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Article

The Role of Green Consumer Brand Engagement in Shaping Brand Loyalty Through Digital Marketing in the Hotel Industry

Orhan Uludag ^{1,*}, Berislav Andrić ² and David Omoruyi ³

¹ The Hospitality Management and Tourism School, Central Asian University, Tashkent 111221, Uzbekistan

² Faculty of Tourism and Rural Development Pozega, Josip Juraj Strossmayer University Osijek, 31000 Osijek, Croatia; bandric@ftrr.hr

³ School of Tourism and Hotel Management, Cyprus International University, Nicosia 99258, Turkey; sosaruyi@gmail.com

* Correspondence: o.uludag@centralasian.uz

Abstract: This study examines how digital marketing characteristics—namely interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility—affect green consumer brand engagement and loyalty in Nigeria’s five-star hotel industry. This study advances relationship marketing and social exchange theory by demonstrating how interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility in digital marketing foster green consumer brand engagement, ultimately boosting brand loyalty. The analysis, based on responses from 304 hotel guests, reveals a strong positive relationship between each digital marketing element and green consumer brand engagement, which subsequently enhances brand loyalty. Our findings demonstrate that green consumer brand engagement serves as a mediator between digital marketing characteristics and brand loyalty, emphasizing that engagement with environmental values plays a crucial role in fostering loyalty in the luxury hotel sector. These insights inform digital marketing strategies aimed at maximizing sustainable consumer engagement, providing a foundation for loyalty-driven practices within hospitality.

Keywords: green consumer brand engagement; digital marketing; hotel industry; loyalty; Nigeria



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1. Introduction

Engagement with environmentally-conscious consumers is essential, since it links a brand’s sustainability initiatives with their beliefs, cultivating stronger emotional connections and trust. This engagement enhances brand loyalty, as customers are more inclined to remain faithful to brands that embody their environmental values and dedication to sustainability. In today’s digital age, hospitality and tourism (H&T) organizations are acutely aware of the expansive reach of the internet, prompting a concerted effort to showcase their goods and services through online avenues such as websites, blogs, and diverse social media platforms [1]. Acknowledging the pivotal role of a robust marketing strategy, as underscored by Liu and Chou [2], becomes imperative in fostering brand success. The transition toward digital marketing as a cornerstone strategy for businesses, including those in the H&T sector, has gained significant traction [3].

Digital marketing, encompassing a multifaceted range of advertising forms that extend beyond web-based promotions to include mobile phones, social media, website advertisements, search engine marketing, and more, has emerged as a critical avenue for engaging potential customers [4]. Previous studies have thoroughly examined the influence of digital marketing on cultivating consumer loyalty in Western markets, frequently concentrating on established luxury companies [5,6]. Nevertheless, limited research has investigated the effects of digital marketing on green consumer brand engagement and loyalty in the luxury hospitality industry of emerging economies, where environmental consciousness and digital interaction are expanding swiftly yet encounter distinct cultural, economic, and technological obstacles [7]. Nigeria, the largest economy in Africa, presents a unique

environment characterized by its expanding luxury tourist sector and a rising desire for sustainable brands among a changing consumer demographic. This study examines how Nigerian five-star hotels can utilize digital marketing to enhance green consumer brand engagement and loyalty, particularly in light of the significant impact of social connections and community values on consumer behavior in collectivist cultures.

Marketers are increasingly integrating brands seamlessly into consumers' lives, recognizing the growing role of consumers in co-creating value [8]. The pivotal role of technology in enhancing service quality within business operations is evident [9]. The evolution of e-marketing, with its origins dating back to innovations like the telegraph in the 19th century [10], has accelerated with the rise of digital media, particularly social media platforms such as Instagram, which have revolutionized brand messaging and interaction [11]. The advantages of digital marketing, including increased interactivity, enhanced brand presence, and greater credibility compared to traditional marketing channels [5], have expanded businesses' reach while simultaneously reducing operational costs, particularly through social media platforms [12]. This shift has had a significant impact on the hotel industry, where brands are increasingly leveraging social media to gain a competitive advantage and integrate technology into their operations [13]. Brands that co-create value with consumers often focus on sustainable practices and ethical values, as these align with consumer expectations for responsible corporate behavior. The ideas from the original text regarding digital marketing and customer involvement in the hospitality sector can be analyzed via the perspectives of corporate social responsibility and sustainability. By acknowledging the significance of customers, utilizing technology, and articulating their sustainable practices, organizations can evolve to satisfy market needs while positively impacting society and the environment. This comprehensive strategy can ultimately enhance brand loyalty and competitive placement in the market. However, despite the growing interest in digital marketing technologies and the importance of luxury brand loyalty, there remains a notable research gap in understanding how the hospitality and tourism (H&T) sector, particularly luxury hotels, utilize social media platforms such as Instagram to foster customer engagement and loyalty [6,14]. This gap is particularly evident in the context of developing markets like Nigeria. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by examining the mediating role of customer engagement between digital marketing and brand loyalty within the hotel industry, with a specific focus on five-star hotels.

Significance of the Study

In the context of an increasingly competitive business environment, digital marketing has become a pivotal tool for fostering customer loyalty [15]. This study examines the impact of digital marketing technologies—specifically interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility—on green consumer engagement and brand loyalty within Nigeria's five-star hotel industry. The research seeks to provide valuable insights for firms, highlighting how effective digital marketing strategies can lead to enhanced revenue growth through improved customer loyalty. The study provides practical insights for hospitality managers in Nigeria and comparable economies, indicating that environmentally friendly engagement tactics integrated with digital marketing can improve client loyalty. The findings emphasize the necessity of creating engaging, authentic digital material that is available on numerous platforms to engage environmentally concerned consumers. This study offers managers a framework for incorporating green marketing into digital strategies to enhance customer loyalty and gain a competitive edge, reflecting the growing importance of sustainability among Nigerian and international customers.

