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The Influence of Online Advertising on Brand Equity of Star Rated Hotels in North Rift Region, Kenya

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Abstract
The main purpose of the study was to determine the influence of online advertising on brand equity of star rated hotels in North Rift region, Kenya. The study was guided by Consumer-Based Brand Equity Theory. This study adopted explanatory design. The study was carried out North Rift Region, Kenya. Target population was 7999 comprising of 7893 customers, 53 marketing managers and 53 supervisors from 53 star rated hotels North Rift Region. The sample size for this study was 487 respondents, comprising of 381 hotel customers, 53 marketing managers and 53 supervisors. The study used stratified, purposive and convenient sampling to select respondents. This study used questionnaires to collect data from respondents. Data collected was analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics was frequency, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Data analysis was done with aid of Statistical Package for Social science (SPSS) version 26. Inferential statistics included Pearson correlation analysis and simple linear regression analysis. The data was presented in form of tables. The findings revealed that online advertising significantly enhanced customers' awareness and perceptions of the hotel brand, particularly perceived quality, thereby strengthening overall brand equity. The study concludes that online advertising positively and significantly enhances brand equity of star-rated hotels in the North Rift region of Kenya by improving visibility, trust, and customer engagement. It is therefore recommended that hotel managers consistently invest in innovative online campaigns to increase competitiveness and sustain brand growth in the dynamic hospitality industry.
Keywords: Online Advertising, Brand Equity, Star Rated

Introduction

Brand equity refers to the value that a brand name adds to a product or service beyond its functional attributes. From a consumer perspective, brand equity develops through consumers' knowledge, perceptions and experiences associated with a brand (Aaker, 1991). Strong brand equity enables consumers to recognise and distinguish a brand from competing alternatives and can influence their evaluations, preferences and loyalty. In the hospitality industry, brand equity is particularly important because customers often rely on brand-related information and previous experiences when evaluating hotels and making accommodation decisions. Sürücü et al. (2019) further demonstrate that customer-based brand equity in the hotel context is associated with brand awareness, brand image, physical quality and employee behaviour. These dimensions show that customers' perceptions and experiences are central to the development of strong hotel brands.

Online advertising plays a central role in enhancing brand awareness, shaping brand perceptions, and strengthening brand associations, which are key dimensions of brand equity (Ra'd Almestarihi et al., 2021). Social media platforms provide affordable and effective advertising options for hotels to reach targeted audiences and increase brand awareness. Online ads can quickly spread brand messaging and drive traffic to hotel websites and booking pages. Partnering with social media influencers and bloggers who have engaged followings in the travel niche allows hotels to tap into their audiences.

Globally, achieving brand equity are top priorities for many organizations because brand is one of the most prized assets of any organization (Adetunji, Mohd Rashid & Ishak, 2018). In Indonesia, engagement with online advertising is deemed necessary by the marketer as online marketing has become the platform that consumers regularly check while they are globally connected to the internet (Kusumasondjaja, 2018). One of the most significant advantages is that online advertising provides flexibility to the companies or brand to make adjustments according to the current trend. Furthermore, online advertising also enables the marketer to get engage with customers more to provide information. Therefore, the potential benefits from online advertising for companies are limitless (Ioanăs & Stoica, 2014). Online advertising enables hotels to directly communicate promotional messages and influence customer perceptions towards their brand.

African countries are experiencing rapid growth in mobile connectivity, creating an expanding digital environment for businesses and consumers. The mobile sector contributed approximately US$240 billion to Africa's economy in 2025, equivalent to 7.8% of the continent's gross domestic product, demonstrating the increasing importance of mobile technologies in economic and commercial activities (GSMA, 2026). The expansion of mobile connectivity and internet use has created new opportunities for online advertising, enabling hospitality firms to enhance brand visibility and build brand equity through digital platforms. Hotels in Kenya are increasingly using online advertising to strengthen their brand presence and reach potential customers (Banoobhai-Anwar & Keating, 2016). Travellers can now identify, compare and select hotel experiences that best suit their needs through information available on digital platforms. Before reserving a hotel in Kenya, many travellers review online ratings, customer feedback and other digital information to inform their decisions. Hotels have consequently recognised the importance of maintaining an active online presence and have increasingly dedicated personnel to managing digital communication and customer interactions. Service quality and responsiveness to customer needs remain important in building and maintaining hotel brands. Hotels that leverage online advertising can achieve their marketing objectives at relatively lower costs, reach wider audiences, strengthen customer relationships and increase customer interaction and engagement (Enyinda, Ogbuehi, & Mbah, 2018). Consequently, online advertising can enhance brand awareness and customer engagement and, ultimately, contribute to the development of brand equity among star-rated hotels in Kenya.

