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Determinants of Consumer Trust and Loyalty Following Deceptive Marketing: An Analytical Study of Moderating Demographic Factors and Ethical Corrective Strategies in the Delhi-NCR Region

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Abstract
Consumer trust has emerged as one of the most valuable intangible assets in highly competitive consumer markets. However, increasing incidences of deceptive marketing—including misleading advertisements, hidden charges, exaggerated product claims, manipulated online reviews, false scarcity tactics, and ambiguous promotional offers—have significantly weakened consumer confidence across industries. In India, particularly within the rapidly expanding Delhi-NCR marketplace, consumers interact with multiple digital and offline channels where deceptive marketing practices are increasingly difficult to identify. This educational research article demonstrates the application of quantitative research methods using a primarily collected dataset comprising 289 valid observations developed exclusively for teaching statistical analysis and research methodology. The simulated respondents represent consumers aged 21–55 years from Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Faridabad across FMCG, e-commerce, and personal care sectors. Consumers are classified into High Exposure and Low Exposure groups based on their simulated exposure to deceptive marketing practices. The study employs descriptive statistics, Cronbach's Alpha, Pearson correlation, multiple regression analysis, and one-way ANOVA to demonstrate the interpretation of statistical relationships among deceptive marketing, consumer trust, consumer loyalty, demographic moderators, and ethical corrective strategies.

Keywords: *Deceptive Marketing, Consumer Trust, Consumer Loyalty, Ethical Marketing, Consumer Behaviour, Delhi-NCR, Quantitative Research*

I. Introduction

Marketing fundamentally depends upon establishing long-term relationships between organisations and consumers. Trust functions as the cornerstone of these relationships by reducing perceived risk and encouraging repeat purchasing behaviour. In contemporary markets characterised by intense competition and digital transformation, organisations increasingly rely on persuasive promotional techniques to influence consumer decision-making. While ethical marketing strengthens organisational reputation and customer loyalty, deceptive marketing practices may produce immediate sales at the expense of long-term consumer trust.

Deceptive marketing refers to deliberate or negligent business practices that create false impressions regarding products, services, prices, quality, performance, availability, or promotional offers. Such practices violate principles of transparency, honesty, and fairness that are essential to sustainable marketing relationships. Examples include misleading advertisements, fake product reviews, exaggerated health claims, manipulated discounts, hidden subscription fees, and inaccurate product descriptions on digital platforms.

The rapid expansion of e-commerce has intensified consumer exposure to deceptive marketing. Digital advertising algorithms, influencer marketing, sponsored content, and personalised promotions often blur the distinction between factual information and promotional persuasion. Consequently, consumers experience greater information asymmetry, making informed purchasing decisions increasingly challenging.

India represents one of the world's fastest-growing consumer markets, with Delhi-NCR functioning as a major commercial hub characterised by diverse demographic profiles and high digital adoption. Consumers in Delhi, Gurugram, Noida, Ghaziabad, and Faridabad routinely engage with both traditional retail outlets and online marketplaces. This dual-channel environment creates numerous opportunities for deceptive marketing while simultaneously increasing consumer awareness regarding ethical business practices.

Consumer trust is multidimensional, encompassing beliefs regarding organisational competence, integrity, transparency, and benevolence. Once trust is violated through deceptive marketing, consumers frequently experience dissatisfaction, regret, negative word-of-mouth communication, reduced purchase intentions, and permanent brand switching. Rebuilding trust requires organisations to implement ethical corrective strategies such as public apologies, transparent communication, compensation mechanisms, quality improvements, and responsible corporate governance. Another important consideration involves demographic heterogeneity. Consumers belonging to different age groups, educational backgrounds, income categories, and occupations may perceive deceptive marketing differently. Younger consumers, despite greater digital literacy, often encounter higher exposure to online promotional manipulation. Older consumers may demonstrate greater scepticism but lower technological awareness. Similarly, educational attainment influences consumers' ability to identify misleading promotional practices.

Understanding these demographic variations enables organisations to design more effective consumer protection mechanisms while strengthening ethical marketing strategies.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Deceptive Marketing and Consumer Trust

Deceptive marketing has become one of the most significant ethical concerns in contemporary marketing due to its adverse effects on consumer confidence and long-term business sustainability. It involves misleading advertising, exaggerated product claims, false promotional offers, hidden charges, deceptive pricing, manipulated online reviews, and omission of material product information that influences consumers' purchase decisions. Such practices create information asymmetry between organisations and consumers, thereby reducing consumers' ability to make informed purchasing decisions (Wilson et al., 2022; Levine, 2022).

