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Theoretical Framework - From Trend to Tradition: Understanding the Long-Term Adoption of Eco-Friendly Cosmetics by Gen Z Consumers

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Abstract: This paper develops a theoretical framework to examine the factors influencing Gen Z's long-term adoption of eco-friendly cosmetics. With increasing environmental awareness, Gen Z exhibits a preference for sustainable products, yet the persistence of this behaviour warrants further exploration. This study examines the motivators, barriers, and the mediating role of social media and influencers in shaping perceptions and purchasing decisions. By conducting an extensive literature review, the paper synthesizes insights on consumer behavior, sustainability, and green marketing to understand the transition from trends to lasting habits. The factors impacting long-term adoption include ethical considerations, product efficacy, brand transparency, and societal influence. The proposed conceptual model offers pathways for fostering sustained consumer engagement, providing insights into the evolution of Gen Z's attitudes and behaviours toward eco-friendly cosmetics.

Keywords: *Generation Z, Green Products, Cosmetic Products, Consumer Behaviour, Sustainable Products, Environmental Sustainability.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

The current scenario towards eco-friendly cosmetics is tremendously influenced by rising environmental awareness and consumer demand for sustainable products. The increasing engagement of younger generation in social and environmental issues has led to a remarkably increase in their preference for organic and eco-friendly cosmetic products, a trend further accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. According to a new report by Grand View Research (2024), The natural and organic cosmetics market is controlled for significant growth, with a projected CAGR of 9.49% from 2024 to 2032, reaching an estimated value of $85.47 billion by 2032. This expansion is largely driven by increasing consumer awareness regarding the health implications of cosmetic ingredients and a rising demand for sustainable products. In India, the market is expected to grow at a CAGR of 3.29% from 2024 to 2028, with revenues anticipated to hit $1.2 billion by 2024. The shift towards natural cosmetics is supported by consumer preferences for products with minimal processing and natural origins. However, challenges remain, including the need for stringent safety regulations and ethical sourcing practices to ensure product integrity and consumer trust. The convergence of health consciousness and sustainability is significantly reshaping the cosmetics industry, particularly among female consumers who demonstrate a strong preference for eco-friendly products. Research indicates that these consumers are not only more environmentally aware but also willing to pay a premium for sustainable cosmetics, reflecting a shift towards greener consumption patterns. Collectively, these trends underscore a transformative movement towards ethical practices in the

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cosmetics industry, particularly among Generation Z consumers, is influenced by several key determinants. This research aims to develop a theoretical framework model to assess the determinants influencing the long-term adoption of eco-friendly cosmetics by Gen Z consumers. This study will explore the underlying reasons behind the paradigm shift in consumer attitudes towards eco-friendly cosmetic products. Additionally, it will investigate the key barriers and challenges faced by Gen Z consumers in adopting these products. Factors such as eco-labels and price sensitivity are particularly influential in shaping their buying behavior for green cosmetics. Furthermore, the research will examine the mediating role of social media and influencers in shaping Gen Z consumers' perceptions and purchasing decisions regarding eco-friendly cosmetics. The integration of the knowledge-attitude-behavior (KAB) model with the theory of planned behavior (TPB) reveals that perceived innovativeness and source credibility also play crucial roles in influencing consumer intentions. Furthermore, the growing awareness of health hazards associated with non-green products has shifted consumer preferences towards organic and natural options, highlighting the importance of sustainability in purchasing decisions. Study underscores the necessity for brands to adopt robust sustainability practices and effectively communicate their ethical attributes to engage this informed consumer base. This study discusses the background literature on eco-friendly cosmetics and theoretical framework development to assess the determinants influencing the long-term adoption of eco-friendly cosmetics by Gen Z consumers. Furthermore, the study provides the understanding the perception of eco-friendly cosmetics consumption and long-term adoption in their day-to-day life in the review of literature section. Followed by conceptual framework were developed and methodology provided in the respective section. Finaly, the study delves the model discussion, implications, conclusion, limitation and future research directions.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Nina Isabel Bautista et al (2023) The researchers examine the variations in purchase behaviour between Generation X and Generation Z when it comes to green cosmetic items, showing a gap in previous research on generational differences. It identifies critical elements that influence their purchasing decisions, including environmental awareness, eco-labels, attitudes, green advertising, and price sensitivity. The study used a quantitative analysis of 385 respondents to find that, while both generations appreciate these qualities, price sensitivity is the most important driver for Gen X, but both eco-labels and price sensitivity are critical for Gen Z. The study adds to the literature by highlighting the distinct motives driving sustainable consumption in these two generations.

