

How Green Brand Love Mediates Green Brand Loyalty in Eco-Friendly Cosmetics ?

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ABSTRACT

In the increasingly competitive eco-friendly cosmetics market, building sustainability-based consumer loyalty presents an important challenge. This study aims to analyse the effects of brand popularity (BP), brand authenticity (BAUNT) and green brand trust (GBT) on green brand love (GBL), as well as their direct and indirect effects on green brand loyalty (GBLOY). A quantitative design was adopted, involving 412 female consumers of green cosmetic products in Batam, Indonesia, selected using purposive sampling. Data were analyzed using SmartPLS 4 to evaluate the measurement and structural models, while SPSS was used for descriptive statistics. Results indicate that BP, BAUNT and GBT have significant positive effects on GBL and GBLOY. Furthermore, GBL partially mediates the relationships between BP, BAUNT and GBT with GBLOY. These findings demonstrate that both cognitive (brand popularity, authenticity, and trust) and affective (green brand love) processes jointly shape consumer loyalty in sustainability-oriented markets. The study contributes theoretically by extending Commitment–Trust Theory in the context of green cosmetics branding and offers practical insights for persuading environmentally conscious consumers through authentic, trustworthy, and emotionally engaging brand strategies.

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Introduction

As global concern with sustainability and environmental preservation intensifies, a wide range of industries has introduced more responsible standards of operation. The eco-friendly cosmetics sector ranks among the most dynamic industries in the embrace of sustainable products within this movement [1], [2]. The increased interest in environmental issues among consumers, driven by concerns such as the effects of climate change, pollution, and ethical sourcing, has redefined consumer behavior and, in turn, caused a rise in the market for ecologically friendly and sustainable cosmetics [3], [4]. The result is that green cosmetics are no longer only evaluated based on performance metrics, but also according to environmental responsibility and brand transparency, they currently serve as the fundamental tenets of the brand. Meanwhile, this increased attention has led to a worldwide growth in adherence to sustainable goods and environmentally sensitive actions in various sectors [5].

Research in green marketing has also proposed the framework of green brand love, in where the emotional ties consumers build develop with brands that engage in green practices is a critical affective construct. The green cosmetic brands available to consumers are likely to have an impact on the consumer-environment relationship, which will be reflected in their emotional and psychological harmony with the environmental ideals advertised by these brands [6]. It is recognized that such emotional bonds form one of the primary triggers of the green brand loyalty, that is, the long-term consumer commitment to brands characterized by their dedication to ecological integrity [7]. However, the key drivers and mediating mechanisms of green brand loyalty remain insufficiently explored, especially in the green cosmetic industry, where emotional attachment and value congruence play a significant role. Brand popularity, authenticity, and trust are well-established as key determinants of consumer loyalty by classical branding scholarship [8], [9], [10], [11].

Although these constructs have attracted considerable research, their specific functions concerning sustainability-oriented branding, and most importantly, within the green cosmetics industry, remain underdeveloped in sustainability-oriented branding research. The popularity of the brand may increase preference; however, brand popularity does not consistently relate to green brand loyalty [12]. Similarly, brand authenticity, traditionally linked to a certain level of transparency, consistency, and harmony between expressed and pursued values, was established to generate both emotional connection and trust; however, its theoretical role in the area of environmentally responsible loyalty was poorly developed [13]. Brand trust reduces skepticism and enhances credibility, which strengthens affective commitment and facilitates long-term loyalty, especially in markets vulnerable to greenwashing [14]. To frame the relational mechanisms under study, this research adopts the Commitment-Trust framework to examine how trust-based and commitment-driven dynamics support long-term brand engagement. Within the domain of green marketing, trust is a reflection of consumers' faith in a brand's sincerity and reliability, also green brand love encompasses the emotional aspect of dedication, namely, an authentic emotional bond rooted in shared environmental values.

These definitions are linked to the statement of the theory, which states that the success of relationships heavily relies on trust and commitment. In turn, the proposed model assumes that brand popularity and brand authenticity serve as antecedents that influence trust in green brands, which in turn reinforces love for green brands. Moreover, three relationships between these antecedents and green brand loyalty are assumed to be mediated by green brand love. The model couple's mental judgments about brand features and meanings with the affective aspects of emotional belongingness and offers a balanced explanation of how consumer loyalty is developed in the perspectives of sustainability-based markets a domain that remains underexplored in the literature on green cosmetics [15], [16]. As the use of sustainable marketing techniques grows, particularly among increasingly environmentally conscious consumers in the green cosmetic sector, the current investigation offers theoretically valuable insights into the investigation of green branding by applying the Commitment-Trust Theory. The findings' practical ramifications range

from managerial guidance on how to create authentic, dependable, and emotionally appealing associations with the consumers. This study enhances our understanding of loyalty formation in sustainability-driven markets by positioning green brand love as a central affective construct.

