experience-oriented communication strategy.

**Keywords :** digital marketing, public relations, consumer loyalty, coffee shop

### INTRODUCTION

Changes in consumer behavior in recent years show that loyalty is no longer formed solely by product quality, but also by how brands present themselves, communicate, and maintain relationships with their customers. (Hidayat, Anggraece, and Parawansa 2024) . In the coffee industry shop, this shift is very clear because consumers are now not only looking

for good coffee taste, but also experience, atmosphere, identity, and emotional closeness to the brand. (Farouqi et al. 2025). In the midst of these conditions, digital marketing and public relations strategies relations are becoming increasingly important because both play a role in building image, trust, and long-term relationships with consumers. (Hasan and Mayr 2027). Coffee shops in Kendari City are also not free from this dynamic, because the increasingly rapid growth of similar businesses has created tighter competition, both in terms of products, services, and brand communication in the digital space. (Utami et al. 2025). Several recent studies support the importance of digital strategies in building loyalty. For example, research by (Thanh and Trong 2023) shows that social media marketing and brand Trust has a positive impact on customer loyalty, making digital channels no longer merely promotional tools but also a means of building stronger relationships with consumers. Furthermore, (Siburian 2023) found that Instagram marketing and customers experience has a positive influence on customers loyalty with customers Engagement as a mediating variable. These findings confirm that active digital interactions and enjoyable experiences can strengthen customer engagement. However, not all research findings are entirely consistent. For example, findings (Sirait and Purwianti 2024) Research shows that service quality does not always have a significant impact on satisfaction, while price, brand image, store atmosphere, and product quality are more dominant in shaping satisfaction and loyalty. This demonstrates that consumer loyalty does not rest on a single factor, but is instead influenced by a combination of symbolic, emotional, and experiential elements.

While these results are quite helpful, there are still gaps that need to be clarified. Most previous research tends to discuss social media marketing, brand trust, customer engagement, or product quality separately. As a result, there are not many studies that specifically integrate digital marketing and public relations strategies. relationships within a coherent framework to explain consumer loyalty. On the other hand, the approaches used are still dominated by quantitative methods, so the process of how loyalty is formed in consumers' daily experiences has not been explored in depth. This research gap becomes even more important when related to the context of coffee. shop in Kendari City, because this city is experiencing quite dynamic creative economic growth, including the mushrooming of coffee shops. shop as a new social space for young people. Thus, Kendari is important to study because it represents a developing city with increasingly digital, competitive, and brand-responsive consumer characteristics. Based on these conditions, this research aims to explain how digital marketing and public relations strategies can be implemented. relations are understood, implemented, and interpreted in building consumer loyalty to coffee shops in Kendari City. More specifically, this research aims to identify the digital practices and public communication considered most influential, while also exploring consumer experiences regarding the factors that contribute to their loyalty.

Another objective of this study is to clarify the relationship between business communication strategies and the formation of trust, brand image, and customer engagement. This ensures that the research findings extend beyond the influence level and also explain the process contextually. In terms of novelty, this study offers an integration between digital marketing and public relations. relations in a more comprehensive discussion, especially on the object of coffee shop in Kendari City. Another novelty lies in the qualitative focus, which allows researchers to capture consumer experiences, meanings, and considerations in greater depth, beyond just numbers and statistical relationships. Furthermore, this research has strong practical justification, as its results can serve as a basis for coffee entrepreneurs. shop to develop communication strategies that are more adaptive, efficient, and relevant to current and future trends.