Le Quang Hieu et al (2021). The researchers examine the impact of psychological factors on Generation Z's purchasing intentions for green cosmetics, using the Value-Belief-Norm Theory (Stern, 2000). The study examines the impact of value orientations, pro-environmental ideas, and personal norms on Gen Z's green buying intentions (GPI). According to the findings, both hedonic and egoistic value orientations have an indirect effect on GPI, whereas personal norms have a large direct influence. The study emphasizes the significance of knowing these psychological motivations in designing effective marketing techniques and public policies to promote green cosmetics among Generation Z consumers.

Nóra Amberg, C. Fogarassy (2019). The authors examine at the growing preference for natural cosmetics, which is being driven by consumers' increased environmental and health awareness. The findings identify three separate customer groups: those who just use natural cosmetics, those who continue with traditional products, and those who use both. According to the research, health and environmental awareness will continue to affect cosmetic product trends, however the impact may differ from that of the food industry due to cosmetics' smaller range of health benefits. Future trends point to an increase in the range of natural cosmetics, as well as advancements in environmentally friendly production processes.

M. I. Irfany, Yusniar Khairunnisa, M. Tieman (2023). The authors studies and looks into the elements that influence Muslim Generation Z's intention to purchase environmentally friendly halal cosmetic goods. The study reveals that these factors have a considerable impact on purchasing intentions, but it does not support religiosity's effect on halal-green awareness or its influence on attitudes. The findings emphasize the importance of halal-green branding for cosmetics firms looking to enter the halal industry and increase their market share.

Soo Yeong Ewe, Fandy Tjiptono(2023).The researcher studies to looks into how brand familiarity, consumer green consciousness (GC), and a persistent regulatory focus influence Generation Z's attitudes, purchasing intentions, and willingness to pay more for eco-friendly items than non-eco-friendly ones. Consumers with higher GC are more willing to pay a premium for eco-friendly items, whereas those with a higher chronic promotion emphasis prefer eco-friendly products when brand familiarity is low. The study's findings stress the relevance of brand eco-friendliness in increasing consumer engagement and sales.

III. RESEARCH GAP

Customers in Generation Z have a high preference for eco-friendly cosmetics due to social responsibility and environmental concerns. Nevertheless, a number of interconnected elements, such as eco-labels, brand trust, and the success of green marketing tactics, affect consumers' long-term adoption of these items. Research to date indicates that although environmentally friendly product attributes and environmentally conscious advertising influence consumers' intentions to buy, there are issues with price sensitivity and the effectiveness of green marketing strategies. Perceived environmental value and social media influencers also have a big impact on consumer behaviour. Still, little is known about how these elements work together to affect Gen Z's long-term commitment to eco-friendly makeup. By examining the relationship between environmental concerns, social media

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influence, and marketing effectiveness, this study seeks to close this gap.

➢ *Need and Significance of the Study*

Due in large part to Generation Z's (Gen Z) preferences, the cosmetics sector has undergone a substantial change towards sustainability in recent years. Given the growing market influence of this demographic, it is imperative to comprehend the elements influencing their long-term acceptance of environmentally friendly cosmetic goods. The need for eco-friendly products in the cosmetics business is growing, and Gen Z's environmental consciousness is influencing this need, which makes this study essential. There is an urgent need to investigate how sustainability, brand credibility, and eco-labels influence the purchasing decisions of Gen Z customers, as these criteria rank higher among them than traditional marketing methods. In recent years, there has been a significant shift in the cosmetics industry towards sustainability due to the tastes of Generation Z (Gen Z). As eco-friendly cosmetics continue to gain traction in the market, it is critical to understand the factors impacting this demographics long-term acceptance of them. This study is significant because it addresses the growing demand from the cosmetics sector for eco-friendly products, which is driven by the increasing environmental consciousness of Generation Z. Instead of using conventional marketing strategies, it is critical to look into how Gen Z consumers' judgements about what to buy are impacted by sustainability, eco-labels, and brand trust.