To support the analysis of the selected research phenomenon, the current study specifically references Morgan and Hunt's (1994) Commitment-Trust Theory within Relationship Marketing [17], [18]. The key within this framework is the argument the concept of trust and commitment acting as the primary key intervening factors in achieving long-term consumer-brand relationships. Trust refers to the buyer's expectation concerning the brand's trustworthiness and integrity, while commitment involves the consumer's intention aimed at continuing a beneficial association with the brand. In the scope of sustainability-oriented marketing, these constructs have assumed greater importance. Contemporary consumers progressively adopt environmentally responsible attitudes and are shifting towards brands that genuinely appeal to the concept of sustainability [19].

In this context, companies that transparently communicate their environmental policies and engage consumers in sustainability projects are more likely to cultivate consumer loyalty [20], [21]. Accordingly, this study presents a conceptual framework to explore how brand popularity, authenticity, and trust in green brands influence consumer loyalty. This study suggests that the impacts of brand popularity, authenticity, and trust in green businesses are channeled toward consumer loyalty through the intervening variable of green brand love [5], [8]. The degree of popularity of a brand is one of the factors that ultimately influences how customers view it. Customers' brand attachment is strengthened by companies with strong brand visibility because they typically have higher social awareness, credibility, as well as emotional appeal [7], [8], [22], [23]. This is well illustrated by Nike's global 'Just Do It' campaign, which demonstrates how a label can support emotional connection and help build loyalty [24]. One important element that has been found to drive emotional commitment to a brand is authenticity. Brands that demonstrate

authenticity through uniqueness, honesty, and alignment with their stated mission and values, are perceived as innately pertinent and reliable by consumers [25], [26].

Despite the acknowledged importance of emotional attachment, limited studies have empirically examined how cognitive brand perceptions (popularity, authenticity, trust) are transformed into durable loyalty through affective bonding in sustainability-oriented contexts. In particular, the mediating function of green brand love in emerging markets such as Indonesia remains conceptually underdeveloped. Addressing this gap, the present study proposes and tests a new cognitive-affective framework grounded in Commitment-Trust Theory to explain how green brand love mediates the effects of popularity, authenticity, and trust on loyalty in the eco-friendly cosmetics industry.

The empirical studies further indicate that authenticity also creates more emotional connections, thus increasing brand love, both in conventional and sustainability-focused environments [27], [28]. Customer's faith in the legitimacy of a business's environmental pledges and actions is reflected in green brand trust, which significantly affects emotional attachment. Companies that effectively implement CSR initiatives, particularly in addressing environmental issues, are positioned to enhance trustworthiness and nurture lasting loyalty among consumers [17], [29], [30]. Nevertheless, the positive performance of environmental communication alone is not enough: insincere or opportunistic green marketing may compromise trust and threaten affective commitment [31], [32], [33].

Hypotheses:

H1 : Brand popularity significantly influences green brand love.

H2 : Brand authenticity significantly influences green brand love.

H3 : Green brand trust significantly influences green brand love.

Green brand love is described as the feeling of attachment that is generated when people associate a brand with being environmentally responsible [34]. This connection extends beyond the level of functional satisfaction and encompasses admiration, pride, and alignment with individual environmental values [35], [36], [37]. This level of emotional connection can serve as an effective precursor to brand loyalty, persuading customers to stick with brands they like over the long run [38], [39]. Research evidence indicates that

affection for green brands positively influences both consumers' behaviors and attitudes toward loyalty. Deep-seated emotional engagement with a brand enhances repurchase intentions, discourages brand defection, and promotes consumer-driven brand advocacy [34], [40], [41]. Hypothesis:

H4 : Green brand love significantly influences green brand loyalty.

Popular brands, which are recognized as such, demonstrate an even greater ability to create consumer loyalty, as recognition drives the creation of trust and preference [42], [43], [44]. Khalid et al. (2023) discovered that customer loyalty is triggered by an increased level of satisfaction and attachment, which is boosted by brand popularity [8]. Leyton et al. (2021) reached a similar conclusion, demonstrating that brand popularity significantly increases loyalty to health-related initiatives [23]. However, Pereira et al. (2021) assert that there are mediating elements and that there isn't a globally consistent relationship between brand popularity and loyalty [48]. Authenticity refers to brands perceived as authentic due to continuity, transparency, and honesty in delivering on promises. These qualities promote trust and help build emotional connections [15], [49], [50]. Kang Juhee (2024) and Kim et al. (2024) further extended this idea by suggesting that groups and organizations that are better able to preserve an undistorted reputation are more likely to gain greater allegiance and commitment [54], [55].

