The Impact of E-WOM on Green Cosmetics Purchase Intention and Behaviour: A Systematic Review and Future Directions

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Abstract

Over the past few years, the green cosmetics market has experienced substantial expansion. Scholarly interest in the field has increased concurrently. The systematic review investigates the influence of electronic-word-of-mouth on consumer behaviour and purchase intention within the green cosmetics industry. As the demand for eco-friendly products rises and digital communication platforms continue to shape consumer decision – making process, understanding the role of E-WOM in this context is imperative. In spite of the expanding body of research, no comprehensive analysis has been conducted to compile and integrate the empirical research analysing the variables linked to green cosmetics buy behaviour (GCPB) and green cosmetics purchase intention (GCPI). This research attempts to fill in this gap. This systematic review was carried out by us. The theory of planned behavior's components (attitude, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control) were most frequently shown as determinants. These were followed by the "marketing mix, consumer consciousness issues, consumer values, brand-related attributes, experience and knowledge, self-efficacy, and perceived barriers". Therefore, this investigation will help scholars understand the knowledge boundary. Moreover, the findings of this review contributes to the body of knowledge on E-WOM and consumer behaviour in the context of susutainable cosmetics, also providing valuable insights to marketers in framing their marketing strategies for promoting green cosmetic products.

Keywords: *Green cosmetics; Purchase Behaviour; Purchase Intention; Systematic Review; Sustainability, E-WOM.*

Introduction

The study of individuals, organisations, or associations, as well as a variety of actions connected to the acquisition, use, and disposal of all commodities and services that consumers can obtain, is known as consumer behaviour. One of these products that customers can choose from a wide range is cosmetics. It's an accessory meant to improve a person's outward look. The skin, hair, colour, and oral care segments of the Indian cosmetics market are expected to generate 11 billion Indian rupees in revenue by 2021. Following the liberalisation of the 1990s, numerous Indian women have been crowned Miss Universe (1994), Miss World (2006), Miss Asia Pacific (1970, 1975), and Miss Universe (1994). Indian consumers have a preference for organic and herbal cosmetics. The

Indian cosmetics market is currently valued at US$950 million and has been expanding at a rate of about 20% annually. It falls under the industry, innovation, and infrastructure category of the UNDP's 2030 sustainable development goals. The Indian cosmetics market has established itself as one of the distinctive sectors with significant growth potential. It is anticipated that the industry's market share will increase by 18% annually. The growing demand for herbal and organic cosmetic products is largely responsible for this surge. The rising demand for products, particularly those that are organic or natural, is the reason behind the Indian cosmetic. Lakme, Revlon, Oriflame Cosmetics, Biotique, Himalaya Herbals, Natures Way, Shanazhussain, Lotus, VLCC, and Dabur are a few of the top businesses in India. As a result, during the past several years, the green cosmetics market has experienced tremendous growth. Consequently, it is projected that the global market for organic or green cosmetic products would be worth USD 54.5 billion by 2027. Market research agencies project that the global market for natural and organic cosmetics will grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 9.1 to 9.76 percent. Academic interest in the use and consumption of green cosmetics has increased concurrently. Two key problems with the conception of green cosmetics are ingredients and processing.

Therefore, a wide range of sustainability attributes are covered by their definition, including chemical-free and natural (organic) solutions, conventional renewable raw materials (such as renewable plant and bacterial sources), and locally sourced ingredients that are processed using environmentally friendly formulations and marketed in packaging that supports the environment.

Cosmetics businesses have been exploiting natural claims to sway consumers' opinions and encourage them to make purchases, as well as producing and marketing their goods as sustainable. Scholars have been paying more and more attention to green cosmetics lately. Global green cosmetic consumer behaviour is still not fully understood because, despite an increasing body of literature, no systematic review has been conducted to compile and synthesise the empirical studies that have looked at factors predicting green cosmetics purchase intention (GCPI) and green cosmetics purchase behaviour (GCPB). Therefore, the goal of the current study is to close this gap by thoroughly analysing previous research on the factors that influence GCPI and GCPB. Consequently, this research will aid in the understanding of the knowledge barrier by academics. Additionally, the review's conclusions will assist marketers in formulating their plans for promoting eco-friendly cosmetics.

