

Brand Awareness And Payment Ease to Create Customer Loyalty In The Strategy of Digital Marketing

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ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT

Keywords:

Brand Awareness,
payment ease,
customer loyalty,
digital marketing
strategy

Background: The rapid development of digital technology has driven a significant transformation in marketing strategies, particularly in utilizing digital marketing as a primary means of reaching and retaining consumers.

Method: This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth how brand awareness and payment ease play a role in shaping customer loyalty in digital marketing strategies. This approach was chosen because it is able to explore the meaning, perceptions, and subjective experiences of consumers that cannot be measured quantitatively. The informant selection technique was carried out using purposive sampling, with the criteria of respondents who actively use digital services (e-commerce or digital transaction-based applications). Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, in order to obtain rich and contextual data.

Results: The combination of brand awareness and payment ease in the case study example can empirically build customer loyalty if carried out through an intermediary internet marketing system which is divided into certain payment zones to build relationships between customers and suppliers as a process in a digital marketing strategy. There are 5 critical factors in this research to build success between brand awareness and payment ease, namely 4 factors in customer interaction techniques with the internet, namely search engine optimization, social media marketing, content marketing and display marketing.

Conclusion: All of these factors can build a good framework for creating customer loyalty in businesses in the current era of internet technology. Brand awareness serves as a cognitive foundation that influences consumer trust and preference for a brand, while payment ease acts as a functional factor that increases convenience and satisfaction during transactions. The integration of these two variables creates a holistic customer experience, ultimately driving repeat purchases and long-term loyalty. Therefore, companies need to develop digital marketing strategies that focus not only on increasing brand visibility but also on optimizing easy, fast, and secure payment systems to enhance business competitiveness and sustainability in the digital economy era.

Received: 9/18/2025

Revised: 11/30/2025

Accepted: 12/1/2025

How to cite this article:

Febriansyah., Wibasuri, A. (2026). Brand Awareness And Payment Ease to Create Customer Loyalty In The Strategy of Digital Marketing. *Sharia Economic and Management Business Journal (SEMBJ)*, 7(1), 133-141. <https://doi.org/10.62159/sembj.v7i1.1984>

INTRODUCTION

The digital transformation, marked by the rapid development of information and communication technology, has fundamentally changed the way individuals interact, transact, and access information (Rocheffort & Ndlovu, 2024; Alfonso, 2025). Innovations such as high-speed internet, mobile devices, and cloud-based system integration have created a digital ecosystem that allows seamless access to a variety of services and products (Purnomo, 2023). This has driven a significant shift in consumer behavior, shifting from conventional consumption patterns to faster, more practical, and more efficient digital consumption patterns. Modern consumers no longer rely solely on physical interactions but instead utilize digital platforms to search for information, compare products, and conduct transactions in real time (F. S. Rahayu & Insani, 2025). This phenomenon aligns with the findings of Kotler and Keller (2016), which state that digitalization has shifted the marketing paradigm from a traditional approach to one based on connectivity and interactivity. This is reinforced by a study by Chaffey (2019), which emphasizes the importance of digital technology integration in understanding contemporary consumer behavior (Hidayah et al., 2026; Rose et al., 2024).

Along with the increasing adoption of digital technology, the use of e-commerce and various digital platforms has also experienced significant growth, ultimately shaping new consumption patterns in society (Ananda, 2025). Consumers now tend to prioritize ease of access, speed of service, and flexibility in transactions, all of which are facilitated by the digital ecosystem. In this context, digital marketing has emerged as a key strategy that enables companies to reach consumers more broadly, personally, and measurably through various channels such as social media, search engines, and marketplaces (Mofokeng, 2025). This approach serves not only as a promotional tool but also as a tool for building long term relationships with customers through integrated digital experiences. This is supported by research by Ryan (2020) and Tiago (2014), which shows that digital marketing strategies play a significant role in influencing consumer behavior and increasing customer engagement and loyalty in the digital economy era.