In green brands, authenticity holds a high value because consumers are more attentive to whether firms truly uphold sustainable environmental practices [26]. Similar to the role of loyalty, building trust is essential to promoting brand loyalty; repeat business and consistent loyalty are more likely to come from consumers who think a company is trustworthy [56], [57], [58]. Regarding eco-friendly brands, consumer trust in the brand's environmental credibility enhances their confidence, which in turn deepens their emotional bond with the brand [59], [60], [61]. A recent study by [18], [19] demonstrates that trust in these green labels will foster a greater degree of loyalty, based on the enhancement of satisfaction and through encouraging relational interaction. Hypotheses:

H5 : Brand popularity significantly influences green brand loyalty.

H6 : Brand authenticity significantly influences green brand loyalty.

H7 : Green brand trust significantly influences green brand loyalty.

In a market characterized by uncertainty and shifting consumer behavior, building emotional connections has become a critical strategy for fostering brand loyalty [62], [63]. Green Brand Loyalty is thought to be influenced by Brand Popularity, Brand Authenticity, and Green Brand Trust, especially when Green Brand Love acts as a mediator [8], [58], [64] According to earlier research, brand love serves as a mediator, bolstering key components including popularity, authenticity, and trust as well as brand loyalty [7], [64], [65] This study uses Green Brand Love as a mediating variable to examine the relationship between Brand Popularity, Brand Authenticity, Green Brand Trust, and Green Brand Loyalty, building on previous theoretical findings. Hypotheses:

H8 : Green brand love mediates the positive influence of brand popularity on green brand loyalty.

H9 : Green brand love mediates the positive influence of brand authenticity on green brand loyalty.

H10 : Green brand love mediates the positive influence of green brand trust on green brand loyalty.

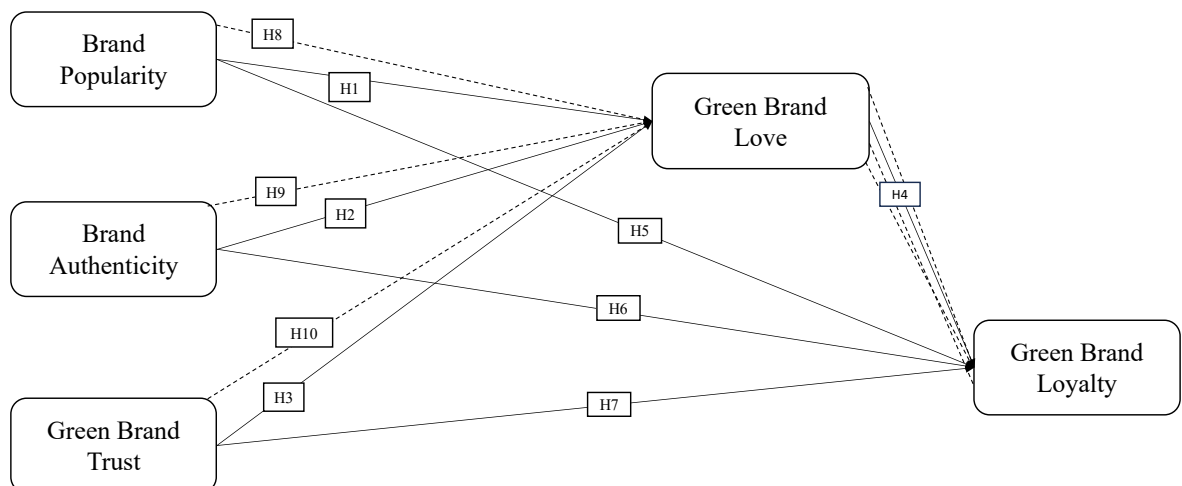


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

Method

This study was conducted in Indonesia, a developing country where environmentally friendly cosmetic products are increasingly shaping female consumers' preferences and purchasing behaviour. A purposive non-probability sampling technique was employed, based on two inclusion criteria: (1) female users aged 18–35 years residing in Batam City, and (2) actively using eco-friendly cosmetic brands for at least the past six months [66], [67]. To verify active use, participants were asked to indicate the specific green cosmetic brand currently being used as well as frequency of monthly usage in the screening section of the survey instrument. Respondents who selected “not currently using” or “use less than once per month” were excluded. A two-step approach was used in identifying relevant brands, by selecting cosmetic brands that clearly communicate sustainability claims and eco-friendly positioning in their marketing communications and digital media campaigns [45] [68]. Based on these criteria, five commonly known green cosmetic brands, The Body Shop, Innisfree, Ilia, RMS Beauty, and Kjaer Weis, were selected as references in the questionnaire.