Review of Literature

Green Cosmetics

Cosmetics in today's society, beauty and physical attractiveness are constantly emphasized as desirable and admirable characteristics A number of studies have addressed the impact of the representation in today's society; beauty and physical attractiveness are constantly emphasized as desirable and admirable characteristics (Joy and Venkatesh, 1994; Picot-Lemasson et al., 2002). The desire to improve one's physical attractiveness seems to be an inherent characteristic of most individuals (Adams, 1977; Etcoff, 1999; Winston, 2003). A number of studies have addressed the impact of the representation of attractive women on female consumers. Cosmetics have traditionally been confined to female consumers (Dino et al., 1972). Cosmetics are substances used to enhance the appearance or odour of the human body. Considerable evidence has accumulated that, regardless of cultural changes in its meaning, beauty is an effective sell (Naikdimen, K.A 1984). Physical attractiveness plays an important role in interpersonal interactions because it provides easily accessible, nonverbal quasi information about a person to others in the form of illusions of personality (Rubinstein, R.P.1985). Such attractiveness may be manipulated, and people use makeup and other forms of external adornments to influence the nonverbal information they wish to communicate (Bloch, P.H., & Richins, M.L 1992). Cosmetics are ubiquitous elements of women's consumer culture, one of the imperatives of contemporary life, and represent one of the most important ways women present and transform their public persona (Melanie K Cumings, 2001). Women use cosmetics to audition various selves (Bolch P.H& Sherrell Richins, M.L 1992) and cosmetics matter because they are a means of self-investigation (Beausolil N 1994).

E-WOM

The Internet has transformed and facilitated the way people communicate. As an example, it has made the sharing of personal opinions and experiences more conveniently. This technological development has brought a new, ground-breaking perspective to Word Of Mouth (WOM), along with the new name "Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM). The eWOM is defined as 'any positive or negative statement made by potential, actual, or former customers about a product or company, which is made available to many people and institutions via the Internet' (Hennig et al., 2004). Besides the term "electronic word of mouth," it is also known as "online word of mouth"

and internet WOM' (Goldenberg et al., 2001), 'buzz marketing' (Thomas & Greg 2004). The 'electronic word of mouth communication' (Hennig et al., 2004) are some other expressions in the literature which refer to eWOM (Vilpponen et al., 2006). Social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram offer electronic word of mouth (eWOM). Social media has emerged as an essential and effective means of assisting and endorsing activities and communications among consumers and organisations that outdo time and space restrictions. Social media has provided what is known as e word of mouth (eWOM) (Kizgin et al., 2018). The growing usage of the Internet has contributed to the growth of eWOM. Some of the advantages of eWOM are communication strategies have become more comfortable and faster with technology, particularly the Internet (Teng et al., 2014). Electronic Word of Mouth (e WOM) can reach a large audience for a message that can be conveyed to hundreds, thousands, or even millions of users through the Internet (Cakim, 2009; Filieri & McLeay, 2014; Sohn, 2014). Electronic Word of Mouth (eWOM) message can be spread quickly (Hung & Li, 2007; King et al., 2014). Overall, eWOM is considered as a powerful marketing tool despite some of its disadvantages (Sen & Lerman, 2007; Sweeney et al., 2012). In a recent study, (Vahdati et al., 2016) also confirmed eWOM having a positive and significant effect on bank customers' purchase intention. Hence, eWOM among consumers significantly affects their purchase intention on social networking websites. Shabsogh et al. (2012) found that "the relationships between source characteristics and trustworthiness are largely irrelevant to eWOM" and its effect on purchase intention.

