

The impact of whatsapp marketing on brand loyalty and sales conversion: Roles of customer engagement, chatbots, and real-time communication

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ABSTRACT

Background: The worldwide expansion of WhatsApp into a global communication platform has created new digital marketing opportunities which enable businesses to establish direct contact with customers through a real-time interactive communication method. WhatsApp delivers better message open rates than standard email marketing methods which makes it suitable for personalized interactive communication especially in developing countries such as India.

Aims: The research aims to evaluate how WhatsApp marketing strategies impact customer engagement results. The study investigates how customer engagement connects to brand loyalty within the framework of WhatsApp marketing.

Methods: The study used conceptual framework to find out how successful WhatsApp Marketing Strategies are in improving customer engagement and increasing business performance. The secondary Data has been collected from SCOPUS, EBSCO, PROQUEST, IGI Global, IEEE Databases and Journals. Most of the references has been taken from the Year 2018-2025.

Result: The research results demonstrate that WhatsApp marketing techniques produce better customer engagement results, which serve as the main connection that affects business performance. The system provides real-time communication together with multimedia content and Chatbot automation to improve responsiveness while delivering personalized experiences, which results in more customer interactions and better response rates to call-to-action messages. The use of automation tools enables businesses to achieve better operational results and enhanced customer satisfaction.

Conclusion: The research demonstrates that WhatsApp marketing tools need to be used strategically because their Chatbot automation and interactive messaging features help businesses to boost customer interaction and buying likelihood. The first requirement for businesses to achieve lasting success with WhatsApp marketing needs them to build customer trust through effective privacy protection and data security measures.

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INTRODUCTION

WhatsApp marketing has become essential for businesses that want to develop direct communication with their customers through one-to-one conversations to create a personalized relationship. With more than 2.78 billion unique monthly active users around the world (Abraham, 2025; Jannah, 2023), at a much higher engagement level than email (Azionya & Mashigo, 2025; Deniz, 2025), WhatsApp provides businesses with a large audience of potential customers for their personalized marketing initiatives. Additionally, WhatsApp has a much higher open rate (98%) than traditional email (26%) which makes it the best platform to use for time-sensitive promotions, customer service, and, ultimately, maximizing conversion rates.

The use of WhatsApp for marketing has been shown through various studies to provide a full funnel growth strategy, taking businesses from lead generation to recapturing lost sales through abandoned cart notifications (GreenAdsGlobal, 2026). WhatsApp supports numerous types of multimedia such as images and videos, creating an experience rich in content and user interaction

(Wimali Lasika De Silva, 2025). However, business owners must use caution when advertising via WhatsApp or they could come off as noticing spam. Businesses will need consent to advertise on WhatsApp and provide value to their customers to see high valid rate of clicks and low block rates.

WhatsApp marketing thrives largely due to the immediacy of its direct engagement with customers. And one of the critical elements to successful WhatsApp marketing is the rapport that is built, as a result, between brands and consumers, earning them both trust and loyalty (Wimali Lasika De Silva, 2025). Based on findings in the body of research available, it is clearer than ever that when consumers use their preferred method of communication, they also tend to be more loyal and willing to buy from brands again (Abraham, 2025).

Background of the study

Using WhatsApp for marketing is very important to help businesses engage with their clients. WhatsApp is different from traditional means of communicating with clients where they receive broadcasts; WhatsApp uses a more direct style of communication so there is a stronger element of building trust and closeness with the customer as indicated by Sayudin et al. (2024). In addition to this, WhatsApp users check the app regularly due to the fact that it is an instantaneous service; therefore, many customers will engage with brands on the app creating stronger brand loyalty, as clearly demonstrated by the impressive return rate as noted by Mustafa et al. (2023) where they claim that the average open rate is 98%.