➢ *Scope of the Study*

The analysis of the variables influencing Generation Z's adoption of eco-friendly cosmetics will be the main goal of this study. It will specifically look at the influence of social media influencers on consumer decisions, the function of eco-labels, brand trust, and environmental awareness. The study will also investigate the ways in which Gen Z's commitment to sustainable cosmetics is influenced by price sensitivity, social responsibility, and green marketing techniques. A comparison of these elements' effects with those influencing other generations, such Generation X, is part of the scope. The study will also look into possible obstacles to the use of green cosmetics, like green pricing, and how consumer education and targeted marketing might help overcome them. The results will be useful to marketers, legislators, and cosmetics companies who want to encourage sustainability in beauty sector.

➢ *Objectives*

This paper aims to develop a theoretical framework model to assess the determinants influencing the long-term adoption of eco-friendly cosmetics by Gen Z consumers. To understand the reasons which underlie the paradigm shift in the attitude of consumers towards eco-friendly cosmetic products. Assess the key barriers and challenges faced by Gen Z consumers in adopting eco-friendly cosmetics. And also assess the mediate role of social media and influencers in shaping Gen Z's consumers perceptions and purchasing decisions regarding eco-friendly cosmetics.

IV. METHODOLOGY USED

To address the study objectives, we conducted an extensive examination to understand the reasons which underlie the paradigm shift in the attitude of consumers towards eco-friendly cosmetic products. This study developed theoretical framework model to assess the determinants influencing the long-term adoption of eco-friendly cosmetics by Gen Z consumers. This study adopted various extensive literatures and conceptual papers related to the study. And we steered an extensive exploration for eco-friendly cosmetics, organic cosmetics and interdisciplinary literature published in the last three decades, which incorporated virtual databases as well as reference lists of the Scopus and WoS articles.