Thus, this research is expected to not only enrich academic literature, but also make a real contribution to the development of coffee. shop in Kendari City in facing increasingly complex competition.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

This research uses a qualitative phenomenological approach because it focuses on the experiences and meanings that consumers construct in responding to digital marketing and public relations strategies. relations on coffee coffee shop in Kendari City. This approach is appropriate for understanding social reality in depth. The research design is descriptive-phenomenological , because it aims to reveal the subjective experiences of informants, not to test cause-and-effect relationships statistically. The research population includes active customers and coffee shop managers. The sample was selected purposively, comprising 6-8 key informants, as they were most knowledgeable about digital promotion practices, brand image, and customer loyalty. The research location was coffee shop Kendari City was chosen because this area is developing as a creative economy and urban lifestyle space that is relevant for observing the dynamics of consumer loyalty. The research procedure was carried out through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation . Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman model through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing, as this model is systematic and suitable for reading themes of meaning sharply in qualitative data.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Digital Marketing Strategy**

Based on the results of the analysis show that the digital marketing strategy for coffee Shops in Kendari City thrive when social media is actively used, the content is visually appealing, and promotional messages are aligned with real-world conditions. coffee shop View Instagram, TikTok , and WhatsApp statuses not only as promotional showcases, but also

as spaces to maintain close relationships with customers. Therefore, responding quickly to messages or comments is crucial, as slow responses are often perceived as indifference. Consistency between digital information and in-person experiences is a key determinant of trust, and when promotional content aligns with the atmosphere, feel, and service customers experience, they are more likely to return. In other words, loyalty doesn't stem from promotions alone, but rather from the alignment between digital promises and the reality of service. This finding aligns with research (Nur and Usman 2024), which shows that visual, interactive, and authentic content on social media, especially Instagram and TikTok, is more effective in attracting the attention and participation of Generation Z than other platforms. The study also confirms that content relevance and information quality influence purchasing decisions. Furthermore, (Wahyuningtiyas and Hermawan 2026) found that a consistent digital marketing strategy, based on audience analysis, and adapting content patterns to the platform's characteristics can increase engagement and the effectiveness of marketing communications. These two findings reinforce the research findings that coffee Shops in Kendari need to maintain a digital communication rhythm that is responsive, honest, and visually strong so that relationships with customers do not stop at momentary attention, but develop into more stable attachments.

### **Public Relations**

Based on the results of the analysis show that the public relations on coffee Shops in Kendari City operate primarily through positive brand image, open communication, and quick customer response. Managers who are able to answer questions, respond to complaints, and provide honest explanations are typically more likely to gain consumer trust. In situations like this, emotional connection is formed not through excessive promotion, but because customers feel valued and listened to. Therefore, public relations do not stop at formal communication activities, but rather become relational practices that maintain daily relationships between businesses and consumers. These results are in line with research. (Damayanti and Ishak 2024) who found that public strategy transparent, consistent, and responsive relations play a major role in strengthening a company's positive image and building public trust. Other findings include, (Kuswati, Kusmayadi, and Pratomo 2025) which confirms that open, honest, and continuous communication is a key pillar of reputation and public trust in the digital age. On the other hand, the findings (Haseeb, Adnan, and Saeed 2024) shows that brand image is not automatically formed strongly just because of communication activities and without alignment between messages and real experiences, public efforts relations can lose their influence. This means that in coffee shop Kendari, public success relations are largely determined by authenticity, sincerity of response, and consistency of business behavior in daily life.

### **Consumer Experience**

Based on the results of the analysis show that consumer experience with coffee Shops in Kendari City are largely determined by a comfortable atmosphere, friendly service, and the alignment between expectations and actual experiences. Consumers tend to feel satisfied when the atmosphere feels comfortable, the staff is friendly, and the experience matches the image they see in digital media. In this context, satisfaction doesn't stop at a fleeting assessment but develops into a positive, memorable experience that encourages repeat visits. Thus, consumer experience acts as a crucial bridge connecting digital promotions with more stable loyalty, as customers typically have more trust in a coffee shop. A shop that is able to provide a consistent atmosphere between online and offline. This result is in line with the findings of (Rukaiyah and Novita 2026) which shows that service quality and cafe atmosphere have a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction, with service quality being the more dominant factor. Conversely, (Mamluatur 2026) shows that the cafe atmosphere and service quality do have an influence, but the increase in satisfaction is not always uniform across all consumer segments, so that the space experience does not automatically result in loyalty if it is not supported by meeting expectations and convincing interactions. In coffee shop Kendari, this emphasizes that a pleasant experience must be designed as a unity between space, service, and consistency of brand promise.