By building on previous studies that explored the role of social media and community functions in brand engagement and loyalty, this study aims to empirically investigate the experiential value of green consumer brand engagement. Anchored in relationship marketing and social exchange theory (SET), the research emphasizes the central role of consumers in value co-creation and the importance of customer relationships in shaping brand loyalty. Green consumer interaction resonates with consumers' personal values,

which strengthens brand trust and enhances favorable perceptions of the brand [16]. When consumers feel that their environmental concerns are acknowledged and endorsed by a brand, they are more likely to support the brand and stay loyal, even in competitive environments. As a result, engaging with green consumer brands becomes a key driver in building and maintaining brand loyalty. Additionally, it addresses the call for a deeper examination of the relationship between digital marketing and brand loyalty, providing practical insights for managers to optimize digital marketing activities [17]. Furthermore, this study expands upon relationship marketing theory and social exchange theory to propose a framework in which digital marketing attributes—interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility—are believed to favorably influence green customer engagement, thus fostering brand loyalty. This study enhances the theoretical comprehension of digital marketing’s influence on brand loyalty by examining green customer involvement as a mediating factor. The mediating role has garnered minimal focus in hospitality, especially in developing areas where customer values may profoundly influence brand loyalty [18]. This research addresses a significant gap in the literature by examining the role of digital marketing qualities in Nigeria’s culturally distinct context, thereby enhancing the knowledge of consumer-brand relationships in emerging nations.

Therefore, this study aims to fill the literature gap by:

- a. Identifying the relationship between digital marketing attributes (interactivity, ubiquity, credibility) and green consumer brand engagement.
- b. Examining how green consumer brand engagement mediates the impact of digital marketing on brand loyalty within Nigeria’s luxury hotel industry.
- c. Providing insights into how these findings can be used to strengthen consumer loyalty in emerging markets through targeted digital marketing.

By focusing on this understudied context, the research bridges practical insights with theoretical advances, contributing to a broader understanding of how digital marketing can drive sustainable consumer engagement and loyalty in a culturally diverse (see Figure 1), developing market.

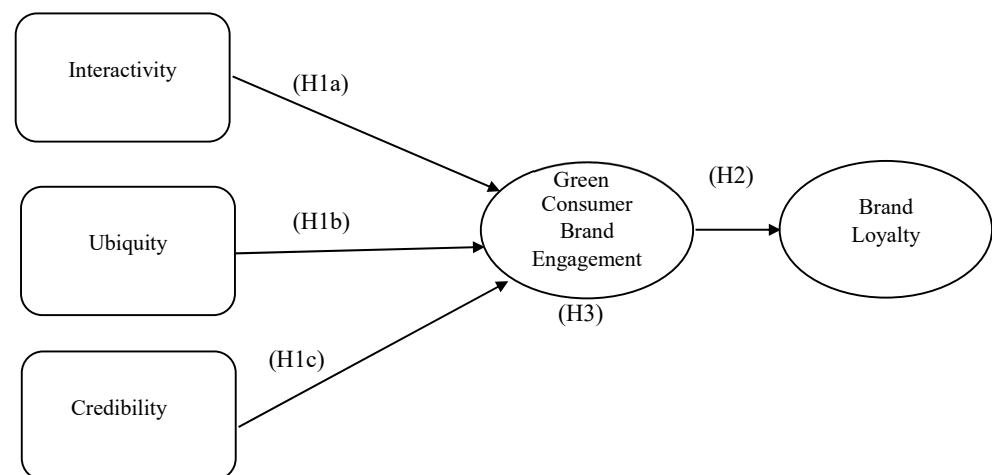


Figure 1. Research model.

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1. Digital Marketing and Green Consumer Brand Engagement

The term “digital marketing” has undergone a transformative evolution, evolving from its initial description as the promotion of goods and services through digital avenues to a comprehensive concept encompassing the utilization of digital technologies to attract customers, establish customer preferences, endorse brands, retain clientele, and bolster sales [19]. On the other hand, consumer engagement pertains to the active and willing allocation of resources by consumers in their contacts with a brand that extends beyond

mere purchases [18]. Digital marketing serves as the catalyst for initiating, fostering, and nurturing consumer engagement [20]. Through various online channels like social media, websites, mobile apps, and email campaigns, digital marketing endeavors to establish connections, create compelling content, and offer interactive experiences tailored to the preferences of the target audience [21].

Consumer engagement, in turn, signifies the depth of interaction, involvement, and relationships consumers develop with a brand through these digital channels [22]. Green customer engagement denotes the extent of involvement and relationship that environmentally conscious consumers cultivate with a business via eco-friendly digital platforms and sustainability-oriented programs. The effectiveness of digital marketing strategies is often measured by the level of engagement they generate among consumers [23]. Engaged consumers actively participate in discussions, share content, offer feedback, and ultimately become brand advocates, contributing significantly to brand loyalty and long-term success [24].