According to Zarouali et al. (2021) WhatsApp's privacy and immediacy allow customers to feel safe disclosing their doubts or needs plus build more significant relationships with the brand by creating a more personalized service to the customer. Further to this, continues this argument by emphasizing how using WhatsApp Business tools, such as automated greetings and quick replies, can promote ongoing customer engagement 24-hours-a-day, thus meeting today's customers' expectations to communicate with their brands any time they want.

According to Pourkhani et al. (2019), the use of computer-mediated communication creates a unique form of "content intimacy" between the brand and the consumer, whereby the brand is viewed as a resource and friend rather than as an advertiser who is far away, thereby increasing the probability that consumers will consume and share the offered content. In addition, Sayudin et al. (2024b) states that the use of status without broadcast lists is a very effective way of distributing content and can help companies to stay at the forefront of their consumers' thoughts without being seen as intrusive. Despite the potential of content marketing through WhatsApp, success depends on providing relevant and permission-based content; users are increasingly aware of "content spam," so it is critical for brands to build credibility by providing high-quality relevant information that supports the use of a personal messaging platform (Mustafa et al., 2023).

WhatsApp Marketing Play a major role in building long-term brand loyalty for companies by creating a long-term relationship with consumers, instead of a series of purchases and transactions. The nature of this platform is one of your own private, secure and confidential communication and therefore, encouraging consumers to have a highly personal and emotional connection to their brand through both the creation of a psychological bond and the establishment of Trust Through Self-disclosure (Zarouali et al., 2021).

Sales conversion rates are greatly improved by using WhatsApp as a marketing tool because it reduces friction during the customer journey through quick, simple, two-way conversations. Mustafa et al. (2023) state that businesses can effectively shorten the time needed to close a sale by using the WhatsApp Business API to qualify leads and process transactions in a seamless manner. WhatsApp is effective at achieving this because it has a very high level of responsiveness; Sayudin et al. (2024b) reports research showing that the immediacy of the WhatsApp platform has assisted in reducing cart abandonment rates and increasing the likelihood that consumers will ultimately buy. In addition, Agrawal (2021) suggests the capability to send customized catalogs and secure payment links through a single chat session provides a "one-stop" shopping experience that is often lacking on traditional e-commerce

websites. Pourkhani et al. (2019) further support this by claiming that the highly interactive nature of the WhatsApp platform along with its perceived social presence creates greater consumer confidence enabling the completion of larger dollar transactions, therefore resulting in conversion rates exceeding those from social media or email marketing.

The tension between the use of personalised marketing through WhatsApp and protecting consumers' personal data is also examined by Mustafa et al. (2023) where it is suggested that consumers will continue to have concerns regarding the collection of consumers' metadata for targeted advertising; however, WhatsApp's end-to-end encryption provides consumers with some level of technical assurance against the collection of their personal data. Agrawal (2021) has indicated that brands can be successful on WhatsApp only if they comply with international privacy regulations (e.g., GDPR). Any brand that fails to adequately comply with such laws could face legal ramifications, as well as, an adverse long-term impact on brand reputation. Finally, to aid in creating a transition from traditional to conversational commerce found in WhatsApp, Sayudin et al. (2024b) suggests that brands should utilize a permission-based model of marketing by incorporating mechanisms such as opt-in/opt-out options and the presence of adequate security measures into their marketing strategy. These steps will help mitigate risks associated with consumers permitting brands to market to them via WhatsApp while also protecting the integrity of the consumers' personal data.

Objective of the Study

- To identify the effectiveness of WhatsApp marketing strategies in enhancing customer engagement.
- To explore the relationship between customer engagement and brand loyalty in the context of WhatsApp-based marketing.

Research Gap

While previous studies have investigated how social media and instant messaging platforms function in digital marketing, current research has not provided an effective framework to study WhatsApp because its existing literature presents both conceptual and operational limitations. Most studies focus on WhatsApp as a customer service and communication tool, with limited attention to its role as a comprehensive marketing platform that combines content strategies with real-time interaction and Chatbot automation and data privacy mechanisms. Existing research studies customer engagement and Chatbot usability as separate factors but fails to create an all-encompassing model which shows how WhatsApp marketing elements affect brand loyalty and sales conversion and other essential business results.

