

# **IMPACT OF ETHICAL BRANDING AND SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT ON CONSUMER TRUST AND LOYALTY: EVIDENCE FROM MAMAEARTH CONSUMERS**

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## **ABSTRACT**

The research investigates how ethical branding together with social media platforms affects consumer trust and brand loyalty for Mamaearth customers. The study employs a descriptive research design which collects primary data through a structured questionnaire from 200 participants. The results demonstrate that transparency and eco-friendly products together with honesty as an ethical practice create a major impact on how consumers perceive trustworthiness. Active social media engagement activities enable brands to establish better relationships with their customers through strong emotional ties. The research demonstrates that people who possess stronger trust relationships with brands will demonstrate greater brand loyalty together with higher rates of purchasing the same products again. The research demonstrates that beauty brands should implement both ethical business practices and digital customer interaction methods to build better relationships with their customers.

**Keywords:** Ethical Branding, Social Media Engagement, Consumer Trust, Brand Loyalty, Mamaearth, Beauty Industry

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Background of the Study**

The study investigates the effects of ethical branding and social media engagement on consumer trust and digital marketplace loyalty through its examination of Mamaearth. Consumers in today's beauty industry make their purchasing decisions based on three main factors which include their understanding of sustainability and transparency and eco-friendly practices. The process of ethical branding establishes business credibility whereas businesses use social media platforms to create stronger connections with their customers. Direct user interaction on Instagram and YouTube platforms increases trustworthiness while building emotional ties with users. The case study of Mamaearth demonstrates how its toxin-free products and environmentally responsible products impact consumer perception and trust and long-term brand loyalty.

### **1.2 Concept of Ethical Branding**

Ethical branding refers to the practice of promoting a brand based on honesty, transparency, sustainability, and social responsibility. The practice requires businesses to implement fair trading

methods while they use environmentally friendly materials and develop products that protect both consumer safety and environmental safety. Businesses use ethical branding to create positive brand images through their commitment to social responsibility practices which include cruelty-free testing and natural ingredient use and environmental protection efforts. Modern consumers who live in the digital age prefer to support brands which show their dedication to ethical standards. The approach establishes trust for businesses while it develops enduring connections between customers and brands which enhances brand credibility in competitive markets.

### **1.3 Key Concepts in the Study**

Social media engagement describes how brands and consumers interact through likes and comments and shares and content participation which enables relationship development and brand exposure. In the digital age three main factors establish consumer trust and brand loyalty which include transparent business practices and continuous communications and online interactions that satisfy users. The beauty industry relies on ethical branding because consumers choose to buy safe natural products which also meet environmental protection standards. Mamaearth stands out as a top brand because it promotes toxin-free products and sustainable practices while establishing a strong online presence which appeals to contemporary customers who value trustworthiness and genuine products.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

1. To look into how ethical branding affects how much people trust a brand.
2. To look at how interacting with a brand on social media can help build brand loyalty.
3. To examine the correlation between consumer trust and purchasing behavior regarding Mamaearth products.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. How does ethical branding affect how much people trust a brand?
2. How does a using social medium affect brand loyalty?
3. How does consumer trust affect the choices people make when buying Mamaearth products?

### **1.7 Statement of the Problem**

The beauty industry needs more research to determine how ethical branding and social media marketing practices influence consumer trust and brand loyalty which keeps increasing because more consumers adopt these marketing techniques. The ethical values of Mamaearth function as a marketing tool, yet their actual effect on how customers see the brand and decide to buy needs complete research.

### **1.8 Research Gap**

Existing studies focus separately on ethical branding or social media engagement, but limited research integrates both factors together. The research field lacks dedicated studies that investigate how these two factors work together to impact consumer trust and loyalty towards Mamaearth products.

### **1.9 Significance of the Study**

The research demonstrates to marketers that they can build customer trust and loyalty through their ethical business practices which they combine with their digital marketing efforts. The research provides information which enables companies to build successful branding strategies while improving their customer relationships and gaining market benefits in the beauty and personal care sector.