Social Exchange Theory (SET) depicts the reciprocal relationship between digital marketing and consumer engagement. Brands employ various digital strategies to provide value to consumers, who, in turn, reciprocate by engaging with the brand through feedback, interactions, and purchases [25]. This theory emphasizes that as brands consistently offer value, trust builds, fostering ongoing engagement as consumers feel inclined to reciprocate the perceived benefits [24]. In the context of green consumer brand engagement, consumers expect brands to reciprocate their commitment to environmental values through tangible efforts such as sustainability initiatives and transparent green practices. When brands align their digital marketing efforts with these values, they reinforce a sense of mutual benefit, which enhances consumer trust and loyalty [26]. Thus, this theory suggests that environmentally conscious consumers are more likely to engage with and stay loyal to brands that offer not only material benefits but also align with their ethical and ecological concerns. Relationship Marketing Theory enhances this comprehension by highlighting the significance of enduring brand-consumer connections rather than isolated transactions. The theory asserts that brand loyalty arises not merely from repeated purchases but is established through emotional connections, trust, and sustained commitment [27]. For environmentally conscious consumers, loyalty transcends the product to include the brand's principles and commitment to sustainable activities. Interactive, pervasive, and trustworthy digital marketing tactics enable organizations to nurture connections by consistently affirming their dedication to environmental sustainability, thus promoting alignment and loyalty. Relationship Marketing Theory posits that firms fostering significant, value-driven connections with consumers achieve greater success in cultivating long-term loyalty, especially among environmentally aware consumers. In addition, comprehending the psychological drivers influencing green consumer brand engagement is essential for developing effective digital marketing tactics. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) is pertinent in this context, as it emphasizes the significance of intrinsic motivation in consumer behavior. Eco-conscious consumers frequently interact with brands not for immediate benefits but to satisfy intrinsic reasons, including alignment with personal values, the pursuit of purpose, and contributions to collective welfare [28]. A brand that openly endorses environmental initiatives and prioritizes sustainability aligns with consumers' inherent motives, enhancing engagement and cultivating an emotional connection. By conveying green initiatives via digital platforms, brands can engage these motives, prompting consumers to feel personally committed to the brand's success. In line with the facts mentioned above, Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) also provides insight into the behavioral mechanisms at play. TPB posits that behavior is shaped by attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioral control. Green consumers are influenced by a favorable attitude toward environmental preservation and by the social norms within their communities that encourage sustainable behaviors. In light of the aforementioned underpinnings, the current study posits that:

H1a. *Interactivity has a positive impact on green consumer brand engagement.*

H1b. *Ubiquity has a positive impact on green consumer brand engagement.*

H1c. *Credibility has a positive impact on green consumer brand engagement.*

2.2. Green Consumer Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty

The nexus between consumer engagement and brand loyalty in the realm of online retail has drawn considerable attention, reflecting a pivotal interrelationship [14]. Ajzen's theory of planned behavior posits that consumer involvement profoundly influences brand loyalty within the hotel industry, shaping intentions for online purchasing [29]. Conversely, apprehensions among consumers regarding the potential exploitation by online retailers inhibit trust and deter engagement, consequently impeding online purchasing behaviors [30]. Customers exhibit a greater propensity for online transactions when anticipating engaging experiences that yield utilitarian and affective benefits, underscoring trust's pivotal role as a mediator in nurturing and sustaining brand loyalty. According to the tenets of relationship marketing, loyalty manifests through factors encompassing customer satisfaction, trust, and commitment [31]. The fulfillment and surpassing of consumer needs and expectations foster greater customer investment and loyalty [32]. Moreover, consumers who exhibit environmentally conscious behaviors tend to develop stronger bonds and demonstrate greater loyalty to the organizations with which they engage. Heightened consumer engagement correlates positively with brand dedication, signifying a deeper commitment arising from the relational significance attributed by engaged consumers [33,34]. When people are actively involved, they are more likely to stay dedicated to the brand. With high levels of consumer engagement, businesses can rest certain that their customers are committed to them because of the importance they place on the relationship [35]. Moreover, Norm Activation Theory (NAT) elucidates the moral or normative motivations influencing environmentally conscious consumer behavior [36]. NAT posits that individuals' awareness of consequences (AC) and sense of personal responsibility (AR) stimulate pro-environmental behavior. For environmentally conscious consumers, digital marketing that informs them about ecological concerns or emphasizes the brand's beneficial influence on sustainability can enhance awareness and stimulate ethical standards that promote participation. By positioning sustainable activities as a collective obligation, brands may resonate with consumers' ethical convictions, hence increasing the likelihood of engagement and loyalty.

Therefore, it is hypothesized that:

H2. *Green consumer brand engagement has a positive impact on brand loyalty.*

Previous research has commonly positioned consumer engagement (CE) as either a precursor or an outcome [26]. Some noteworthy studies have delved into CE's role as a mediator. For instance, Vivek et al. [37] identified customer engagement as a mediating factor between customer participation, involvement, and subsequent brand loyalty. Similarly, M Abou-Shouk and Soliman [38] found the mediating role of CE in the relationship between gamification adoption intention and brand awareness as well as loyalty. In another study, Hollebeek, Glynn, and Brodie [21] investigated CE's mediating function, revealing its mediation between brand involvement and self-brand connection as well as brand usage intent within social media domains. However, there is a gap in exploring CE's potential as a mediator in the relationship between digital marketing facets (specifically, interactivity, ubiquity, credibility) and brand loyalty. This specific mediation has yet to be thoroughly examined in prior research. Social Exchange Theory (SET) posits that relationships involve an exchange of resources where parties benefit mutually [39]. In the context of digital marketing, consumers engage with brands, providing their attention, time, and feedback and expecting certain benefits in return. Interactivity in digital marketing allows consumers to actively participate, fostering a sense of involvement and reciprocity between the brand and consumers. Ubiquitous digital marketing extends brand presence, offering consumers continuous interactions, and enhancing relationship quality. Moreover, credibility in digital

marketing builds trust, facilitating a positive exchange environment. SET suggests that this exchange of benefits leads to greater consumer engagement [24]. Engaged consumers are more invested in the relationship with the brand, leading to enhanced loyalty. They commit themselves to the brand due to the perceived value received [25].

