



Unraveling Brand Trust's Mediation Between Content Marketing, Website Quality, and Brand Loyalty: A Case Study of Detikcom

Luthfi Zian Nasifah ^{a*}, Muhammad Eka Purbaya ^a, Yosita Dwiani Suryaningtiyas ^a

^a Department of Digital Business, Universitas Telkom Purwokerto, Indonesia

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*Corresponding author

luthfiziannn@student.telkomuniversity.ac.id

Abstract

The shift in societal lifestyles toward internet-based information consumption must contend with the proliferation of hoax content. Consequently, digital media companies must implement strategies to cultivate public trust, thereby enhancing brand loyalty. This study analyzes the impact of content marketing and website quality on brand loyalty, with brand trust as a mediator, using data from Indonesia's leading digital news platform, Detikcom. The analysis employs structural equation modelling, partial least squares (SEM-PLS), mediation testing, and hypothesis testing. The findings reveals that while content marketing does not directly affect brand loyalty, it significantly boosts brand trust, indirectly fostering loyalty. Brand trust has the strongest influence ($R^2 = 0.436$) on loyalty. Website quality also directly enhances loyalty and trust, with an indirect effect mediated by trust. Mediation tests show brand trust partially mediates the relationship (74.1% for content marketing; 60.1% for website quality). Descriptive statistics (73.9%) rate the variables as 'good,' highlighting the need for Detikcom to prioritize trust-building through content and website improvements.

Keywords: Content Marketing; Website Quality; Loyalty; Trust

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SDGs: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (16); Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure (9); Responsible Consumption and Production (12)

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The shift in society's desire for information is closely tied to the growing digitalization. People use the internet to search for information through trusted websites. Technological advancements have driven media convergence, enabling broader access to digital content through digital television, websites, and mobile applications. In Indonesia, the number of internet users increased by 97 million between 2023 and now, totalling 5.35 billion users (We Are Social, 2022). As many as 83.1% of internet users use the internet to find information. As many as 61.1% of internet users aim to stay up-to-date with the latest news and events, and there is no doubt that an increasing number of people are searching for information online. Following the needs of users to search for information online, Indonesia has several digital media platforms that the public can access.

The public increasingly relies on the internet to seek information through credible websites, thereby driving the growth of digital competition aimed at fostering consumer engagement and trust (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019). Users who use the internet to search for information must face the spread of hoax news. According to Nihayah & Adila (2020), a hoax is the dissemination of false information to deceive the public into not trusting an individual, organization, or service provided by that individual or organization. This news can be disseminated online or offline through various types of media.

Identified by the AIS Team of the Directorate General of Informatics Applications, Ministry of Communication and Informatics, total hoax or false content is 11,642 for August 2018 - May 2023. The MASTEL survey (2019) reported that the most common media for spreading hoaxes are chat applications, such as WhatsApp, Line, and Telegram, at 67%, followed by websites at 28.20%. According to the Digital News Reports 2023 report, based on the type of media, 84% of survey respondents chose online media as their primary news source. This data shows that the spread of hoax news has led to increasingly tight competition in digital media to

meet users' needs for information or news from trusted sources. Therefore, digital media must increase user trust to prevent them from migrating to other media.

Trust alludes to the reliability of a product or service provider to behave in a manner that safeguards the long-term interests of customers (Khairunnisa & Rachmawati, 2018). According to Shin et al. (2019), this concept of trust works as the cornerstone for building connections between consumers and brands. When consumers consistently have positive experiences with a brand, they gradually develop a strong sense of confidence in the brand's ability to fulfil their expectations. As a long-term relationship between the brand and its customers develops, what initially starts as a general sense of trust may gradually evolve into strong brand trust (Shin et al., 2019). Trust is one of the factors influencing brand loyalty (Ulfah, 2020). The way digital media is used in society affects its perceived trustworthiness (Strömbäck et al., 2020). To establish such relationships with the public, companies must earn user trust (Supertini et al., 2020). When users have trust in digital media, user loyalty can be established. This trust pertains to brand trust, which is the propensity of customers to depend on a brand despite the associated risks, based on their positive expectations of the brand (Ulfah, 2020). Theoretically, brand trust entails customer having faith in the brand's security, honesty, and ability to consistently meet their needs. This confidence encourages consumers to continue using and recommending the brand. According to research, consumer loyalty towards a brand is significantly shaped by brand trust (Mai & Nguyen, 2021; Supertini et al., 2020). Thus, brand loyalty emerges when consumers trust a brand (Adogo et al., 2024).