## 1.10 Scope of the Study

The research investigates Mamearth product users to determine how ethical branding and social media interaction affect their trust and loyalty. The study uses selected participants to conduct its research but lacks the capacity to represent both the complete study population and other industrial sectors.

## 2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### 2.1 Introduction

**The research conducted by Aaker (1996)** demonstrates that successful brands establish their presence through three essential components which include consumer trust and continuous brand communication and established brand values which branded products provide to their customers. The study shows that consumers stay loyal to brands which show genuine brand authenticity and corporate social responsibility. The process of ethical branding creates an important role in shaping consumer perceptions about businesses because trust functions as the primary element that separates competing companies in market environments.

**Kotler and Keller (2016)** demonstrate that social media engagement serves as an essential component of modern marketing because interactive communication methods help customers build stronger relationships with brands. Their research demonstrates that brands can establish emotional connections with consumers through digital platforms which operate their business by maintaining ongoing customer relationships and providing valuable content.

### 2.2 Theoretical Foundations of Consumer Behavior

**Ajzen (1991)** developed the Theory of Planned Behavior which explains that consumer behavior results from three factors: their personal attitudes and the norms of their social group and their ability to control their actions. The study shows that people tend to buy products when they have favorable brand attitudes and social acceptance and they believe they can make the purchase. The theory helps researchers understand how ethical branding and social media impact consumer purchase intentions and actual buying behavior.

**Kotler and Keller (2016)** showed that consumer behavior develops through psychological and social and cultural and personal influences. The research shows that brand values and trust and communication strategies determine how customers make purchasing choices. In the digital age, social media usage together with ethical business methods creates a strong impact on how consumers view brands which results in increased trust and lasting brand loyalty.

### 2.3 Ethical Branding and Consumer Trust

**Aaker (1996)** studied brand equity and found that consumers trust brands more when they practice ethical behavior through transparent and honest business operations. The study showed that when brands maintain ethical standards, they build consumer trust which leads to increased customer loyalty over time. The research found that ethical branding functions as a crucial element which creates positive brand associations and drives consumer decision-making processes.

**Aaker (1996)** studied brand equity and discovered that consumers develop stronger trust towards brands which engage in ethical business practices through transparent operations and authentic business conduct. The research revealed that brands which maintain their ethical standards will develop trust from consumers which results in increased customer loyalty throughout the years. The

research discovered that ethical branding serves as an essential factor which develops positive brand connections and influences how consumers make their purchasing decisions.

#### **2.4 Social Media Engagement and Brand Loyalty**

**Brodie et al. (2013)** studied how customers interact with online brand communities and discovered that social media users who engage with their brands on social media platforms create stronger emotional ties to their brand which results in increased customer loyalty. The research showed that consumer engagement through liking and commenting and sharing content with brands creates enduring relationships which lead to increased customer repeat purchases.

**Hollebeek et al. (2014)** discovered that social media platforms show higher brand loyalty when consumers interact with brands through their platforms. The authors demonstrated that brands which provide their customers with ongoing attractive engagement opportunities will develop stronger customer relationships.

#### **2.5 Role of Sustainability and Eco-friendly Practices**

**Chen (2010)** studied how green marketing together with eco-friendly practices affects both consumer trust and brand image. The study discovered that sustainability initiatives lead to increased brand credibility which results in higher consumer purchase intentions. The research showed that companies which adopt environmentally responsible practices not only build better corporate reputations but also achieve permanent customer loyalty especially in beauty and personal care industries where safety and environmental effects are primary customer worries.

**Ottman (2011)** demonstrated that sustainability has become a crucial element of contemporary marketing practices when he observed that eco-friendly products and ethical business methods draw customers who care about environmental issues. The research discovered that companies which implement environmentally friendly policies achieve both better market position and increased customer interaction. The research discovered that organizations which disclose their environmental initiatives create trust with customers who become more devoted to their brand in online shopping environments.