The role of digital marketing in consumer engagement has been thoroughly examined in industrialized nations, especially in North America and Europe, where digital infrastructure is sophisticated and environmental awareness is widespread [5]. This corpus of research, however, frequently presupposes that customers uniformly appreciate and participate in green activities, overlooking the fact that in underdeveloped economies, consumers may prioritize economic factors above environmental issues. This error prompts enquiries regarding the applicability of these findings to emerging economies, where cultural, economic, and technical issues profoundly affect consumer behavior. This study concentrates on Nigeria to overcome these limitations and evaluate the relevance of digital marketing-driven green engagement techniques in a culturally unique and economically diverse context. Moreover, whereas studies such as Chu et al. [6] underscore the efficacy of digital marketing in fostering brand loyalty, they frequently neglect to investigate certain mechanisms—such as interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility—that enhance green consumer brand engagement. Current literature often regards digital marketing as a singular entity, neglecting to explore the unique characteristics that may variably impact green consumer loyalty. This study critically evaluates the distinct influence of each quality on green customer engagement and brand loyalty, offering a more detailed comprehension of digital marketing's significance.

Based on the afore stated discussion we posit following hypotheses:

H3a. *Green consumer brand engagement has a mediating effect in the relationship between interactivity and brand loyalty.*

H3b. *Green consumer brand engagement has a mediating effect in the relationship between ubiquity and brand loyalty.*

H3c. *Green consumer brand engagement has a mediating effect in the relationship between credibility and brand loyalty.*

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and Procedure

The research employed a convenience sampling method, which involves selecting the first available primary data source for testing without the need for specific objective criteria [40]. This study focusses on five-star hotel visitors, a distinct consumer category whose behaviors and tastes may markedly differ from those of the general public. Consequently, sourcing participants directly from this sector yielded a pertinent sample to meet the study enquiries, obtaining insights that are contextually particular to luxury hospitality. To determine the appropriate sample size, Fisher's sampling formula was used. The target population for this study consisted of guests staying at five-star hotels in Lagos, Nigeria. According to Travel Guide, more than ten thousand visitors annually stay at five-star hotels in Nigeria. Based on this, a minimum sample size of 384 was deemed appropriate. Data collection consisted of the distribution of online questionnaires via the social media site Instagram to luxury hotel brands and their followers. To maximize participation, users were messaged on Instagram, accommodating the fact that the research concerned the green marketing and the organization of users' participation in such a study. Such a strategy enabled the effective collection of responses from a digitally well-connected and eco-friendly population. A total of 384 questionnaires were distributed to guests of five-star hotel brands, and data were collected via an online survey using Google Forms. At the conclusion of data collection, 304 usable questionnaires were returned, resulting in a response rate of 79%.

The questionnaire comprised a series of research questions adapted from previous studies, covering demographic information as well as measures of digital marketing, green consumer brand engagement, and brand loyalty. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” This scale allowed for a structured assessment of participants’ perceptions and attitudes toward the variables under investigation.

3.2. Measures and Common Method Bias: Procedural Remedies

While self-report measures are commonly used in social science research due to their practicality and ability to capture subjective experiences, they are also susceptible to several biases, such as social desirability bias and common method bias, which can affect the validity of the findings [41]. To mitigate potential common method bias, we implemented several methodological precautions. First, the introductory section of each survey explicitly assured respondents about the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses, aiming to safeguard the privacy of collected data. Second, the instructions emphasized that there were no definitive right or wrong answers to the survey items, encouraging unbiased responses. Lastly, it was explicitly stated that participation in the study was voluntary, ensuring participants felt at ease and were not obligated to partake. These measures align with the guidelines proposed by Podsakoff et al. [41] regarding survey development and data collection procedures.

Regarding the measurement of digital marketing components, the current study utilized validated scales. Specifically, for assessing interactivity, a set of five items was employed, drawing from previous work by the author. Cronbach alpha score of interactivity was 0.91. Ubiquity was measured using a 10-item scale with a Cronbach alpha score of 0.92, adapted from Okazaki and Mendez [42]. The assessment of credibility employed a four-item scale based on Forbes’ [43] research. For this variable, the Cronbach alpha score was 0.88. To gauge green customer engagement, an eight-item scale derived from Rather and Sharma [24] was employed. The dimensions of consumer engagement were operationalized, with the items carefully formulated [44] to reflect and assess perceptions associated with green consumer brand engagement. The Cronbach alpha for this variable was 0.91. Lastly, the study has utilized a seven-item scale obtained from Dehghan and Shahin’s [45] research to measure brand loyalty with a Cronbach alpha score of 0.89. All coefficient alphas met the commonly accepted cut-off level of 0.70 [46]. Furthermore, the study incorporated income and educational level into the bivariate correlation analyses. The findings indicated no significant relationships between income, educational level, and the study constructs. Additionally, these demographic variables were included in Hierarchical Regression Analyses to examine potential confounding effects. The results demonstrated that income ($\beta = 0.033$) and educational level ($\beta = -0.022$) had no significant impact on brand loyalty in model 4. This suggests that demographic variables do not exert a confounding influence. A similar approach has been observed in prior research [47].

A total of 304 surveys were successfully collected for this study, and the demographic characteristics of the sample are presented in Table 1. The table outlines the key demographic features of the participants. Notably, a larger proportion of the respondents were male, with 190 male participants accounting for 62.5% of the sample, while 114 female participants made up 37.5%. In terms of age distribution, a significant portion of the respondents fell within the 36–45 age group, representing 46.7% of the total. Educational background data indicate that the majority of participants held a Bachelor’s degree (56.6%). Furthermore, most respondents reported an annual income of less than USD 20,000, with 251 participants (82.6%) falling into this income bracket.

Table 1. Demographic profiles of the participants.