The online survey was administered using Google Forms, after ethical clearance and instrument validation from two academic experts. The link was disseminated through WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn. While social media-based distribution may introduce sampling bias (e.g., over-representation of digitally active, urban, and middle-income users), mitigation steps were adopted by sharing survey invitations across diverse social groups and limiting access only to targeted users using screening questions. In total, 416 responses were received, and after cleaning and removing responses not meeting the inclusion criteria, 412 valid questionnaires were retained for final analysis.

All measurement items were assessed using a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Brand popularity (BP) was measured using four indicators adapted from [69], brand authenticity (BAUNT) through six indicators from [70], green brand trust (GBT) through four items adapted from [49], while green brand love (GBL) and

green brand loyalty (GBLOY) were assessed via seven and four indicators from [40], respectively. (See Table 1).

This study gathered demographic information from 412 respondents. All of the respondents shared the same female gender. The age range of 18 to 25 comprised the biggest group (72.3%, $n = 298$), then those between 26 and 30 years (15.8%, $n = 65$), 31 to 35 years (8%, $n = 33$), under 18 years (2.7%, $n = 11$), and over 35 years (1.2%, $n = 5$). Most respondents identified as private sector employees (50.9%, $n = 210$). The rest included students (32.3%, $n = 133$), civil servants (4.4%, $n = 18$), entrepreneurs (4.6%, $n = 19$), homemakers (2.2%, $n = 9$), and unemployed (5.6%, $n = 23$). Regarding income, most respondents 58% ($n = 239$) earned between IDR 4,500,001 and IDR 9,000,000. Then, 37% ($n = 152$) earned less than IDR 4,500,000. Then 4.6% ($n = 19$) earned between IDR 9,000,001 – 15,500,000 and 0.5% ($n = 2$) reported earning over 15,500,000.

Results and Discussion

For the research, SPSS and Smart PLS Software were utilized [68], [71], [72], [73]. In this case, hypothesis testing was done using SmartPLS 4, while SPSS performed the descriptive analysis and data screening. Several models, including AMOS, had the drawback of being more strict on having normally distributed data, lower sample sizes, or higher sensitivity to sample size. Hence, Partial Least Squares (PLS) were chosen as they offer greater flexibility compared to other covariance-based models like AMOS [15], [74]. As construct relationships needed to be assessed simultaneously, SmartPLS was chosen for this analysis.

Measurement Model

CFA was evaluated to assess construct validity. In 2022, Hair and Associates, indicate that all item loadings exceeded a critical value of 0.70, demonstrating strong relationships between items and their respective constructs. Further confirmation of reliability and validity was provided by assessing the measurement instruments using Reliability and validity were assessed using CA, CR, and AVE parameters indices [75], [76]. Table 1 indicates that all indicators exceeded the recommended thresholds, both CA and CR values

were greater than 0.70. [77] found AVE values exceeding 0.50 across all constructs, supporting convergent validity. These findings show that every latent variable meets the validity and reliability standards put forth by [74], hence confirming the measurement model's overall robustness.

Table 1. Construct and measurement items

| Construct and measurement items | Loadings |
|--|----------|
| <i>Brand Popularity</i> ($AVE = 0.612$, $CR = 0.863$, $\alpha = 0.801$) | |
| This environmentally friendly cosmetic brand is widely recognized | 0.774 |
| This environmentally friendly cosmetic brand is highly well-known | 0.767 |
| Many consumers frequently purchase this environmentally friendly-cosmetic brand | 0.814 |
| Many of my friends use this environmentally friendly-cosmetic brand | 0.773 |
| <i>Brand Authenticity</i> ($AVE = 0.589$, $CR = 0.896$, $\alpha = 0.861$) | |
| This eco-friendly cosmetic brand has a unique ideology that underpins all of its brand promises | 0.711 |
| This eco-friendly cosmetic brand is transparent and avoids making claims that contradict its core values | 0.775 |
| This environmentally friendly cosmetic brand remains faithful to its promises and identity | 0.763 |
| This environmentally conscious cosmetic brand maintains integrity by fulfilling its commitments | 0.796 |
| This eco-friendly cosmetic brand is honest and refrains from deceptive practices | 0.771 |
| This environmentally friendly cosmetic brand consistently demonstrates authenticity | 0.786 |
| <i>Green Brand Trust</i> ($AVE = 0.712$, $CR = 0.908$, $\alpha = 0.865$) | |
| I believe this environmentally friendly cosmetic brand is reliable in its environmental commitment | 0.833 |
| I trust the environmental performance of this eco-conscious cosmetic brand | 0.880 |
| The brand's care for the environment seems to meet my expectations | 0.832 |
| I believe this green cosmetic brand delivers on its environmental promises and commitments | 0.827 |
| <i>Green Brand Love</i> ($AVE = 0.621$, $CR = 0.920$, $\alpha = 0.898$) | |
| I find this environmentally friendly cosmetic brand to be truly special. | 0.821 |
| I perceive this eco-conscious cosmetic brand as beneficial. | 0.755 |
| I consider this green cosmetic brand to be of excellent quality. | 0.739 |
| I feel happy when using this eco-friendly cosmetic brand. | 0.822 |
| I genuinely like this environmentally friendly-cosmetic brand. | 0.774 |
| I feel enthusiastic about this eco-conscious cosmetic brand. | 0.797 |
| I feel emotionally attached to this environmentally friendly cosmetic brand. | 0.805 |

