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## **EDITORIAL**

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## **GREEN COSMETICS AND PURCHASE INTENTION: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERN, SUBJECTIVE NORMS, QUALITY, AND HEALTH BENEFITS.**

*Dr. Firdaus Bashir, Assistant Professor, PSG Institute of Management, PSG College of Technology, Coimbatore, Tamilnadu*

### **Abstract**

The rising consumer preference for eco-friendly beauty products has accelerated the shift from conventional cosmetics to sustainable alternatives, particularly among women consumers. Increasing awareness of environmental and health concerns has fuelled demand for chemical-free personal care products, making green cosmetics a rapidly growing market segment. This study explores the determinants of women's purchase intentions toward green cosmetics, highlighting environmental consciousness, health considerations, product quality, and social influences as key drivers. Social media is identified as a crucial enabler, shaping consumer attitudes and facilitating interactive purchasing experiences by disseminating information on environmentally friendly products. Grounded in the Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB), the conceptual research demonstrates that favourable attitudes toward green cosmetics, shaped by environmental values and subjective social norms, significantly predict purchase intentions. However, challenges remain in standardising "green" certifications and achieving scalability in production, which may hinder widespread adoption. Future research should extend to the role of consumer education, certification credibility, and lifecycle assessments in shaping sustainable consumption. Addressing these dimensions will strengthen industry practices and support the transition toward environmentally responsible beauty products.

**Keywords:** Consumer health, environmental concern, green cosmetics, purchase intention, sustainability, theory of planned behavior.

## **1. Introduction**

Cosmetics have long played a central role in women's lives, evolving from traditional herbal formulations to a multi-billion-dollar global industry that spans skincare, haircare, and other products such as foundation, lipsticks, and mascaras (Akter & Islam, 2020). In recent years, this industry has undergone a significant transformation as consumers particularly women have become increasingly conscious of the health and environmental risks associated with synthetic ingredients. Rising awareness of sustainability, coupled with a desire for safer and chemical-free alternatives, has led to growing demand for green cosmetics (Pudaruth, Juwaheer, & Seewoo, 2015). Green cosmetics, typically defined as products that use natural ingredients, sustainable sourcing practices, and eco-friendly packaging, are perceived as both safer for human health and less harmful to the environment (Wang et al., 2018). Unlike conventional cosmetics, which may contain parabens, sulphates, or other potentially harmful chemicals, green alternatives are positioned as healthier choices for consumers while also promoting ecological responsibility. Consequently, their adoption has become a means for women to align personal beauty routines with broader environmental values and sustainable lifestyles.

### **1.1 Context of the Study**

Sustainability has become a defining trend of the global economy, influencing lifestyle choices such as eating organic food, using renewable energy, adopting sustainable fashion, and driving eco-friendly vehicles (Cervellon, Rinaldi, & Wernerfelt, 2011). This growing environmental consciousness has extended into personal care, where consumers are increasingly attentive to the ingredients in the cosmetics they apply to their bodies. In India, green cosmetics are regulated under the *Drugs and Cosmetics Act of 1940* and the *Drugs and Cosmetics Rules of 1945*. These frameworks ensure safety, quality, and the efficacy of cosmetic ingredients. Additionally, the Ministry of Ayurveda, Yoga, Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH) oversees regulations for traditional medicinal systems, many of which are also incorporated into green cosmetics (Mishra & Kurmi, 2023). Consumers today are especially cautious about the potential side effects of chemical-based cosmetics. Green cosmetics, formulated with natural and eco-friendly ingredients, are perceived as safer alternatives with fewer risks of causing skin ailments. Companies in this sector are also innovating in sustainable packaging, adopting recyclable and biodegradable materials to minimize environmental impact.

Cosmetic usage is significantly higher among women than men, making female consumers the key drivers of demand for green cosmetics (Kaur, Gangwar, & Dash, 2022). Women increasingly integrate green skincare, haircare, and other eco-friendly cosmetic products into their routines to enhance physical appearance while aligning with sustainability values. Cosmetics could be of different genre conventional cosmetics, natural cosmetics, as well as green cosmetics. Conventional cosmetics rely heavily on synthetic chemicals, while natural cosmetics incorporate a large proportion of ingredients derived from plants, animals, or minerals, though often still supplemented with petrochemical derivatives. Green cosmetics, however, go further by emphasizing organic farming, the sustainable use of natural resources, and minimal reliance on synthetic inputs (Zafarzadeh et al., 2018).