Factors		Frequency	Percent
Gender	Male	190	62.5
	Female	114	37.5
Age	18–25	10	3.3
	26–35	56	18.4
	36–45	142	46.7
	46–55	63	20.7
	56–65	28	9.2
	66 and above	5	1.7
Education	Diploma	65	21.4
	Bachelors	172	56.6
	Masters	54	17.7
	Others	13	4.3
Annual Income	<20,000 USD	251	82.6
	20k USD–100k USD	42	13.8
	100k and above	11	3.6
Purpose of Visit	Rest and Relaxation	120	39.5
	Visiting relatives and friends	11	3.6
	Business reason	110	36.2
	Conference and seminars	32	10.5
	Fun	10	3.3
	Sport	-	-
	Religion	21	6.9

3.3. Data Analysis

The research primarily employed a quantitative approach to data collection. Participant responses were systematically input into SPSS 22.0 (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences), a widely used software for statistical analysis in social science research, and multiple analyses were conducted to test the hypothesized relationships. To examine the proposed connections between the study variables, a correlation analysis was performed to assess the strength of their associations. Hierarchical Regression Modeling was used to test the direct effects, while the Sobel Test was employed to evaluate mediation effects between constructs. SPSS, being one of the most comprehensive and widely accessible statistical tools for social scientists, enabled the following analyses: confirmatory factor analysis to assess the validity of the measurement model, reliability analysis to evaluate the consistency of the scales used, correlation analysis to explore relationships among variables, and regression analysis to determine the predictive relationships.

4. Findings

4.1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis

The confirmatory factor analysis using the factor loading, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) is shown in Table 2:

The measurement model was assessed by a CFA performed in Amos 21 with the maximum likelihood estimator. Since the composite reliability coefficients for all the scales were higher than 0.7 (varying from 0.85 to 0.92), we may conclude that they are consistent with one another internally. The average variance extracted values for each concept were larger than 0.50, ranging from 0.52 to 0.69, demonstrating convergent validity [48]. One item from the interactivity construct was eliminated due to a low factor loading. All the remaining factor loadings were statistically significant, and all were more than 0.50 on the standard score [49].

Table 2. Confirmatory factor analysis results.

Items	Factor Loading	CR	AVE
INT1	0.868		
INT2	0.938		
INT3	0.816	0.93	0.69
INT4	0.801		
UBT1	0.572		
UBT2	0.924		
UBT3	0.939		
UBT4	0.882		
UBT5	0.842		
UBT6	0.569	0.75	0.52
UBT7	0.673		
UBT8	0.703		
UBT9	0.562		
UBT10	0.591		
CBT1	0.812		
CBT2	0.913		
CBT3	0.873	0.83	0.63
CBT4	0.500		
CBE1	0.524		
CBE2	0.566		
CBE3	0.760		
CBE4	0.841		
CBE5	0.784	0.76	0.62
CBE6	0.796		
CBE7	0.631		
CBE8	0.706		
BL1	0.577		
BL2	0.934		
BL3	0.945		
BL4	0.878	0.87	0.55
BL5	0.502		
BL6	0.500		
BL7	0.597		

Notes: INT = Interactivity, UBT = Ubiquity, CBT = Credibility, CBE = Green Consumer Brand Engagement, BL = Brand Loyalty.

4.2. Correlation Analysis

This research examined the correlation between all five variables as shown in Table 3. The correlation table is used to ascertain the relationship between constructs using the Pearson correlation value and significance level.

Table 3. Correlation coefficients among study variables.

	INT	UBT	CBT	CBE	BL
INT	1				
UBT	0.720 **	1			
CBT	0.503 **	0.628 **	1		
CBE	0.749 **	0.859 **	0.638 **	1	
BL	0.655 **	0.821 **	0.798 **	0.823 **	1

Notes: INT = Interactivity, UBT = Ubiquity, CBT = Credibility, CBE = Green Consumer Brand Engagement, BL = Brand Loyalty, ** $p < 0.01$.

From the table above, it can be deduced that INT ($r = 0.749$ ** $p < 0.05$), UBT ($r = 0.859$ **, $p < 0.05$), and CBT ($r = 0.638$ ** all have a positive and significant correlation with CBE. Furthermore, CBE ($r = 0.823$ ** $p < 0.05$) has a positive and significant correlation with BL.

4.3. Hierarchical Regression Modeling

This section describes path estimates and the relationships among constructs using hierarchical regression modeling (HRM). Table 4 displays the results of the regression analysis, examining how each digital marketing attribute (interactivity, ubiquity, credibility) and green consumer brand engagement predicts brand loyalty. The beta coefficients (β) represent the strength and direction of the relationship between each predictor and green consumer engagement, while the t-values and *p*-values provide information on the statistical significance of each relationship.

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis.

		t	Sig.
(Model 1)			
INT	0.655	15.061	0.000
(Model 2)			
INT	0.131	2.806	0.000
UBT	0.727	15.530	0.000
(Model 3)			
INT	0.083	2.282	0.000
UBT	0.473	11.668	0.000
CBT	0.459	14.133	0.000
(Model 4)			
INT	0.100	0.281	0.000
UBT	0.306	6.226	0.000
CBT	0.419	13.144	0.000
CBE	0.284	5.477	0.000

Notes: INT = Interactivity, UBT = Ubiquity, CBT = Credibility, CBE = Green Consumer Brand Engagement, BL = Brand Loyalty.

The table above illustrates that brand loyalty (BL) is explained by the variables INT, UBT, CBT, and CBE. The strength of the relationship between these variables is further supported by the closeness of the R-squared value, which confirms the model's explanatory power regarding the relationships between INT, UBT, CBT, and CBE. Additionally, the positive R-squared change, with a significance level of less than 0.05, provides further evidence of a statistically significant relationship between these variables.

Based on the standardized beta coefficients for INT (0.83), UBT (0.473), and CBT (0.459) as presented in Table 5, the model indicates that a one-unit increase in the impacts of INT, UBT, and CBT on green consumer brand engagement (CBE) results in a corresponding increase in the standardized coefficients. This supports the validity of Hypotheses 1a, 1b, and 1c, demonstrating that digital marketing exerts a positive and significant influence on green consumer brand engagement. Similarly, with a standardized beta coefficient for CBE of 0.234, the model predicts that a one-unit increase in CBE leads to a proportional increase in brand loyalty (BL). Consequently, Hypothesis 2 is confirmed, indicating that green consumer brand engagement positively and significantly impacts brand loyalty.

