

DIGITAL CONTENT MARKETING AND CUSTOMER LOYALTY IN NIGERIAN UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The evolution of marketing concepts in recent years has made possible the use of various contents that are perceptible, comprehensible, and appreciable by customers. Such avenues are tailored to suit the needs and expectations of the customers in the digital era of content marketing in business. In essence, business concerns could aspire to design a dependable platform using engaging content to attract customers by satisfying and retaining them for future business growth and development. The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of digital content marketing in directing traffic to a particular content owner through an increased level of customer loyalty. The study defines and appraises the concept of digital content marketing and the effect of engaging marketing content on customer loyalty. The respondents for this study were postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria. The study designed and administered some digital Content marketing-related questions that could induce customer loyalty to respondents. The data obtained from the study were analyzed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient technique; the study revealed that the accomplishment of unambiguous and dependable content by business concerns could increase the delight of organizational customers. The analysis of data revealed that there is a link between digital content marketing and customer loyalty in Nigerian Universities. In conclusion, the study appraises the need for effective dissemination of information through digital marketing content to encourage end-users to break away from the grip of traditional marketing platforms and embrace the new concept of digital content marketing in Nigeria.

Keywords: Digital marketing, traditional marketing, online content, media marketing, customer Loyalty.

1. Introduction

The growing trend of technological advancement and the high level of end user sophistication in assuaging their desires have made possible the need for owners of products and services to adapt to current trends in marketing that will satisfy these necessities with a good Return on Investment (ROI). Customer loyalty is one concept that product and service owners must have to earn through; trust, transparency, consistency, and clear-cut evidence that they could be relied upon. In today's complex competitive trend in product service delivery, a more consistent and holistic approach is required in unraveling sustainable digital marketing content that will provide solutions to the desires of the 21st-century customer ahead of business rivals. (Halttunen, Makkonen, Frank, & Tyrväinen, 2010). In spite of the much talk about the digital edge, a great percentage of household and corporate customers are still reluctant of joining the digital bang due to some reserved worries such as; full disclosure of personal details, security of virtual transactions as well as visits to virtual sites that that does not translate into an actual transaction. (Senic, 2013; & Changchit, 2006),

Digital content marketing is one concept that is information-driven, the need for a deeply rooted engagement with customers and exchange of ideas, based on customers' needs becomes a prerequisite for a successful customer to Business (C2B) and Business Business (B2B) relationship. The most crucial need for a successful digital content marketing campaign lies in the need to harness the basic ingredients of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) such as; Customer Satisfaction, Customer Loyalty, Customer Trust, and Customer Retention. In a virtual business platform, the worth, value, and nature of information disseminated to end-users is one major factor that influences traffic to a particular site and this could captivate consumer interest, loyalty, and assurance of given product service. (Sheth, Eshghi, Krishna, 2001; & Raghunandan, & Parimal, 2015).

Business concerns must note that the origin of distinctive and cherished digital marketing content is the quantum of useful information churned out to the consumer, that could increase their awareness of a product service more than competitors, improve content quality as well as increase the rate of the consumer buying decision. One major aspect of digital marketing is to anticipate what customers' requests and expectations are and how to satisfy them. It involves the use of integrated marketing communication platforms to reach a wider range of consumers while publicizing such product services. (Wilson, Zeithaml, Bitner, & Gremier, 2008).

Moreover, end-users will prefer a platform that affords them the freedom to make their choice without undue interference by product service owners. The digital platform allows for an unhindered tour around different product services, and the liberty to compare prices, and confirm the quality of products than

traditional marketing perspective. Jackson, (2011), It is also possible for customers to have an abysmal experience that is, where the customer was unsatisfied, such encounters have a way of turning off the customer from patronizing such product service offering. Leggatt, (2010). It is also worth noting that, in digital marketing transaction, loyalty and retention is built based on how were satisfied previous experiences with a given product service offering. Hence an increased level of satisfaction could encourage the customer to repurchase. (McKee, 2010).

Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, Nigeria is one of the foremost universities established by law in Nigeria in 1962; the university presently has an estimated population of over 48.000 students. The choice of the selected sample (postgraduate students) for this study is due to the fact that over 70percent of postgraduate students in the university are either workers or business owners and have access to smartphones, computers, and other digital marketing-enabled devices. Further investigation by this study also revealed that, at one time or the other, the selected respondents have personally engaged in a successful digital marketing transaction. Hence, the researcher perceives this group as suitable enough to carry out this study. Few studies have been carried out on digital content marketing due to the fact that it is a new concept in product and service delivery. (Chaffey, 2013; Dvoskin, 2013; Chaffey, & Bosomworth, 2015; Lovato, 2016; & Merisavo, 2006). Other studies have emphasized greatly the significant value of the end-user of product services. (Labrecque, Esche, Mathwick, Novak, & Hofacker, 2013; Pulizzi, & Barrett 2009).