In the context of increasingly intense digital business competition, customer loyalty has become a key determinant of a company's sustainability and competitive advantage. Loyalty not only reflects a customer's propensity to make repeat purchases but also demonstrates emotional attachment and trust in a brand (Putra & Nainggolan, 2026). In a digital environment rife with alternative choices and information transparency, retaining existing customers is a more effective strategy than continually attracting new ones. This aligns with Frederick F. Reichheld's (2003) view, which asserts that small increases in customer retention can generate significant profitability growth. Furthermore, Philip Kotler and Kevin Lane Keller (2016) emphasize that customer loyalty is a strategic asset that contributes to long-term revenue stability and strengthens a brand's market position (Ilyas et al., 2020).

Furthermore, in the digital marketing era, customer loyalty is often used as a key indicator of the success of a company's digital marketing strategy. Customer loyalty reflects a company's effectiveness in creating positive customer experiences through various digital channels, such as social media, e-commerce platforms, and mobile applications (Reyhanrafif et al., 2024; Gielens & Steenkamp, 2019). However, maintaining customer loyalty in the digital era is not easy, given the high level of competition and low switching costs that allow consumers to easily switch to other brands. This challenge requires companies to continue to innovate in providing added value, both in terms of product quality, service, and the digital experience offered. A study by Valarie A. Zeithaml, Leonard L. Berry, and A. Parasuraman (1996) shows that service quality and customer satisfaction have a close relationship with loyalty, while research by Lemon and Verhoef (2016) emphasizes the importance of holistic customer experience management in maintaining customer loyalty.

The main challenge in today's digital marketing context lies in how companies can build strong brand awareness amidst intense competition and a deluge of digital information (Bahcecik^a et al., 2019). Although various digital platforms such as social media and marketplaces offer significant opportunities to increase brand visibility, not all companies succeed in creating brand awareness that leads to customer loyalty. Many consumers only recognize brands superficially (brand recognition), but lack the emotional attachment or trust necessary to make repeat purchases. This indicates a gap between digital marketing efforts and their effectiveness in building customer loyalty. Furthermore, poorly integrated and inconsistent digital communication strategies also hinder the strengthening of a brand's position in consumers' minds (Vo et al., 2026).

Furthermore, payment convenience, as part of the customer experience in the digital ecosystem, still faces various challenges. Although digital payment technology has advanced rapidly, not all platforms are able to provide easy, fast, secure, and flexible payment systems that meet consumer expectations (Rusdianti & Fajar, 2023). The complexity of the transaction process, limited payment methods, and concerns about data security often act as barriers that reduce repeat purchase intentions. This situation directly impacts low levels of customer loyalty, even when the products or services offered are of high quality. Thus, there is an urgent need to empirically examine how the integration between brand awareness and payment ease in digital marketing strategies (Almeida & Mensah, 2019); (Mofokeng, 2025).

Previous research has shown that brand awareness plays a significant role in influencing consumer behavior, particularly in shaping customer loyalty. Studies by David A. Aaker (1991) and Kevin Lane Keller (2013) confirm that brand awareness is a fundamental element of brand equity, contributing to the formation of long-term relationships between consumers and brands. Empirically, research by Hsin Kuang Chi et al. (2009) found that brand awareness has a positive and significant effect on customer loyalty by increasing perceived quality and consumer trust. Furthermore, research by Severi Elham and Ling Kwek Choon (2013) also shows that consumers with high levels of brand awareness tend to be more loyal due to a sense of familiarity and confidence in the product or service offered.

Furthermore, research on payment convenience in the digital ecosystem indicates that the ease of payment systems is a crucial factor in enhancing customer experience and loyalty. A study by A. Parasuraman et al. (2005) emphasized that the quality of electronic services, including the ease and reliability of payment systems, directly influences customer satisfaction. Research by Tiago Oliveira et al. (2016) showed that perceived ease of use and security in digital payments significantly contribute to continued usage intentions. Furthermore, Venkatesh Viswanath et al. (2012) using the UTAUT2 model confirmed that ease of use of technology has a strong influence on user adoption and loyalty in the context of digital systems. However, most studies still examine these variables partially, so research that integrates brand awareness and payment ease within a digital marketing strategy framework is needed to provide a more comprehensive understanding of customer loyalty formation.