The green cosmetics industry represents a specialized segment of the broader health and skincare market that prioritizes environmentally sustainable practices. Its scope extends across several key dimensions, including sustainable sourcing of raw materials, eco-friendly packaging, transparency in ingredient disclosure, and minimal environmental impact in production and distribution. As demand for green cosmetics continues to grow, consumers are not only concerned about physical appearance and skincare but also increasingly expect products to reflect their health goals and environmental values. This shift indicates a broader transformation of the cosmetics industry, moving from conventional chemical-based products to sustainable alternatives. The implications of this transition are wide-ranging and involve multiple stakeholders. Consumers seek safer, eco-conscious options; manufacturers aim to capture emerging markets with innovative sustainable products; regulators develop stricter standards for safety and sustainability; and media and communities act as platforms to amplify awareness. This convergence highlights the significance of studying the green cosmetics sector to understand its drivers, challenges, and opportunities. Despite its rapid growth, research on green cosmetics remains comparatively limited. Most existing studies focus on general sustainable consumption or specific aspects of consumer behaviour, but relatively few address the distinct factors driving adoption of green cosmetics. There is thus a pressing need to examine the determinants influencing consumer shift from conventional to green cosmetics, particularly among women who constitute the primary consumer base. Understanding these factors can help identify the relative significance of health concerns, environmental values, social influence, and product attributes in shaping purchase and referral behaviour.

## **1.2 Theoretical Framework**

The theory of planned behaviour provides a robust framework for understanding consumer intentions toward green cosmetics. TPB emphasizes three elements: attitudes, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Research shows that environmental values strongly influence positive attitudes, which in turn increase purchase intentions (Meliniasari & Mas'od, 2023). Beyond attitudes, social influences such as peer pressure play a key role in motivating eco-friendly purchases. Young consumers, particularly women, are often influenced by peer groups and social media endorsements that promote sustainable consumption. Perceived behavioural control shaped by product availability, affordability, and perceived effectiveness further determines purchasing intentions. When high-quality green cosmetics are affordable and accessible, consumers are more likely to adopt them; conversely, high costs or limited access discourage purchase (Qi & Ploeger, 2021). Although TPB effectively explains much of consumer behaviour, research suggests it may overlook additional variables such as perceived quality and environmental concern. Incorporating these dimensions provides a more nuanced understanding of green cosmetics adoption, particularly among young female consumers.

## **2. Review of Literature**

Consumer purchase decisions involve multiple stages, including problem recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, purchase, and post-purchase behaviour (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018; Kotler & Keller, 2016). Though are often presented linearly, these stages can overlap, and factors such as risk perception, motivation, and emotional influences play crucial roles. Impulse purchases often bypass certain stages, while negative word-of-mouth or peer influence can disrupt final purchase decisions. Consumer behaviour in cosmetics, thus, is shaped by both rational evaluation and non-rational emotional considerations (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Swastha& Irawan, 2014). Besides all of these there are various other factors that influence the purchase intention of consumers like

### **A) Environmental Concern**

Green cosmetics typically use biodegradable materials and sustainable packaging, significantly reducing environmental pollution compared to conventional products. Studies highlight that such products minimise harmful chemical runoff that could damage ecosystems and emphasize renewable resources to reduce carbon footprints across their life cycles (López & Santamaría, 2021). By excluding toxins such as parabens and sulphates, green cosmetics protect both user health and the environment by preventing contamination of water

and soil. Growing consumer demand for sustainable practices has also driven companies to adopt recycling programs and reduce plastic usage. Research shows that firms implementing Eco- friendly practices not only improve their environmental impact but also achieve greater market competitiveness, revealing a positive link between sustainability and economic performance (Wang & Chen, 2023). Sustainable sourcing ensures that biodiversity and ecosystem health are preserved through renewable resources and minimal processing impacts (Garcia & Nascimento, 2022). Additionally, cruelty-free practices promote animal welfare while avoiding environmental harm related to livestock production, such as greenhouse gas emissions and ecological degradation (Fletcher & Martin, 2020). Green cosmetics primarily rely on plant-based and mineral ingredients, lowering risks of allergic reactions while enhancing both consumer safety and environmental sustainability (Hassan & Lee, 2021). Formulations incorporating botanicals and essential oils provide skin benefits while reducing exposure to hazardous chemicals, consistent with the principles of green chemistry (Patel & Jain, 2022). Research indicates that organic and natural components reduce the ecological impact of chemical production and contribute to biodiversity protection (Smith & Clark, 2020; Browne & Mitchell, 2021; Ochoa & Garcia, 2022; Hernandez & Rivera, 2020). Consumer preference for green cosmetics is strongly linked to environmental awareness, particularly among younger generations who seek to minimise the environmental damage caused by conventional cosmetics ( Lee& Choi, 2022). Many consumers perceive purchasing green cosmetics as an act of responsibility and personal contribution to sustainability, reinforcing environmentally conscious behaviour.