#### **2.6 Influencer Credibility and Consumer Perception**

**Djafarova, E., and Rushworth C. (2017)** studied how Instagram influencers shape consumer perception through their established credibility and authentic content and their ability to connect with audiences. The study showed that young female consumers trust influencers more than traditional celebrities because they believe influencers provide honest content and build personal relationships, which leads to higher brand perception and customer engagement.

**Lou, C., & Yuan, S. (2019)** examined how influencer credibility impacts consumer attitudes together with their behavioral intentions. The study found that expertise trustworthiness and attractiveness of influencers produce positive effects on consumer perception and brand trust through their expertise trustworthiness and attractiveness. The study showed that sponsors who create high-quality product content will achieve two outcomes through their content which will strengthen audience connection and improve brand assessment.

#### **2.7 Empirical Studies in the Beauty and Cosmetic Industry**

**Aaker (1996)** studied how brand equity affects customer purchasing decisions in the cosmetic market. The study demonstrated that strong ethical values combined with consistent branding processes build greater consumer trust and loyalty. The study revealed that consumers will engage with brands and

continue their loyalty when brands show authentic products and transparent business practices and social responsibility.

**Keller (2003)** investigated the impact of customer-based brand equity on consumer perception within the beauty and cosmetic sector. The study showed that social media communication together with ethical branding practices created improved consumer trust outcomes. The research demonstrated that customers who build strong brand ties with a company will remain loyal to that company throughout their relationship.

## 2.8 Studies Related to Mamaearth

**Agarwal (2022)** studied Mamaearth's marketing strategies and discovered that its digital campaigns and toxin-free product range and sustainable practices create strong consumer trust which leads to increased brand preference. The study showed that beauty brands which practice transparent operations and use eco-friendly marketing methods can successfully draw in customers who value environmental conservation.

**Sharma (2023)** studied how social media engagement affects consumer perception of Mamaearth products. The study showed that digital platforms worked through influencer marketing user-generated content and social media activities to enhance brand loyalty and purchase intent among younger customers who shopped online.

## 2.9 Research Gap Identification

**Aaker (1996)** studied how brand equity affects consumer trust and loyalty, which his research proved helps businesses create stronger customer relationships through their brand identity development. The researchers failed to investigate how ethical branding and social media activities affected consumer behavior in emerging markets, particularly in the beauty industry, which created an understanding gap about current digital and ethical practices.

**Kotler and Keller (2016)** examined consumer behavior together with marketing management while demonstrating how trust and value and communication create brand loyalty. The research recognizes digital marketing developments yet it fails to provide detailed examination about how brands establish their ethical presence through active social media participation and branding activities, specifically for eco-friendly brands such as Mamaearth.