Green Consumer Purchase Behaviour

Consumer behaviour focuses on how individuals make decisions to spend their available resources (time, money, effort) on consumption related items. This includes what they buy, why they buy it, when they buy it, where they buy it, how often they buy it, how often they use it, how they evaluate it after the purchase and the impact of such evaluations on future purchases, and how they dispose it off. Rresearch in consumer behavior is a top priority for marketers both in the third world (Albaum and Peterson, 1984) and in Eastern Europe (Kaynak and Samli, 1986). Once a company has ensured both economic and physical access to its products, it needs to evaluate the buying behavior of consumers in the country that it is seeking to enter. However, little is known about consumer attitudes, buying habits, purchase motives, lifestyles, etc., in Eastern Europe and Third World countries (Kaynak and Samli, 1986). Marketers who seek to enter these markets might therefore find it necessary to engage in some priority marketing research relating to such issues (Peterson, 1985).

Green Consumer Purchase Intention

With the development of technology and media, online shopping has become one of the most popular shopping methods in the recent years (Lim et al., 2016; Wu et al., 2011). The number of online shopping consumers and online shopping revenue has continuously increased over the years (Ozen & Engizek, 2014). Processed through the internet, the online shopping has more advantages than traditional shopping ways available anywhere and anytime (Lester et al., 2005); saving time (Abbad et al., 2011; Morganosky & Cude, 2000); having a wide range of products (Delafrooz et al., 2011) and saving cost by buying products at lower prices (Choi & Park, 2006; Elliot & Fowell, 2000; Lester et al., 2005; Walsh & Godfrey, 2000). Previous studies which were based on Technology Acceptance Model - TAM (Davis et al., 1989) prove that these benefits are one of the most important and positively influencing factors to intention (Aziz & Wahid, 2018; Gefen et al., 2003a; Ha et al., 2019; Lim et al., 2016). Beside the perception of usefulness, studies which uses TAM (Davis et al., 1989) also show that the ease of use also influences the shopping intention of online consumers (Gefen et al., 2003a; Gefen et al., 2003b; Ha, 2020; Ha et al., 2019; Lin, 2007). Mirabi et al. (2015) said that purchase intention is the impulse to buy a particular product in a particular purchasing environment. Shah et al. (2012) provided a comparable definition. declaring that purchase intention is a choice-making procedure that shows the motive why customers purchases a particular product. Moreover, the researchers added that making a purchase decision is a complicated process. Ghosh (1990) stated that purchase intention is an important predictor for buying process of consumers. Online purchase intention is defined as the construct that encourages the strength of a customer's intention to purchase online. The decision-making process is a multifaceted stage that influences customers directly or indirectly with different choices. Customers intend to seek information about products or services to maximize their satisfaction level, expectations, and experiences. Information adoption of recommended products or services is not only a one-time decision-making process but also for repeated use, first use, or pre-usage, which is a process that occurs consistently and over time (Blackwell et al., 2001; Comegys et al., 2006). In the context of online shopping, the vital community provides an opportunity to share or gain information to expose the quality and risk of products before decision-making. Consumers rely on online information provided by others, which may credible to adopt, may profoundly influence their behavior, subjective norms, beliefs, intention, and attitude. Involvement, information credibility,