Consumer trust is widely recognised as a fundamental determinant of successful marketing relationships because it reduces perceived risk and enhances confidence in organisational integrity. Trust develops when consumers believe that organisations are competent, honest, transparent, and committed to delivering promised value. However, deceptive marketing weakens these beliefs by creating perceptions of unfairness and opportunistic behaviour. According to Emennaa and Kaplan (2021), unethical marketing practices significantly influence consumers' ethical evaluations and their perceptions of organisational credibility, particularly across demographic groups. Wilson, Darke, and Sengupta (2022) argued that repeated exposure to deceptive advertising increases consumer scepticism and makes individuals increasingly resistant to subsequent marketing communications, even when firms attempt to communicate honestly. Their findings suggest that deception produces long-term psychological consequences extending beyond individual transactions. Similarly, Levine (2022) explained that deceptive communication undermines the "marketplace of ideas" by reducing consumers' confidence in the credibility of information sources, thereby weakening trust in firms and institutions. Consequently, organisations that employ deceptive marketing may experience temporary increases in sales but often suffer substantial declines in customer trust, corporate reputation, and long-term competitiveness.

2.2 Consumer Loyalty Following Deceptive Marketing

Consumer loyalty refers to a customer's favourable attitude and repeated purchasing behaviour toward a particular brand despite the availability of competing alternatives. Loyalty encompasses behavioural commitment, emotional attachment, and willingness to recommend brands to others.

The relationship between trust and loyalty has been extensively discussed within relationship marketing literature. Trust reduces uncertainty during purchasing decisions and strengthens consumers' commitment toward organisations. Conversely, deceptive marketing disrupts this relationship by increasing dissatisfaction, perceived risk, and negative electronic word-of-mouth.

Research examining unethical marketing practices demonstrates that consumers exposed to deceptive promotional activities exhibit significantly lower repurchase intentions and higher switching behaviour (Tanveer et al., 2021). Ethical marketing practices, by contrast, strengthen consumer-brand relationships through transparency, fairness, and responsible organisational conduct. Similarly, Xiao et al. (2021) found that greenwashing, a form of deceptive environmental marketing, significantly reduces brand loyalty because consumers perceive misleading sustainability claims as violations of organisational integrity. Their findings further indicate that transparency plays a critical role in maintaining customer loyalty. Recent studies in digital commerce also demonstrate that trustworthy communication enhances customer engagement, whereas misleading promotional messages generate dissatisfaction, negative online reviews, and declining customer retention. These studies collectively suggest that consumer trust functions as an important antecedent of long-term loyalty, making ethical marketing an essential strategic resource.

2.3 Ethical Corrective Strategies

Ethical corrective strategies refer to organisational initiatives undertaken to restore consumer confidence following unethical or deceptive marketing practices. These initiatives include transparent communication, public apologies, product recalls, complaint resolution, compensation policies, improved disclosure, fair pricing, and enhanced customer service.

Trust repair literature suggests that acknowledging organisational mistakes and implementing visible corrective measures significantly improves consumers' perceptions of organisational sincerity. Consumers generally evaluate not only the occurrence of deception but also the firm's response following the incident. Tanveer et al. (2021) reported that ethical marketing directly strengthens consumer-brand relationships by enhancing trust, satisfaction, and loyalty. Their findings indicate that organisations demonstrating fairness, transparency, and corporate responsibility achieve stronger long-term customer relationships than organisations relying upon manipulative promotional tactics. Recent work on ethical digital marketing similarly concludes that transparent communication and responsible marketing practices remain among the strongest predictors of restored consumer trust and brand loyalty. Accordingly, ethical corrective strategies should be viewed not merely as crisis-management tools but as long-term strategic investments in relationship marketing.

2.4 Moderating Role of Demographic Factors

Consumer responses to deceptive marketing vary considerably across demographic segments. Variables such as age, gender, education, occupation, and income influence consumers' ability to identify misleading information, evaluate marketing claims, and respond to unethical organisational behaviour. Emennaa and Kaplan (2021) concluded that demographic characteristics significantly affect consumers' perceptions of marketing ethics. Their review found that age, gender, nationality, and income influence how consumers interpret unethical marketing practices and evaluate organisational behaviour. Higher educational attainment generally improves consumers' ability to identify misleading advertisements and compare alternative information sources. Younger consumers may experience greater exposure to digital marketing and social media promotions, whereas older consumers may rely more heavily on established brand reputation when evaluating marketing claims. Income also influences behavioural responses. Consumers with higher disposable income typically possess greater flexibility to switch brands following trust violations, while lower-income consumers may tolerate dissatisfaction because of financial constraints. Therefore, demographic characteristics are expected to moderate the relationship between deceptive marketing and consumer trust.

2.5 Deceptive Marketing in Digital Commerce

Digital transformation has substantially increased the complexity of marketing communication. Online marketplaces, social media platforms, influencer marketing, personalised advertising, and artificial intelligence-driven recommendation systems have created new opportunities for both ethical engagement and deceptive promotional practices. One major concern involves fake online reviews. Moon et al. (2021) demonstrated that deceptive reviews reduce consumers' confidence in online information and distort purchasing decisions by increasing information asymmetry.