The importance of comprehensively understanding the factors influencing customer loyalty in the digital era, characterized by rapid market dynamics and high levels of competition. Changes in consumer behavior that are increasingly adaptive to technology require companies to focus not only on customer acquisition but also on customer retention through appropriate strategies. Customer loyalty is a crucial indicator in assessing the success of a digital marketing strategy, as it reflects the level of consumer satisfaction, trust, and attachment to a brand. In this context, understanding the role of brand awareness and payment ease is crucial, given that both variables contribute to shaping a holistic consumer experience, which ultimately impacts repeat purchase decisions and long-term customer relationships.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with the aim of understanding in depth how brand awareness and payment ease play a role in shaping customer loyalty in digital marketing strategies. This approach was chosen because it is able to explore the meaning, perceptions, and subjective experiences of consumers that cannot be measured quantitatively. The informant selection technique was carried out using purposive sampling, with the criteria of respondents who actively use digital services (e-commerce or digital transaction-based applications). Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, in order to obtain rich and contextual data.

Data analysis in this study employed thematic analysis techniques, which encompassed data reduction, categorization, and inductive conclusion drawing. Data validity was maintained through triangulation of sources and methods, as well as member checking to ensure the validity of the researcher's interpretation of the data obtained. Through this approach, researchers were able to identify patterns in consumer perceptions related to brand awareness, ease and fairness of payment systems, and how these two aspects influence customer loyalty in a digital context. The research results are expected to provide a deeper and more comprehensive understanding of the dynamics of consumer behavior, while also providing a basis for formulating more effective, customer-experience-oriented digital marketing strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Analysis of Brand Awareness

The PSESAI model introduced can give more insight for managers and executives in creating awareness of their brands for the target markets. Brand awareness analysis is a fundamental aspect of modern marketing studies, particularly in understanding how consumers recognize, remember, and prioritize a brand in the decision-making process. Brand awareness is defined as a consumer's ability to identify and recall a brand in various purchasing situations (David A. Aaker, 1991). From a brand equity perspective, brand awareness is the initial element that determines whether a brand will enter a consumer's consideration set. Without brand awareness, it is impossible for consumers to develop further perceptions regarding the quality, value, or trust in a product or service. Conceptually, brand awareness consists of several levels: brand recognition, brand recall, and top of mind (S. Rahayu, 2024). According to Kevin Lane Keller (2013), brand recognition refers to a consumer's ability to recognize a brand when presented with a specific stimulus, while brand recall relates to the ability to recall the brand without assistance. The highest level, top of mind, indicates that the brand is the first choice that comes to mind. These levels reflect the strength of the brand's position in consumer memory and serve as important indicators in evaluating the effectiveness of implemented marketing strategies. In the context of digital marketing, brand awareness analysis is increasingly complex because it is influenced by various factors such as social media exposure, digital content, and consumer interactions with brands online. Digital platforms enable companies to build brand awareness more broadly and quickly through strategies such as content marketing, search engine optimization (SEO), and social media engagement. According to Dave Chaffey (2019), the integrated use of digital channels can increase brand visibility while strengthening relationships with consumers. Therefore, brand awareness analysis in the digital era focuses not only on the level of brand recognition but also on the quality of consumer interaction and engagement with the brand (Mofokeng, 2025).

Furthermore, various empirical studies show that brand awareness has a significant relationship with other consumer behavioral variables, such as trust, perceived quality, and customer loyalty. A study by Hsin Kuang Chi et al. (2009) found that brand awareness positively influences purchase intention through the mediation of perceived quality and brand loyalty. This suggests that the higher a consumer's level of brand awareness, the more likely they are to repurchase and recommend the brand to others. Thus, brand awareness functions not only as a cognitive indicator but also as a key driver in forming long-term relationships between consumers and brands. The implications of brand awareness analysis are crucial for companies in designing effective and sustainable marketing strategies. Companies need to develop consistent, relevant, and data-driven communication strategies to increase brand visibility and recall in the minds of consumers. Furthermore, utilizing digital technologies such as data analytics and artificial intelligence can help monitor and evaluate brand awareness levels in real time. Thus, strengthening brand awareness not only enhances a company's competitiveness but also serves as a key foundation for building customer loyalty and competitive advantage in an increasingly dynamic marketplace.