and information quality are important sources that appeal to consumers' social ties as positive or negative eWOM (Sussman and Siegal, 2003; Plotkina and Munzel, 2016). Technological awareness and the trust towards the sites are the main factors that have led to the emergence of the concept of online shopping (Heijden, Verhagen & Creemers, 2003). The trust created by the websites in the minds of customers had, in turn, created a positive attitude towards these sites thus increasing the customer base of online shoppers by each passing day Yoon (2002). According to Mundorf and Bryant (2002), the business-to-consumer online shopping has gained considerable appeal during the past few years. Schlosser, White, and Lloyd (2006) argue that more and more effort shall be put by the shopping portals to convert the website visitors into buyers. Theories and studies have been put forth to determine that what causes a customer to shop online. Hausman and Siekpe (2009) highlighted the importance of a good web interface for websites to increase the base of customers. Verhagen and Van Dolen (2009) identified factors like online store service, online store merchandise, online store atmosphere and online store navigation as important contributors of online purchase intentions. Similarly, Chiu, Lin, and Tang (2005) highlighted the importance of personal awareness of security, perceived ease of purchasing, perceived usefulness, personal innovativeness and attitude towards buying in the formation of intentions for online purchase. Korzaan (2003) and Heijden et al. (2001) also indicated that attitude plays a crucial role in online purchase decision making besides trust and reputation of the store. Bosnjak, Galesic, and Tuten (2007) argued that online purchase intentions are a function of the personality of a customer, focusing more on the intrinsic factors. On the other hand, Brown and Muchira (2004) showed how privacy issues inhibit customers to buy online. Zhou (2011) highlighted the role of social influence in the virtual world. According to him, a person's judgement to buy a product is often strongly affected by people who are close, rather than strangers. People interact with other persons to seek advice and get information. Bearden, Calcich, Netemeyer, and Teel (1986) observed the actuality of two kinds of social influence when a person intends to adopt a new product: normative social influence (or subjective norms) and informational social influence. According to Kim and Srivastava (2007) social influence is one of the key drivers of the online purchases. The social influence is the referent power of people in the decision-making process of an individual. In the virtual world where online shopping takes places, the social influence can be exerted by family, peers and groups, both offline (physical) as well as online in the form of e-WOM (Rosen & Olshavsky, 1987; Amblee & Bui, 2011). Adamic and Adar (2003) provide an extensive study as how connections with family and friends are going more virtual and online.

Research Methodology

We carried out this systematic review. A systematic review extensively scans all reports published on a subject to find answers to a clearly defined research question. The research is based on descriptive design.

Search Strategy

We conducted a broad, date-independent search of Scopus, the biggest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature, to find pertinent papers. Using Boolean operators to combine search phrases, we created the search strings. Some search terms included "Green Cosmetics" AND "EWOM" AND "Purchase intention".

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

The scope of our search was restricted to excluding conference proceedings and non-English papers, as well as any literature that was not pertinent to our investigation. Only quantitative empirical research that looked at the factors influencing consumers' intentions and behaviours to purchase green cosmetics while taking the mediating effect of E-WOM into account were included.

1200 records were obtained from the electronic databases. 568 records remained after duplicates were eliminated. Other researchers then independently reviewed the abstracts and titles. 301 records were removed after that. Lastly, we evaluated the full-text publications that were left. 53 of these articles met the requirements for eligibility.

Data Analysis
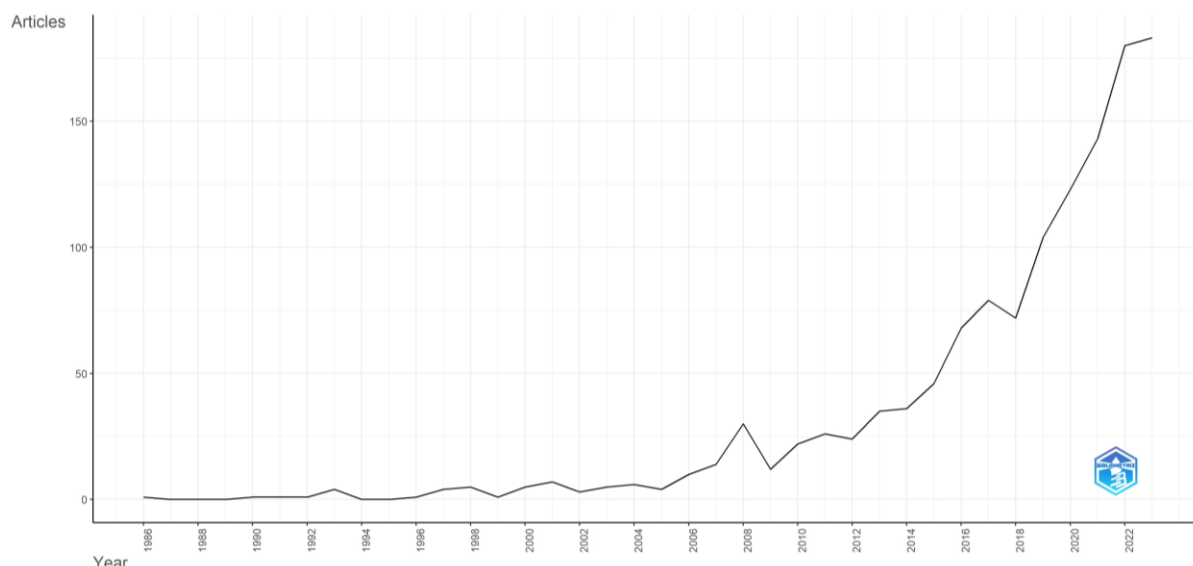
(Source: Biblioshiny)