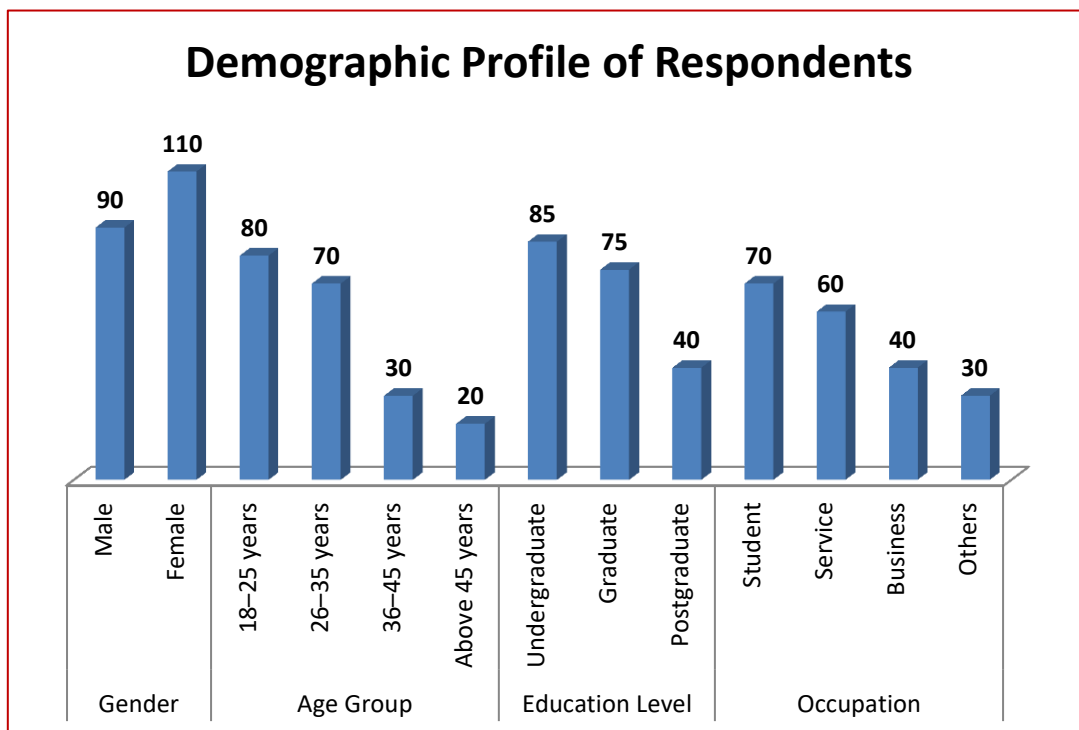
## 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research study uses a descriptive research approach to investigate how ethical branding and social media engagement activities impact consumer trust and loyalty. The conceptual framework establishes connections between two independent variables which include ethical branding and social media engagement and their impact on consumer trust and brand loyalty as dependent variables. The study investigates four different factors which include ethical practices online engagement trust and loyalty. The research uses structured sampling methods to find users who consume Mamaearth products. The research uses convenience sampling with 200 participants as its sample size. The researchers collected their data through primary sources by using an extensive questionnaire. The measurement system uses a Likert scale while data analysis employs descriptive statistics and correlation analysis methods.

## 4. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

### 4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	90	45%
	Female	110	55%
Age Group	18–25 years	80	40%
	26–35 years	70	35%
	36–45 years	30	15%
	Above 45 years	20	10%
Education Level	Undergraduate	85	42.5%
	Graduate	75	37.5%
	Postgraduate	40	20%
Occupation	Student	70	35%
	Service	60	30%
	Business	40	20%
	Others	30	15%

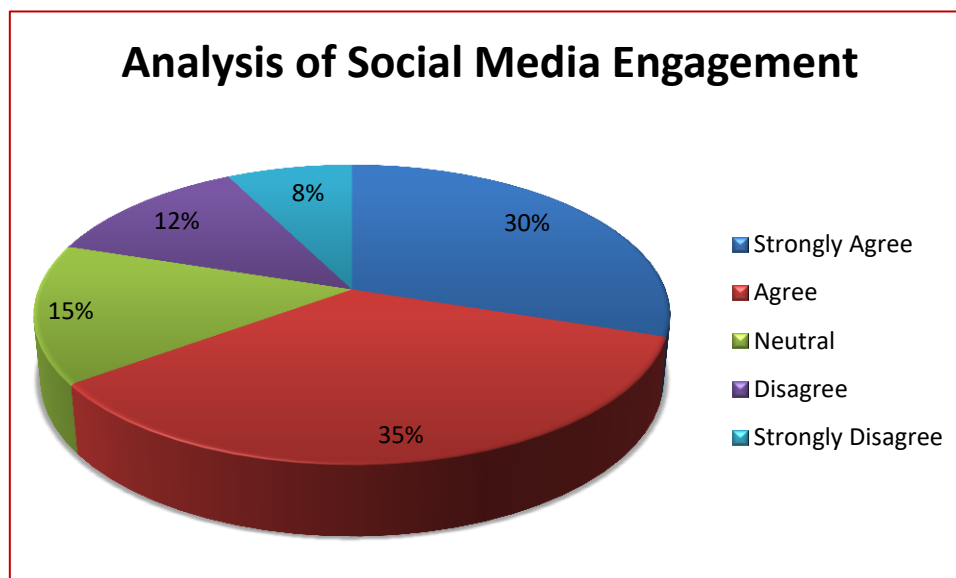


The research methodology used 200 respondents for its sample size, which showed that most respondents were female because 55% of respondents identified as female. The study found that 75% of participants belonged to the 18-35 age group, which revealed that young consumers make up the