### **Consumer Trust**

Based on the results of the analysis show that consumer confidence in coffee Shops in Kendari City thrive when product quality is judged consistent, service is perceived as stable, and promotional information is perceived as honest and not exaggerated. Informants' experiences, a sense of security in returning to a coffee shop arises when what is promised digitally truly matches what is received on-site. Therefore, trust doesn't stand alone but is formed from a series of repeated experiences: consistent products, consistent service, and management's openness to feedback. Once this trust is established, consumers are typically more likely to recommend a coffee shop. shop with others, because they feel certainty and comfort in the relationship. This result is in line with the findings (Saefullah 2023) which shows that consumer trust, taste, product quality, and service quality have a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions. Conversely, a study (Jasin et al. 2023) shows that perceived Quality does not always have a significant direct impact on loyalty, although it still encourages satisfaction. This indicates that in coffee Kendari shop , trust needs to be maintained not only through the physical quality of the product, but also through consistent experience and honest, continuous communication.

### **Consumer Loyalty**

Based on the results of the analysis show that consumer loyalty to coffee Shops in Kendari City are seen primarily from the intention to return, repeat purchasing habits, and willingness to persist despite the availability of coffee options. other shops . In the informant's experience, loyalty doesn't emerge instantly, but rather grows from a repeated sense of fit

between the atmosphere, service, and brand communication. When customers feel comfortable, trusting, and have a consistent experience, they are more likely to not only return but also share word-of-mouth recommendations. At this point, emotional attachment becomes crucial, as customers no longer see the coffee shop as a unique place. Shops are not merely places to buy drinks, but rather spaces with personal intimacy and social value. These results align with findings (Bilal and Achmad 2023). which shows that customer satisfaction has a significant influence on customer loyalty, although product and service quality does not always have a direct impact. Other findings include from (Audreya and Kurniawan 2025) shows that product quality, service quality, place design, and customer satisfaction simultaneously have a significant influence on coffee consumer loyalty. On the other hand, the findings (Deryana et al. 2024) also emphasized that loyalty is not always directly influenced by product or service quality, so that loyalty relationships are significantly influenced by customer satisfaction, brand innovation, and experiences. In the Kendari context, these findings reinforce that loyalty needs to be understood as the result of repeated experiences, emotional closeness, and trust maintained by coffee shop.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion that has been carried out, this study concludes that digital marketing and public relations strategies relations have a mutually supportive contribution in forming consumer loyalty to coffee shop in Kendari City. Consistent social media marketing activities, supported by engaging visual content, quick customer response, and a match between promotional information and the customer experience, have proven to be important factors in building customer trust. Furthermore, the implementation of public relations Relationships that prioritize the principles of openness, honesty, and responsiveness can strengthen brand image while creating a closer emotional connection between management and consumers. The results of this study indicate that customer loyalty is influenced not only by the quality of the product offered, but also by the overall experience consumers experience from the stage of learning about promotions to receiving direct service. Therefore, coffee Shops that are able to maintain consistent communication, provide quality service, and create a positive customer experience have a greater chance of maintaining repeat purchases, gaining word-of-mouth recommendations, and building long-term customer loyalty.

Based on these findings, coffee managers Shops are advised to continue to strengthen the integration between digital marketing strategies and public activities . relations so that the communication built remains consistent with the real conditions experienced by customers. In addition, the owner coffee Shops need to maintain responsiveness to consumer feedback, improve service quality, and build more personal relationships through open, honest, and ongoing communication. Published digital content should not only be visually

appealing but also reflect authentic experiences that meet consumer expectations. Meanwhile, future researchers are advised to use a mixed-media approach. methods or conducting research in more diverse locations so that research results can be compared more broadly and provide a more comprehensive picture. Future research can also develop the research model by adding variables such as customer engagement, brand image, perceived value , as well as electronic word-of-mouth so that understanding of the factors that shape consumer loyalty in the coffee industry shop can be further deepened.

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