Researchers paid close attention to slow fashion in the decades before to this one, as seen by the publication trend displayed in Fig. 1. The first two studies on GCPI and GCPB were published in 1986 and 1990, respectively, based on the extraction process results, which turned up a total of 1200 articles. Figure 2 clearly demonstrates that the yearly number of publications was in the single digits prior to 2006. After thereafter, the publishing trend kept showing double digits; it peaked in 2023 and reached a three-digit level in 2019.

Table 1: Main Information of the articles extracted

Depiction	Outcomes
Duration	1986:2022
Sources (Journals, Books etc.)	998
Articles	1526
Annual Rate of Growth (%)	11.92
Mean Age of article	2.8
Mean Citations per article	15.84
References	77675
Keywords Plus	6352
Author's Keywords	2222
Authors	2625
Authors of Single-authored article	282
Single-authored article	302
Co-authors per article	3.11
International Co-authorship (%)	18.90

(Source: Biblioshiny)

Table 1 displays the summary statistics of the bibliometric metadata; 225 authors were included in the published records.
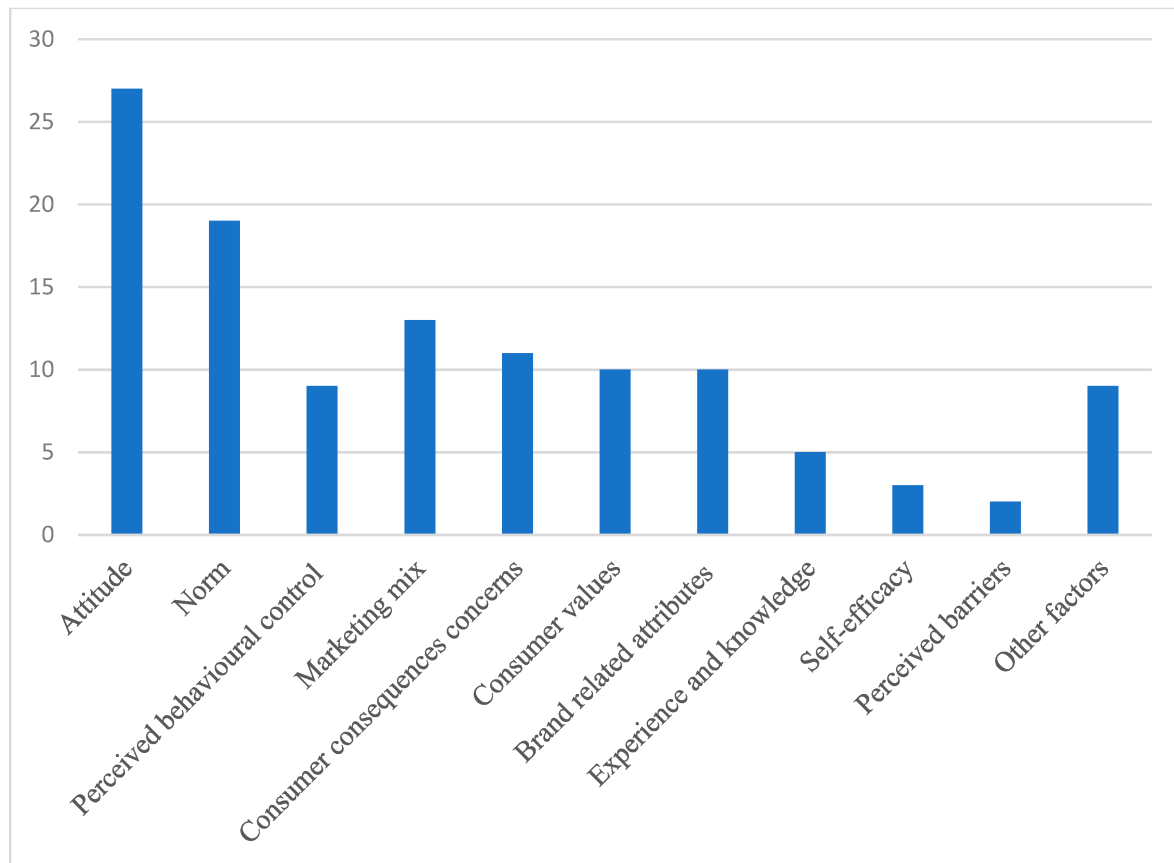
Figure 2: Major Research Themes