| Construct and measurement items | Loadings |
|---|----------|
| <i>Green Brand Loyalty</i> ($AVE = 0.717$, $CR = 0.910$, $\alpha = 0.868$) | |
| I intend to repurchase this cosmetic brand due to its environmentally friendly benefits | 0.837 |
| Because of its sustainable performance, I like this eco-friendly cosmetic brand better than others | 0.844 |
| Because of this brand's environmental concerns, I hardly ever think about switching to other products | 0.825 |
| Because of its commitment to the environment, I want to keep buying this green cosmetic brand | 0.880 |

Notes: (1) CR stands for composite reliability, and α for Cronbach's alpha; (2) all factor loadings are significant at the 0.05 level.

Structural Model Evaluation

The model of the structural route was evaluated using the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) as an indicator, Q^2 , R^2 , and Goodness of Fit (GoF). The inner collinearity was evaluated by examining the VIF values, and results ranged 1.266 to 2.487. As [74] suggest a threshold of <5 , these VIF values indicate no multicollinearity issues. The Q^2 values were greater than zero for both Green Brand Love ($Q^2 = 0.591$) and Green Brand Loyalty ($Q^2 = 0.650$), confirming strong predictive relevance of the model.

Furthermore, the explanatory power assessed via R^2 placed Green Brand Love ($R^2 = 0.651$) and Green Brand Loyalty ($R^2 = 0.690$) within the “high” category [78], [79], explaining more than two-thirds of variance in loyalty. From a managerial standpoint, this confirms that initiatives related to brand popularity, authenticity, trust and affective attachment are capable of substantially driving loyalty formation in green cosmetics consumers. Therefore, investments in strengthening emotional and cognitive brand attributes are likely to yield high returns in terms of customer commitment.

Model fit was assessed using the GoF index computed as $GoF = \sqrt{(\text{average } AVE \times \text{average } R^2)}$. The obtained GoF score of 0.528 exceeded the threshold of 0.36 for “large” model fit [80], [81]. This not only reflects a well-fitting model statistically, but also implies that the proposed theoretical framework provides a reliable decision-making structure for brand managers seeking to build sustainable consumer loyalty in the eco-friendly cosmetic

segment. Collectively, these diagnostic statistics support the robustness of the proposed model and highlight its managerial value as a practical tool for designing effective sustainability-oriented branding strategies.

Given the high R^2 and Q^2 values, the model proves that over two-thirds of loyalty behaviour in the green cosmetics market can be meaningfully shaped by strategic interventions in brand popularity, authenticity, trust, and emotional bonding. This suggests that managers can achieve substantial loyalty gains not through price competition, but by strengthening the emotional and value-based components of their green branding strategies.

Discriminant Validity

The outcomes validate the model's discriminant validity since all HTMT values remained under the recommended threshold [82]. This demonstrates that the model can distinguish among overlapping characteristics without ambiguity between the variables. In this regard, all variables investigated are more intelligible (Table 2).

Table 2. Construct and measurement items

| Constructs | Mean | Std | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
|---------------------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| Brand Authenticity | 0.588 | 0.025 | 0.768 | | | | |
| Brand Popularity | 0.610 | 0.031 | 0.838 | 0.782 | | | |
| Green Brand Love | 0.620 | 0.028 | 0.890 | 0.730 | 0.788 | | |
| Green Brand Loyalty | 0.716 | 0.023 | 0.854 | 0.710 | 0.855 | 0.847 | |
| Green Brand Trust | 0.711 | 0.023 | 0.885 | 0.692 | 0.800 | 0.860 | 0.844 |

Note: Bold numbers on the diagonal indicate \sqrt{AVE} for each construct.

The potential multicollinearity between components was evaluated in this study using the HTMT ratio. As shown in Table 2, all HTMT coefficients fall below the acceptable benchmark of 0.90, aligning with prior scholarly recommendations [83], [84]. These results further confirm the absence of multicollinearity among the research variables.