Therefore, there is growing recognition that online advertising is a crucial marketing communication strategy that can significantly influence brand awareness, brand associations, perceived quality and brand loyalty. Despite the increasing adoption of online advertising by hotels, limited empirical studies have specifically examined its influence on brand equity of star rated hotels in the North Rift region, Kenya. Consequently, the current study seeks to determine the influence of online advertising on brand equity of star rated hotels in North Rift region, Kenya.

Theoretical Review

Consumer-Based Brand Equity Theory

Consumer-Based Brand Equity Theory was founded by Aaker (1991) and explains how brand value is created from the consumer's perspective. Aaker (1991) asserts that marketers need to build a brand through key components including brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and brand loyalty. These components influence how consumers identify a brand, form perceptions about its performance, and develop emotional attachment, which ultimately translates into loyalty.

Brand equity is a multidimensional concept and a complex phenomenon (Yoo & Donthu, 2001). Keller (2002) categorizes it into brand awareness and brand associations, while Aaker (1996) groups it into five dimensions: perceived quality, brand loyalty, brand awareness, brand association, and other proprietary brand assets. Among these, brand awareness, perceived quality, brand associations, and loyalty represent customers' evaluations and reactions to a brand.

The theory is relevant to this study as it explains how marketing activities, such as online advertising, influence customer perceptions and responses toward a brand. Online advertising enhances brand awareness by increasing visibility, shapes brand associations through communicated messages, and influences perceived quality and customer attitudes. As a result, effective online advertising contributes to the development of strong brand equity.

In the context of the hospitality industry, strong brand equity implies that customers are able to recognize the hotel brand, maintain favorable perceptions, perceive high service quality, and remain loyal. Therefore, Consumer-Based Brand Equity Theory provides a suitable foundation for understanding how online advertising influences brand equity among star-rated hotels.

Conceptual Framework

Independent Variable **Dependent Variable**

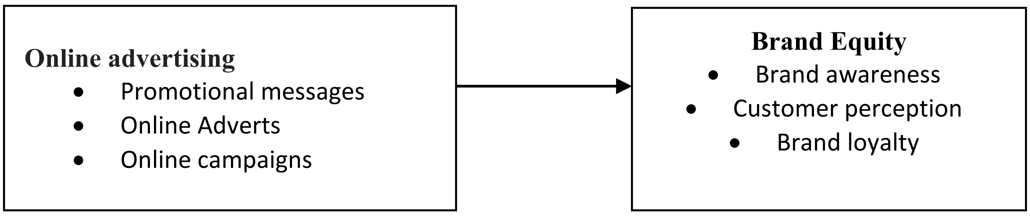

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Methodology

The study adopted an explanatory research design because it sought to establish whether online advertising was statistically associated with and predicted brand equity among star-rated hotels in the North Rift Region of Kenya. The target population was 7,999, comprising 7,893 customers, 53 marketing managers and 53 supervisors from 53 star-rated hotels in the North Rift Region. Yamane's (1973) sample size formula was used to determine the sample size. The sample size for the study was 487 respondents, comprising 381 hotel customers, 53 marketing managers and 53 supervisors. The study used stratified, purposive and convenience sampling to select respondents. Questionnaires were used to collect data from the respondents. Content validity was used to assess the validity of the research instruments, while Cronbach's alpha coefficient was used to assess their reliability. The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistics to analyse the data. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations, were used to summarise and describe the key characteristics of the data. Pearson correlation analysis was used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between online advertising and brand equity, while simple linear regression analysis was employed to assess the extent to which online advertising predicted brand equity. Data analysis was conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26. Ethical considerations were observed by ensuring voluntary participation through informed consent and maintaining strict confidentiality and privacy of all participants throughout the study and after publication of the results.

Results

Response Rate

This section presents the response rate achieved during data collection from both customers, supervisors and managers who were targeted in the study.

Customers Response Rate

The study targeted a total of 381 respondents, out of which 338 successfully filed and returned, resulting in a response rate of 88.71%. However, 43(11.29%) of the sample did not respond. Table 1 indicates that the study response rate findings.