Figure 2 shows the major research themes that can form the part of future studies. The above figure shows there are enough researches on consumer attitude, norm, marketing mix and consumer consequences concerns regarding green cosmetics but there is a scarcity of researches in the area of experience and knowledge, self –efficacy and perceived barriers. So, these are the promising future themes on which future researchers can work.

Contribution of the Countries

Table 2: Most Productive Countries

COUNTRY	DOCUMENTS
USA	69
UK	65
SPAIN	44
GERMANY	33
INDIA	27
AUSTRALIA	24
NETHERLANDS	23
PORTUGAL	21
FINLAND	19
FRANCE	17

Source: Rstudio

The scholarly work on the present topic is scattered throughout 63 nations, with some authors publishing just one article on the subject. The top 10 countries that make contributions to publications are listed in Table 2.

Table-3 Co-authorships between countries.

Cluster 1	Cluster 2	Cluster 3	Cluster 4
Brazil	Canada	Austria	France
Denmark	China	Belgium	Greece
Finland	Indonesia	Germany	Japan
Norway	Iran	India	Portugal
Spain	Italy	Israel	United States
Sweden	Malaysia	Mexico	
United Kingdom	Pakistan		

Cluster 5	Cluster 6	Cluster 7
Australia	Netherlands	Switzerland
Slovenia	South Africa	
Thailand		
Viet Nam		

Source: Researchers Calculations

Figure depicts a network map with a large number of interconnected elements involving 32 countries in the field of present topic.