Hypotheses Result and Structural Model Assessment

The findings of the path analysis confirm H1 by showing that Brand Popularity has a substantial impact on Green Brand Love (coefficient = 0.129, $p = 0.008$). Green Brand Love is also highly impacted by Brand Authenticity (coefficient = 0.511, $p < 0.001$) and Green Brand Trust (coefficient = 0.235, $p = 0.001$), supporting H2 and H3, respectively. Moreover, H4 is supported by the substantial relationship between Green Brand Loyalty and Green Brand Love (coefficient = 0.308, $p < 0.001$). Green Brand Loyalty is highly impacted by both Brand Popularity (coefficient = 0.179, $p < 0.001$) and Brand Authenticity (coefficient = 0.153, $p = 0.007$), supporting H5 and H6, respectively. Last but not least, H7 is supported by the substantial relationship between Green Brand Trust and Green Brand Loyalty (coefficient = 0.299, $p = 0.001$).

Table 3. Direct and indirect effects

| Hipotesis | β | <i>T-Statistics</i> | <i>P-Values</i> | Supported |
|-----------------------|---------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| BP -> GBL | 0.129 | 2.663 | 0.008 | Yes |
| BAUNT -> GBL | 0,511 | 7,466 | 0.000 | Yes |
| GBT -> GBL | 0.235 | 3,196 | 0.001 | Yes |
| GBL -> GBLOY | 0.308 | 5,257 | 0.000 | Yes |
| BP -> GBLOY | 0.179 | 3.703 | 0.000 | Yes |
| BAUNT -> GBLOY | 0.153 | 2.696 | 0.007 | Yes |
| GBT -> GBLOY | 0.299 | 4.236 | 0.001 | Yes |
| BP -> GBL -> GBLOY | 0.040 | 2.417 | 0.016 | Yes |
| BAUNT -> GBL -> GBLOY | 0.158 | 4.133 | 0.000 | Yes |
| GBT -> GBL -> GBLOY | 0.072 | 2.713 | 0.007 | Yes |

R^2 : GBL - 0.651, GBLOY - 0.690

Q^2 : GBL - 0.591, GBLOY - 0.650

BP: Brand Popularity; BAUNT: Brand Authenticity; GBT: Green Brand Trust; GBL: Green Brand Love; GBLOY: Grand Brand Loyalty

Source: Output generated using SmartPLS 4 and analyzed by the authors

Brand Popularity supported Hypothesis 8 by showing a substantial indirect effect on Brand Loyalty through Green Brand Love ($\beta = 0.040$, $t = 2.417$, $p = 0.016$). Similarly, Hypothesis 9 was confirmed by the significant mediating influence of Brand Authenticity through Green Brand Love ($\beta = 0.158$, $t = 4.133$, $p < 0.001$). Similarly, Hypothesis 10 was supported by the indirect relationship between Green Brand Trust and Green Brand Loyalty through Green Brand Love ($\beta = 0.072$, $t = 2.713$, $p = 0.007$). All of the suggested mediation theories were empirically supported, according to these findings taken together.

Discussion

General Discussion

The first finding demonstrates that the degree of Green Brand Love is strongly impacted by Brand Popularity. Popular brands tend to possess higher visibility, emotional salience, and are perceived as trustworthy, which increases consumers' psychological closeness to the brand [7], [8], [22], [23]. In eco-friendly cosmetics, visibility also signals social endorsement of a brand's environmental stance and evokes stronger affective responses. Strategically, increasing popularity through positive exposure can serve as an effective entry point for building emotional attachment.

The second finding emphasizes how green brand love is impacted by brand authenticity. Brands that are dependable and consistent have been found to improve consumers' emotional connections [25], [26], [85], [86], [87]. For green cosmetics, authenticity becomes even more vital because consumers often scrutinize whether environmental claims reflect genuine practices, rather than symbolic marketing. This underscores that emotional attachment is not built on environmental messages per se, but on consumers' belief that those messages are sincere.

Thirdly, the results indicate that Green Brand Trust significantly enhances Green Brand Love. This supports other studies that implies trust in a green brand is necessary for emotional connection [5], [17], [30], [58], [88], [89]. Since the green cosmetics segment is vulnerable to greenwashing, building trust functions as a prerequisite for the emergence of

emotional bonds. Hence, brands must consistently demonstrate reliable environmental performance to convert cognitive trust into emotional commitment.

Furthermore, the following research demonstrates that green brand love has a beneficial effect on green brand loyalty, in line with prior research which emphasizes that affective attachment drives sustainable consumption behavior's [20], [35], [36], [37], [64]. From a managerial viewpoint, this finding suggests that loyalty cannot be secured by functional performance alone but requires alignment between the brand's environmental values and the consumer's personal ecological identity.