Table 1
Customers Response Rate

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Responded	338	88.71
Not responded	43	11.29
Total	**381**	**100**

Source: Field Data (2025)

Supervisors and Managers Response Rate

Findings indicates that out of 106 respondents, 97 were returned accounting to a response rate of 91.5%. Additionally, the non-response rate was 9(8.5%). Table 2 indicates that the study response rate findings.

Table 2
Supervisors and Managers Response Rate

Responses	Frequency	Percentages
Responded	97	91.51
Not responded	9	8.49
Total	**106**	**100**

Source: Field Data (2025)

Descriptive Statistics for Online Advertising for Customers

The study sought to determine the influence of online advertising on brand equity of star rated hotels in North Rift region, Kenya. Results are presented in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Online Advertising for Customers

Statement		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Stdv
1. I often come across this hotel's advertisements while browsing online.	F	26	40	10	150	112	3.83	1.23
	%	7.7	11.8	3.0	44.4	33.1		
2. The hotel's online ads make the brand more familiar to me.	F	17	54	11	135	121	3.86	1.21
	%	5.0	16.0	3.3	39.9	35.8		
3. Online advertisements have made me aware of the hotel's services and offers.	F	24	43	14	140	117	3.84	1.23
	%	7.1	12.7	4.1	41.4	34.6		
4. The visual quality and creativity of the online ads leave a positive impression.	F	31	46	10	148	103	3.73	1.28
	%	9.2	13.6	3.0	43.8	30.5		
5. The frequency of the hotel's online ads keeps it top of mind when I need hospitality services.	F	31	55	9	132	111	3.70	1.32
	%	9.2	16.3	2.7	39.1	32.8		
6. The hotel's use of social media platforms for advertising feels current and engaging.	F	28	46	13	133	118	3.79	1.28
	%	8.3	13.6	3.8	39.3	34.9		
7. Online ads have influenced how I perceive the quality of the hotel brand.	F	26	48	13	146	105	3.76	1.25
	%	7.7	14.2	3.8	43.2	31.1		

Source: Field Data (2025)

The study findings in Table 3, revealed that 262(77.5%) of the respondents agreed that they often come across this hotel's advertisements while browsing online while 66(19.5%) disagreed that they often come across this hotel's advertisements while browsing online. The analysis further showed that respondents agreed that they often come across this hotel's advertisements while browsing online as indicated by a mean score of 3.83 and a standard deviation of 1.23. Furthermore, 256(75.7%) of the respondents agreed that the hotel's online ads make the brand more familiar to them. Additionally, 71(21.0%) disagreed that the hotel's online ads make the brand more familiar to them. The findings indicated that respondents agreed that the hotel's online ads make the brand more familiar to them, as shown by a mean rating of 3.86 and a standard deviation of 1.21.

Further, 257(76.0%) of the respondents agreed that online advertisements have made them aware of the hotel's services and offers and on the other hand 67(19.8%) disagreed that online advertisements have made them aware of the hotel's services and offers. The study revealed that participants agreed that online ads enhanced awareness of hotel services and offers, as indicated by a mean of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.23. Moreover, 251(74.3%) of the respondents agreed that the visual quality and creativity of the online ads leave a positive impression. Additionally, 77(22.8%) disagreed that the visual quality and creativity of the online ads leave a positive impression. The findings confirmed that respondents agreed that the visual quality and creativity of the online ads leave a positive impression, as reflected by a mean rating of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.28.

Additionally, 243(71.9%) of the respondents agreed that the frequency of the hotel's online ads keeps it top of mind when they need hospitality services on the other hand 86(25.5%) disagreed that frequency of the hotel's online ads keeps it top of mind when they need hospitality services. The analysis indicated that the respondents agreed that the frequency of the hotel's online ads keeps it top of mind when they need hospitality services, with a mean rating of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.32. The study also showed that 251(74.2%) of the respondents agreed that the hotel's use of social media platforms for advertising feels current and engaging while 74(21.9%) disagreed that the hotel's use of social media platforms for advertising feels current and engaging. A mean of 3.79 and a standard deviation of 1.28 confirmed that respondents agreed that the hotel's use of social media platforms for advertising feels current and engaging.