### **B) Subjective Norms**

Social influence plays a crucial role in shaping consumer decisions toward green cosmetics. Family recommendations build trust and increase the likelihood of adoption, especially among young consumers (Aerts et al., 2016; Hassan & Shiu, 2019). Positive family experiences with sustainable products create a supportive environment for shared purchasing decisions (Minton et al., 2021). Friends also significantly influence buying behaviour, as peer recommendations often encourage consumers to try new green cosmetic brands (Hassan et al., 2016; Bae & Chang, 2020; Rohm et al., 2021). Such influence extends beyond individual purchases, fostering wider community acceptance of eco-friendly products.

Expert endorsements from dermatologists and beauticians further increase consumer confidence in green cosmetics. Endorsements enhance perceptions of product credibility and effectiveness, thereby boosting sales and adoption rates (Lee & Shin, 2018; Deng & Pei, 2020; Morales et al., 2021). Overall, strong social ties whether through family, friends, or professional networks create a supportive atmosphere that encourages sustainable consumption. Shared values and social support significantly influence the likelihood of adopting green cosmetics (Jansson et al., 2017; Kumar & Singh, 2021).

### **C) Health Benefits**

Consumers often perceive green cosmetics as safer and more effective than conventional alternatives. Natural ingredients are associated with healthier skin, fewer adverse reactions, and improved overall appearance (Sharma & Vohra, 2020; Khan & Rahman, 2021). Safer formulations also reduce risks of irritation, allergies, and long-term health issues, positioning green cosmetics as a healthier choice for conscious buyers (Ebrahimi, Firooz, & Sarrafi, 2017). Many consumers view purchasing green cosmetics as both a health-conscious and environmentally responsible action (Michaels, Brown, & Smith, 2019). High consumer satisfaction with green cosmetics contributes to long-term brand loyalty, as users believe these products are both effective and safe (Kumar & Gupta, 2021). Awareness of the risks of synthetic chemicals reinforces consumer preference for natural alternatives, further strengthening the perception that green cosmetics promote skin health and hydration while reducing irritation.

### **D) Quality**

Perceived quality is a central factor influencing green cosmetics adoption. Consumers associate natural ingredients and ethical sourcing with higher efficacy and product purity, distinguishing green cosmetics from conventional alternatives (Cohen & Sweeney, 2017). Research shows that consumers value transparency and ethical sourcing, as these attributes contribute to perceptions of superior quality (Zhou & Wong, 2020). Among young female consumers, perceived quality significantly influences purchase intentions and brand loyalty. Both intrinsic factors (e.g., performance, durability) and extrinsic factors (e.g., brand reputation) drive decisions. A study in Jordan confirmed that higher perceived quality correlates with stronger purchase intentions for green cosmetics (Ghazali et al., 2017).

### **3. Future Directions**

To enhance the robustness of future research, studies should extend their scope to include culturally diverse contexts, allowing a broader understanding of consumer perceptions and attitudes toward green cosmetics. Longitudinal research designs would be particularly valuable in capturing shifts in consumer preferences and behaviours over time, especially as awareness of environmental issues continues to grow. Empirical studies with large sample sizes and incorporating more diverse demographic segments will provide findings for improved generalizability. Future research should also evaluate the impact of consumer education initiatives and marketing strategies on purchasing decisions. Examining the role of certifications, eco-labels, and regulatory frameworks in shaping consumer trust would provide critical insights into building confidence in the green cosmetics sector. Additionally, integrating lifecycle assessments into studies would reveal the true environmental impact of green cosmetic products and identify opportunities for improvement. Collaborative efforts between brands, researchers, and policymakers can encourage innovation, promote best practices, and drive more sustainable behaviours across the cosmetics industry.

### **4. Conclusion**

This research highlights an emerging shift in consumer preference toward environmentally responsible cosmetics, largely driven by growing health and ecological concerns. Eco-friendly mind set, social media and subjective norms play a pivotal role in shaping consumer attitudes and behaviours toward green cosmetics. Besides effective brand engagement through targeted communication, educational initiatives, and collaborations with influencers can foster loyalty and stimulate demand. Building informed consumer communities that value sustainability will be key to long-term brand success. Although challenges remain regarding the establishment of clear standards and the scalability of green cosmetic practices, the market shows promising growth. As sustainability continues to dominate global discourse, the cosmetics industry must align with evolving consumer expectations to secure both competitive advantage and long-term viability in an increasingly responsible marketplace.

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