The fifth conclusion demonstrates that brand presence has a favorable effect on green brand loyalty. According to previous studies, customers are more likely to trust and favor well-known companies [7], [8], [22], [23]. When it comes to green branding, popularity is often associated with a more positive perception of a company's trustworthiness, quality, and environmental commitment all of which contribute to increased consumer loyalty. Popularity serves as a psychological gauge of consumer choice and trust in addition to being a symbol of recognition.

The substantial finding explains how brand authenticity has a significant impact on green brand loyalty. This conclusion supports earlier studies that show how authenticity affects the relationship between customers and businesses over time [9], [50], [54], [55], [70]. Authenticity is important in sustainability because customers are more likely to stick with companies whose environmental initiatives are seen as sincere and well-thought-out. A brand's dedication to sustainability fosters loyalty since it aligns with the ethical standards and values of its target audience.

The seventh conclusion states that green brand trust has a direct and significant impact on green brand loyalty. This result aligns with other studies that consistently emphasize trust as a critical determinant of customer loyalty [18], [19], [21], [56], [57], [58], [90]. When it comes to sustainable branding, customers' faith in a company's environmental stewardship encourages both sentimental attachment and logical dedication. Such confidence enhances brand credibility, strengthens long-term relationships, and ultimately promotes sustained green brand loyalty.

The eighth study shows that the relationship between brand popularity and green brand loyalty is considerably mediated by green brand love. However, [7], [8] also observed this impact, who emphasized that popularity increases a brand's emotional resonance, particularly in green markets. Customers show emotional attachment to well-known brands that are seen as being ecologically conscious. Such emotional bonds increase loyalty intentions, which include brand advocacy and repurchase intent. So, green brand love mediates the effect of popularity, transforming it into deeper loyalty sustained over time.

This finding illustrates that green brand love partially explains how authenticity translates into loyalty, emphasizing the emotional pathway through which authentic branding fosters consumer retention. This aligns with existing literature by [91] which highlights the consumer's need for a relationship with a brand as important when considering a brand's authenticity. In green branding, authenticity goes beyond mere image and promises; it equates to a brand's ethical transparency while caring for the environment. After all, consumers' opinions of a brand's commitment to sustainability are shaped by its image and promise, which induces emotional attachment, further solidifying loyalty. That emotional relationship is what converts authenticity into active engagement with a brand.

The tenth finding suggests that green brand love acts as a mediator between green brand loyalty and trust. This result is in line with research by [5], [30], that while trust forms the cognitive foundation of commitment, it is emotional love that transforms trust into loyalty behavior's such as advocacy, repeat purchase, and forgiveness after brand failures. Together, these mediations demonstrate that Green Brand Love is a stronger emotional conduit than trust or authenticity alone because it captures the culmination of cognitive evaluations and converts them into deep affective attachment. Love reflects a holistic bond involving identity, emotion and value alignment, which is particularly powerful for self-expressive categories like cosmetics. Thus, affective transformation, rather than rational conviction alone, is the principal driver in long-term green brand loyalty formation.

This demonstrates that while brand trust and authenticity initiate cognitive acceptance, it is only when these evaluations evolve into emotional 'love' that consumers

display resistant, repeat, and advocacy-based loyalty. In product categories such as cosmetics, which are closely tied to self-identity, ritual, and emotional reward, love emerges as a deeper and more stable psychological state than trust or authenticity alone. Thus, green brand love functions not just as a mediator, but as the primary emotional engine transforming rational evaluations into enduring behavioral loyalty.

Theoretical Implications

This study advances the theoretical understanding of sustainable branding by empirically integrating Brand Popularity, Brand Authenticity, and Green Brand Trust into a holistic model of Green Brand Love and Green Brand Loyalty. Prior research has tended to treat these drivers in isolation or only examine their direct effects on loyalty. By contrast, this study situates them simultaneously within a Commitment–Trust theoretical framework and demonstrates how cognitive brand perceptions are translated into loyalty through affective mechanisms. Consequently, Green Brand Love is positioned not as an end construct, but as a crucial emotional bridge within sustainability-based consumer relationships. This reinforces emotionally driven loyalty theories which conceptualize brand love as an affective bond that channels the effects of trust, authenticity, and popularity into long-term loyalty towards eco-friendly brands [91], [85].

Importantly, these findings offer a theoretical recommendation for the integration of affective constructs, especially Green Brand Love, into future sustainable branding models, which currently remain heavily cognition-centric. From a sustainability standpoint, loyalty to green brands is shown to be shaped by the quality of emotional brand relationships rather than simply brand attributes. Thus, branding frameworks should incorporate emotional-value pathways alongside traditional trust- and attribute-based antecedents to more fully capture the drivers of green consumer loyalty.