Managers sometimes face the challenge to the changing of customer expectation. Managers want some priorities that give the best service for consumers by building some advantageous for the brands of customer's mind. Businesses must make their brands in the top minds of consumers through awareness (Reyhanrafif et al., 2024). Monitoring brand enhancement in order to get the intended brand performance in the cutthroat market, managers might modify their marketing strategies under awareness programs with the aid of placement, sponsorship, event marketing, sports marketing, advertising, and integrated marketing communications. Additionally, this performance review can help companies to measure the level of brand awareness and its strength against competing brands to target consumers in the modern marketing environment. Building brand by offering a rational framework, it is possible to raise consumer awareness, lessen the base's susceptibility to competing acts, and influence customers' perceptions of risk and confidence in their purchases, all of which have a direct impact on future sales and profits. Strong brand knowledge can persuade customers to become friends with a brand through good word-of-mouth promotion for companies that have achieved the targeted level of brand recognition in the marketplace. With thorough brand knowledge, which is the main or key cue of brand awareness, businesses can use this strategy to impact brand awareness to new categories of uniqueness and difference that adhere to positive brand perception.

Payment Ease of Fair Pay

The concept of payment ease of fair pay refers to the level of convenience, fairness, and transparency in the payment process perceived by consumers in a digital transaction system. In the context of modern marketing, payment ease encompasses not only technical aspects such as speed and ease of use, but also reflects consumers' perceptions of price fairness and the appropriateness of the value received versus the cost incurred. According to Xavier Drèze and Joseph C. Nunes (2004), perceptions of payment fairness play a crucial role in shaping customer satisfaction and trust, which ultimately influence purchasing decisions and long-term loyalty. In the digital era, the development of various payment methods such as e-wallets, mobile banking, and payment gateways has driven the creation of more efficient and flexible payment systems. This convenience allows consumers to conduct transactions anytime and anywhere without physical barriers. However, this convenience must be balanced with the perception of fairness in the pricing structure and any additional fees charged. Richard Thaler (1985), in his theory of mental accounting, explains that consumers tend to evaluate transactions based on perceived value and fairness, making price transparency a crucial factor in increasing customer satisfaction (Yusuf, 2018).

Furthermore, payment ease is also an integral part of the customer experience in the digital environment. Ease of payment can reduce friction in the customer journey, thereby increasing the likelihood of repeat purchases. Research by A. Parasuraman et al. (2005) shows that the dimensions of ease of use and system reliability are key components of e-service quality. This is reinforced by a study by Viswanath Venkatesh et al. (2012), which found that perceived ease of use significantly influences the intention to use technology continuously. Furthermore, the integration of payment ease and perceived price fairness directly contributes to customer loyalty. Consumers who perceive the payment process as easy, transparent, and fair tend to have higher levels of trust in service providers. Research by Xia Lan, Monroe Kent B, and Cox Jennifer L (2004) shows that perceived price fairness is positively related to customer satisfaction and loyalty. Thus, payment ease and fairness serve not only as a transaction tool but also as a strategic mechanism for building long-term relationships with customers (Alfonso, 2025).

The practical implications of this concept require companies to design payment systems that are not only technically efficient but also fair and transparent from a consumer perspective. Companies need to ensure that all cost components are clearly communicated and provide a variety of payment options that align with customer preferences. Furthermore, the use of digital technologies such as secure payment systems and real-time transaction processing can increase consumer trust in the payment system they use. Thus, optimal implementation of the payment ease of fair pay can be a source of competitive advantage in facing increasingly complex digital business competition. framework that can be applied to mass consumer markets. Through the application of this framework, suppliers and customers can engage in participatory pricing at the individual customer level (Rochefort & Ndlovu, 2024).