Finally, 251(74.3%) of the respondents agreed that online ads have influenced how they perceive the quality of the hotel brand, while 74(21.9%) disagreed that online ads have influenced how they perceive the quality of the hotel brand. The results revealed that the respondents agreed that online ads have influenced how they perceive the quality of the hotel brand, as indicated by a mean score of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.25. Findings concur with Prabowo et al., (2023) analysis show that there is an influence of perceived quality, perceived price, digital marketing has an effect on brand image and has an impact on repurchase intention. However, price perception has no effect on repurchase intention.

Descriptive Statistics for Brand Equity of Star Rated Hotels

The study sought to determine the brand equity of star rated hotels in North Rift region, Kenya. Results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics for Brand Equity of Star Rated Hotels

Statement			SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Stdv
1.	I can easily recognize the brand of this hotel among other competing hotels.	F	43	51	6	136	102	3.60	1.38
		%	12.7	15.1	1.8	40.2	30.2		
2.	I am likely to stay in this hotel again because of its strong brand reputation.	F	26	21	10	160	121	3.97	1.15
		%	7.7	6.2	3.0	47.3	35.8		
3.	I can differentiate this hotel's brand from others in the region.	F	37	49	6	124	122	3.72	1.37
		%	10.9	14.5	1.8	36.7	36.1		
4.	I feel emotionally connected to this hotel brand.	F	27	39	15	136	121	3.84	1.25
		%	8.0	11.5	4.4	40.2	35.8		
5.	The hotel's online presence has strengthened my loyalty to the brand.	F	27	32	16	159	104	3.83	1.20
		%	8.0	9.5	4.7	47.0	30.8		
6.	The brand of this hotel reflects consistency in communication and service quality.	F	18	40	15	140	125	3.93	1.17
		%	5.3	11.8	4.4	41.4	37.0		

Source: Field Data (2025)

The findings in Table 4 shows that 238(70.4%) of the respondents agreed that they could easily recognize the brand of the hotel among other competing hotels. Further, 94(27.8%) disagreed that they could easily recognize the brand of the hotel among other competing hotels. The mean rating of 3.60 indicated that the respondents agreed that they could easily recognize the brand of the hotel among other competing hotels, though with a slightly wider dispersion as shown by a standard deviation of 1.38. Additionally, 281(83.1%) of the respondents agreed that they were likely to stay in the hotel again because of its strong brand reputation while 47(13.9%) disagreed that they were likely to stay in the hotel again because of its strong brand reputation. The mean rating of 3.97indicates that the respondents agreed that they were likely to stay in the hotel again because of its strong brand reputation and the standard deviation of 1.15 showed a relatively low level of variation in responses.

Moreover, 246(72.8%) of the respondents agreed that they could differentiate the hotel's brand from others in the region. Further, 86(25.4%) disagreed that they could differentiate the hotel's brand from others in the region. The findings showed a mean of 3.72, suggesting general agreement with the statement, while the standard deviation of 1.37 indicated a moderate spread of opinions. Further, 257(76.0%) of the respondents agreed that they felt emotionally connected to the hotel brand while on the other hand 66(19.5%) disagreed that they felt emotionally connected to the hotel brand. With a mean score of 3.84, this implies respondents agreed that they felt emotionally connected to the hotel brand and a standard deviation of 1.25 indicated that a few of the respondents deviated from the mean of 3.84. The study also revealed that 263(77.8%) of the respondents agreed that the hotel's online presence had strengthened their loyalty to the brand while 59(17.5%) disagreed that the hotel's online presence had strengthened their loyalty to the brand. A mean of 3.83 indicates that the respondents agreed that the hotel's online presence had strengthened their loyalty to the brand and a standard deviation of 1.20 indicated limited dispersion.

Finally, 265(78.4%) of the respondents agreed that the brand of the hotel reflected consistency in communication and service quality. However, 58(17.1%) disagreed that the brand of the hotel reflected consistency in communication and service quality. The mean rating of 3.93 indicates that the respondents agreed that the brand of the hotel reflected consistency in communication and service quality and the standard deviation of 1.17 shows that a few of the respondents deviated from a mean of 3.93. These findings agreed with Šerić and Mikulić, (2020) found that communication consistency is found to have a strong positive impact on all brand equity dimensions, especially on brand trust, brand image and perceived quality.