Furthermore, by demonstrating that Green Brand Trust and Brand Authenticity have both direct and indirect (via Green Brand Love) impacts on loyalty, the study underlines the need to embed trust-based and authenticity-based variables as core dimensions in theoretical models of sustainable brand equity. Finally, as the findings correspond with the principles

underlying the Sustainable Development Goals (especially SDG 12 on responsible consumption and production), they encourage broader conceptual discussions of how emotional value creation can be leveraged to drive sustainable consumer commitment, thereby extending the theoretical contours of relationship marketing into the context of sustainability-oriented markets.

This study's results are vital for marketers and brand managers, especially in green marketing and developing loyalty rooted in consumer sustainability. The suggested implementation strategies are: (1) Enhancing brand equity and loyalty by increasing visibility through sustainable branding and reinforcing widespread positive ecological (pro-environmental) campaigns that improve how customers view the brand's reputation and environmental credibility. Popularity likely cultivates emotional attachment, or green brand love, which is invaluable in fostering long-term loyalty. (2) Supporting enhanced perceptions of brand authenticity through operational transparency and active, direct communication of values, including sustainability, open environmental impact reporting, and co-creation participatory campaigns.

(3) Building trust in green brands by guaranteeing the integrity of brand promises and the effective implementation of eco-conscious initiatives, supported by issuing sustainability certificates, publishing social and environmental impact reports, and collecting testimonials from affected communities. (4) Enhancing consumer emotional attachment by fostering green brand love through storytelling grounded in sustainability, ecological empathy-evoking imagery, and active participation concepts such as educational games or environmentally focused digital campaigns. (5) Employing green brand love as a mediating strategy due to its critical role within the contexts of brand esteem, perceived authenticity, and trust regarding consumer loyalty. Therefore, to foster loyalty based on sustainability, deepening emotional relationships through value alignment loyalty policies and socio-ecological initiatives becomes imperative.

Limitations and Future Research Development

A number of limitations warrant critical consideration, even though this study demonstrates the strong correlations between brand popularity, authenticity, and trust and outcomes like consumer loyalty and green brand love. These include: (1) the limitation of spatial and sectoral context, It can restrict how broadly the results can be applied to other sectors or geographical areas with different levels of environmental consciousness because the research is centered on a particular industry within the environmentally oriented brand ecosystem. Replication studies are therefore strongly advised in fields like ecotourism, green automotive, and sustainable fashion in order to increase external validity; (2) the homogeneity of respondent characteristics, which could result in representational bias because of the predominance of a specific demographic or geographic group. Future studies are advised to include a more diverse population in terms of age, educational attainment, and cultural background in order to increase the findings' robustness; (3) the drawbacks of a strictly quantitative methodological approach that excludes a thorough examination of affective and cognitive dimensions using a qualitative approach.

Future research should incorporate techniques like focus groups and in-depth interviews to more thoroughly understand how meaning, values, and emotional attachment to green brands are constructed; (4) the absence of a longitudinal approach, in which loyalty toward green brands should ideally be examined over a longer time horizon to capture the dynamics of consumer behavior and perception. To have a deeper comprehension of how brand attachment and ecological loyalty develop over time, a longitudinal methodology can offer a more robust theoretical contribution; (5) the limitations of investigating moderating variables, even though factors such as sustainability literacy, the level of consumer involvement, and environmentally oriented personal values have the potential to significantly moderate the relationships among the main variables studied. Therefore, the integration of these variables into future conceptual models is highly recommended to deepen the complexity of the interactions that occur.

Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence on how brand popularity, brand authenticity, and green brand trust jointly shape loyalty in the eco-friendly cosmetics sector, both directly and indirectly, through green brand love. By testing a cognitive–affective model grounded in the Commitment–Trust Theory, the findings highlight that emotional attachment, represented by green brand love, serves as a critical bridge transforming cognitive perceptions into enduring loyalty. Among the predictors, brand authenticity emerged as the most influential driver of emotional bonding, while trust consistently reinforced both emotional and behavioral commitment.

Theoretically, these results extend sustainable branding literature by positioning green brand love as a central mediating construct in sustainability-driven markets, particularly in emerging economies. The study underscores the importance of integrating affective pathways into existing cognitive-heavy models, offering a more holistic understanding of how environmentally conscious consumers form lasting brand relationships.

From a practical perspective, the research suggests that marketers in the green cosmetics industry should go beyond functional product performance and environmental messaging. Strategies such as increasing brand visibility through credible sustainability campaigns, demonstrating operational transparency, delivering on environmental promises, and leveraging storytelling to evoke ecological empathy can foster stronger emotional bonds and, ultimately, customer loyalty. Future studies are encouraged to broaden the demographic and geographic scope, employ longitudinal and qualitative approaches, and examine potential moderating factors, such as sustainability literacy and consumer involvement, to deepen the understanding of loyalty formation in sustainable markets.

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