The architecture in Figure 7 illustrates the possibility of two zones for customer-supplier interactions: a traditional "Fixed Price zone" and an optional "FairPay zone," which can be granted to specific customers on a privileged basis but may be withdrawn at any moment in the future by the supplier. Decisions regarding the zones in which future supplier-customer interactions will occur are influenced by the outcomes of a series of supplier-customer interactions that occur inside each of these zones. The FairPay framework is based on building customer/supplier relationships characterized by cooperation, trust and mutual commitment. Suppliers can design choice architectures for an 'iterative game' of creating and evaluating distinct products, testing each product, and maximizing the value that customers perceive from its use. For a certain amount of time, providers reward based on relationship value, and customers are incentivized to establish a reputation for fairness. Revenue, contributions, and customer lifetime value are examples of relationship value; other elements include ad serving, data provision, and word-of-mouth recommendations (Rowi et al., 2024).

In addition to giving suppliers the chance to incorporate real-time market research into their continuing operations, this dynamic participatory pricing and value discovery strategy also engages customers in a value-related conversation. Unlike fixed pricing, this dynamic paradigm focuses on customers who are most likely to participate fairly in collaborative pricing and enables suppliers to continuously learn how individual characteristics in consumers impact their responses to offers (e.g.,

Weisstein et al., 2016). Higher revenues, which are attained by accepting offers from all clients prepared to pay a reasonable price, are what allow suppliers to make money. (Almeida & Mensah, 2019)

Total profitability (and sales) may rise despite a decline in average revenue per user. This framework provides a tailored approach to client demands as a competitive strategy that strengthens interactive relationships, engages customers, and fosters customer loyalty. Price discrimination that is zero-sum and bargain-hunting is replaced by value discrimination that is win-win and mutually beneficial.

Applications of Fairpay

The FairPay framework particularly has built strong relationships to the customers in the long term with digital marketplaces, where customers' value in use might change significantly depending on their usage habits, payment methods, and hours. With the help of this framework, suppliers may comprehend and take advantage of variations in usage, as well as adjust and gain knowledge from them. It is also appropriate in situations when buyers believe a thing is desirable but the price established prevents them from receiving a fair price or when middlemen take an excessive amount of profit.

For instance, compared to the makers of music labels, many musicians frequently receive comparatively little money. As the band Radiohead has shown, fans may choose to honor performers they find inspiring. Suppliers of digital books, games, podcasts, software applications (Almeida & Mensah, 2019), video, journalism, and non-profit organizations are some potential industry areas that might gain the most from using this architecture. When a common platform architecture can handle supplier-customer communication, integrate each customer's reputation history, and use individual data collectively, this can be especially useful. In such a situation, the information becomes as valuable over time as a credit rating database, specifically by determining each customer's track record of paying reasonable pricing (Rochefort & Ndlovu, 2024).

Another context also applies to this framework, where customers do not just rely on unit volume, but also offer prices that also reflect value in use. Subscribers can suggest reasonable prices related to their use and include volume discounts. Therefore, suppliers encourage large volume usage, but can offer more inexpensive prices across the usage spectrum. Although the customer has fair power in the relationship, the supplier can explain, for example, peak price, thereby aiding the customer in making fair pricing decisions. Suppliers are able to divide up their clientele and create products that cater to the distinct context of each customer or group of customers. For example, an offer may reflect the paying ability of a particular customer segment (as is often the case for students or seniors), its usage, usage time, how many devices, and how many users use the service.

The framework's adaptive value discrimination capabilities can be applied to achieve dynamic customer segmentation as they differ from each other and over time to better reflect variations in usage context, usage levels, value in use, and even ability to pay (Rose et al., 2024). The FairPay framework is especially relevant for suppliers with low marginal costs and where many customers do not buy for fixed prices but will pay at a level consistent with their specific value in use. The news, information, and magazine industries are among the industry sectors facing severe pricing pressures that threaten their sustainability, and implementing the framework in these sectors may prove invaluable (Siuda et al., 2025; Mai et al., 2026).

This could streamline current segmentation techniques, which are more inflexible, challenging to create, and may elicit animosity from customers due to their apparent arbitrary nature. This methodology can be used to other categories where fixed prices do not accurately reflect income possibilities, not just digital offerings or even offerings with low marginal costs. Perishable commodities, for instance, are a natural fit for this paradigm since providers can make money from items that consumers might not buy at set price points. As a more advantageous option to NYOP, offerings that let clients select their own value in use may appeal to both clients and suppliers. (Agamudainambhi et al., 2022).