From the foregoing, there exist a wide literature gap in examining the interrelationship between digital content marketing and customer loyalty in Nigeria, hence the purpose of this study is to fill this gap, an attempt at the effects of digital marketing communications on customer loyalty: an integrative model and research propositions. Merisavo, 2006). This study will provide the theoretical framework for the need to effectively engage and communicate with end-users on digital marketing content, enhance consistent repurchases by end-users and guide future research in this dynamic area of product service delivery

2. Statement of Problem

The challenge faced by virtual service providers and marketing strategists all over the globe is the ability to build trust among its myriad of enthusiastic customers. The task becomes quite exasperating in developing countries, due to the fundamental issues of poverty, widespread under-development, the low pace of infrastructural development, and lack of directional leadership. The widespread and overwhelming growth of digital content marketing has made the platform available to customers with digital connectivity to access its

product service offering with just a click of a button from the privacy of their homes and offices.

Customers' contentment with traditional marketing platforms poses a great challenge due to its ability to establish trust through one-on-one contact with the product service provider, the major point of discourse with respondents in this study is that it becomes extremely difficult to part with hard-earned resources on a virtual platform in which the customer has no control as to what transpires at the other end. Hence, the need to build trust and engage customers through rich and dependable content is sine-qua-non to the growth of digital marketing in Nigeria.

It is of greater concern to advance at this point the inability of digital marketing strategists to compete effectively with traditional marketing platforms, there has been no clear-cut coherent game plan by digital marketers to out-manuever the traditional marketing proponents, and establish digital marketing as an enduring and amenable platform for customers in developing countries. (Udo-Orji, Anyanwu, & Umeh, 2019). This will involve a confidence-building perspective among its teeming customers and creating special digital marketing content that will address the various niches in Nigeria and target them with the right marketing tools.

Furthermore, the inability of digital content marketing strategists to engage with the customer in Nigeria has mitigated its ability to emerge as a better alternative to traditional marketing. The process of attracting customer loyalty must begin with holistic engagement which begins with the ability of digital product service providers to proffer seasoned propositions, create avenues for interconnectivity between consumers and product service providers, and increase customer level of awareness of available products service offerings. In essence, the process of achieving effective digital content marketing in Nigerian universities is for service providers to provide customers with engaging content that could attract customers interest in adopting and ordering the product/service.

The objective of this study is to examine the role of customer loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigeria. To achieve this, the researcher outlined the following research objectives are to:

- i. evaluate the link between trust and customer loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigerian Universities.
- ii. examine how engaging digital content marketing could affect customer loyalty in Nigerian Universities.

The following research questions are also proposed

- i. What is the influence of trust on customer loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigerian Universities?

- ii. What is the effect of engaging digital content marketing on customer loyalty in Nigerian Universities?

From the foregoing research questions, the following propositions are made

- H₁: There is no significant influence of trust on customer loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigeria Universities.
- H₂: Engaging in digital content marketing has no significant effect on customer loyalty in Nigerian Universities.

3. Literature Review

Digital marketing could be described as the process of proffering products and services offered to end-users with the aid of digital mediums and channels such as the internet, smartphones, and exposition. Financial Times, (2015). Historically, the evolution of digital marketing began in the 1990s and developed into the 2000s. This has revolutionized the process in which business concerns use digital technology in carrying out their daily activities as well as strategic marketing plans for products and services. Nielsen (2016). The level of efficiency and proficiency of digital platforms has reduced the usual traffic on traditional stalls and malls. Morgan, & Hunt, (1994); & Dahlen, (2010), According to Forbes, (2017), digital marketing methods include; i) search engine marketing (SEM), ii) content marketing, iii) influencer marketing, iv) e-commerce marketing, v) social media marketing, vi) e-mail direct marketing.