METHOD

The study used conceptual framework to find out how successful WhatsApp Marketing Strategies are in improving customer engagement and increasing business performance. The main source of data for the study was secondary data that had been gathered from scholarly articles in academic journals, industry reports, digital marketing studies, and previous work associated with WhatsApp marketing; conversational commerce; and ways to enhance customer engagement. The secondary Data has been collected from SCOPUS, EBSCO, PROQUEST, IGI Global, IEEE Databases and Journals. Most of the references has been taken from the Year 2018-2025. As shown in Figure 1, the proposed research framework is illustrated.



Figure 1. Proposed Research Framework (Self Sourced)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The proposed research framework illustrated in Figure 1 indicates that WhatsApp marketing leads to business success through customer engagement and building relationships with customers. The structure shows that WhatsApp Marketing is the primary method of digital communication between businesses and customers. WhatsApp enables businesses to engage with their audience on a more personal level by using methods such as: Content Marketing, Multimedia Messaging, Automated Communication Tools. Because of these reasons, customers receive personalized and interactive messages from brands. The engagement of customers will be reflected in a center-circle on the model as being a key mediating factor (the thing that links one thing to another). Customer engagement happens when a company and its customers interact through WhatsApp, for example, by responding to a message or promotion from a brand.

Customer Engagement Theory and Relationship Marketing together with Social Presence theory and Conversational Commerce theory establish a solid theoretical framework which researchers use to study WhatsApp marketing effectiveness. Customer Engagement Theory shows that WhatsApp enables brands to connect with customers through its two-way communication system which allows customers to interact with brands using instant messaging and multimedia content and customized messages. Relationship Marketing establishes long-term customer connections through ongoing relationships because WhatsApp enables businesses to build trust which protects customer loyalty and retention. Social Presence Theory shows that WhatsApp creates a human-like conversational experience which makes users feel socially connected to the brand through its instant replies system and Chatbot features. The concept of Conversational Commerce explains that modern buying decisions now occur through dialogue-based interactions which people conduct when using messaging applications. Theories demonstrate that WhatsApp marketing changes traditional promotional methods into interactive marketing which builds customer relationships through conversational communication and results in better customer engagement and stronger brand loyalty which leads to increased sales.

Role of Chatbot in Whatsapp

Employing WhatsApp to create a Chatbot to enhance your marketing efforts allows for improved communication with customers, engagement, and efficiency in running your company. A WhatsApp Chatbot is an automated message system connected to the WhatsApp Business API that provides immediate responses to customer questions, gives information about your products, and provides information to help with purchasing decisions. A key advantage of having a Chatbot on WhatsApp is that it allows you to provide your customers with 24/7 access to your company, therefore responding to customers immediately without them waiting for a human response, which improves the overall customer experience and satisfaction and can affect their decision to purchase. As shown in Figure 2, the implementation of the chatbot is illustrated.



Figure 2. Implementation of Chatbot (Self Sourced)

Figure 2 shows WhatsApp Chatbots Offer Several Competitive Advantages for Businesses. The main purpose of WhatsApp marketing improvement exists because AI technologies together with Chatbot systems and automated systems create customer interactions that businesses can handle through their company WhatsApp platforms to develop personalized customer communication throughout all customer interactions. The research found that AI Chatbots integrated into WhatsApp Business platforms enable companies to provide their customers with immediate answers and ongoing support together with customized product suggestions, which results in better user experience and higher user engagement (Marwah et al., 2025; Spivakovskyy et al., 2025). The systems apply machine learning together with predictive analytics to analyze customer preferences and behavior, which enables them to deliver marketing messages that match customer needs at the right time, which serves as a major factor that leads to successful conversions (Iyelolu et al., 2024; Šola et al., 2025).