With the critical role that brand loyalty plays, it is necessary to determine the factors that affect it. One factor that can influence brand loyalty is content marketing. The spread of hoax news can damage user trust in the brand, so companies must present trusted content marketing to maintain credibility. Companies can attract and retain loyal customers with the right digital marketing strategy, including personalized content and a user-friendly website (Gahlot & Rani, 2023; Kanodia, 2020). Content marketing provides valuable and quality content, building a brand as a trusted authority (Chen & Xu, 2022). Content that meets user needs can increase trust and loyalty (Julaeha, 2024). The user also serves as a watchdog, actively scrutinizing and challenging content that is invalid, irrelevant, or inaccurate. Thus, user trust becomes an important bridge to creating loyalty, and companies can use various content marketing strategies to encourage users to identify and be loyal to them (Chen & Xu, 2022). Several studies have demonstrated the impact of content marketing on brand loyalty (Baydaş et al., 2023; Chen & Xu, 2022; Jafarova & Tolon, 2022). Additionally, content marketing, which encompasses sub-dimensions of interaction and information, has a positive influence on user loyalty to the brand (Baydaş et al., 2023). Mediated by brand trust, content marketing affects brand loyalty (Ashrafa et al., 2022). Digital media content marketing is typically displayed on websites and can influence user loyalty (Yusniar et al., 2022).

For online businesses and digital media, websites today pay attention to detailed visitor information by utilizing interactive features to implement one-to-one marketing (Effendi & Prasetyo, 2020). If a website is frequently down or a page is unavailable, customers may lose trust in the company and seek alternative options (Hidayat & Nasution, 2024). Digital media should utilize website quality (webqual) to assess the quality of a website, thereby providing benefits to the company by monitoring and evaluating the business operations (Susanti, 2020). Webqual 4.0 is a measurement that provides accurate information and assesses the feasibility of a website (Sinuraya, 2019). This website quality consists of information quality, service interaction quality, and usability quality (Purwandani & Syamsiah, 2021). Research suggests that web quality has a significant impact on brand trust (Hai & Nguyen, 2022) dan terhadap loyalitas merek (Mai & Nguyen, 2021). Therefore, it is essential to manage website quality to provide high trust to consumers. However, if trust is used as a mediator, trust does not increase the influence of website quality on other variables (Ramialis & Besra, 2021).

In this study, the researcher wants to use Detikcom as the object of research. Detik.com is a digital media platform that features online news and articles in Indonesia. Detikcom was officially acquired on August 3, 2011, by Transmedia, part of CT Corporation. Detikcom is a media that has an online edition and relies on advertising revenue. As a digital media platform, the Detikcom domain has been active since May 29, 1998, and began online with news content on July 9, 1998. The emergence of Detikcom coincided with the wave of digital transformation in Indonesia, positioning it as a pioneering force in the realm of online news and solidifying its status as one of the largest digital media platforms in the country today.

In this research, Detikcom serves as the focal point of investigation. In addition to its popularity, Detikcom was chosen because it is a platform that actively produces content and is also vulnerable to hoax issues, making it suitable for exploring how website quality and content marketing strategies can build (or damage) the trust of Detikcom's audience. Most previous studies on Detikcom have only analyzed website quality using the importance-performance analysis (IPA) method (Christianto et al., 2020; Liani et al., 2020; Sholeh et al., 2021), without integrating the role of other variables. Research by Welyani & Melano (2025) is one of the studies that analyzes Detikcom content using qualitative methods and implements Brand Expression theory. This study demonstrates the role of Detikcom content as a branding strategy that can contribute to increasing credibility.