The characteristics of digital marketing, when compared to traditional marketing as illustrated by Dann, & Dan. (2011) are:

- a) **Reciprocity**; This is the ability of any content to enable end user(s) to decide with a feedback module, on what is appealing to them, with a based on a range of available options. Traditional marketing is a one-way option that lacks iterative capabilities, as displayed by digital marketing
- b) **Personalization**; this process uses personalized user experience to create, implement and control the target market based on their specific needs.
- c) **Accessibility**; It enhances round-the-clock access to end-users even in a remote part of the globe on an online real-time basis, the traditional marketing platform limits business transactions based on operational time, socio-cultural differences, and global limitations.
- d) **Intangibility**; explains the gains such as goodwill.
- e) **Adaptability**; through its widespread channels, network, and medium, digital marketing has the capacity to deliver product service content at any time and at any given point. The distribution channel of traditional marketing has varied limitations.
- f) **Unpredictability**; Digital marketing is adaptable to changing trends in technology. Traditional marketing is not flexible enough to adapt easily to changing technological trends.

Digital marketing is cost effective because information to end users are available online, it personalizes the ability of end users to interact with the system and reduces the cost of research and development. Dann, & Dan. (2011). **Search engine optimization (SEO)** this involves the process of exerting an influence on the digital perception of a web page, known as "earned" results. In essence, the more often a site comes into view on the outcome list; it will increase users, who may eventually become customers of the site. Ortiz-Cordova, & Jansen, (2012), SEO can select various searches such as; pictures, audiovisual search, scholarly search, report search, and industry inclined search; local and international searches. (Labrecque, Esche, Mathwick, Novak, & Hofacker, 2013).

Social media marketing: This involves the use of social media rostrum and sites to advertise product service offerings. Pulizzi, & Barrett, (2009), the swiftness with which social media marketing is used has popularized it amongst users and academia This platform has now become the buzz for companies, customers, advertisers, religious organizations, bloggers, reporters, politicians, and government to reach a wide range of their audience. Senic, (2013).

Email marketing: This is the process of disseminating business information to existing email owners within the group, would-be, and existing customers to publicize, enquire and notify end users or group members. Email marketing is a prolific tool used by product and service providers for effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM). It is always expected that customers' email responses should always be treated with dispatch because; this is a basis for establishing and consolidating the opportunity for a long-lasting relationship with prospects, new and existing customers, and to enhance their loyalty to the firms' product service. (Forootan, 2008).

E-commerce: This is the process of online mechanizing of product services using the internet and other devices. An example of e-commerce transactions is virtual sales by Amazon, Jumia, OLX, and iTunes Store. (Thuy, & Hau, 2010).

Influencer marketing (also influence marketing): This is the process of marketing outstanding personalities in the society instead of product services, Influencer could be politicians, analysts, reporters, artists, and professionals. (Brown, Duncan, & Hayes, 2013).

Content marketing is a marketing process with great emphasis on designing, communicating, and disseminating content to attract a given market within the digital environment. Shim, Eastlick, Lotz, & Warrington, (2001), The core essence of content marketing is to; i) create awareness to end users while creating traffic to product service, ii) enlarge the number of customers iii) create and enlarge virtual sales volume and, iv) improve on product service perception. Content marketing is a way of designing and distributing unrestricted treasured content by engaging and revolutionizing potential customers. The objective of content marketing is to enhance product service owners to design an enduring brand loyalty through the delivery of unrestrained value-based facts to end-

users that will spur the desire to always patronize a particular product service provider. Content marketing though it has some shared features with traditional marketing, is quite different from traditional marketing in the sense that, it is predicated on one-on-one engagement an establishing customer trust and mutual understanding. (Dahlen, 2010; & Nielsen, 2016).

According to Content Marketing institute (2015), content marketing is posited as a critical marketing strategy that aims at engaging and disseminating inestimable, appropriate and dependable content to engage and maintain a well-defined target market. According to Gagnon Chasser, & Wolfe, (2010) & Wienclaw, & Ruth, (2013), posits that content marketing has the capacity to engage end-user through digital advertorials, hence, the key issue is how product and service owners can constructively engage customers through creative advertorials that effectively describe the product service through contents. Various studies; Wienclaw, & Ruth; (2013); Gagnon, (2014); Ružkevičius, & Guseva, (2006); Rowley, (2008); Chasser, Wolfe, (2010) & Creamer, (2012), the highlight in clear terms the value of; content worth, content attributes and content ingredient that must be incorporated in any digital content to motivate end-user into active purchases of product service.

A standard digital content marketing should have the under listed features;

Applicability: The idea of applicability of content marketing connotes that, it is a concept that is real and practicable. Relevant works on digital content marketing define it as a technological platform that ensures the provision of vital information that is useful and applicable to consumers Wienclaw, & Ruth (2013) Abel, 2014; Pulizzi, & Barrett, (2009); & Chasser, & Wolfe, (2010). The desperate necessities are effective, and relevant communication with end-users about product service offerings is the bedrock of successful digital content.