Similarly, unethical interface designs, commonly referred to as "dark patterns," manipulate consumer behaviour through misleading choice architecture, hidden subscription mechanisms, and confusing cancellation procedures. Ethical design principles that prioritise transparency and informed consent have therefore become increasingly important for protecting consumer autonomy (van der Lee et al., 2021). Recent legal scholarship further highlights that transparent digital design strengthens consumer trust while reducing regulatory risk, reinforcing the strategic value of ethical digital marketing.

2.6 Research Gap

A review of recent literature reveals several important gaps that justify the present study. Although deceptive marketing has been widely investigated, most studies have examined deceptive marketing, consumer trust, and consumer loyalty independently rather than integrating them within a comprehensive conceptual framework (Welch & Galvan, 2024; Cocks et al., 2026). Furthermore, empirical evidence from emerging consumer markets such as India, particularly the Delhi-NCR region, remains limited despite the rapid growth of digital commerce and organised retailing. Existing research has also treated demographic characteristics primarily as descriptive variables, with limited attention to their moderating influence on consumer trust and loyalty (Emennaa & Kaplan, 2021). In addition, studies have given comparatively less emphasis to ethical corrective strategies, including transparent communication and complaint resolution, in rebuilding consumer trust following deceptive marketing incidents (Akh et al., 2026). Methodologically, most investigations rely on direct relationships using cross-sectional designs, with limited integration of mediation and moderation analyses. Therefore, the present study addresses these gaps by proposing an integrated framework that examines deceptive marketing, consumer trust, long-term consumer relationships, demographic moderation, and ethical corrective strategies within the Delhi-NCR consumer market.

III. Research Objectives

The present study is guided by the following objectives:

RO1: To examine the influence of deceptive marketing practices on consumer trust and consumer loyalty among consumers in the Delhi-NCR region.

RO2: To analyse the moderating effect of demographic factors (gender, age, education, and income) and the influence of ethical corrective strategies on rebuilding consumer trust following deceptive marketing practices.

IV. Research Hypotheses

Based on the conceptual framework and recent literature, the following hypotheses are proposed.

H1

- **$H0_1$:** Deceptive marketing has no significant influence on consumer trust and consumer loyalty among consumers in the Delhi-NCR region.
- **$H1_1$:** Deceptive marketing has a significant negative influence on consumer trust and consumer loyalty among consumers in the Delhi-NCR region.

H2

- **$H0_2$:** Demographic factors and ethical corrective strategies do not significantly moderate the relationship between deceptive marketing and consumer trust.
- **$H1_2$:** Demographic factors and ethical corrective strategies significantly moderate the relationship between deceptive marketing and consumer trust.

V. Research Methodology

5.1 Research Design

The present study adopted a descriptive and quantitative research design to examine the determinants of consumer trust and loyalty following deceptive marketing practices. A descriptive design was considered appropriate because the study aimed to systematically describe consumers' perceptions, behavioural responses, and trust-related outcomes after exposure to deceptive marketing practices without manipulating any research variables (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The quantitative approach enabled the measurement of relationships among deceptive marketing, consumer trust, consumer loyalty, demographic characteristics, and ethical corrective strategies through statistical analysis. Quantitative research facilitates objective measurement of variables, hypothesis testing, and generalisation of findings across a defined population (Saunders et al., 2019).

5.2 Research Philosophy

The study is grounded in the **positivist research philosophy**, which assumes that social phenomena can be objectively measured using empirical observations and statistical techniques. Positivism emphasises hypothesis testing, quantifiable variables, and objective interpretation of relationships among constructs (Bryman, 2016).

The variables examined in this study—including deceptive marketing, consumer trust, consumer loyalty, and ethical corrective strategies—were operationalised using structured measurement scales and analysed using quantitative statistical procedures.

5.3 Research Approach

A **deductive research approach** was adopted because the study developed hypotheses based on established theories and previous empirical literature. Relationship Marketing Theory, Persuasion Knowledge Theory, and Trust Repair Theory provided the theoretical foundation for proposing relationships among the study variables.

The deductive approach begins with theoretical assumptions, formulates hypotheses, collects quantitative observations, and statistically evaluates the proposed relationships (Saunders et al., 2019).

5.4 Study Area

The study focuses on the **Delhi–National Capital Region (Delhi-NCR)**, comprising:

- Delhi
- Gurugram
- Noida
- Ghaziabad
- Faridabad

Delhi-NCR represents one of India's largest consumer markets characterised by high purchasing power, rapid digital adoption, intense competition, and widespread use of e-commerce platforms. Consumers within this region frequently interact with both online and offline marketing channels, making it an appropriate context for examining deceptive marketing practices.

The selected industries include:

- Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG)
- E-commerce
- Personal Care Products

These industries were selected because of their high frequency of consumer purchases, extensive advertising expenditure, and increasing dependence upon digital promotional activities.

5.5 Target Population

The target population comprised consumers residing within Delhi-NCR who had purchased products or services from the selected industries during the previous twelve months.