Table 5. Mediation Analysis.

Hypothesis	Path	Sobel Test	<i>p</i> -Value
H3a	INT-CBE-BL	15.486	0.000
H3b	UBT-CBE-BL	19.045	0.000
H3c	CBT-CBE-BL	12.497	0.000

Notes: INT = Interactivity, UBT = Ubiquity, CBT = Credibility, CBE = Green Consumer Brand Engagement, BL = Brand Loyalty.

Table 5 presents the mediation analysis results, examining whether green consumer brand engagement (CBE) mediates the relationships between each digital marketing at-

tribute (interactivity, ubiquity, credibility) and brand loyalty (BL). The Sobel test and p -values are used to determine the statistical significance of the mediation effects. A psychological mechanism exists for incorporating green consumer brand engagement into mediation analysis. When consumers participate in the brand's eco-friendly initiatives via interactive digital platforms, they develop an internalized sense of accountability and community cohesion. This reinforced ethical commitment amplifies their involvement with the brand, resulting in loyalty. Consequently, green consumer involvement serves as a conduit for the conversion of ethical beliefs into steadfast loyalty. As highlighted in Table 5, the current research employed the Sobel test to determine whether the indirect effect of the independent variable (IV) on the dependent variable (DV) via the mediator was significantly different from zero [50]. The reported p -values, all below 0.05, and Sobel test values exceeding ± 1.96 for all relationships, indicate the presence of a mediation effect in support of Hypotheses 3a, 3b, and 3c.

Consequently, this study represents a unique effort to investigate the impact of digital marketing on green consumer brand engagement and brand loyalty within the context of five-star hotels in Nigeria. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to the literature on digital marketing, specifically within the Nigerian five-star hotel industry. The findings, derived from data collected from 304 five-star hotels or their guests, provide support for three hypotheses. The results confirm that Hypotheses 1, 2, and 3 are valid. Specifically, the data demonstrate a positive relationship between digital marketing and green consumer brand engagement, as well as a positive correlation between green consumer brand engagement and brand loyalty. For practical applications, luxury hotels should prioritize transparency in their sustainability messaging, ensuring that consumers perceive their eco-friendly claims as authentic. For instance, including certifications, environmental impact reports, or verified testimonials can enhance credibility and encourage consumers to align with the brand. Practically, this means that consumers will engage more actively with brands they trust, translating to higher brand loyalty and advocacy in the long term. Finally, green consumer brand engagement is shown to mediate the relationship between digital marketing elements (i.e., interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility) and brand loyalty. This indicates that luxury hotel brands had to not only advertise their eco-friendly measures but also engage consumers in these endeavors to cultivate a feeling of community and collective accountability. Hotels could initiate community-oriented programs that motivate customers to engage in environmental activities or provide donations. Such activities strengthen consumers' emotional connections to the brand and their sense of belonging to a larger, value-oriented group, hence augmenting brand loyalty.

5. Discussion

According to Hypothesis 1a, there is a positive relationship between interactivity and customer brand engagement in five-star hotels. The findings from Human Resource Management (HRM) indicate a strong positive correlation between the interactive elements of digital marketing and green consumer brand engagement. Specifically, the interactive features of a five-star hotel brand's digital marketing, including its engagement with consumers on online platforms, were found to enhance customer engagement. In support of Hypothesis 1b, HRM analysis also revealed a strong positive relationship between the ubiquity of digital marketing and green consumer brand engagement. These findings are consistent with earlier studies, validating the premise that a brand's ubiquity on digital platforms positively influences customer engagement [51]. The widespread presence of five-star hotel brands across digital platforms was shown to increase consumer engagement, which in turn impacts brand loyalty. Conversely, contrasting viewpoints arise from research in emerging markets and various industries, indicating that an overabundance of brand visibility may result in advertising fatigue or consumer skepticism, especially when the brand's environmental assertions lack authenticity [52]. Conversely, our research indicates that in the green luxury hotel industry, ubiquity enhances engagement when the brand's messaging is well aligned with consumers' environmental ideals. This disparity

indicates that ubiquity is most efficacious in fostering green involvement when paired with transparent, authentic content that aligns with consumers' beliefs.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate a strong positive relationship between the credibility of digital marketing and green consumer brand engagement, supporting Hypothesis 1c. These findings are in line with previous research, confirming that a company's credibility on digital platforms significantly affects customer brand engagement [53,54]. In particular, the credibility of a five-star hotel brand, as perceived through its digital marketing and service offerings, influences consumer engagement and ultimately brand loyalty. The study also established a positive impact of customer brand engagement on brand loyalty, thereby supporting Hypothesis 2. These results are consistent with earlier studies, affirming the notion that increased customer engagement with a brand enhances brand loyalty [55,56]. Specifically, customers who engage with five-star hotel brands via their digital platforms are more likely to become loyal to those brands.

Hypothesis 3a examined the mediating effect of green consumer brand engagement on the relationship between the digital marketing component of interactivity and brand loyalty, utilizing the Sobel test. The mediation analysis revealed that green consumer brand engagement has an indirect effect on the relationship between interactivity and brand loyalty, thus validating the hypothesis. This result is consistent with previous research [57,58], demonstrating that enhanced interactivity on a brand's digital platform—such as responsive customer service and frequent communication—leads to greater customer engagement and loyalty. Similarly, Hypothesis 3b, which explores the mediating effect of green consumer brand engagement on the relationship between digital marketing ubiquity and brand loyalty, was supported by the Sobel test. The results confirmed that consumer engagement mediates the relationship between ubiquity and brand loyalty, consistent with prior studies [59,60]. This suggests that five-star hotel brands that are present on multiple digital platforms, such as Instagram, are more likely to engage customers and foster brand loyalty. Similar to the findings of this research, the impact of green brand preferences and their outcomes has been examined among consumers in the South Asian context [16].

