

The Impact of Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty: The Moderating Role of Brand Trust in Glad2Glow Skincare Products in Medan City

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, Brand Trust, Consumer Loyalty, Glad2Glow

Received : 15 April

Revised : 20 May

Accepted: 30 June

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the effect of Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty through Brand Trust among Glad2Glow skincare consumers in Medan City. This research employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory design involving 160 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The measurement model met the requirements of validity and reliability, with all indicators demonstrating satisfactory psychometric properties. The results indicate that Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement have positive and significant effects on Brand Trust and Consumer Loyalty. Brand Trust also positively and significantly influences Consumer Loyalty. Furthermore, Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Micro Community Marketing and Consumer Loyalty, as well as the relationship between Brand Engagement and Consumer Loyalty. The coefficient of determination shows that the model explains 35.6% of the variance in Brand Trust and 41.8% of the variance in Consumer Loyalty, both categorized as moderate. These findings suggest that strengthening community-based marketing activities, consumer engagement, and brand trust can effectively enhance consumer loyalty toward Glad2Glow skincare products in Medan City

INTRODUCTION

Marketing is recognized as one of the most important business functions that enables organizations to create value, build customer relationships, and achieve sustainable competitive advantage. According to Kotler, Keller, and Chernev (2022), modern marketing is no longer limited to promoting products and generating sales, but also focuses on developing long-term relationships with customers through meaningful interactions and customer-centered strategies. In the digital era, the rapid development of information technology and social media has transformed how companies communicate with consumers, making customer engagement and relationship-building critical determinants of business success.

The transformation of digital marketing has significantly influenced consumer behavior across various industries, including the skincare industry. Consumers today are more informed, connected, and actively involved in searching for product-related information before making purchasing decisions. Rather than relying solely on traditional advertising, consumers increasingly depend on online reviews, social media content, digital communities, and peer recommendations. This shift has encouraged companies to adopt more interactive and relationship-oriented marketing approaches to attract and retain customers (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

The skincare industry has become one of the fastest-growing sectors within the beauty market worldwide. In Indonesia, increasing awareness of skin health, changing lifestyles, and the growing influence of social media have contributed to substantial growth in skincare consumption. Market reports indicate that Indonesia's skincare market continues to expand and is expected to maintain positive growth over the coming years. The increasing number of local skincare brands entering the market has intensified competition, requiring companies not only to offer high-quality products but also to establish strong relationships with consumers to maintain long-term business sustainability.

In highly competitive markets, customer loyalty is considered a critical determinant of organizational success. Customer loyalty refers to a deeply held commitment to repurchase a preferred product or service consistently in the future despite situational influences and marketing efforts from competitors (Kotler & Keller, 2022). Loyal customers not only engage in repeat purchases but also provide positive word-of-mouth recommendations and demonstrate resistance to competitive offerings. Therefore, building and maintaining customer loyalty has become a strategic priority for companies operating in the skincare industry.

Glad2Glow is one of the emerging local skincare brands in Indonesia that actively utilizes digital platforms and social media to promote its products and interact with consumers. Through various product categories, including cleansers, toners, serums, moisturizers, sunscreens, and body care products, Glad2Glow has successfully attracted a considerable number of consumers, particularly among Generation Z and young adults. However, despite its growing popularity, preliminary survey results indicate that customer loyalty toward Glad2Glow products remains relatively low. Approximately 54% of

respondents stated that they were uncertain about continuing to purchase Glad2Glow products in the future, while more than half of the respondents were unwilling to consistently recommend the products to others. These findings suggest that customer loyalty toward Glad2Glow has not yet reached an optimal level and requires further investigation.

One factor that may influence customer loyalty is Micro Community Marketing. Micro Community Marketing refers to a marketing strategy that focuses on building and maintaining smaller, highly engaged communities that share common interests, values, or consumption experiences related to a brand (Febrian & Ahluwalia, 2021). Unlike mass marketing approaches, micro community marketing emphasizes personalized interactions, meaningful communication, and stronger emotional connections between brands and consumers. Through digital communities, brands can facilitate knowledge sharing, customer support, product discussions, and social interactions that strengthen customer relationships.

In the skincare industry, micro community marketing has become increasingly relevant because consumers frequently seek product information, skincare recommendations, and usage experiences from other users before making purchasing decisions. Previous studies have shown that micro community marketing positively influences customer trust, engagement, and loyalty by creating authentic interactions and fostering a sense of belonging among community members (Zhang et al., 2022; Wongsansukcharoen, 2022). However, preliminary surveys conducted among

Glad2Glow users in Medan revealed an interesting phenomenon. Although more than 90% of respondents perceived Glad2Glow's community activities positively, customer loyalty levels remained relatively low. This discrepancy indicates that participation in brand communities does not automatically translate into stronger customer loyalty.