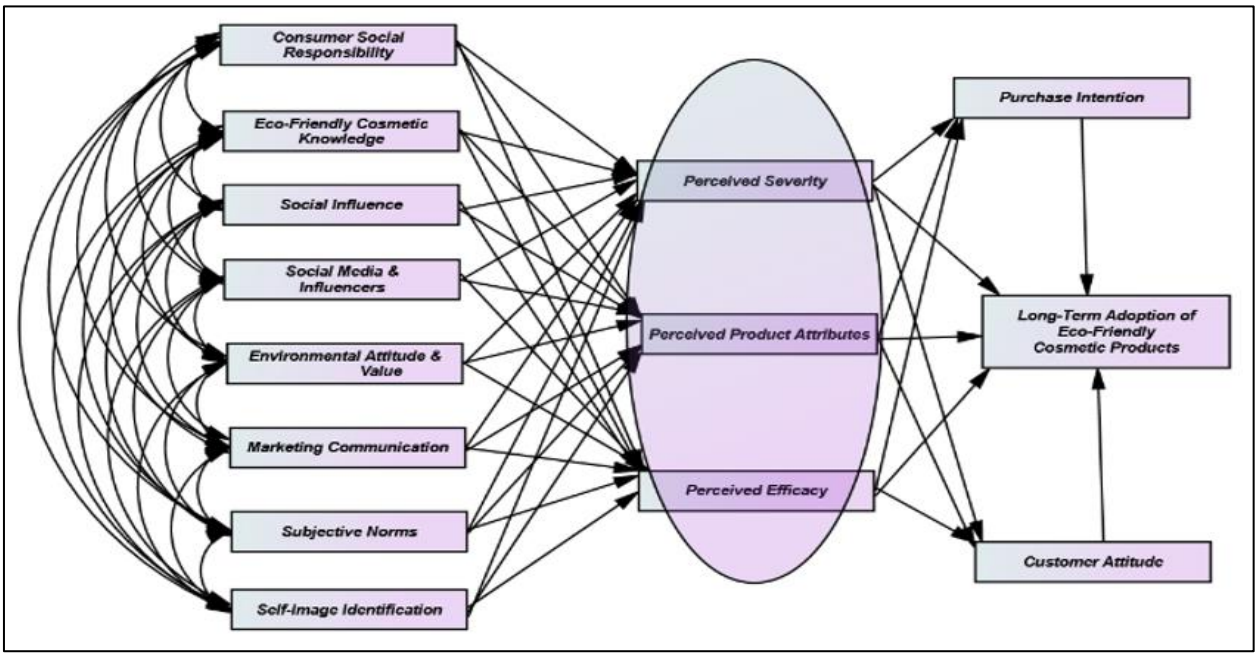

Fig 1 Methodology Used

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➢ *Theoretical Framework*

Generation Z's trend of green makeup use is enabled by the mutual influence of environmental, social and personal factors. This theoretical framework principles of consumer behaviour, environmental sustainability and green marketing to explain this process. The Knowledge-Attitude-Behavior (KAB) model and Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), the model emphasizes the main implications of environmental knowledge, social pressure and expected product efficacy. The derived model obtained independent variables, such as consumers' awareness of social responsibility, eco-friendliness, attitude toward the environment and towards the marketing message. These variables are mediated by constructs and have outcome variables as their consequence. Social media and influencer marketing are emphasized as two major mediators that lead to perception and behavior in Gen Z, a generation that expects transparency, sustainability and an ethical supply chain.

- *Consumer Social Responsibility (CSR):*

This practices may affect consumer's assessment of severity of environmental problems and influence the perceived attributes of sustainable cosmetics. The CSR has perceived value and trustworthiness to its eco-friendly goods.

- *Eco-Friendly Cosmetic Knowledge:*

Consumers knowledge of eco-friendly cosmetics for makeup has an impact on the attributes of the makeup and enable a more intelligent decision on the advantages and side effect(s) of these products. This knowledge has direct consequences on the perceived seriousness of environmental problems associated with the cosmetic segment.

- *Social Influence:*

Social norms and peer pressure may affect perceived severity as well as product characteristics. When a consumer's social network highly regards environmental sustainability, that consumer is more likely to perceive environmental problems as important.

- *Social Media & Influencers:*

Social media and the influencer have a vital impact on perceptions. They can be used to exaggerate the perceived impact of environmental problems and to induce the desirable properties of eco-friendly products and negative impact on social media can negatively impact perceptions.

- *Environmental Attitude & Value:*

A consumer's own beliefs about values and attitudes toward the environment play a significant role in shaping the severity perception. People who have high environmental attitudinal orientations take environmental threats more seriously and it affect the perception of the attributes of eco-friendly products.

- *Marketing Communication*

Marketing communication can have an immediate impact on both perceived severity and product characteristics. Campaigns emphasizing the environmental impact of conventional cosmetics may raise the sense of severity. Marketing focusing on eco-friendly feature benefits and sustainability can lead to a positive perception of product attributes.

- *Subjective Norms:*

Subjective norms are the perceived requests of important others. If a consumer believes their friends and family expect them to use eco-friendly products, it can influence their perception of severity and product attributes. This influence can drive purchase intentions.

- *Self-Image Identification:*

How consumers perceive themselves influences their choices. The more environmentally conscious a consumer is, the greater he/she should perceive environmental problems to be. They also tend to perceive eco-friendly products as consistent with their self-image even more often.

V. IMPLICATION AND CONCLUSION

This research paper examines the adoption of green cosmetic products makes a significant transformation in consumer behaviour by increasing the awareness of environmental and health issues. This theoretical research highlights the importance of understanding the longterm adoption of green cosmetic products to survive with eco-friendly and environmental sustainability. Finally this research states the consumption of green cosmetic products is increasing in Generation Z to deal with eco-friendly products, sustainability to avoid the environmental and health issues.

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