This study also suggests a relationship between content marketing and Detikcom's branding, as well as credibility or trust. However, there are still very few studies that integrate content marketing, website quality, and brand trust in the context of digital news media in Indonesia to understand the relationship and strengths between them. As a digital media platform that provides the latest and most reliable information, the issue of hoaxes poses a challenge for Detikcom in determining the influence of content marketing and website quality on branding.

The interest in research about trust and loyalty within digital media has not been adequately matched by studies that thoroughly integrate content marketing as a key determinant of brand trust and brand loyalty in the digital media landscape (du Plessis, 2022). Consequently, this study also necessitates the inclusion of brand trust as a mediating variable, which has been established as significant in either reinforcing or diminishing the influencing factors. Thus, this research can serve as a reference and consideration for digital media to increase brand loyalty through the analyzed factors.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs two grand theories that serve as the foundation for generating new variables or theoretical constructs. First, the grand theory of marketing management proposed by Kotler et al. (2018), which explicates marketing as the art and science of choosing target markets and gaining, keeping, and expanding a customer base by producing, delivering, and sharing greater customer value. The second is the grand theory of social psychology, which serves as the basis for Fishbein and Ajzen's Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Ajzen, 2020). Figure 1 depicts the formation of the research's theoretical framework.

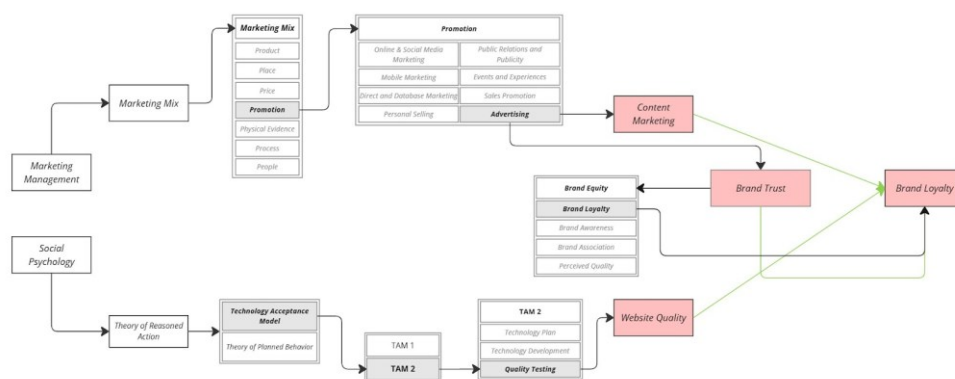


Figure 1. Theoretical Framework

The results of this study can support the two integrated theories, namely that brand loyalty can be formed not only by functional quality but also by credible content strategies, in line with the concept of customer-based brand equity according to Keller (Kohli & Haenlein, 2021). This is because the concept of brand equity involves consumer reactions to an element in the marketing mix and is associated with a fictitious or anonymous product. The application of social psychology theory can also enhance the theories of source credibility and the elaboration likelihood model, which emphasize the roles of credibility and information processing. Thus, this study can enrich the marketing literature with interdisciplinary insights from social psychology.

This section reviews previous research that discusses the impact of content marketing and website quality on brand loyalty, the relationship between content marketing and website quality on brand trust, the role of brand trust in influencing brand loyalty, and the potential mediating role of brand trust.

Content Marketing and Website Quality on Brand Loyalty

Research by Baydaş et al. (2023) indicates that the R-value of 0.40 and R^2 of 0.16 suggest that approximately 16% of the variance in brand loyalty can be explained by the information variable from content marketing. According to research by Chen & Xu (2022), culture, entertainment, emotion, and interaction are the four aspects that determine customer loyalty. On the other hand, Mai & Nguyen (2021) in their research on website quality and brand loyalty, using the SEM approach, showed that perceived quality also positively affects brand loyalty, with a standard coefficient of 0.441 and a significance level of $p = 0.000$. These results show that the higher the quality perceived by customers, the more likely they are to be loyal to the brand.