Another important factor affecting customer loyalty is Brand Engagement. Brand engagement refers to the level of consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in interactions with a particular brand (Hollebeek, 2021). Engaged consumers tend to pay attention to brand-related information, actively participate in brand activities, interact with brand content, and develop emotional connections with the brand. In digital marketing environments, brand engagement has become an essential mechanism through which companies strengthen customer relationships and encourage long-term loyalty.

Several studies have demonstrated that brand engagement positively affects customer loyalty because engaged customers are more likely to develop emotional attachment and commitment toward a brand (Tuti & Sulistia, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, preliminary findings among Glad2Glow users indicate relatively low levels of brand engagement. More than 70% of respondents reported that they rarely follow Glad2Glow's social media accounts, pay attention to promotional content, or actively search for information about the brand. These findings suggest that consumers may use Glad2Glow products

without developing meaningful engagement with the brand itself, potentially limiting the development of long-term loyalty.

The effects of Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement on customer loyalty may not occur directly. Brand Trust may serve as an important moderating mechanism that strengthens or weakens these relationships. Brand trust refers to consumers' confidence that a brand will consistently deliver promised value, maintain product quality, and act in the best interests of consumers (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2022). In the skincare industry, trust is particularly important because consumers are concerned about product safety, effectiveness, ingredient quality, and potential risks associated with product usage.

Consumers who trust a brand are more likely to remain loyal, even when competing alternatives are available. Preliminary survey results among Glad2Glow consumers indicate that brand trust remains relatively moderate. More than half of respondents expressed doubts regarding product consistency, effectiveness, and the reliability of promotional information communicated by the brand. These findings suggest that trust-related issues may hinder the development of stronger customer loyalty despite the existence of active community marketing and engagement initiatives.

Previous studies have reported that Micro Community Marketing positively influences customer loyalty through stronger customer relationships and community interactions (Zhang et al., 2022; Damayanti, 2024; Lesmana, 2025). Similarly, Brand Engagement has been found to positively affect customer loyalty by increasing emotional attachment and customer commitment (Tuti & Sulistia, 2022; Pratama et al., 2024). Furthermore, Brand Trust has consistently been identified as an important determinant of customer loyalty (Hanaysha, 2022; Nandita et al., 2025).

However, empirical findings remain inconsistent. Fadhilah (2024) found that social media engagement does not always translate into customer loyalty because engagement activities may remain superficial and fail to create genuine commitment. Likewise, Londono and Rana (2022) reported inconsistent relationships between brand engagement and loyalty, particularly in high-risk consumption categories such as skincare products. Research investigating micro community marketing has also produced mixed findings, with some studies suggesting that community participation alone is insufficient to generate loyalty unless consumers develop strong trust toward the brand.

In addition, most previous studies have examined Brand Trust as a mediating variable between marketing activities and customer loyalty. Research specifically investigating Brand Trust as a moderating variable in the relationships between Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, and Customer Loyalty remains limited, particularly within the Indonesian skincare industry. This limitation is important because trust may determine whether community interactions and engagement activities effectively translate into long-term customer loyalty.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the marketing literature by integrating Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, Brand Trust, and

Customer Loyalty within the context of relationship marketing and digital consumer behavior. Practically, the findings are expected to provide valuable insights for Glad2Glow management in designing more effective community-based marketing strategies, strengthening consumer engagement, enhancing brand trust, and ultimately improving customer loyalty. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement on Customer Loyalty, with Brand Trust serving as a moderating variable among Glad2Glow skincare consumers in Medan City.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Micro Community Marketing on Brand Trust

Micro Community Marketing refers to a marketing strategy that focuses on building and nurturing small, highly engaged consumer communities through personalized communication, interaction, and shared experiences (Febrian & Ahluwalia, 2021). According to Relationship Marketing Theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), continuous interaction and relationship-building activities between firms and consumers foster trust and commitment. Through micro communities, consumers are exposed to authentic information, peer recommendations, and direct communication with brands, which can reduce uncertainty and strengthen trust toward the brand. Zhang et al. (2022), Damayanti (2024), and Lesmana (2025) found that Micro Community Marketing positively influences Brand Trust. Therefore, more effective Micro Community Marketing is expected to increase Brand Trust.

H1: Micro Community Marketing has a positive effect on Brand Trust.

Brand Engagement on Brand Trust

Brand Engagement refers to consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral investment in interactions with a brand (Hollebeek, 2021). According to Consumer Engagement Theory, consumers who actively engage with a brand tend to develop stronger emotional connections and more favorable evaluations toward the brand. Frequent interactions through social media, brand communities, and brand-related activities allow consumers to gain positive experiences that enhance trust. Algharabat et al. (2022), Islam and Rahman (2022), and Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2023) found that Brand Engagement positively influences Brand Trust. Therefore, higher Brand Engagement is expected to increase Brand Trust.