Customer Loyalty is Maintained

Content marketing has increased success rates (the likelihood of converting leads into qualified leads) by as much as 30%. The author of this business solution creates a content marketing plan using the B.E.S.T. formula, which is helpful for seeing critical moments and determining strategy. In terms of behavior, what consumers feel when visiting the Ailesh Green Consulting website content is satisfaction because from the information they get and feel that Ailesh Green Consulting is one of the

most trusted sources of information for content related to Life Cycle Evaluation(Purnomo, 2023). Customers are expected to post Ailesh Green Consulting articles on social media in order to help spread the word about the company's knowledge. It is intended that by giving customers relevant and helpful information, they would want to employ Ailesh Green Consulting in the future and consider it among the environmental consultants they are evaluating(Rose et al., 2024). Consumers need information regarding life cycle assessment, why it is important for companies to do this, and the advantages provided by Ailesh Green Consulting which have a big impact on consumers, such as faster uptime so that companies can get reports for the overall Life Cycle Assessment more quickly. By providing content that discusses this, such as that the government has required companies to carry out Life Cycle Assessments and the impact that can have on companies, the environment and the government, it will provide more understanding and knowledge to consumers so that they are interested in using Life Cycle Assessments to their company. (Chen et al., 2025).

Visual content such as images, infographics, and videos is the most effective kind of media. Accordingly, it is crucial to incorporate images and videos into marketing materials to provide customers a comprehensive picture of the Life Cycle Assessment, the process, and how it might affect every facet. Potential customers, specifically businesses who use Life Cycle Assessment as one of their required corporate evaluations, are the target audience for Ailesh Green Consulting's content. Offering information from the viewpoint of someone in need of a Life Cycle Assessment will offer an intriguing viewpoint on the material since customers will believe that Ailesh Green Consulting's content is what they need in order to make a company in their field. Customer satisfaction has increased significantly through the implementation of technology that simplifies the product and service delivery process. With the ease with which consumers may now access goods and services via digital platforms like websites and mobile applications, self-service alternatives have emerged as a key component in raising customer satisfaction. Customers benefit from shorter wait times, more convenience, and an improved overall experience as a result. Another innovation in raising consumer satisfaction is data analysis. In order to provide individualized experiences, businesses can now gather and analyze customer data to learn important information about their preferences and behavior(Gielens & Steenkamp, 2019). Businesses can use this data to provide recommendations based on a client's browsing history, previous purchases, and demographic data, which will eventually boost customer satisfaction and encourage repeat business. Additionally, chatbots and virtual assistants have made it possible for technology to provide customer care more quickly and effectively. answer times are shortened, answer accuracy rises, and overall customer happiness rises as a result of this automation. Through data analysis, self-service alternatives, and enhanced customer support, technology plays a significant role in raising customer satisfaction. Businesses must adjust and embrace new technologies as they become available in order to stay competitive and satisfy the constantly shifting demands and expectations of their clientele. A common post-evaluation metric used to gauge a client's experience with a brand is customer satisfaction (Ilyas et al., 2020); (Vo et al., 2026).

CONCLUSION

The research results show that the combination of brand awareness and payment ease in the case study example can empirically build customer loyalty if carried out through an intermediary internet marketing system which is divided into certain payment zones to build relationships between customers and suppliers as a process in a digital marketing strategy. There are 5 critical factors in this research to build success between brand awareness and payment ease, namely 4 factors in customer interaction techniques with the internet, namely search engine optimization, social media marketing, content marketing and display marketing. Meanwhile, 1 other specific factor is building relationships with fair pay zone customers. All of these factors can build a good framework for creating customer loyalty in businesses in the current era of internet technology. Brand awareness serves as a cognitive foundation that influences consumer trust and preference for a brand, while payment ease acts as a functional factor that increases convenience and satisfaction during transactions. The integration of these two variables creates a holistic customer experience, ultimately driving repeat purchases and long-term loyalty. Therefore, companies need to develop digital marketing strategies that focus not only on increasing brand visibility but also on optimizing easy, fast, and secure payment systems to enhance business competitiveness and sustainability in the digital economy era.

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