Finally, Hypothesis 3c, which investigates the mediating effect of green consumer brand engagement on the relationship between digital marketing credibility and brand loyalty, was also validated by the Sobel test. The findings align with previous research [61] indicating that a credible digital presence enhances customer engagement, which in turn strengthens brand loyalty. To achieve high levels of customer engagement and loyalty, five-star hotel brands must ensure the credibility and reliability of their digital services and offerings. Contrary to our findings, findings in the low-cost retail sector suggest that customer involvement does not consistently moderate the relationship between brand messaging and loyalty, as consumers in these sectors frequently base their purchasing decisions on convenience or price [52]. Our study reveals that green engagement significantly enhances loyalty among environmentally motivated consumers in luxury hotels, particularly in high-involvement, values-driven sectors.

5.1. Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study hold significant theoretical implications for digital marketing frameworks, particularly by advancing understanding of the factors that influence customer-brand engagement and loyalty. Engagement with green consumer brands is crucial for cultivating brand loyalty by enhancing the relationship between environmentally-conscious consumers and sustainable brands. When consumers recognize a brand's dedication to environmental stewardship, their engagement increases through active participation, emotional investment, and alignment of values. This increased interaction enhances trust and emotional connection, fostering repeat purchases and enduring loyalty. This research makes a substantial contribution to the existing body of literature by specifically addressing the roles of interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility—factors that have been underexplored in previous studies [62] in relation to green consumer brand engagement. Furthermore, our findings indicate that both ubiquity and credibility in digital marketing enhance green

consumer brand engagement, consistent with Social Capital Theory, which asserts that trust, social networks, and community values promote commitment [63]. In this environment, luxury hotels cultivate “social capital” by creating a reliable and pervasive brand voice across digital channels. This research underscores that brand credibility, bolstered by clear and validated sustainability promises, motivates eco-conscious consumers to interact with the company, cultivating a sense of community. This linkage to Social Capital Theory enhances our comprehension of consumer-brand relationships, especially among customers who prioritize environmental congruence. Moreover, given the profound impact of digital marketing on consumer behavior, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding the underlying dynamics of these marketing strategies. It aligns with scholarly calls to utilize established theories and models to formulate hypotheses that explore the complexities of digital marketing [64]. From a theoretical standpoint, this research is distinctive in its development and validation of a model grounded in relationship marketing theory and social exchange theory. This model elucidates the connection between key digital marketing elements—interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility—and green customer-brand engagement, with a particular focus on brand loyalty. By investigating these components and their influence on consumer behavior, the study significantly broadens the scope beyond the typical focus on relationship marketing and social exchange theory [65]. In doing so, it addresses a gap in prior research, which often overlooks the critical factors contributing to the success of digital marketing initiatives [66,67]. The inclusion of interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility as key variables in the model is justified by their pivotal roles in driving successful digital marketing strategies. These aspects form the foundation of effective digital marketing and are essential for understanding how digital strategies influence consumer actions. Additionally, the significance of credibility in fostering green consumer brand engagement suggests that transparency and genuine commitment to sustainability activate environmental norms. When consumers perceive a brand as credible in its environmental claims, they are more likely to engage based on their moral alignment with the brand’s values. This insight broadens the application of Norm Activation Theory (NAT) by illustrating that ethical consumer engagement can be enhanced in digital contexts where credible, transparent communication helps activate consumers’ sense of moral responsibility.

Moreover, the introduction of green consumer brand engagement as a mediating variable provides deeper insights into the complex relationship between digital marketing elements and customer loyalty. The focus on the hospitality sector for data collection enhances the specificity and validity of the research model. While much of the previous research on digital marketing has been industry-agnostic, this study’s concentration on the hospitality industry adds a new dimension to the understanding of digital marketing’s impact. By examining the unique characteristics of the hospitality sector, this study enriches the comprehension of how digital marketing functions in industry-specific contexts. Furthermore, green consumer brand engagement corresponds with customers’ personal beliefs, thus augmenting brand trust and strengthening favorable brand perceptions. When consumers perceive that their environmental concerns are recognized and endorsed, they are more inclined to champion the brand and maintain loyalty, even in competitive markets. Thus, participation with green consumer brands serves as a catalyst for fostering and maintaining brand loyalty.

In summary, this research contributes novel insights to the literature on digital marketing by expanding the understanding of its key components and their impact on consumer behavior, specifically within the hospitality sector. It provides a comprehensive exploration of the interplay between digital marketing elements, green consumer brand engagement, and brand loyalty, thereby enhancing the theoretical and practical understanding of digital marketing strategies.

5.2. Practical Implications

This study holds vital implications for the management of hotel brands in Nigeria, particularly in the nascent stage of digital marketing in the country. To effectively navigate

this landscape, it is imperative for hotel management to tailor marketing strategies toward fostering customer-brand connections and loyalty. Findings underscore that specific characteristics within digital marketing significantly influence both brand engagement and loyalty among consumers, particularly within social media realms. Given Nigeria's collectivist culture, where purchasing decisions are heavily influenced by social connections and interactions, prudent management necessitates a dual focus on offline and online engagement.