Adaptability: The inability to provide coherence and comprehensible contents could have a adverse effect on organizational projection, profitability and overall growth profile, hence the need to create contents that they can understand , and has direct bearing with end users expectations Bertrand, Karlan, Mullainathan, Shafir & Zinman, (2010), It is the information provided by the content that will advertise to the end-user the skill, competence, expertise, and capability of the content owner to deliver (Berger, & Milkman, 2012).

Dependability; It is important for content owners to provide reliable information through their content by applying relevant models and techniques. Dependability is the process of ensuring that reliable data are collected and analyzed effectively to produce dependable results (Rowley, 2008).

Benefits. One of the relevant aspects of content building is considering the derivable benefits of the content to both the end-user and the product service owner. Limba, & Jurkutè, (2013). Consumers are interested in knowing if a given content has the capacity to solve their specific problems. (Gagnon, 2014).

Uniqueness. The ability to provide a distinctive solution to problems facing end users through peculiar content can increase traffic, increase sales as well as profitability, one specific way of having high patronage is when customers themselves are the ones advertising the product service, due to its added value, (Gagnon, 2014).

Innovativeness. Creativity is the hallmark of outstanding success, when contents have in them uncommon solution driven ideas, it is predicated upon content owners to make use of experts and skilled professionals in any given field, to ensure innovative, valuable, and result-oriented digital content. (Creamer, 2012; & Lovato, 2016,).

Concept of Customer loyalty

The concept of customer loyalty according to [47] describes it as the level of interest expressed by end-user to patronize an individual or organization(s) continuously. Loyalty is used to describe the desire of end-users to recommend an organization's product service to friends and associates. Lovelock, & Wirtz, (2011). Customer loyalty is a major determinant of organizational growth and development. Customer loyalty is consistent self-determination by the customer to patronize a particular product service willingly, based on the customers' perception of the expected derivable benefit from the product service offering. According to Lam, & Burton, (2006), the author makes a clear distinction on the two main types of loyalty which are; i) Behavioral loyalty and ii) Attitudinal loyalty. Behavioral loyalty is a process in which loyalty is evaluated by the rate at which firms' product services are purchased and the willingness of the customer advertise the firms' product service willingly. Attitudinal loyalty is a psychological feeling of an enduring sense of inclination or bonding to a product service.

According to Morgan, & Hunt, (1994), the basic features of customer loyalty are i) Trust and a combination of, ii) Service quality and customer satisfaction;

- i. Customer trust. Customer trust is an indispensable link that binds individual(s) and groups together interacting mutually together for their common interest, Wainwright, (2016). Also, according to Morgan, & Hunt, (1994); Trust is the conviction reposed by one associate on another's dependability and sense of honesty as they mutually relate with one another on an agreed interest. The derivable benefit of trust lies in the loyalty reposed by end-users on the product service offering, based on satisfaction derivable, customers become product service ambassadors, using word-of-mouth (WOM) to advertise the firm's product offering.
- ii. Service quality and customer satisfaction.

The building block for formidable loyal customers is the ability of firms to satisfy those end users (Sheth Eshghi & Krishna, 2001). According to Ehigie, (2006), the author asserted that there is a remarkable affirmative link between

service quality delivery, customer satisfaction and customer loyalty and customer retention. Hence for firms to retain their customers, the quality of service provided must have the capacity, to add positive value to the end user based on the value expectation of the customer.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical structure in which this study is based upon the B.E.S.T.(Behavioral, Essential, Strategic and Targeted). Formulated by Pulizzi, & Barrett, (2009), to design a blueprint for firms to fashion out a transmutation from the traditional marketing process to the formulation of an inestimable and suitable consumer-centric digital content for an earmark target market. In the opinion of the authors, firms must, first of all, lay the strategic framework for customer solution-driven content, before embarking on a digital content marketing crusade on the product offering.

Based on the proposition of; Ettenson Conrado; & Knowles (2013), the product offering is described as the necessity such product service is able to accomplish, basically not based on their attributes, purpose, or their technological applicability and ensuring the delivery of vital facts to end-users based on the actual prerequisite on the digital marketing process. The B.E.S.T formula represents the under listed;

1. **Behavioral:** This represents the aggregation of the broad objective of why a firm communicates with its customers, and to ensure that such intentions are accomplished.
2. **Essential:** This is the ability of firms to focus on the basic necessities of end users that have direct bearing with their daily activities.
3. **Strategic:** The total digital content marketing campaign endeavor should be an essential component of the comprehensive effort must be an integral part of the overall organizational game plan.
4. **Targeted:** Digital marketing content should be specifically focused on a target market for its importance to be well appreciated by end-users.