Content Marketing and Website Quality on Brand Trust

Research on content marketing towards brand trust by Parahita et al. (2023) involved 150 samples focusing on the food and beverage industry. Using the PLS-SEM (Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modelling) technique,

the study's findings demonstrated that the content marketing variable had no discernible effect on the customer loyalty variable. Research by Qalati et al. (2021), involving 600 respondents in China and utilizing the SEM-PLS analysis technique, found that service quality, website quality, and reputation have a significant impact on trust. The study's results showed that web stores have paid more attention to attractiveness, colour, and real-time services, providing all necessary information to eliminate ambiguity.

Brand Trust on Brand Loyalty

Essentially, trust encompasses the knowledge that individuals possess and the conclusions they draw regarding an object, its attributes, and its benefits (Desfitriady et al., 2023). Trust between companies and customers is vital to establish and maintain in order to establish a mutually beneficial and lasting relationship (Islam et al., 2021). This relationship creates conditions for customers to rely on a brand to fulfil its brand functions, which is known as brand trust. Briliana & Sari (2020) study shows a connection between consumer trust and brand loyalty. With a value of 10.94 and a coefficient value of 0.63 in PLS analysis results, Go-Ride consumers' brand loyalty and customer trust are significantly influenced by each other. With loyalty in users who have a slightly different concept from consumers, this study can illustrate that loyalty influences brand loyalty.

Brand Trust as a Mediator

Research by Lova & Raharjo (2023), which utilized 120 respondents and applied Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) using AMOS, found that brand trust is a crucial mediating factor in the link between social media marketing and purchasing decisions. The study found that social media marketing indirectly influences consumers' decisions by fostering brand trust (0.151), which was higher than its direct effect (0.107), emphasizing the significant role of trust in mediating this relationship. Although social media marketing alone showed a positive but insignificant direct impact on purchase decisions, its indirect influence via brand trust highlights the potential of trust as a mediator in enhancing the effectiveness of marketing strategies. This finding highlights the importance of further investigating brand trust's mediating capabilities in diverse contexts and with various variables.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

This study employs a quantitative approach, utilizing survey methods for data collection. According to Tojiri et al. (2023), surveys are a data collection method that involves pre-designed questions. Through the survey data collection method, researchers can measure respondents' preferences regarding a research variable. As a result, this study collected data through questionnaires distributed to a selected sample using the purposive sampling method, ensuring that the sample aligned with the desired objectives and characteristics. Given the unknown population size, sample size determination was performed using the formula by Hair et al. (2022), which involves multiplying the number of indicators by 5–10. This multiplier represents a range that ensures the validity of analytical results and guarantees accurate estimation for each indicator. The study comprises 53 indicators, which are represented by 51 questionnaire items. By applying the minimum multiplier as per Hair et al.'s formula, the required sample size was calculated based on the number of indicators, resulting in a baseline threshold of 265 respondents, who are Detikcom website users who tend to search for news through the Detikcom website. To ensure robust statistical power and account for potential data exclusions, the final analyzed sample consisted of 270 valid responses, exceeding the minimum requirement and aligning with best practices for model stability in PLS-SEM. The survey was conducted using the semantic differential method with a measurement scale ranging from 1 to 7 intervals. This method is used to measure respondents' attitudes and perceptions (Simamora, 2022).

The research used a multivariate analytic method that is distribution-free and does not depend on distributional assumptions: Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). PLS-SEM analysis involves two primary stages: the outer model and inner model. The outer model assesses validity and reliability. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion decision rule compares the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) with squared correlations, where AVE must exceed 0.5. Cross-loadings results were deemed acceptable if no errors were detected. Construct reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability, with acceptable thresholds set at >0.7, while values >0.9 were considered excellent.