H2: Brand Engagement has a positive effect on Brand Trust

Micro Community Marketing on Consumer Loyalty

Micro Community Marketing enables consumers to participate in brand-related communities, share experiences, and establish social connections with other members. According to Social Identity Theory proposed by Tajfel and Turner (1986), individuals tend to develop loyalty toward groups and brands that become part of their social identity. Through active participation in micro communities, consumers may develop a stronger sense of belonging and attachment to the brand, which subsequently enhances loyalty. Wongsansukcharoen (2022), Zhang et al. (2022), and Xu and Hu (2022) found that

Micro Community Marketing positively influences Consumer Loyalty. Therefore, more effective Micro Community Marketing is expected to improve Consumer Loyalty.

H3: Micro Community Marketing has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty.

Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty

Brand Engagement reflects the intensity of consumers' interactions and emotional attachment toward a brand. According to Consumer Engagement Theory, engaged consumers tend to develop stronger psychological connections with brands, resulting in repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and long-term loyalty. Consumers who actively interact with a brand are more likely to remain committed and maintain favorable attitudes toward the brand. Tuti and Sulistia (2022), Dwivedi et al. (2023), and Pratama et al. (2024) found that Brand Engagement positively influences Consumer Loyalty.

Therefore, higher Brand Engagement is expected to increase Consumer Loyalty. H4: Brand Engagement has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty.

Brand Trust on Consumer Loyalty

Brand Trust refers to consumers' confidence that a brand will consistently fulfill its promises and deliver expected value (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2022). According to Commitment-Trust Theory proposed by Morgan and Hunt (1994), trust serves as a fundamental determinant of successful relationship marketing and long-term customer retention. Consumers who trust a brand are more likely to repurchase products, recommend the brand to others, and resist competitors' offerings. Hanaysha (2022), Nandita et al. (2025), and Ghorbanzadeh et al. (2023) found that Brand Trust positively influences Consumer Loyalty. Therefore, stronger Brand Trust is expected to improve Consumer Loyalty.

H5: Brand Trust has a positive effect on Consumer Loyalty.

The Moderating Role of Brand Trust in the Relationship between Micro Community Marketing and Consumer Loyalty

According to Commitment-Trust Theory, trust strengthens the effectiveness of relationship-building strategies by reducing uncertainty and encouraging long-term commitment. Micro Community Marketing facilitates interactions among consumers and brands; however, the impact of these interactions on loyalty may depend on the level of trust consumers have in the brand. Consumers who highly trust a brand are more likely to transform community participation into loyalty behaviors such as repeat purchases and recommendations. Zhang et al. (2022), Damayanti (2024), and Hanaysha (2022) suggested that trust strengthens the effectiveness of community-based marketing strategies. Therefore, Brand Trust is expected to strengthen the effect of Micro Community Marketing on Consumer Loyalty.

H6: Brand Trust positively moderates the effect of Micro Community Marketing on Consumer Loyalty.

The Moderating Role of Brand Trust in the Relationship between Brand Engagement and Consumer Loyalty

According to Social Exchange Theory proposed by Blau (1964), consumers who experience valuable and trustworthy relationships with brands tend to reciprocate through commitment and loyalty. Although Brand Engagement encourages interaction and emotional attachment, consumers may not become loyal unless they trust the brand. Trust provides confidence that the brand will continue to meet expectations, thereby strengthening the relationship between engagement and loyalty. Algharabat et al. (2022), Islam and Rahman (2022), and Hanaysha (2022) indicated that trust enhances the impact of engagement on customer behavioral outcomes. Therefore, Brand Trust is expected to strengthen the effect of Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty.

H7: Brand Trust positively moderates the effect of Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty.

Based on the theoretical foundations, empirical evidence, and findings from previous studies, this research proposes that Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement are important marketing mechanisms that influence Consumer Loyalty. Effective micro community marketing strategies enable brands to establish closer relationships with consumers through personalized interactions, community participation, and shared experiences. Similarly, higher levels of brand engagement encourage consumers to develop stronger emotional, cognitive, and behavioral connections with a brand, which may increase their commitment and loyalty.

However, the effects of Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty may vary depending on consumers' level of trust in the brand. Brand Trust reflects consumers' confidence in a brand's ability to consistently deliver its promises, maintain product quality, and provide reliable benefits. Consumers who trust a brand are more likely to transform their community participation and engagement experiences into long-term loyalty behaviors, including repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and resistance to competing brands.

Therefore, Brand Trust is expected to play an important moderating role in strengthening the relationships between Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, and Consumer Loyalty. Higher levels of Brand Trust may enhance the positive influence of Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty, whereas lower levels of Brand Trust may weaken these relationships. Based on these relationships, the conceptual framework of this study is presented as follows.