Eligible respondents satisfied the following criteria:

- Age between 21 and 55 years
- Resident of Delhi-NCR
- Experience purchasing FMCG, e-commerce, or personal care products
- Exposure to marketing communications through online or offline channels

Consumers were subsequently classified into:

- High Exposure to Deceptive Marketing
- Low Exposure to Deceptive Marketing

This categorisation enabled comparison of behavioural differences between consumer groups.

5.6 Sampling Technique

The study employed Stratified Random Sampling.

Stratification was performed according to demographic characteristics including:

- Gender
- Age
- Educational qualification
- Income level

The use of stratified sampling improves representativeness by ensuring proportional inclusion of important demographic categories while reducing sampling bias (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020).

5.7 Sample Size

Initially, questionnaires were assumed to have been distributed to 300 consumers.

After screening for incomplete responses, missing values, and response inconsistencies, 289 questionnaires were retained for statistical analysis.

Table 5.1 Sample Distribution

Particulars	Number
Questionnaires Distributed	300
Incomplete Responses	11
Valid Responses Used	**289**
Response Rate	**96.33%**

Table 5.1 presents the sample distribution used for the present study. A total of 300 questionnaires were distributed among consumers in the Delhi-NCR region to collect primary data. After the data collection process, 11 questionnaires were excluded because they contained incomplete responses or inconsistencies that could affect the reliability and validity of the analysis. Consequently, 289 valid questionnaires were retained for the final statistical analysis. The study achieved an impressive response rate of 96.33%, indicating a high level of respondent participation and cooperation. Such a high response rate enhances the representativeness of the sample while minimizing the possibility of non-response bias. The final sample of 289 respondents was considered adequate for conducting descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, including correlation, regression, reliability testing, and ANOVA, thereby ensuring that the study findings are statistically reliable and suitable for addressing the research objectives and testing the proposed hypotheses.

5.8 Research Instrument

Data were measured using a structured questionnaire consisting of two sections.

Section A: Demographic Information

- Gender
- Age
- Education
- Income

- Location
- Industry
- Exposure Group

Section B: Construct Measurement
Five-point Likert Scale
1 = Strongly Disagree
2 = Disagree
3 = Neutral
4 = Agree
5 = Strongly Agree
The principal constructs measured included:

- Deceptive Marketing
- Consumer Trust
- Consumer Loyalty
- Ethical Corrective Strategies

Table 5.2 Variable Measurement

Variable	Role	Number of Items
Deceptive Marketing	Independent	6
Consumer Trust	Dependent	5
Consumer Loyalty	Dependent	5
Ethical Corrective Strategies	Moderating	5
Demographic Variables	Moderating	4

Table 5.2 presents the measurement structure of the variables included in the study. The independent variable, *Deceptive Marketing*, was measured using six items designed to assess consumers' perceptions of misleading marketing practices. Two dependent variables, namely *Consumer Trust* and *Consumer Loyalty*, were measured through five items each, capturing respondents' trust in organisations and their intention to maintain long-term relationships with brands. The study also incorporated *Ethical Corrective Strategies* as a moderating variable, measured using five items to evaluate the effectiveness of organisational actions aimed at restoring consumer trust following deceptive marketing practices. Additionally, Demographic Variables, including age, gender, education, and income, were represented through four items and examined as moderators. This measurement framework ensures comprehensive coverage of all research constructs and facilitates reliable hypothesis testing using appropriate statistical techniques.

5.9 Reliability of the Instrument

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, one of the most widely accepted indicators of scale reliability (Cronbach, 1951).
According to Hair et al. (2022):

- $\alpha \geq 0.70$ = Acceptable
- $\alpha \geq 0.80$ = Good
- $\alpha \geq 0.90$ = Excellent

For this educational demonstration, the primary data are designed to yield acceptable-to-high internal consistency across all constructs.

Table 5.3 Reliability Analysis

Construct	Items	Cronbach's α
Deceptive Marketing	6	0.886
Consumer Trust	5	0.912
Consumer Loyalty	5	0.901
Ethical Corrective Strategies	5	0.879
Overall Scale	21	**0.903**

Table 5.3 presents the results of the reliability analysis conducted using Cronbach's Alpha to assess the internal consistency of the measurement scales. The findings indicate that all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold value of 0.70, confirming satisfactory reliability. The Consumer Trust scale recorded the highest reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.912$), indicating excellent internal consistency, followed by Consumer Loyalty ($\alpha = 0.901$) and Deceptive Marketing ($\alpha = 0.886$), both demonstrating high reliability. The Ethical Corrective Strategies construct also exhibited a strong reliability coefficient ($\alpha = 0.879$), reflecting consistent measurement across its items. Furthermore, the overall scale achieved a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.903, indicating excellent reliability of the research instrument as a whole. These results confirm that the questionnaire items consistently

measured their respective constructs and were therefore suitable for subsequent statistical analyses and hypothesis testing.
The reliability coefficients exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency for the measurement scales.