Establishing a dedicated team of social media specialists, responsible for vigilantly monitoring and responding to social media interactions, becomes pivotal. Careful attention to customer feedback, through the dissemination of comprehensive information about the hotel's offerings, can enhance positive recommendations and trust-building. Recognizing the incentive-seeking behavior of consumers in developing nations, particularly the value placed on financial incentives [68], hotel brands should strategically offer unique deals and discounts. Addressing financial demands can foster trust and engagement between the brand and consumers. Central to successful digital marketing strategies is the facilitation of genuine, transparent, and timely dialogues with customers on social media platforms. Prompt responses to inquiries, demonstrating attentiveness to customer feedback, and providing an open environment for expressing opinions contribute to enhanced engagement and loyalty. In today's digital landscape, empowering customers holds paramount importance for five-star hotel businesses in Nigeria. Acknowledging this empowerment is pivotal for fostering greater engagement and brand loyalty across various social media platforms. From a practical standpoint, this study highlights actionable strategies for hospitality managers: fostering interactivity to enhance engagement, maintaining consistent brand presence for familiarity, and building credibility through transparency to reinforce trust. These strategies can help hotels cultivate loyal consumers who are not only satisfied with the service but also aligned with the brand's environmental values. This study recommends the implementation of targeted digital marketing tactics that prioritize interactivity, ubiquity, and trustworthiness to enhance green consumer brand engagement and loyalty in luxury hotels. Hotels ought to create interactive digital experiences that promote consumer engagement, including virtual eco-tours, sustainable lifestyle challenges, and live Q&A sessions centered on environmental initiatives [69]. Second, maintaining a uniform presence across digital platforms helps improve engagement by providing constant interactions with consumers via multi-platform green initiatives and an organized green content schedule [70]. Ultimately, fostering credibility via transparent communication, such as sustainability reports and authenticated certifications, cultivates confidence among environmentally aware consumers. Moreover, hotels can integrate green consumer brand engagement into loyalty programs by incentivizing eco-friendly behaviors, providing distinctive sustainable experiences, and enhancing long-term loyalty through aligned values. These results align with prior research, reinforcing the core premise that a brand's interactivity on digital platforms significantly influences customer brand engagement [71,72].

We propose a four-phase operational approach for implementation: (1) evaluate and synchronize current green practices, (2) adopt a unified multi-platform strategy, (3) foster community involvement through sustainable activities, and (4) track and report on sustainability outcomes. This methodical strategy can establish hotels as pioneers in sustainability and cultivate enhanced loyalty through value-oriented consumer interaction.

5.3. Limitations and Avenues for Further Research

The study, while substantial, presents certain limitations that pave the way for potential avenues of further exploration. First, the exclusive focus on the hospitality sector in Nigeria may limit the generalizability of the findings, as customer behaviors on social media platforms might exhibit variations across industries. Subsequent research could replicate these findings in diverse sectors such as sports venues, tour operators, and travel agencies, broadening the applicability of the study's model.

Expanding the study model in subsequent research by incorporating additional factors like brand image and brand power and green brand choice could enrich the understanding of the mediating role these elements play between the variables of interest. Furthermore, investigating how cultural factors moderate the modelled connections warrants attention in future studies. Second, while this study validated its model using convenience sampling procedure and cross-sectional survey data where relevant, providing insights into the attitudes and behaviors of environmentally concerned consumers within Nigeria's luxury hotel sector, this limits the generalizability of the findings to other consumer segments or hotel categories. Consequently, the results may overestimate green engagement and loyalty levels, as participants might already be more inclined toward eco-conscious behavior. Future research may improve generalizability by utilizing probability sampling techniques and broadening the sample to encompass varied consumer demographics across many hotel categories and geographic areas. These modifications would yield a more accurate comprehension of digital marketing's influence on green customer engagement and brand loyalty within the wider hotel sector (i.e., independent and/or family-owned businesses).

Using self-reported responses can introduce social desirability bias, particularly in questions related to environmental attitudes and loyalty. Participants may have overstated their engagement or loyalty due to perceived social expectations around sustainability. Employing longitudinal designs and experimental approaches in future research could offer deeper insights into the evolving impact of digital marketing on consumer-brand engagement and loyalty. Considering the geographical context of the research, exploring diverse cultural settings beyond Nigeria could validate or challenge the established findings, highlighting the influence of unique cultural nuances on digital marketing dynamics. Experimental studies focusing on the digital marketing landscape within five-star hotel businesses could provide more profound insights. In the same vein, insights into consumer understanding of the difference between a truly sustainable brand and its corresponding greenwashing brand would thus be useful in developing a credibility strategy. Trust-oriented strategies could be further developed upon experimental research, assessing specific elements, such as third-party certifications, and their effect on how trust and engagement may be fostered.

Additionally, employing larger sample sizes and diverse methodologies beyond the quantitative approach utilized in this study would fortify future research efforts, given the transient nature of digital marketing phenomena. Lastly, scholars are encouraged to delve into various forms of digital marketing beyond those addressed here, thereby expanding and refining the existing model to encompass a broader spectrum of green digital marketing attributes.

6. Conclusions

This study demonstrates that digital marketing attributes—namely interactivity, ubiquity, and credibility—augment green consumer brand engagement and brand loyalty in Nigeria's luxury hotel sector. The results demonstrate that green consumer engagement substantially mediates the connection between digital marketing strategies and brand loyalty, highlighting that alignment with environmental principles cultivates consumer trust and enduring loyalty. This study enhances relationship marketing and social exchange theory by highlighting the alignment of eco-friendly brand involvement with consumers' own values, thereby reinforcing brand perceptions and commitment.

These insights offer pragmatic direction for luxury hotels seeking to enhance consumer loyalty via sustainable digital tactics. Hotels should adopt interactive and transparent digital material that highlights genuine sustainable initiatives. Nonetheless, constraints such as the convenience sample technique, dependence on self-reported data, and cross-sectional design underscore opportunities for future investigation. Future research may utilize longitudinal designs, wider samples, and cross-cultural analyses to enhance these findings and investigate the changing influence of green customer interaction on loyalty in

various hospitality settings. This research highlights the crucial importance of ecologically aligned digital marketing in fostering consumer loyalty in emerging markets.

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