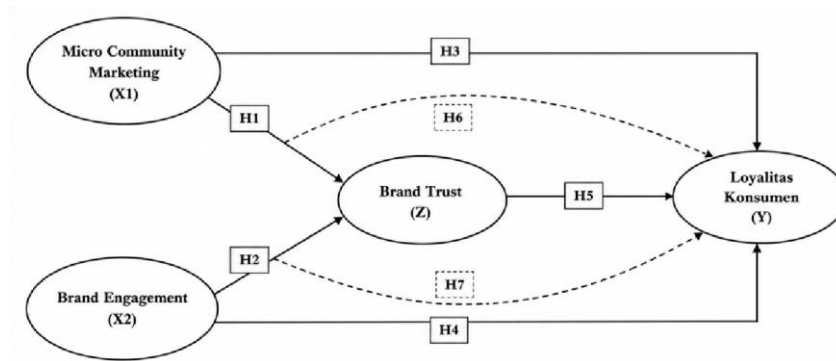


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the effect of Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty with Brand Trust as a moderating variable. The study was conducted from March 2026 to Juni 2026 in Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The population consisted of consumers who had purchased and used Glad2Glow skincare products in Medan City. Since the exact population size was unknown, the sample size was determined based on the minimum requirement for Structural Equation Modeling using Partial Least Squares (PLS-SEM). According to Hair et al. (2022), the recommended sample size ranges from five to ten times the number of indicators used in the study. With 32 indicators employed in this research, a sample size of 160 respondents was considered adequate. Therefore, this study involved 160 respondents selected through a purposive sampling technique. The respondents were required to meet the following criteria: (1) have used Glad2Glow skincare products for at least three months, (2) reside in Medan City, and (3) be at least 17 years old.

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Micro Community Marketing was measured using eight indicators, namely personalized interaction, community participation, information sharing, relationship building, social connection, community responsiveness, customer involvement, and community value. Brand Engagement was measured using eight indicators consisting of attention, interest, enthusiasm, interaction, participation, emotional attachment, brand involvement, and behavioral engagement. Brand Trust was measured using eight indicators, including reliability, credibility, honesty, consistency, product safety, confidence, dependability, and trustworthiness. Consumer Loyalty was measured using eight indicators, namely repurchase intention, repeat purchase behavior, recommendation intention, positive word-of-mouth, retention, commitment, brand preference, and resistance to competitors. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The measurement model was evaluated through convergent validity using outer loadings and Average

Variance Extracted (AVE), discriminant validity using the Fornell–Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), and reliability assessment through Composite Reliability and Cronbach’s Alpha. Furthermore, the structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and bootstrapping procedures. The moderating effect of Brand Trust on the relationships between Micro Community Marketing and Consumer Loyalty, as well as between Brand Engagement and Consumer Loyalty, was examined through interaction effects generated within the PLS-SEM framework.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the results of the empirical analysis conducted to investigate the influence of Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty, as well as the moderating role of Brand Trust. The analysis was performed using the Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) technique to assess the strength and significance of the hypothesized relationships among the study variables. The conceptual model includes Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement as independent variables, Brand Trust as a moderating variable, and Consumer Loyalty as the dependent variable. The assessment of both the measurement model and the structural model provides comprehensive evidence regarding the effectiveness of community-based marketing strategies, consumer engagement, and brand trust in enhancing consumer loyalty toward Glad2Glow skincare products in Medan City.

Validity and Reliability

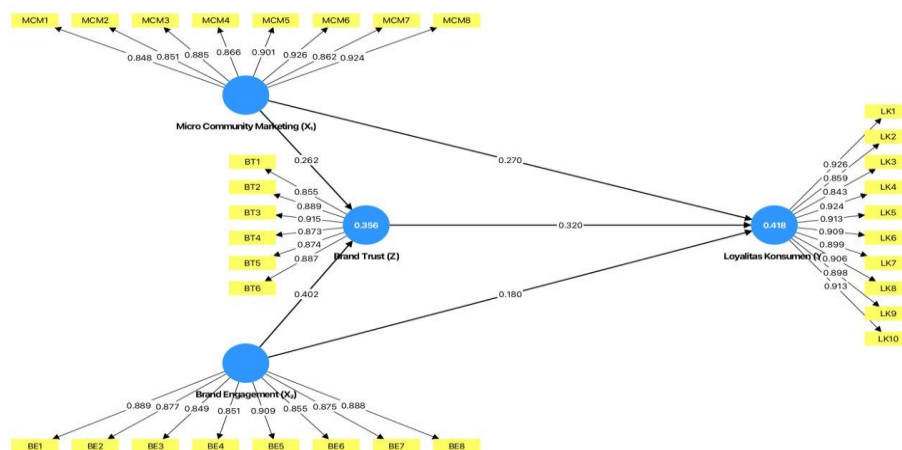


Figure 2. Loading Factor Full Model

Figure 2 presents the Full Model Loading Factor, illustrating the relationships between latent variables and their respective indicators. The model consists of four latent variables, namely Micro Community Marketing (X1), Brand Engagement (X2), Brand Trust (Z), and Consumer Loyalty (Y), where each construct is measured using several indicators. Micro Community Marketing is measured by 8 indicators (MCM1–MCM8), Brand Engagement is measured by 8 indicators (BE1–BE8), Brand Trust is measured by

6 indicators (BT1–BT6), and Consumer Loyalty is measured by 10 indicators (LK1– LK10). The model also depicts the structural relationships among variables, where Brand Trust serves as a moderating variable in the relationships between Micro Community Marketing and Consumer Loyalty, as well as between Brand Engagement and Consumer Loyalty.