Descriptive Statistics for Online Advertising for Managers and Supervisors

The study sought to determine the influence of online advertising on brand equity of star rated hotels in North Rift region, Kenya. Results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5

Descriptive Statistics for Online Advertising for Managers and Supervisors

Statement		SD	D	N	A	SA	Mean	Stdv
1. Promotion messages has acted as one way for online advertisement	F	5	14	7	39	32	3.81	1.19
	%	5.2	14.4	7.2	40.2	33.0		
2. There have been effective uses of online adverts in our hotel	F	5	15	6	36	35	3.84	1.22
	%	5.2	15.5	6.2	37.1	36.1		
3. Online campaigns have attracted more customers	F	7	13	9	29	39	3.82	1.29
	%	7.2	13.4	9.3	29.9	40.2		
4. The online message is understandable to customers	F	9	14	4	37	33	3.73	1.32
	%	9.3	14.4	4.1	38.1	34.0		
5. The online advertisement is believable to potential customers	F	8	14	4	39	32	3.75	1.28
	%	8.2	14.4	4.1	40.2	33.0		
6. The benefits described in the online advertisement are attracting customers	F	5	10	4	40	38	3.99	1.15
	%	5.2	10.3	4.1	41.2	39.2		
7. After viewing online advertisement, customers have considered using the hotel services	F	5	11	3	44	34	3.94	1.14
	%	5.2	11.3	3.1	45.4	35.1		
8. Online advertisement is much better than other advertisement for products in this services category	F	6	21	8	32	30	3.61	1.30
	%	6.2	21.6	8.2	33.0	30.9		
9. Soliciting reasonably simple, straight forward answers based on obvious facts or awareness using online tools	F	7	14	4	42	30	3.76	1.24
	%	7.2	14.4	4.1	43.3	30.9		

Source: Field Data (2025)

Table 5 showed that 71(73.2%) of the respondents agreed that promotion messages has acted as one way for online advertisement while 19(19.6) of the respondents disagreed that promotion messages has acted as one way for online advertisement. The study findings father revealed that the respondents agreed that promotion messages has acted as one way for online advertisement with mean rating of 3.81 and standard deviation of 1.19. Furthermore, 71(69.0%) of the respondents agreed that there have been effective uses of online adverts in their hotel and 20(20.7%) of the respondents disagreed that there have been effective uses of online adverts in their hotel. However, respondents agreed that there have been effective uses of online adverts in their hotel with mean rating of 3.84 and Standard deviation of 1.22. Further, 68(70.1%) of the respondents agreed that online campaigns have attracted more customers and those who disagreed are 20(20.6%). The study findings revealed that participants agreed with the statement that online campaigns have attracted more customers with mean rating of 3.82 and the Standard deviation of 1.29.

Moreover, 70(72.1%) of the respondents agreed that the online message is understandable to customers and on the other hand 23(23.7%) of the respondents disagreed that the online message is understandable to customers. Additionally, the study results father revealed that the respondents agreed that the online message is understandable to customers with mean rating of 3.73 and a standard deviation of 1.32. Additionally, 71(73.2%) of the respondents agreed that the online advertisement is believable to potential customers. However, 22(22.6%) of the respondents disagreed that the online advertisement is believable to potential customers. Analysis on mean and standard deviation of 3.75 and 1.28 respectively revealed that the respondents agreed with the statement that the online advertisement is believable to potential customers.

The study further revealed that, vast majority 62(63.9%) of the participants agreed that online advertisement is much better than other advertisement for products in this services category. On contrary to that the 27(27.8%) of the respondents disagreed that online advertisement is much better than other advertisement for products in this services category. Further, the study results indicate that the respondents agreed with the statement that online advertisement is much better than other advertisement for products in this services category with mean rating of 3.61 and standard deviation of 1.30. Finally, 72(74.2%) agreed that soliciting reasonably simple, straight forward answers based on obvious facts or awareness using online tools. However, 21(21.6%) of the respondents disagreed that soliciting reasonably simple, straight forward answers based on obvious facts or awareness using online tools. Further, the study results also indicate that the mean rating of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.24 the respondents agreed with the statement that soliciting reasonably simple, straight forward answers based on obvious facts or awareness using online tools. The findings are consistent with Agag et al. (2020), who established that web assurance seals services positively influence perceived website trust and reduce consumers' concerns, while perceived value and trust mediate the relationship between web assurance seals services and consumers' booking intentions. Although the study did not examine brand equity directly, its findings provide relevant support for the present study by demonstrating that online assurance mechanisms can strengthen consumers' trust and perceptions of value when interacting with hotel websites. These factors can contribute to favourable consumer perceptions of a hotel and, consequently, support the development of a stronger hotel brand. The findings therefore suggest that effective online advertising and digital communication should not only focus on creating awareness but also on building trust and perceived value among potential hotel customers.