The research shows that real-time interaction abilities serve as the main factor that determines both customer satisfaction and their intention to purchase because quicker response times together with smooth conversation flow decrease obstacles that customers encounter during decision-making (Malvin & Rangkuti, 2022; Romero-Charneco et al., 2025). The businesses use Chatbots for automated operations because these systems help them handle multiple customer interactions while maintaining outreach to customers, which results in better business performance through improved customer response times and increased rates of successful sales (Bhujbal et al., 2025; Ghanshyambhai & Mishra, 2025). The WhatsApp platform uses conversational AI to create customer-facing systems that handle lead development automated follow-up procedures and call-to-action functions, which lead to better marketing results because they increase conversion rates (Gaire, 2025; Ramkumar, 2025).

IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this research suggest that WhatsApp marketing offers substantial benefits for businesses looking to enhance customer engagement and loyalty through real-time interactions and personalized communication. The integration of automation tools, such as chatbots, into WhatsApp marketing platforms allows businesses to provide faster customer service, increase customer satisfaction, and improve operational efficiency. These outcomes can lead to greater sales conversions and brand loyalty, making WhatsApp a critical tool in digital marketing strategies. The study highlights the importance of ensuring data security and privacy to maintain customer trust and ensure long-term success in WhatsApp marketing campaigns. Furthermore, businesses need to adapt their marketing strategies to leverage WhatsApp's capabilities for personalized and interactive marketing effectively.

LIMITATIONS

While the study provides significant insights into the role of WhatsApp marketing in customer engagement, it is limited by its reliance on secondary data sources, such as academic journals and industry reports. The research does not incorporate primary empirical data or real-world case studies from businesses using WhatsApp marketing, which could provide further validation of the findings. Additionally, the conceptual framework used in the study does not account for variations across different industries or regions, which may affect the effectiveness of WhatsApp marketing strategies. The lack of a longitudinal analysis limits the understanding of how WhatsApp marketing impacts businesses over time, particularly with respect to evolving customer expectations and changing technology.

SUGGESTIONS

Future research could focus on conducting primary empirical studies to validate the conceptual framework proposed in this paper, especially in different industry contexts and geographical regions. Case studies examining how specific businesses have implemented WhatsApp marketing could provide real-world insights into the effectiveness of various strategies. Longitudinal studies would also be beneficial in understanding the long-term impacts of WhatsApp marketing on customer loyalty and business performance. Moreover, future studies could explore the intersection of WhatsApp marketing with emerging technologies, such as AI-driven analytics and personalized customer journeys, to assess how businesses can further optimize their marketing efforts using WhatsApp. Finally, investigating consumer attitudes towards WhatsApp marketing, particularly concerning privacy concerns and consent-based marketing, would contribute to a better understanding of the ethical implications of using such platforms.

CONCLUSION

This research study revealed that WhatsApp marketing has evolved as an important component of any modern business' digital communication strategy. The findings of this study demonstrate that WhatsApp is a highly interactive tool for facilitating direct and personalized communication between businesses and their customers. The use of content marketing, multimedia messaging, real-time interactions, and Chatbot automation on WhatsApp greatly enhances customer engagement and overall customer experience. When used effectively by companies, these tools lead to greater customer connections, increasing trust, and maintaining continuous interactions with the company's target customers. Increased customer engagement ultimately translates into stronger brand loyalty, increased intention to purchase, and improved sales conversion rates. Additionally, the introduction of Chatbots integrated into the WhatsApp Business platform makes businesses more efficient by allowing them to quickly respond to customers' inquiries, provide assistance with making purchasing decisions, and improves responsiveness with regard to call-to-action requests. Automating these communications results in reduced response time and a more efficient customer journey ultimately resulting in a higher probability of completing the sale.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Surjadeep Duta : Conceptualization, Drafting, Project Review.
Arunava Mookherjee : Drafting, Idea Screening, Methodology.
Tisha Biswas : Drafting and Collecting Literatures.
Anindita Sinha : Literature Framing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The research was conducted independently, and all conclusions are based on secondary data, without influence from financial or personal relationships.

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