largest part of digital and social media-driven markets. The study shows that most people possess undergraduate or graduate degrees which demonstrates their ability to make knowledgeable choices. The study revealed that students and service workers constitute the largest group of people who consume Mam aearth products which shows that young professionals make up the biggest part of the brand's customer base.

#### 4.2 Analysis of Social Media Engagement

Statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
I regularly interact with Mamaearth posts on social media	60	70	30	25	15	3.68
Social media content of Mamaearth is informative and engaging	65	75	28	20	12	3.81
I trust the brand more after engaging with its social media content	55	80	35	18	12	3.74
Influencer promotions increase my interest in Mamaearth products	70	65	30	20	15	3.78
I am likely to share or recommend Mamaearth content on social media	50	72	40	23	15	3.60

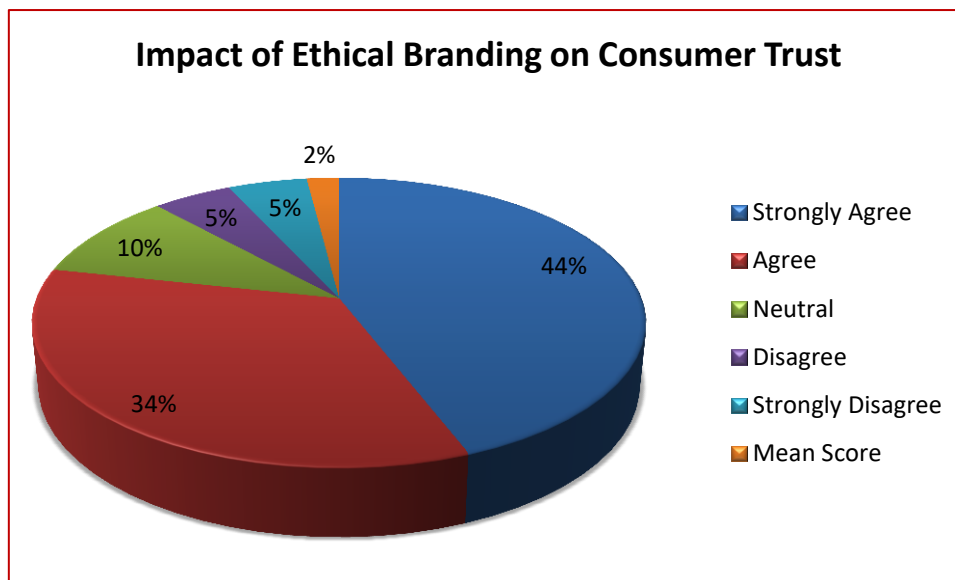


The table shows that respondents have a positive level of social media engagement. The majority of respondents show content from Mamaearth as both engaging and informative through their agreement with this statement. The higher mean scores which exceed 3.5 demonstrate that social media networks serve as a crucial tool for building consumer trust and interest through their use by businesses. The

results show that influencer promotions have a significant effect on how people interact with content. The research findings support the assumption that social media engagement constitutes a key element which affects how consumers perceive and trust brands while deciding their loyalty to those brands.