In retrospect, [38] posited the need for a digital content expert to avoid the pitfalls of traditional marketing by enquiring deeper into where their potential or existing customers spend their time, socialize, and who they keep company with, this will help in elucidating the exact content assortment (mix,) that will fit exactly into the customers need.

The B.E.S.T framework goes hand-in-hand with the S.A.V.E (Solution, Accessibility, Value, and Education). A concept introduced by Ettenson, Conrado; & Knowles, (2013), introduced a paradigm shift by replacing digital content with the 4P's of the marketing model.

Fig1: Step –by-Step Guide to Content Marketing

Fig. 1 is a framework that shows step-by-step process in adopting content marketing strategy. This involves three basic steps of; (i) Create; by attracting visitors through the creation of: blog post, web content and articles. (ii) Promote; by gathering information through; e-newsletters, e-books, webinars and, (iii) Convert; this is the most critical stage in this strategic framework which involves; more interactions through phone, consultations and adequate assessment of marketing efforts. In digital content marketing, the most effective tool for educating the customer is the '**VIRALITY**' of such content; viral digital content is most effective because, consumers prefer them Dwoskin, (2013). Viral content is a replacement for traditional word-of-mouth (W.O.M) advertising. According to; Berger, & Milkman, (2012), a viral content must be i) Surprising, ii) Interesting (captivating content) iii) Positive (addressing key marketing niches and targets), iv) Intense (providing captivating information in the content), iv) Positive (eliciting sentiment and emotions) and, v) Actionable (inducing instant action from prospects and existing customer).

4. Methods

The cross-sectional research design method was adopted for the study. The selected respondent for the study were postgraduate students of Ahmadu Bello University, Kongo Campus, Zaria, Kaduna, Nigeria. The population of the study was 943 students. A sample of 596 was used for the study based (Yamene, 1967) on a larger-sized population. The instrument used for data collection was structured questionnaires, using a stratified random sampling technique as well as personal interviews. According to Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, (2009). In order to enhance the effective collection and processing of data, a combination of statistical techniques is allowable. The interview conducted by the researcher was meant to collect detailed information that the structured questionnaire could not cover on the detailed experience of respondents on the level of customer loyalty to digital content marketing in Nigeria.

5. Data Presentation, Analysis and Interpretation

The data collection instruments were given to marketing professionals for content validity purpose. Data collected from the respondents were analyzed using correlations techniques. The total number of questionnaire administered were 596 out of which; questionnaire returned to the researcher that were useful in carrying out the study represented 548(92.00%). Based on the total number of questionnaire distributed for the study, rejected questionnaires not returned by the respondents represented 30(5.00%), and questionnaires not returned at all by respondents represented 18(3.00%). The analysis of data was tested using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient technique on the analyses of the two hypotheses of the study by the null hypotheses.

Hypothesis One;

There is no significant influence of trust on customer loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigeria Universities.

Correlations

		Customer Loyalty	Trust
Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.926
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	548	548
Trust	Pearson Correlation	.926	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	548	548

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the correlations coefficient is .928, this proves that there is a positive relationship between trust and Customer Loyalty on digital content marketing in Nigerian Universities, that is, the level of trust exhibited by digital content marketing product service is synonymous with the level of customer loyalty. The total sample under consideration is 548, the strength of the interrelationship (r) between trust and customer loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigerian Universities is .928. Therefore, this shows that there is a correlation between the two variables. The outcome the is expressed as; [$r=.928, n=548, p<.0005$].

Hypothesis Two;

Engaging in digital content marketing has no significant effect on customer loyalty in Nigerian Universities

Correlations

		Customer Loyalty	Engaging Content
Customer Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.881
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	548	548
Engaging Content	Pearson Correlation	.881	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	548	548

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The result of the correlations coefficient is .881, this proves that there is a positive relationship between non-engaging content and Customer Loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigerian Universities, that is, the higher the level of engaging content, the higher the level of customer loyalty. The total sample under consideration is 548, and the strength of the interrelationship (r) between engaging content and Customer loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigerian Universities is .881. Therefore, this shows that there is a correlation between the two variables. The outcome the is expressed as follows; [$r=.881, n=548, p<.0005$]. The interview session was to specifically cover areas in which the structured questionnaire could not effectively cover.