For validity testing, the study applied the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and cross-loadings analysis. The inner model evaluation examined path coefficients, R-squared values, and hypothesis testing. Path coefficients were deemed significant if their absolute values exceeded 1.96 (derived from a 5% significance level). R-squared values were categorized into three strength levels: ≥ 0.75 (strong), 0.5–0.75 (moderate), and <0.5 (weak). Hypothesis testing relied on p-values, where results ≤ 0.05 led to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H_0) in favor of the alternative (H_a). Following PLS-SEM analysis, mediation effects were assessed using Variance Accounted For (VAF) calculations.

To facilitate data interpretation, descriptive statistical analysis was performed based on predefined measurement scale criteria. The scoring interpretation framework was structured as follows on Table 1.

Table 1. Descriptive Analysis Category

Percentage	Category
20-36%	Very Not Good
37-52%	Not Good
53-68%	Enough
69-84%	Good
85-100%	Very Good

Source: (Iba & Wardhana, 2024)

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4.0 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model

To test the validity of the research instrument, a questionnaire was distributed to 30 respondents. The testing process and data analysis were carried out using SmartPLS 4.0 software. The questionnaire results were used to determine convergent and discriminant validity. The convergent validity assessment using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion is presented in Table 2. The convergent validity test results state that all Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values printed in bold in Table 4 are smaller than the values of other constructs (correlations).

Table 2. Fornell-Larcker Criterion Test

	Y	M	X1	X2
Y	0,787			
M	0,852	0,791		
X1	0,770	0,804	0,635	
X2	0,732	0,727	0,751	0,708

Source: Author's calculating using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

Researchers also attempted to increase the AVE value to meet discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and cross-loadings. They eliminated indicator items by removing those with the highest correlations that differed significantly from the others. These high correlations indicate potential issues with discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2022). This indicator item elimination method is feasible in PLS-SEM research; however, careful elimination, while increasing validity, can also compromise the content validity of the measurement. Researchers also eliminated indicator values based on the highest correlation values, which caused data inhomogeneity.

This elimination process was also supported by conducting cross-loadings tests simultaneously with the Fornell-Larcker Criterion to identify values that did not meet the criteria, thereby improving the validity of both in an integrated and orderly manner. Therefore, the indicators were removed, including CM8, WQ17, WQ19, BL3, BL4, BL8, and BT3.

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted Score

Variable	AVE
X1	0.509
X2	0.519
Y	0.643
M	0.678

Source: Author's calculating using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

However, the researcher still found an AVE value of less than 0.5 for the content marketing (X1). Then, the researcher conducted a cross-loading test to identify invalid indicator values, taking into account the indicator's role in representing the variable. The researcher decided to remove indicators that had cross-loading

values higher than those of other constructs and were indicated to cause problems with discriminant validity. The following indicator items were removed: CM1, CM3, CM4, CM5, and CM10. Finally, the AVE results and the cross-loading test results, as detailed in Tables 3 and 4, demonstrate that each construct's indicators have met the measurement criteria of AVE <0.5 and cross-loading values with construct values greater than other variables. Consequently, the measurement items satisfy the discriminant validity criteria, confirming their effectiveness in measuring their intended variables while exhibiting minimal association with unrelated constructs.