### 4.3 Impact of Ethical Branding on Consumer Trust

Ethical Branding Factors	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Mean Score
Use of Natural Ingredients	90	70	20	10	10	4.10
Transparency in Product Information	85	75	25	10	5	4.12
Eco-friendly Packaging	80	78	22	12	8	4.05
Cruelty-Free Practices	95	68	20	10	7	4.17

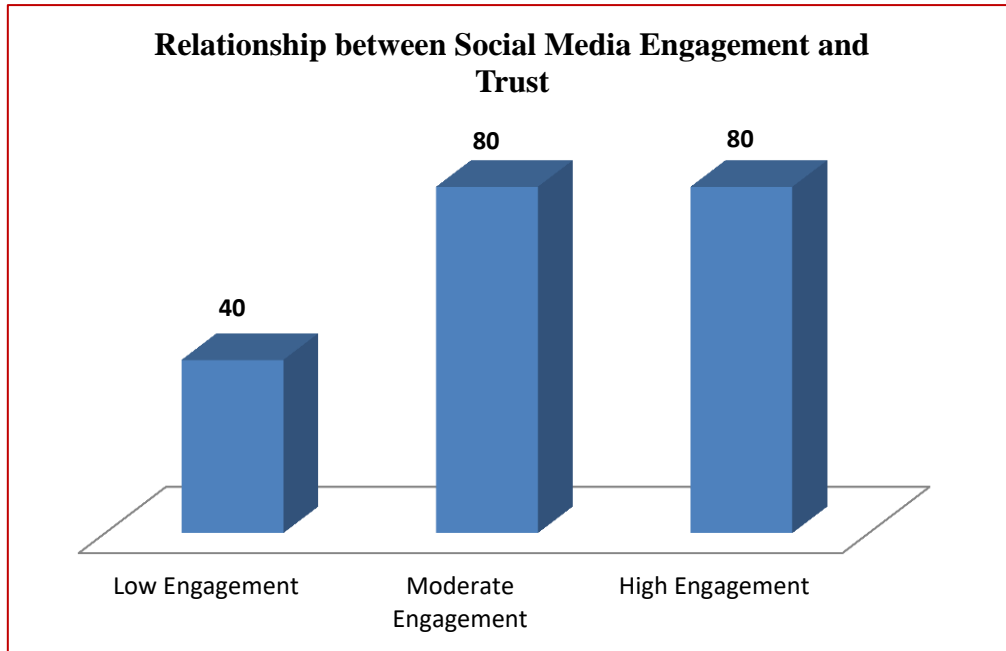


The ethical branding elements of the above table show direct impact on consumer trust which the respondents demonstrated through their assessment. The majority of participants either agree or strongly agree that natural ingredients and transparency and eco-friendly packaging and cruelty-free practices make them trust brands like Mamaearth more. The mean scores above 4.0 for all variables reflect a strong positive perception of ethical branding. Consumers demonstrate high awareness of ethical practices which they see as essential for their purchasing decisions this results in increased trust relationships with brands which last over time.

### 4.4 Relationship between Social Media Engagement and Trust

Level of Social Media Engagement	Number of Respondents	Mean Trust Score (1-5)	Standard Deviation
Low Engagement	40	2.8	0.65
Moderate Engagement	80	3.6	0.58

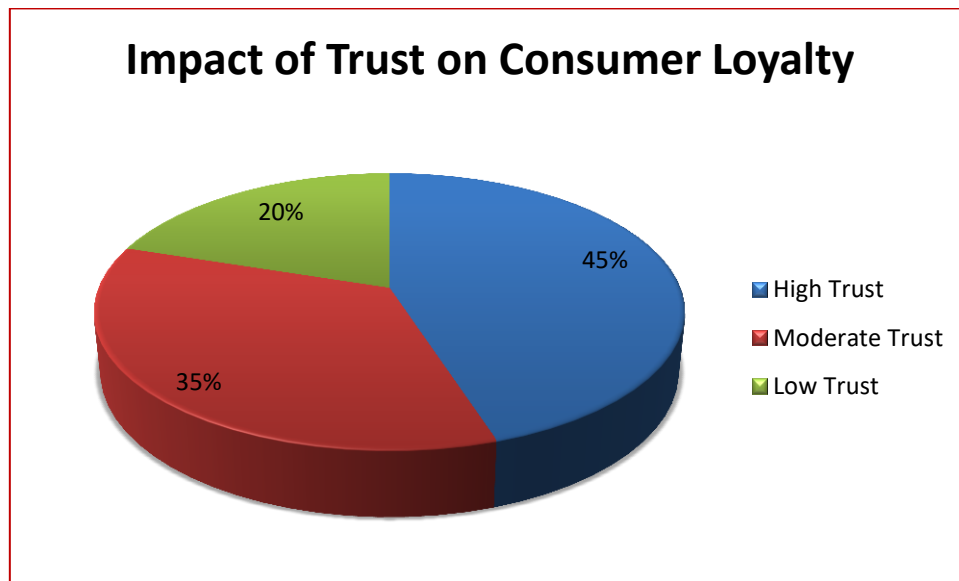
High Engagement	80	4.3	0.52
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	—	—