Descriptive Statistics for Brand Equity of Star Rated Hotels

The study sought to determine the brand equity of star rated hotels in North Rift region, Kenya. Results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6

Descriptive Statistics for Brand Equity of Star Rated Hotels

Statement		**SD**	**D**	**N**	**A**	**SA**	**Mean**	**Stdv**
1. Charging a price premium has been brought about by online advertising	F	5	14	9	46	23	3.70	1.14
	%	5.2	14.4	9.3	47.4	23.7		
2. There has been an increase in sales volume	F	7	11	8	47	24	3.72	1.17
	%	7.2	11.3	8.2	48.5	24.7		
3. Our hotel Has Brand image improved	F	8	10	6	46	27	3.76	1.21
	%	8.2	10.3	6.2	47.4	27.8		
4. The customers are aware of the hotel brand due to marketing	F	6	8	4	49	30	3.92	1.11
	%	6.2	8.2	4.1	50.5	30.9		
5. There is increased brand association among customers	F	5	13	7	40	32	3.84	1.18
	%	5.2	13.4	7.2	41.2	33.0		
6. There is increased perceived quality	F	4	12	4	46	31	3.91	1.11
	%	4.1	12.4	4.1	47.4	32.0		
7. Brand loyalty among costumers has increased	F	5	14	9	44	25	3.72	1.15
	%	5.2	14.4	9.3	45.4	25.8		

Source: Field Data (2025)

According to Table 6, 69(71.1%) of the respondents agreed that charging a price premium has been brought about by online advertising while 19(19.6%) of the respondents disagreed that charging a price premium has been brought about by online advertising. Moreover, the study findings revealed that the respondents agreed that charging a price premium has been brought about by online advertising with mean rating of 3.70 and a standard deviation of 1.14. Similarly, majority of the respondents 71(73.2%) of the participants agreed that there has been an increase in sales volume. However, 18(18.5%) of the respondents disagreed that there has been an increase in sales volume. Further, the study findings revealed that participants agreed that there has been an increase in sales volume with mean rating of 3.72 and the standard deviation of 1.17.

Moreover, 73(75.2%) of the respondents agreed that their hotel has Brand image improved Further, 18(18.5%) of the respondents disagreed that their hotel has Brand image improved. Additionally, the study results father revealed that the respondents agreed that their hotel has Brand image improved with mean rating of 3.76 and a standard deviation of 1.21. However, 79(81.4%) of the participants agreed that the customers are aware of the hotel brand due to marketing. On contrary, 14(14.4%) of the participants disagreed that the customers are aware of the hotel brand due to marketing. Further, the study results also showed that the respondents agreed that the customers are aware of the hotel brand due to marketing with mean rating of 3.92 and the standard deviation of 1.11.

Additionally, it was noted that 72(74.2%) of the participants agreed that there is increased brand association among customers. Conversely to that, it was noted that 18(18.6%) of the respondents disagreed that there is increased brand association among customers. The study results father revealed that the respondents agreed that there is increased brand association among customers with mean rating of 3.84 and a standard deviation of 1.18. The study Further showed that, 77(79.4%) of the respondents agreed that there is increased perceived quality and 16(16.5%) disagreed with the statement that that there is increased perceived quality. Further, the study results also revealed that the mean rating of 3.91 and a standard deviation of 1.31 indicate that the respondents agreed that there is increased perceived quality.

Finally, 69(71.2%) of the respondents agreed that brand loyalty among costumers has increased and on the other hand 19(19.6%) of the respondents disagreed that brand loyalty among costumers has increased. Additionally, the study results father revealed that the respondents agreed the brand loyalty among costumers has increased with mean rating of 3.72 and a standard deviation of 1.15. These findings are consistent with the study done by Tefera and Govender, (2016) significant relationships were found between customer satisfaction and loyalty; but there was no direct relationship between hotel ratings and customer loyalty. Even though, there was no direct relationship between service quality and loyalty, there may be an indirect or mediated effect of hotel ratings on both service quality and loyalty, through its effect on service expectations and customer satisfaction.