The loading factor values shown on each indicator represent the extent to which the indicators reflect their corresponding latent constructs. Higher loading factor values indicate stronger contributions of the indicators in measuring the latent variables. Based on the model, the loading factor values for Micro Community Marketing range from 0.848 to 0.926, indicating that all indicators adequately represent the construct. The loading factor values for Brand Engagement range from 0.849 to 0.909, while the loading factor values for Brand Trust range from 0.855 to 0.915. Furthermore, the loading factor values for Consumer Loyalty range from 0.843 to 0.926. Since all loading factor values exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, all indicators are considered valid and suitable for measuring their respective latent variables.

The path coefficient values displayed between the latent variables represent the magnitude and direction of the structural relationships examined in this study. The model shows that Micro Community Marketing positively influences Brand Trust with a path coefficient of 0.262, while Brand Engagement positively influences Brand Trust with a path coefficient of 0.402. Furthermore, Micro Community Marketing positively influences Consumer Loyalty with a path coefficient of 0.270, whereas Brand Engagement positively influences Consumer Loyalty with a path coefficient of 0.180. Brand Trust also positively influences Consumer Loyalty with a path coefficient of 0.320. These findings indicate that all structural relationships in the proposed model have positive directions.

In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) values presented within the endogenous constructs indicate the proportion of variance explained by the predictor variables in the structural model. The R^2 value for Brand Trust is 0.356, indicating that 35.6% of the variance in Brand Trust can be explained by Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement. Meanwhile, the R^2 value for Consumer Loyalty is 0.418, indicating that 41.8% of the variance in Consumer Loyalty can be explained by Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, and Brand Trust, while the remaining variance is explained by other variables outside the scope of this study. Overall, the model demonstrates satisfactory measurement and structural properties and provides initial evidence regarding the relationships among Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, Brand Trust, and Consumer Loyalty among Glad2Glow skincare consumers in Medan City.

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test

Variable	Indicator	MCM (X ₁)	BE (X ₂)	BT (Z)	LK (Y)
Micro Community Marketing (X₁)	MCM1	0.848			
	MCM2	0.851			
	MCM3	0.885			
	MCM4	0.866			
	MCM5	0.901			
	MCM6	0.926			
	MCM7	0.862			
	MCM8	0.924			
Brand Engagement (X₂)	BE1		0.889		
	BE2		0.877		
	BE3		0.849		
	BE4		0.851		
	BE5		0.909		
	BE6		0.855		
	BE7		0.875		
	BE8		0.888		
Brand Trust (Z)	BT1			0.855	
	BT2			0.889	
	BT3			0.915	
	BT4			0.873	
	BT5			0.874	
	BT6			0.887	
Loyalitas Konsumen (Y)	LK1				0.926
	LK2				0.859
	LK3				0.843
	LK4				0.924
	LK5				0.913
	LK6				0.909
	LK7				0.899
	LK8				0.906
	LK9				0.898
	LK10				0.913

The validity and reliability test results presented in Table 1 indicate that the measurement model demonstrates satisfactory psychometric properties. All indicators have outer loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong convergent validity and adequate indicator reliability. The loading factor values for Micro Community Marketing range from 0.848 to 0.926, Brand Engagement range from 0.849 to 0.909, Brand Trust range from 0.855 to 0.915, and Consumer Loyalty range from 0.843 to 0.926. These results confirm that all indicators are capable of representing their respective latent constructs and meet the recommended criteria for convergent validity. The findings further indicate that all constructs satisfy the validity requirements because each

indicator loading exceeds the minimum threshold of 0.70 suggested by Hair et al. (2022). The highest loading value is observed for indicator MCM6 and LK1, both recording values of 0.926 under the Micro Community Marketing and Consumer Loyalty constructs, respectively. Meanwhile, the lowest loading value is observed for indicator LK3 (0.843) under the Consumer Loyalty construct. Nevertheless, all loading values remain substantially above the acceptable threshold, demonstrating that the indicators provide reliable and valid measures of their corresponding constructs.

Furthermore, the Micro Community Marketing construct exhibits consistently high loading values ranging from 0.848 to 0.926, indicating that all indicators strongly reflect consumers' perceptions regarding personalized interactions, community participation, information sharing, and relationship-building activities within Glad2Glow communities. Similarly, the Brand Engagement construct demonstrates loading values between 0.849 and 0.909, suggesting that the indicators effectively capture consumers' cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement toward the Glad2Glow brand.

The Brand Trust construct also shows strong indicator reliability, with loading values ranging from 0.855 to 0.915, confirming that the indicators adequately represent consumers' confidence, reliability perceptions, credibility evaluations, and trust toward Glad2Glow skincare products. Likewise, the Consumer Loyalty construct records loading values between 0.843 and 0.926, indicating that the indicators successfully measure consumers' loyalty behaviors, including repurchase intentions, positive word-of-mouth, commitment, retention, and resistance to competing brands.