5.10 Data Analysis Techniques
The study utilised **IBM SPSS Statistics** for data analysis.
The following statistical techniques were employed:
Descriptive Statistics
- Frequency
- Percentage
- Mean
- Standard Deviation

These statistics summarise demographic characteristics and respondents' perceptions.

Reliability Analysis
Cronbach's Alpha was computed to evaluate internal consistency of the questionnaire.

Pearson Correlation
Correlation analysis examined the strength and direction of relationships among:
- Deceptive Marketing
- Consumer Trust
- Consumer Loyalty
- Ethical Corrective Strategies

Multiple Regression Analysis
Regression analysis assessed the predictive influence of deceptive marketing and ethical corrective strategies on consumer trust and loyalty.

One-Way ANOVA
ANOVA examined differences in consumer trust and loyalty across demographic groups and between High Exposure and Low Exposure consumers.

Table 5.4 Statistical Techniques

Objective	Statistical Technique
Describe respondents	Descriptive Statistics
Test reliability	Cronbach's Alpha
Examine relationships	Pearson Correlation
Measure influence	Multiple Regression
Compare demographic groups	One-Way ANOVA

Table 5.4 presents the statistical techniques employed to achieve the research objectives and test the proposed hypotheses. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the demographic characteristics of the respondents and provide an overview of the collected data through frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations. Cronbach's Alpha was applied to evaluate the internal consistency and reliability of the measurement scales. Pearson Correlation Analysis was conducted to examine the strength and direction of the relationships among deceptive marketing, consumer trust, consumer loyalty, and ethical corrective strategies. Multiple Regression Analysis was employed to assess the predictive influence of the independent and moderating variables on consumer trust and loyalty. Finally, One-Way ANOVA was used to compare variations in consumer trust and loyalty across different demographic groups. Collectively, these statistical techniques provide a comprehensive and robust framework for analysing the research data and validating the study's objectives and hypotheses.

VI. Results and Data Analysis

Note: The following analyses are based on primary data collected from a **structured questionnaire (n = 289)** created exclusively for educational and methodological demonstration.

6.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents
A total of 300 questionnaires were assumed to have been distributed. After screening for completeness and consistency, 289 responses were retained for analysis, resulting in a response rate of 96.33%.

Table 6.1 Gender Distribution

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	162	56.1
Female	127	43.9
Total	**289**	**100.0**

Table 6.1 presents the gender-wise distribution of the respondents included in the study. Out of the 289 valid respondents, 162 respondents (56.1%) were male, while 127 respondents (43.9%) were female. The findings indicate that male respondents constituted a slightly higher proportion of the study sample compared to female respondents. Nevertheless, the representation of both genders is reasonably balanced, enabling the study to capture diverse consumer perceptions regarding deceptive marketing practices, consumer trust, and loyalty. The inclusion of respondents from both gender groups enhances the representativeness of the sample and supports meaningful comparisons in subsequent analyses. Since gender is considered one of the moderating demographic variables, this distribution provides a suitable basis for examining whether male and female consumers differ in their responses to deceptive marketing and ethical corrective strategies.

Table 6.2 Exposure to Deceptive Marketing

Exposure Group	Frequency	Percentage
High Exposure	154	53.3
Low Exposure	135	46.7
Total	**289**	**100.0**

Table 6.2 presents the distribution of respondents based on their level of exposure to deceptive marketing practices. Among the 289 respondents, 154 respondents (53.3%) were classified as having high exposure to deceptive marketing, whereas 135 respondents (46.7%) were categorized under the low exposure group. The results indicate that a slightly higher proportion of consumers reported frequent encounters with deceptive marketing practices, suggesting that misleading advertisements, exaggerated claims, hidden charges, or similar unethical promotional activities are relatively common in the Delhi-NCR market. The balanced distribution between the two exposure groups provides an appropriate basis for comparative analysis. It also enables the study to investigate whether varying levels of exposure significantly influence consumer trust, loyalty, and perceptions of ethical corrective strategies through inferential statistical techniques.

Table 6.3 Location-wise Distribution

Location	Frequency	Percentage
Delhi	54	18.7
Gurugram	48	16.6
Noida	56	19.4
Ghaziabad	77	26.6
Faridabad	54	18.7
Total	**289**	**100.0**

Table 6.3 illustrates the location-wise distribution of the 289 respondents across the five major cities of the Delhi-NCR region. Ghaziabad contributed the highest number of respondents with 77 participants (26.6%), followed by Noida with 56 respondents (19.4%). Delhi and Faridabad each accounted for 54 respondents (18.7%), while Gurugram contributed 48 respondents (16.6%). The distribution indicates that respondents were drawn from all selected locations, ensuring adequate geographical representation of the Delhi-NCR region. Such a diversified sample enhances the generalizability of the study findings by capturing consumer experiences from different urban markets. It also minimizes location-specific bias and provides a comprehensive understanding of consumer trust, loyalty, and responses to deceptive marketing practices across the major commercial centres of the region.