Correlation Analysis

The correlation analysis conducted was Pearson in order to demonstrate the strength and direction of the relationship between independent and dependent variables. Table 2. presents the results.

Table 7

Correlation Coefficient Matrix

		Brand equity	Online advertising
Brand equity	Pearson Correlation	1	
	Sig. (2-tailed)		
Online advertising	Pearson Correlation	.415**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	

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

Source: Correlation results showed in Table 7 that correlation between online advertising and brand equity of star rated hotels in North Rift region, Kenya was positive and statistically significant ($r=0.415$, $p<0.01$).

Simple Regression

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.415[a]	.172	.170	.78302

a. Predictors: (Constant), X1

The model summary indicates that the regression model produced an R value of .415, corresponding to the positive association identified in the correlation analysis. The R^2 value of .172 indicates that online advertising explains 17.2% of the variance in brand equity among the sampled star-rated hotels. The remaining 82.8% of the variation in brand equity is attributable to other factors that were not included in the model.

The adjusted R^2 of .170 is close to the unadjusted R^2, indicating only a minimal adjustment to the explanatory power of the model. The standard error of the estimate was 0.78302, representing the average extent to which observed brand equity scores deviate from the values predicted by the regression model.

ANOVA[a]

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	55.116	1	55.116	89.894	.000[b]
	Residual	265.482	433	.613		
	Total	320.598	434			

a. Dependent Variable: Y
b. Predictors: (Constant), X1
The ANOVA results indicate that the regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 433) = 89.894$, $p < .001$. This finding demonstrates that the model containing online advertising provides a statistically significant prediction of brand equity.

Since the significance value is below the conventional 0.05 threshold, the null hypothesis that online advertising does not significantly predict brand equity is rejected. The result therefore confirms that the variation in brand equity explained by online advertising is statistically meaningful rather than attributable to sampling variation alone.

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.224	.160		13.937	.000
	Online advertising	.401	.042	.415	9.481	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y
The coefficients indicate that online advertising had a positive and statistically significant effect on brand equity ($B = .401$, $\beta = .415$, $t = 9.481$, $p < .001$). The unstandardised coefficient indicates that a one-unit increase in online advertising was associated with an estimated 0.401-unit increase in brand equity.

The standardised coefficient ($\beta = .415$) further confirms the positive direction of the relationship. The statistically significant t-value demonstrates that online advertising made a significant contribution to the prediction of brand equity. The constant of 2.224 represents the estimated level of brand equity when online advertising is held at zero.

Summary of the Findings
Findings from customers revealed that most of them regularly encountered the hotel's online advertisements during browsing, which contributed significantly to increased familiarity with the brand. The respondents felt that the online adverts enhanced their awareness of the hotel's services and offers, which in turn elevated their recognition and trust in the hotel brand. The creative presentation and visual appeal of the adverts also left a favorable impression on their perception of quality.

Additionally, customers affirmed that the frequency and consistency of the hotel's online ads kept the hotel brand at the forefront of their minds when seeking hospitality services. Many of them appreciated the hotel's use of social media platforms, describing the advertising content as modern, interactive, and engaging. Ultimately, online advertisements were perceived to influence the way customers viewed the quality of the hotel brand, indicating that such digital marketing strategies played a critical role in shaping positive brand equity among customers.

Conclusions

The study concludes that the online advertisement was very important when it comes to awareness of every brand as well as their trust and visibility to customers. The customers, managers and supervisors of the hotel noted that regular and innovative online advertisements enhanced the perceived quality of services and increased the recognition of the brand. This type of advertising turned out to be an efficient way of reaching the current and potential customers in the realm of cyberspace.

Recommendations

Policymakers should encourage hotels to adopt comprehensive digital marketing frameworks that not only enhance visibility but also build consumer trust. For practical implementation, hotel management should prioritize investing in creative and targeted digital advertising campaigns. To optimize brand equity, it is also recommended that hotels invest in search engine optimization (SEO) strategies. This ensures their online content is easily discoverable, increasing visibility and traffic, which are key drivers of brand awareness and bookings. Future studies could focus on specific social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok or X (formerly Twitter) to evaluate the unique impact each platform has on the various dimensions of brand equity, such as brand awareness, brand loyalty, and perceived quality.

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