Overall, these findings confirm that the measurement model satisfies the convergent validity requirements and that all indicators are appropriate for further analysis in the structural model. Therefore, no indicators need to be removed from the model, and all constructs can be retained for subsequent reliability assessment, discriminant validity evaluation, structural model analysis, and hypothesis testing procedures.

Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)

Table 2. Discriminant validity - Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)

Variable	Brand Engagement (X ₂)	Brand Trust (Z)	Consumer Loyalty (Y)	Micro Community Marketing (X ₁)
Brand Engagement (X ₂)	0.887			
Brand Trust (Z)	0.587	0.882		
Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.536	0.577	0.899	
Micro Community Marketing (X ₁)	0.627	0.528	0.555	0.883

Based on Table 2 the discriminant validity test results indicate that all constructs demonstrate acceptable discriminant validity, suggesting that each construct is empirically distinct from the others. The correlation value between Consumer Loyalty and Brand Trust is 0.577, indicating a moderate positive relationship between both constructs. This finding suggests that consumers with higher levels of trust toward the Glad2Glow brand tend to exhibit stronger

loyalty behaviors, including repurchase intentions, positive word-of-mouth, and commitment toward the brand. Furthermore, Consumer Loyalty shows a correlation of 0.536 with Brand Engagement and 0.555 with Micro Community Marketing, indicating moderate positive relationships between Consumer Loyalty and both marketing-related constructs. These results suggest that consumers who actively engage with the brand and participate in brand-related communities are more likely to develop loyalty toward Glad2Glow skincare products. The slightly higher correlation between Consumer Loyalty and Micro Community Marketing implies that community-based interactions may play a stronger role in fostering loyalty compared to engagement activities alone. In addition, Brand Trust demonstrates a correlation of 0.587 with Brand Engagement, indicating a relatively strong positive relationship. This finding implies that consumers who frequently interact with the brand, participate in brand-related activities, and develop emotional connections with the brand are more likely to trust Glad2Glow products. Similarly, Brand Trust has a correlation of 0.528 with Micro Community Marketing, suggesting that community participation and information sharing within consumer communities contribute positively to building trust toward the brand.

The strongest relationship in the model is found between Brand Engagement and Micro Community Marketing, with a correlation value of 0.627. This finding indicates that consumers who actively participate in Glad2Glow communities tend to exhibit higher levels of engagement with the brand. The strong association between these constructs highlights the importance of community-based marketing activities in encouraging consumer involvement and interaction. Overall, all correlation values remain below the recommended threshold of 0.90, indicating that the constructs are conceptually and empirically distinct from one another and that no multicollinearity issues exist within the model. Therefore, all constructs satisfy the discriminant validity requirements and are considered appropriate for further structural model evaluation and hypothesis testing procedures involving Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, Brand Trust, and Consumer Loyalty.

R-Square

Table 3. R Square

Variable	R-square	Adjusted R-square
Brand Trust (Z)	0.356	0.348
Loyalitas Konsumen (Y)	0.418	0.407

Based on Table 3, the coefficient of determination (R^2) results indicate that the structural model has moderate explanatory power. The R-square value for Consumer Loyalty is 0.418 (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.407$), indicating that Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, and Brand Trust explain 41.8% of the variance in Consumer Loyalty, while the remaining 58.2% is explained by other factors outside the model. Likewise, the R-square value for Brand Trust is 0.356 (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.348$), meaning that Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement explain 35.6% of the variance in Brand Trust, whereas 64.4% is influenced by other variables.

According to Hair et al. (2022), R-square values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 are categorized as substantial, moderate, and weak, respectively. Therefore, the R-square values for Consumer Loyalty (0.418) and Brand Trust (0.356) fall within the moderate category, indicating that the proposed model has satisfactory predictive capability.

Overall, these findings suggest that Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement play important roles in building Brand Trust, while Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, and Brand Trust jointly contribute to enhancing Consumer Loyalty toward Glad2Glow skincare products in Medan City. The remaining unexplained variance may be influenced by factors such as Brand Image, Product Quality, Customer Satisfaction, Brand Experience, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM).

F-Square

Table 4. F Square

Variable	Brand Engagement (X ₂)	Brand Trust (Z)	Consumer Loyalty (Y)	Micro Community Marketing (X ₁)
Brand Engagement (X ₂)	-	0.161	0.031	-
Brand Trust (Z)	-	-	0.113	-
Consumer Loyalty (Y)	-	-	-	-
Micro Community Marketing (X ₁)	-	0.068	0.075	-

Based on Table 4, the effect size (f^2) results indicate the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous variables in the structural model. According to Hair et al. (2022), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. The results show that Brand Engagement has a medium effect on Brand Trust ($f^2 = 0.161$), indicating that Brand Engagement makes a meaningful contribution to explaining consumers' trust toward Glad2Glow skincare products. In contrast, Micro Community Marketing has a small effect on Brand Trust ($f^2 = 0.068$), suggesting a relatively modest contribution to building consumer trust.