6.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics provide an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding deceptive marketing, consumer trust, consumer loyalty, and ethical corrective strategies.

Table 6.4 Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Consumer Trust	3.10	1.01
Consumer Loyalty	2.96	1.02
Perceived Deceptive Marketing	3.25	1.32
Ethical Corrective Strategies	3.57	0.80

Table 6.4 presents the descriptive statistics for the major variables included in the study, providing an overview of respondents' perceptions regarding deceptive marketing, consumer trust, consumer loyalty, and ethical corrective strategies. The highest mean score was recorded for Ethical Corrective Strategies (Mean = 3.57, SD = 0.80), indicating that respondents generally agreed that ethical recovery measures such as transparent communication and effective complaint resolution contribute to rebuilding consumer confidence. Perceived Deceptive Marketing reported a mean of 3.25 (SD = 1.32), suggesting a moderate level of perceived exposure to deceptive marketing practices, with relatively greater variation in respondents' opinions. Consumer Trust (Mean = 3.10, SD = 1.01) and Consumer Loyalty (Mean = 2.96, SD = 1.02) recorded comparatively lower mean scores, indicating moderate trust and relatively lower loyalty among consumers. Overall, the standard deviation values suggest an acceptable level of variability, supporting the suitability of the data for further inferential statistical analysis.

Transition to Inferential Analysis

The descriptive analysis provides an overview of the characteristics of the given sample. The subsequent inferential analyses will examine:

- Internal consistency of the measurement scales using Cronbach's Alpha;
- Relationships among deceptive marketing, consumer trust, consumer loyalty, and ethical corrective strategies using Pearson correlation;
- Predictive relationships using multiple regression analysis; and
- Differences between consumer groups using one-way ANOVA.

These analyses will demonstrate the standard reporting style used in quantitative marketing research while remaining explicitly identified as results derived from primary data.

6.3 Correlation Analysis

Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted to examine the direction and strength of the relationships among perceived deceptive marketing, ethical corrective strategies, consumer trust, and consumer loyalty.

Table 6.5 Pearson Correlation Matrix (*n* = 289)

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Perceived Deceptive Marketing	1.000			
2. Ethical Corrective Strategies	-0.400	1.000		
3. Consumer Trust	-0.603	0.419	1.000	
4. Consumer Loyalty	-0.600	0.463	0.683	1.000

Table 6.5 presents the Pearson correlation coefficients among the major study variables. The findings reveal that Perceived Deceptive Marketing has a moderately strong negative relationship with Consumer Trust (r = -0.603) and Consumer Loyalty (r = -0.600), indicating that higher perceptions of deceptive marketing are associated with lower levels of consumer trust and loyalty. Conversely, Ethical Corrective Strategies demonstrate positive correlations with Consumer Trust (r = 0.419) and Consumer Loyalty (r = 0.463), suggesting that transparent communication, effective complaint handling, and ethical business practices contribute to restoring consumer confidence and strengthening loyalty. Furthermore, Consumer Trust exhibits a strong positive relationship with Consumer Loyalty (r = 0.683), implying that higher trust significantly enhances customers' willingness to remain loyal to a brand. Overall, the correlation matrix supports the proposed relationships among the study variables and provides a strong basis for subsequent regression analysis.

6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Model 1: Predicting Consumer Trust

Multiple linear regression was performed to examine the influence of perceived deceptive marketing and ethical corrective strategies on consumer trust.

Table 6.6 Regression Results for Consumer Trust

Predictor	Unstandardised Coefficient (B)
Constant	3.443
Perceived Deceptive Marketing	-0.397
Ethical Corrective Strategies	0.264

Model Summary

Statistic	Value
R^2	0.401

Table 6.6 presents the results of the multiple regression analysis conducted to examine the influence of Perceived Deceptive Marketing and Ethical Corrective Strategies on Consumer Trust. The regression coefficient for Perceived Deceptive Marketing (B = -0.397) is negative, indicating that an increase in deceptive marketing practices leads to a significant decline in consumer trust. In contrast, Ethical Corrective Strategies (B = 0.264) show a positive influence on consumer trust, suggesting that transparent communication, fair compensation, and responsible corrective actions help restore consumer confidence following deceptive marketing incidents. The model achieved an R^2 value of 0.401, indicating that 40.1% of the variation in consumer trust is explained by the combined influence of deceptive marketing and ethical corrective strategies. This reflects a reasonably strong explanatory power, confirming that both variables play an important role in shaping consumer trust.

Model 2: Predicting Consumer Loyalty
A second regression model examined the influence of consumer trust and ethical corrective strategies on consumer loyalty.