Table 4. Cross-loadings Test

Indicator Item	CM (X1)	WQ (X2)	BL (Y)	BT (M)
CM2	0.614	0.468	0.359	0.330
CM6	0.683	0.215	0.291	0.548
CM7	0.675	0.354	0.436	0.448
CM9	0.792	0.564	0.563	0.671
CM11	0.791	0.572	0.514	0.536
CM12	0.741	0.434	0.600	0.521
CM13	0.776	0.495	0.383	0.436
CM14	0.608	0.485	0.351	0.512
WQ1	0.443	0.805	0.472	0.433
WQ2	0.374	0.724	0.483	0.455
WQ3	0.162	0.578	0.081	0.302
WQ4	0.582	0.827	0.399	0.578
WQ5	0.249	0.757	0.306	0.366
WQ6	0.464	0.837	0.534	0.479
WQ7	0.526	0.833	0.410	0.466
WQ8	0.448	0.532	0.309	0.359
WQ9	0.350	0.642	0.522	0.396
WQ10	0.704	0.775	0.685	0.749
WQ11	0.647	0.787	0.407	0.575
WQ12	0.323	0.760	0.610	0.488
WQ13	0.354	0.678	0.583	0.517
WQ14	0.523	0.823	0.661	0.552
WQ15	0.522	0.742	0.499	0.426
WQ16	0.364	0.483	0.180	0.188
WQ18	0.502	0.632	0.336	0.405
WQ20	0.559	0.734	0.530	0.543
WQ21	0.301	0.595	0.447	0.407
BL1	0.557	0.629	0.873	0.747
BL2	0.237	0.573	0.614	0.478
BL5	0.595	0.526	0.857	0.638
BL6	0.574	0.376	0.766	0.601
BL7	0.524	0.540	0.868	0.639
BT1	0.618	0.659	0.732	0.776
BT2	0.728	0.509	0.572	0.839
BT4	0.496	0.576	0.573	0.774
BT5	0.628	0.570	0.659	0.854
BT6	0.474	0.493	0.658	0.874
BT7	0.553	0.524	0.623	0.836
BT8	0.598	0.475	0.669	0.806

Source: Author's calculating using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

Following the validity assessment, reliability test results are presented in Table 5. The analysis confirms that both Cronbach's Alpha and composite reliability meet the established thresholds, with values exceeding 0.7

and 0.9, respectively. Consequently, the examined variables demonstrate sufficient internal consistency and are deemed reliable for further analysis.

Table 5. Reliability Test

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)
Y	0.856	0.873	0.899
M	0.921	0.922	0.936
X1	0.860	0.874	0.891
X2	0.947	0.957	0.953

Source: Author's calculating using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

Inner Model

In structural model testing, regression-based path analysis and principal component analysis are combined to estimate parameters from a set of equations within a structural equation model (Sarstedt et al., 2021). This structural model also serves as a diagram illustrating hypothesized relationships among variables.

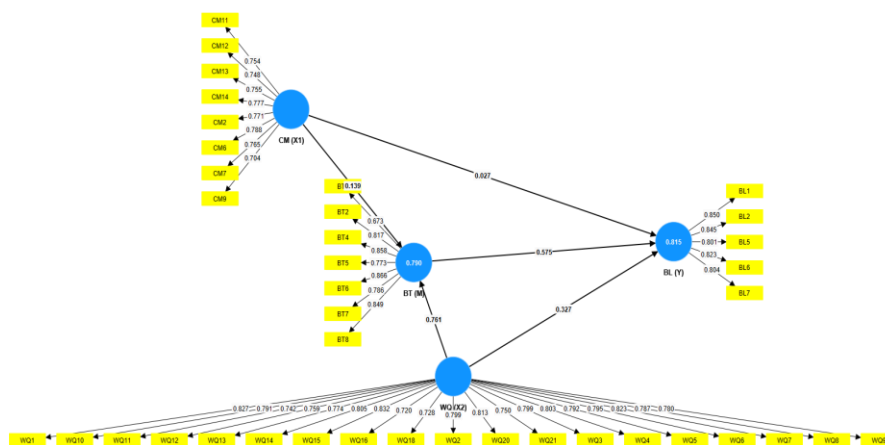


Figure 2. Path Coefficients Test

Figure 2 displays the path coefficients test, reveals that content marketing (CM) and website quality (WQ) have a significant impact on brand trust (BT), with coefficients of 0.529 and 0.276, respectively. Furthermore, brand trust has a strong effect on brand loyalty (BL) of 0.835. This suggests that CM and WQ influence brand loyalty indirectly through brand trust, which serves as the primary mediator.