Furthermore, Brand Trust has a small effect on Consumer Loyalty ($f^2 = 0.113$), indicating that trust contributes positively to consumer loyalty, although its effect size remains limited. Similarly, Micro Community Marketing has a small effect on Consumer Loyalty ($f^2 = 0.075$), while Brand Engagement has the smallest effect on Consumer Loyalty ($f^2 = 0.031$). These findings suggest that both community-based marketing activities and consumer engagement contribute to loyalty formation, but their individual effects are relatively modest.

Overall, the findings indicate that Brand Engagement is the strongest predictor of Brand Trust in the model, while Brand Trust exerts the largest influence on Consumer Loyalty compared to the other direct predictors. These results highlight the importance of strengthening consumer engagement as a strategy to build trust, which subsequently contributes to increasing consumer loyalty toward Glad2Glow skincare products in Medan City.

Path Coefficients

Table 5. Path Coefficients

Research Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
Direct Effects						
Micro Community Marketing (X ₁) → Brand Trust (Z)	0.262	0.263	0.084	3.101	0.000	Accepted
Brand Engagement (X ₂) → Brand Trust (Z)	0.402	0.403	0.085	4.729	0.000	Accepted
Micro Community Marketing (X ₁) → Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.270	0.270	0.083	3.257	0.001	Accepted
Brand Engagement (X ₂) → Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.180	0.181	0.083	2.155	0.000	Accepted
Brand Trust (Z) → Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.320	0.321	0.076	4.234	0.000	Accepted
Indirect Effects						
Micro Community Marketing (X ₁) → Brand Trust (Z) → Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.084	0.085	0.036	2.333	0.020	Accepted
Brand Engagement (X ₂) → Brand Trust (Z) → Consumer Loyalty (Y)	0.129	0.129	0.041	3.145	0.000	Accepted

Based on Table 5, the hypothesis testing results indicate that all direct effect relationships in the proposed model are positive and statistically significant. Micro Community Marketing has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.262$, $t = 3.101$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that stronger community-based marketing activities contribute to increasing consumers' trust toward Glad2Glow skincare products. Similarly, Brand Engagement has a positive and significant effect on Brand Trust ($\beta = 0.402$, $t = 4.729$, $p < 0.05$), suggesting that consumers who actively interact and engage with the brand are more likely to develop higher levels of trust. Among the predictors of Brand Trust, Brand Engagement demonstrates the strongest influence. Furthermore, Micro Community Marketing positively and significantly affects Consumer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.270$, $t = 3.257$, $p < 0.05$), indicating that active participation in brand communities contributes to stronger consumer loyalty. Brand Engagement also has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.180$, $t = 2.155$, $p < 0.05$), implying that engaged consumers are more likely to maintain long-term relationships with the brand. In addition, Brand Trust positively influences Consumer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.320$, $t = 4.234$, $p < 0.05$), showing that consumers who trust the brand tend to exhibit higher levels of loyalty through repeat purchases, positive recommendations, and commitment to the brand. Among the direct effects on Consumer Loyalty, Brand Trust has the strongest influence.

The indirect effect results further reveal that Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Micro Community Marketing and Consumer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.084$, $t = 2.333$, $p = 0.020$). Likewise, Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Engagement and Consumer Loyalty ($\beta = 0.129$, $t = 3.145$, $p < 0.05$). These findings indicate that Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement not only influence Consumer Loyalty directly but also indirectly through Brand Trust. Moreover, the indirect effect of Brand Engagement on Consumer Loyalty through Brand Trust is stronger than that of Micro Community Marketing, highlighting the important role of consumer engagement in building trust and fostering long-term loyalty toward Glad2Glow skincare products in Medan City. Overall, all proposed hypotheses are accepted, confirming that Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, and Brand Trust play important roles in enhancing Consumer Loyalty. The findings also emphasize that Brand Trust serves as a significant mediating mechanism that strengthens the impact of marketing activities on consumer loyalty.

DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that Micro Community Marketing has a positive and significant effect on both Brand Trust and Consumer Loyalty among Glad2Glow skincare consumers in Medan City. Based on the field findings, respondents perceived that Glad2Glow actively builds close relationships with consumers through digital communities, skincare discussions, educational content, and authentic user reviews. These activities enable consumers to obtain credible information regarding product quality and effectiveness while fostering a sense of belonging within the community. As a result, consumers become more confident in the brand and are more likely to remain loyal through repeat purchases and positive recommendations. These findings support Relationship Marketing Theory, which emphasizes that continuous interaction and relationship-building activities strengthen trust and long-term consumer relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The results are consistent with previous studies indicating that micro community marketing positively influences brand trust and consumer loyalty (Zhang et al., 2022).