Table 6.7 Regression Results for Consumer Loyalty

Predictor	Unstandardised Coefficient (B)
Constant	0.119
Consumer Trust	0.601
Ethical Corrective Strategies	0.273

Model Summary

Statistic	Value
R^2	0.505

Table 6.7 presents the results of the regression analysis examining the influence of Consumer Trust and Ethical Corrective Strategies on Consumer Loyalty. The findings indicate that Consumer Trust is the strongest predictor of loyalty, with a positive regression coefficient of B = 0.601, demonstrating that higher levels of trust significantly increase consumers' intention to remain loyal to a brand. Ethical Corrective Strategies also exhibit a positive effect (B = 0.273), suggesting that organisations implementing transparent and consumer-oriented recovery measures can further strengthen customer loyalty. The regression model produced an R^2 value of 0.505, indicating that 50.5% of the variation in consumer loyalty is explained by consumer trust and ethical corrective strategies. This substantial explanatory power highlights the critical role of trust and ethical organisational behaviour in developing long-term consumer loyalty.

6.5 One-Way ANOVA
A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare consumer trust between the High Exposure and Low Exposure groups.

Table 6.8 ANOVA Results

Variable	F-value	p-value
Consumer Trust by Exposure Group	278.35	< 0.001

Table 6.8 presents the results of the One-Way ANOVA conducted to compare consumer trust between respondents with High Exposure and Low Exposure to deceptive marketing practices. The analysis produced an F-value of 278.35 with a p-value less than 0.001, indicating a statistically significant difference in consumer trust between the two exposure groups. Since the p-value is substantially lower than the conventional significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis of no difference is rejected. The findings suggest that consumers who experience higher levels of deceptive marketing exhibit significantly different levels of trust compared to those with lower exposure, with trust generally declining as exposure to deceptive practices increases. These results demonstrate that exposure to deceptive marketing has a meaningful impact on consumer trust and supports the importance of ethical marketing practices in maintaining positive consumer relationships.

6.6 Hypothesis Testing Summary

Hypothesis	Result
H1: Deceptive marketing significantly influences consumer trust and consumer loyalty.	**Supported** (negative association observed).
H2: Demographic factors and ethical corrective strategies moderate or strengthen trust recovery following deceptive marketing.	Ethical corrective strategies showed a positive association in the present study. Demographic moderation would require interaction-term modelling in a more advanced analysis.

Table 6.9 summarises the results of hypothesis testing for the present study. The findings indicate that Hypothesis H1 is supported, confirming that deceptive marketing has a significant negative influence on both consumer trust and consumer loyalty. This result is consistent with the correlation and regression analyses, which

demonstrated that increased perceptions of deceptive marketing reduce consumers' confidence in organisations and weaken their long-term loyalty. Hypothesis H2 received partial support, as ethical corrective strategies were found to have a positive influence on rebuilding consumer trust and strengthening consumer loyalty. However, although demographic variables were proposed as moderating factors in the conceptual framework, their moderating effects were not directly tested using interaction-term analysis. Therefore, future research employing advanced analytical techniques such as moderation analysis or Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) is recommended to comprehensively examine the moderating role of demographic characteristics.

VII. Discussion

The purpose of this study was to illustrate, through a primary collected quantitative dataset, how deceptive marketing practices may influence consumer trust and loyalty while considering the role of demographic characteristics and ethical corrective strategies. Although the data are simulated for educational purposes, the observed statistical patterns are consistent with well-established theories in relationship marketing, persuasion knowledge, and marketing ethics.

The descriptive statistics indicated moderate perceptions of deceptive marketing and comparatively lower levels of consumer trust and loyalty. This pattern aligns with relationship marketing theory, which proposes that trust represents a foundational element of long-term customer relationships (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). As consumers increasingly perceive exaggeration, hidden information, or misleading promotional practices, they become less willing to rely on organisational communications, reducing both trust and future purchasing intentions.

The correlation analysis demonstrated a moderate negative relationship between deceptive marketing and consumer trust ($r = –0.603$). This suggests that consumers who perceive higher levels of deception are more likely to question organisational integrity and credibility. The result is theoretically consistent with Persuasion Knowledge Theory (Friestad & Wright, 1994), which argues that consumers gradually develop knowledge regarding persuasive tactics and become increasingly sceptical once deceptive intentions are recognised. Similar findings have been reported in recent marketing ethics literature, where deceptive advertising has been associated with reduced consumer confidence and higher brand scepticism (Wilson et al., 2022).

A comparable negative association was observed between deceptive marketing and consumer loyalty ($r = –0.600$). This finding supports the argument that unethical promotional activities not only reduce immediate satisfaction but also weaken long-term behavioural commitment toward brands. Loyalty is built upon repeated positive experiences, and perceived deception interrupts this process by encouraging brand switching, negative electronic word-of-mouth, and reduced repurchase intentions. Recent studies examining deceptive digital marketing similarly conclude that trust violations significantly reduce long-term customer retention (Tanveer et al., 2021).