The above table demonstrates that social media engagement creates a direct relationship which leads to increased consumer trust. Respondents with low engagement show a comparatively lower mean trust score (2.8), whereas those with moderate engagement demonstrate higher trust (3.6). Social media platforms show their highest trust level which reaches 4.3 among users who engage with their content. The study shows that when consumers interact with brand content through likes and comments and shares their trust in the brand increases. The research methodology establishes that social media engagement functions as a major factor which helps consumers build trust in brands such as Mamaearth and thus creates a favorable impression of those brands.

#### 4.5 Impact of Trust on Consumer Loyalty

Level of Consumer Trust	Number of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Level of Brand Loyalty
High Trust	90	45%	High Loyalty
Moderate Trust	70	35%	Moderate Loyalty
Low Trust	40	20%	Low Loyalty
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100%</b>	—



The above table indicates that consumer trust has a strong positive relationship with brand loyalty among Mamaearth respondents. The data shows that 45% of respondents with high trust levels show high loyalty which demonstrates that trust matters for their repeat purchases and brand choice. The respondents with moderate trust display 35% loyalty which shows that moderate trust has partial effects on their loyalty. The data shows that 20% of respondents with low trust show low loyalty which demonstrates that lack of trust leads to customer churn. The study results confirm that consumer trust operates as a key factor which enhances brand loyalty according to the research methodology assumption.

#### 4.7 Interpretation of Results

The research findings show that ethical branding establishes a direct relationship with social media engagement which generates consumer trust that results in brand loyalty. The practice of ethical branding through transparent business operations and environmentally sustainable products and honest business conduct establishes consumer trust. Social media platforms enable customers to interact with brands while developing brand awareness and emotional ties to those brands. The study results show that people develop stronger brand loyalty when they experience higher levels of trust which leads to their repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth. Consumers see Mamaearth as a trustworthy and responsible brand which increases their brand loyalty. The study results show that both ethical business practices and digital marketing activities drive consumer behavior in the beauty industry.

### 5. DISCUSSION

The research study shows that ethical branding and social media presence have the ability to create consumer trust and loyalty with their customers. The research results show that three factors including transparency and environmentally friendly practices and online user engagement lead to higher product value for consumers. The current study results support previous research which identified trust as the main factor driving customer loyalty while the study expands understanding by connecting ethical branding with digital customer engagement. Theoretical implications show that consumer behavior research together with relationship marketing theories provide essential insights into current brand-consumer relationship dynamics. The research recommends that Mamaearth should maintain its dedication to ethical principles while developing engaging social media content to enhance consumer

trust and increase customer loyalty which will help the company achieve a competitive edge in the beauty market.

## 6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The study concludes that ethical branding and social media engagement play a vital role in building consumer trust and enhancing brand loyalty. Consumers show a growing preference for brands which conduct business transparently and sustainably while sustaining digital contact with their customers through online platforms. Marketers need to implement ethical standards while they should deliver transparent messages to their customers and use interactive social media methods to connect with their audience. The beauty industry requires a policy framework which should support authentic marketing practices and environmentally responsible manufacturing methods. Future research can expand the scope by including larger and more diverse samples which will allow researchers to study multiple brands while examining cultural factors and technological developments that shape consumer behavior and loyalty.

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