The findings also indicate that Brand Engagement has a positive and significant effect on both Brand Trust and Consumer Loyalty. Based on the field findings, consumers who actively interact with Glad2Glow through social media, product reviews, promotional content, and online discussions tend to develop stronger confidence in the brand. Frequent engagement allows consumers to become more familiar with the brand, understand product benefits, and perceive the company as responsive to consumer needs. Consequently, engaged consumers are more likely to maintain long-term relationships with the brand and exhibit loyalty behaviors. These findings support Consumer Engagement Theory, which explains that cognitive, emotional, and behavioral engagement strengthens consumers' attachment and trust toward a brand (Hollebeek, 2021). The findings are in line with previous studies reporting that brand engagement positively contributes to brand trust and consumer loyalty (Algharabat et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Loyalty and represents the strongest direct predictor of loyalty in the research model. The field findings indicate that consumers trust Glad2Glow because of its consistent product quality, perceived product safety, transparent communication, and positive user experiences. Consumers who trust the brand are more willing to repurchase products, recommend them to others, and remain committed despite the availability of competing skincare brands. This finding confirms that trust plays a central role in maintaining long-term consumer relationships within the skincare industry, where consumers are highly concerned about product effectiveness and safety. These findings support Commitment-Trust Theory, which identifies trust as a fundamental determinant of consumer loyalty and relationship continuity (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). The results are also consistent with previous studies showing that brand trust significantly enhances consumer loyalty (Hanaysha, 2022).

The indirect effect analysis further demonstrates that Brand Trust significantly mediates the relationship between Micro Community Marketing and Consumer Loyalty. This finding implies that community-based marketing activities do not merely influence loyalty directly but also enhance loyalty by increasing consumers' trust in the brand. Through community interactions, consumers gain valuable information, receive recommendations from fellow users, and observe positive experiences shared by other community members. These experiences strengthen trust, which subsequently encourages loyalty behaviors such as repeat purchases and positive word-of-mouth. The findings support Relationship Marketing Theory, which argues that trust is an essential outcome of relationship-building efforts and an important mechanism in creating loyal customers (Morgan & Hunt, 1994)).

Finally, Brand Trust also significantly mediates the relationship between Brand Engagement and Consumer Loyalty. The results indicate that consumers who actively engage with Glad2Glow content and activities develop stronger trust in the brand, which subsequently leads to higher loyalty. Interestingly, the indirect effect of Brand Engagement through Brand Trust is stronger than that of Micro Community Marketing, suggesting that engagement plays a more influential role in fostering trust and loyalty. Consumers who frequently interact with the brand tend to perceive Glad2Glow as more credible, reliable, and responsive, thereby strengthening their commitment to the brand. These findings support Social Exchange Theory, which explains that positive interactions create reciprocal relationships that encourage commitment and loyalty (Blau, 1964). The results are consistent with previous studies demonstrating that brand trust mediates the relationship between brand engagement and consumer loyalty (Algharabat et al., 2022).

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, Micro Community Marketing and Brand Engagement have positive and significant effects on Brand Trust and Consumer Loyalty among Glad2Glow skincare consumers in Medan City. The results indicate that consumers who actively participate in Glad2Glow communities, engage with skincare-related content, and interact with the brand through social media tend to develop higher levels of trust toward the brand. Furthermore, Brand Trust has a positive and significant effect on Consumer Loyalty and serves as a significant mediating variable in the relationships between Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, and Consumer Loyalty. These findings demonstrate that consumer trust is a key factor that transforms community participation and brand engagement into long-term loyalty toward Glad2Glow products.

The findings suggest that Glad2Glow should prioritize strategies that strengthen consumer trust through educational content, authentic user reviews, responsive communication, and active community management. Since Brand Engagement was found to have the strongest influence on Brand Trust, the company should increase interactive activities on digital platforms such as Instagram, TikTok, and online skincare communities. In addition, maintaining product quality, transparency of ingredients, and consistency of product performance is essential to sustain consumer trust and encourage repeat purchases, positive word-of-mouth, and long-term consumer loyalty in the increasingly competitive skincare market in Medan City.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the research was conducted only among Glad2Glow skincare consumers in Medan City, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to consumers in other cities, regions, or skincare brands. Second, this study focused only on Micro Community Marketing, Brand Engagement, Brand Trust, and Consumer Loyalty, while other factors such as Brand

Image, Customer Satisfaction, Product Quality, Perceived Value, Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM), Influencer Credibility, and Brand Experience may also influence consumer loyalty. Third, this study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to capture changes in consumer trust, engagement, and loyalty over time.

Therefore, future research is recommended to expand the research setting by involving consumers from different regions, demographic groups, and skincare brands to improve the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are also encouraged to incorporate additional variables, particularly Brand Image, Customer Satisfaction, Product Quality, and Electronic Word-of-Mouth (e-WOM), which may provide a more comprehensive explanation of consumer loyalty behavior. Furthermore, applying longitudinal research designs and comparing local and international skincare brands may offer deeper insights into how community-based marketing activities, consumer engagement, and brand trust influence consumer loyalty in different market contexts.

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