Tabel 6. T-statistic test

Relation	T-value
X1 → Y	0.480
X1 → M	2.165
M → Y	9.513
X2 → Y	3.201
X2 → M	8.736

Source: Author's calculating using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

The path coefficient test results are presented in Table 6, with the decision criterion set at a t-statistic > 1.96. The results of this test are used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between variables. The analysis reveals that the relationships between content marketing (X1) and brand loyalty (Y) yield t-values below 1.96. As a result, the hypothesized path was considered to have a statistically positive but insignificant influence power. This conclusion aligns with the findings of Rifaldi & Gaffar (2022), which indicate that content marketing does not influence brand loyalty. Conversely, this outcome contrasts with the research conducted by Chen & Xu (2022) and various other scholars. Such discrepancies may arise from differences in content specifications and the industrial sectors examined. The study by Chen & Xu (2022) emphasizes content rooted in cultural and emotional aspects, which has been demonstrated to significantly impact brand loyalty. In contrast, the current research centers on news within digital media, which does not consistently prioritize emotional or cultural elements. In this study, the analysis results indicate that Detikcom's emotional level,

reflected in the CM11 indicator, namely “posts separate each emotion using a clear method, so that users can feel each emotional element individually,” has the lowest correlation value in the cross-loading results. If the emotional and cultural elements in this study exhibit a higher correlation value, as observed in the study by Chen & Xu (2022), Detikcom’s content marketing could serve as a reinforcing factor in influencing brand loyalty. Research by Kim & Sullivan (2019) suggests that emotional content can foster consumer preference for a brand and prompt purchasing or other actions.

Additionally, other hypotheses have been validated, showing a positive and significant effect. This is consistent with the findings of Yusniar et al. (2022), which suggest that content marketing, particularly through images and videos, significantly influences brand trust. Furthermore, website quality affects brand loyalty, echoing the findings of Hsieh (2022), which indicate that the most critical factors stem from information and navigation design, as well as the visual design of the website. Regarding brand trust, website quality exerts a positive and significant influence, corroborating the research of Qalati et al. (2021), which specifically addresses the provision of online services and the enhancements made to website quality to bolster trust in the brand. Besides, brand trust itself exerts a significant impact on brand loyalty. Kwon et al., 2020 indicated in their study that loyalty is a construct developed from trust. The greater the trust a customer has in a brand or company, the stronger the customer loyalty that can be established towards that brand or company (Aprilha & Engkur, 2020).

Table 9. F-square test

	Y	M
M	0.436	
X1	0.001	0.027
X2	0.057	0.419

Source: Author’s calculating using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

Subsequently, an analysis of the coefficient of determination was conducted, incorporating the evaluation of F^2 (effect size) and R^2 (R-square). The F-square test is used to assess the effect size or contribution of each predictor variable to the explained variance in the dependent variable. The results of the F-square test, presented in Table 9, indicate that brand trust exerts the most substantial influence on brand loyalty, whereas content marketing has the weakest impact on both brand trust and brand loyalty.

Table 10. R-square test

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Y	0.808	0.806
M	0.771	0.769

Source: Author’s calculating using SmartPLS 4.0 software.

The R-square analysis results are presented in Table 10. The findings indicate that the R^2 value for the brand loyalty (Y) variable is 0.806, suggesting that the model explains 80.6% of the variance in brand loyalty. This value falls under the “strong” category, demonstrating that the model exhibits an excellent ability to account for data variability. The remaining 19.4% is attributed to factors outside the research model, suggesting the presence of other unexamined variables that influence brand loyalty.

Meanwhile, the R^2 value for the brand trust (M) variable is 0.769, indicating that brand loyalty (Y) accounts for 76.9% of its variance. This value falls under the “strong” category, suggesting that the model exhibits explanatory power in capturing data variability. The remaining 23.1% is attributed to other variables outside the research model.

Mediation Test

This study examines brand trust as a mediating variable using the Variance Accounted For (VAF) method. The calculations reveal the following mediation effects:

Content Marketing → Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty: A VAF of 0.7414 (74,14%) implies that this link is partially mediated by brand trust.

Website Quality → Brand Trust → Brand Loyalty: With a VAF of 0.6005 (50,05%), brand trust again demonstrates partial mediation.

These results confirm that brand trust plays a significant yet partial mediating role in enhancing brand loyalty, driven by both content marketing and website quality, while other external factors also contribute to the model’s explanatory power.