6. Discussion

The objective of this study is to access the influence of digital marketing content on customer satisfaction in Nigerian Universities. The study outcome obtained through Pearson Correlation Coefficient revealed that there is link between trust and customer loyalty in digital content marketing and also effective engagement of customers could accelerate customer loyalty on digital marketing content in Nigeria. Hence, digital content marketing could enhance effective Customer Relationship Management (CRM) and improved the delivery process for digital content marketing of product-service offerings.

D) Based on the outcome of the Analysis: The study findings revealed in hypothesis one that trust has a significant positive effect on customer loyalty in Nigerian Universities as listed thus; [$r=.928, n=548, p<.0005$]. Hence, engaging customers on the bases of loyalty based on superior content marketing, the perceived product experience must convey some convincing quality of trust and dependability based on confidence in the product (brand) consumed. Therefore, H_1 is not accepted based on the statistical significance influence of trust on customer loyalty in digital content marketing in Nigeria Universities. The outcome of the regression analysis of a positive correlation of .928 between trust and customer loyalty affirms that a well-implemented content marketing strategy could

increase loyalty to product offering amongst graduate student in the Nigerian University system.

- II)** Also, the outcome of hypotheses two also showed that engaging content has a significant relationship between customer loyalty and digital content marketing in Nigeria. The expression is listed as follows; [$r=.881$, $n=548$, $p<.0005$]. Hence, appealing to customers on the bases of loyalty based on engaging content, therefore, H_2 is not accepted based on the statistical significance influence of engaging digital content on customer loyalty in Nigeria Universities. The outcome of the regression analysis of a positive correlation of .881 between engaging content and customer loyalty affirms that a well-implemented content marketing strategy through Word of Mouth (WOM) could increase loyalty to product offerings amongst graduate students in the Nigerian University system. The study implication based on the above finding affirms that trust and engaging content is sine-qua-non to customer loyalty to digital content marketing in Nigeria.

7. Implications of the Study

- a) *Theoretically:*** The B.E.S.T. (Behavioral, Essential, Strategic, and Targeted) theory is designed as a blueprint for firms to fashion out a transmutation from the traditional marketing process to the formulation of an inestimable and suitable consumer-centric digital content for an earmark target market. Firms must first of all, lay the strategic framework for a customer solution driven content, before embarking on a digital content marketing crusade on product offering through the process of creating content, promoting such contents and converting it to profitable sales that will impact profitably on the service provider. [33]. A similar study conducted in Nigeria was in the banking sector by Udo-Orji, Anyanwu, & Umeh, (2019), the study adopted the Diffusion of innovation theory by Everett Rogers in 1962. The adoption of the B.E.S.T theory in this study is to augment and fill the gap in content marketing theoretical literature in the Nigerian University digital content marketing space.
- b) *Empirically:*** As at the time of this study, there was no existing empirical study conducted in this field of marketing within the Nigerian university space, hence, most of the studies conducted were from other countries and non was also done to assess the effect of digital content marketing within the university system. [1,3,4,10,20,26,33,35,38 & 45] This study became quite necessary to fill the existing gap in literature nationally and internationally.

8. Conclusion

The outcome of the study drawn from the discussion of findings indicates a positive relationship between Customer trust and effective digital customer engagement as a recipe for customer loyalty in the marketing digital content

platform in Nigerian. The success of digital content marketing being a new window in product service offering is premised on the ability of digital content owners to create captivating and purchase action eliciting content; this could induce customers to patronize such product service offered by content owners. Digital content marketing is a new platform in a product service offering that has to be viral in nature to educate and attract massive traffic that will patronize such product service. Effective digital content has the capacity to proffer solutions to customers, easily access them at the chosen location, provide value that is synonymous with product-service offering and ensure proper enlightenment and education of prospects and existing customers on the product service offering.

The outcome of the test of hypotheses affirmed a positive relationship between trust and customer loyalty in hypothesis 1 and also a positive relationship between engagement content and customer loyalty in hypothesis 2, a clear correlation between the two hypotheses tested with digital content marketing. Based on the foregoing, we may conclude that the content marketing strategies embarked upon by service providers to graduate students in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria had a significant effect on the customer; The students now became brand ambassadors and loyalists to this product/service by using Word of Mouth (WOM) advertising to woo other customers to this service product. This, in turn, had a significant return on investment to the service providers of this 21st century state-of-the-art services.

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