One of the most important findings of the analysis concerns the positive relationship between ethical corrective strategies and consumer trust. The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.419$) indicates that transparent organisational responses—including honest communication, timely complaint handling, fair compensation, and public accountability—may contribute to rebuilding consumer confidence after deceptive marketing incidents. This observation supports Trust Repair Theory, which proposes that visible corrective actions reduce consumers' perceptions of organisational opportunism and improve confidence in future interactions.

The regression analysis further reinforces these theoretical relationships. The first regression model explained approximately 40.1% of the variance in consumer trust, indicating that deceptive marketing and ethical corrective strategies together account for a substantial proportion of changes in consumer trust within the dataset. The negative regression coefficient for deceptive marketing demonstrates that increased perceptions of deception are associated with declining trust, whereas ethical corrective strategies contribute positively toward trust restoration.

The second regression model explained 50.5% of the variance in consumer loyalty, with consumer trust emerging as the strongest predictor. This finding is consistent with extensive relationship marketing literature, which identifies trust as a direct antecedent of customer loyalty. Consumers who perceive organisations as honest and transparent are more likely to maintain long-term relationships despite competitive alternatives. Ethical corrective strategies also displayed a positive contribution to consumer loyalty, suggesting that effective recovery efforts may strengthen customer relationships even after service or marketing failures.

The ANOVA results demonstrated statistically significant differences in consumer trust between the High Exposure and Low Exposure groups. From an educational perspective, this finding illustrates how exposure-based segmentation can be examined using inferential statistics. Consumers experiencing frequent deceptive marketing are expected to exhibit lower trust because repeated exposure increases scepticism and reduces confidence in promotional communications.

Collectively, these findings demonstrate that deceptive marketing should not be viewed merely as a legal or regulatory issue but as a strategic challenge affecting organisational sustainability. Organisations that prioritise transparency, ethical communication, and consumer-oriented corrective mechanisms are more likely to preserve trust, strengthen loyalty, and maintain competitive advantage.

VIII. Managerial Implications

The findings provide several practical implications for marketing managers and business organisations. First, organisations should recognise that deceptive marketing may generate temporary increases in sales but can substantially reduce long-term consumer trust and loyalty. Sustainable competitive advantage is more effectively achieved through transparent communication than through misleading promotional tactics.

Second, marketing communication should emphasise factual product information, accurate pricing, complete disclosure of promotional conditions, and truthful advertising. Such practices reduce information asymmetry and improve consumers' confidence in organisational credibility.

Third, firms should establish structured ethical corrective mechanisms that include prompt complaint resolution, transparent public communication, compensation policies, and continuous monitoring of customer feedback. These initiatives may accelerate trust recovery following marketing failures. Fourth, organisations should segment consumers according to demographic characteristics because age, education, and income may influence consumers' interpretation of promotional messages and their responses to deceptive practices. Tailored communication strategies may therefore improve consumer engagement while reducing ethical misunderstandings.

Finally, organisations should integrate ethical marketing into strategic decision-making rather than treating ethics solely as a compliance requirement. Ethical marketing contributes not only to regulatory compliance but also to stronger brand equity, customer retention, and long-term organisational reputation.

IX. Theoretical Implications

This study contributes to the marketing literature by illustrating an integrated framework linking deceptive marketing, consumer trust, consumer loyalty, demographic moderators, and ethical corrective strategies. The conceptual model extends Relationship Marketing Theory by incorporating ethical corrective strategies as mechanisms supporting trust recovery after deceptive marketing. It also demonstrates the relevance of Persuasion Knowledge Theory in explaining consumers' cognitive responses to misleading promotional activities. Furthermore, the study illustrates how demographic characteristics can be conceptualised as moderating variables rather than merely descriptive respondent characteristics. This integrated framework may assist future researchers in developing more comprehensive models of ethical consumer behaviour.

X. Conclusion

Consumer trust remains one of the most valuable strategic assets in modern marketing. While deceptive marketing may temporarily increase organisational sales, it undermines consumer confidence, damages long-term loyalty, and weakens sustainable competitive advantage. The statistical analyses presented in this paper demonstrate how quantitative methods can be applied to examine these relationships within a structured research framework.

The findings consistently indicate that greater perceptions of deceptive marketing are associated with lower consumer trust and reduced consumer loyalty, whereas ethical corrective strategies contribute positively toward trust restoration and stronger customer relationships. Consumer trust further emerges as a central mechanism linking ethical organisational behaviour with long-term loyalty, highlighting its strategic importance in relationship marketing.

From an educational perspective, this article demonstrates the complete process of conducting quantitative consumer behaviour research, including research design, hypothesis development, reliability assessment, descriptive analysis, correlation, regression, ANOVA, and interpretation of findings. The study therefore provides a practical learning resource for postgraduate students, doctoral scholars, and researchers seeking to understand the application of quantitative research techniques within the fields of marketing ethics and consumer behaviour.

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