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis of all four variables (content marketing, website quality, brand loyalty, and brand trust) illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11. Descriptive Analysis Result

Variable	Score Mean	Ideal Score	Percentage %	Category
Content Marketing	1,392	1,890	73,7	Good
Website Quality	1,418	1,890	75	Good
Brand Loyalty	1,375	1,890	72.8	Good
Brand Trust	1,375	1,890	72.7	Good

Source: Author's own calculation

The findings displayed in Table 11 reveal that all four variables fall within the “Good” category, with percentage scores ranging between 69% and 84%. Notably, website quality achieved the highest scores (75%), indicating that users perceive these aspects as highly satisfactory. In contrast, brand loyalty and brand trust recorded slightly lower scores, suggesting potential areas for improvement in strengthening customer loyalty and trust toward Detikcom. These findings suggest that, while the platform excels in website quality, additional strategies may be necessary to foster long-term brand commitment and consumer confidence.

Content marketing, although it does not directly impact brand loyalty, plays a crucial role in fostering brand trust. Therefore, a strategy aimed at enhancing audience trust is essential for cultivating loyalty towards Detikcom. Furthermore, given the significant impact of website quality, Detikcom must enhance its competitive edge by improving UI/UX, speed, and interactive features. Additionally, considering the high level of user trust and confidence in Detikcom as a digital news platform, it is recommended that Detikcom implement loyalty programs and offer exclusive content to bolster user word-of-mouth promotion.

5.0 CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The study reveals that 80.6% of brand loyalty variation and 76.9% of brand trust variation among Detikcom users can be attributed to content marketing and website quality. However, content marketing demonstrates no significant direct influence on brand loyalty. Content marketing builds brand trust, and through this trust, it indirectly increases Detikcom's brand loyalty. Website quality exhibits statistically significant effects on both constructs. About brand loyalty, brand trust exerts a more substantial indirect effect on website quality compared to its direct influence. Brand trust itself functions as a partial mediator, accounting for 74.14% of content marketing's indirect effect and 60.05% of website quality's impact, based on the VAF results, underscoring customer trust as a pivotal factor in fostering brand loyalty. User evaluations indicate strong performance across all measured variables, with content marketing, website quality, brand loyalty, and brand trust of Detikcom each scoring an average of 73.9%, categorizing them as “Good.” These results reflect general user satisfaction with platform services, suggesting that enhancing content marketing alone may not directly improve the loyalty metric. However, increasing trust can still indirectly affect Detikcom's brand loyalty. Conversely, superior website quality—particularly in terms of usability, information quality, and service interaction—proves effective in strengthening both brand trust and loyalty.

Implication

The research findings suggest that Detikcom can employ strategies to foster audience trust and enhance its loyalty. A quality website with superior competitiveness and user experience is Detikcom's primary model for continuous innovation in UI/UX design, loading speed, and interactive features, which are key competitive advantages. The analysis also revealed that Detikcom could implement a more engaging loyalty program or enhance the quality of exclusive content to encourage word-of-mouth.

Limitation Research

This research employed a quantitative method, which uses quantitative information as the basis for exploration. Therefore, there are inherent limitations and complex assumptions behind all the figures. Furthermore, there are limitations to the type of content marketing; this study used content from the website only and did not include content from social media or other platforms. Furthermore, this study is limited to analyzing the influence of variables. Further analysis of other aspects is needed to understand how content marketing quality builds audience trust.

Recommendation

Strategic recommendations emphasize prioritizing website quality improvements, specifically targeting usability enhancements, information quality refinement, and service interaction optimization to bolster brand trust and loyalty. Detikcom can strategically leverage content marketing as a trust-building mechanism to increase user/audience loyalty to Detikcom. Specifically, it examines post formatting standards, optimal content upload timing, the interactivity of the message, and the attractiveness of the topics. Future research should consider incorporating additional relevant variables, exploring alternative methodologies for loyalty factor analysis, and examining complementary mediators of brand trust. These findings establish a foundational framework for more robust subsequent studies in this domain.

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