The Theory of Planned Behavior

"Subjective norms (perceived social pressure from others to engage in or not engage in a particular behaviour), perceived behavioural control (perceptions of people's ability to perform a given behaviour), and attitudes (i.e., overall positive or negative evaluations) are said to influence both intentions and behaviours, according to the theory of planned behaviour (TPB). Several studies have revealed significant impacts of TPB constructs on GCPB and/or GCPI, supporting this notion".
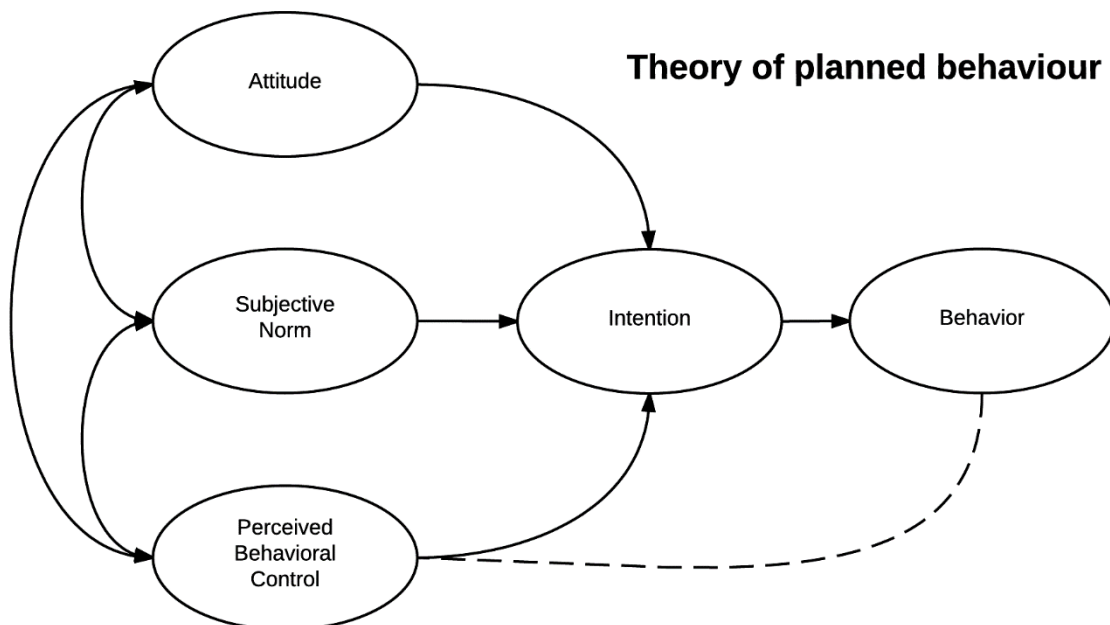

Figure 3- Theory of Planned Behavior

Findings

The results of this review demonstrate a substantial and positive relationship between GCPI and GCPB and the theory of planned behaviour constructs (attitude, norms, and perceived behavioural control). The most often shown predictor of GCPB and GCPI mediating EWOM was attitude, which was followed by perceived behavioural control and norms. These findings imply that the theory of planned behaviour may provide a useful framework for comprehending the intents and actions of consumers when making green purchases. In order to create a good attitude, it is important to consider customers' impressions of green cosmetics while creating promotional efforts aimed at increasing their intentions to purchase them. Commercial messaging can draw attention to the impact of peer pressure and highlight the norm of buying green cosmetics in today's culture. Moreover, by educating customers about their certified organic and eco-friendly products, marketers can concentrate on boosting their trust in green cosmetics.

The present review demonstrates that the GCPI was significantly predicted by marketing mix variables, including price sensitivity, price consciousness, product sensory appeal, and product sensorial expectations. As a result, acceptable prices should be charged for eco-friendly cosmetics, and buyers should be fully aware of the costs associated with eco-friendly versus non-organic products. In order to increase consumers' inclinations to make a purchase, green cosmetics marketers can also inform consumers about the advantages of their products. Lastly, when creating and promoting their products, companies should take into account the sensory qualities of their offerings (such as colour, aroma, oiliness, and greasiness).

Consumer values and consciousness have been shown in numerous research to be crucial factors of GCPB and GCPI. Thus, rather of concentrating just on the advantages of the product, consideration should also be given to the hedonic value (e.g., beautiful design, packaging, and labelling) while producing green cosmetics. Additionally, positive emotional appeals like pride, pleasure, joy, and tenderness can be used to leverage the hedonic value. Additionally, marketers want to think about emphasising the health advantages of their eco-friendly makeup products. Marketing methods can highlight the ecological and health benefits of green cosmetics, as consumers with a high level of pessimism are unlikely to purchase them.

According to our findings, GCPI and GCPB were favourably correlated with brand-related characteristics such as corporate social responsibility, certification trust, green brand trust, and brand equity. As a result, by acquiring and publicising sustainability certifications, cosmetics companies that produce sustainable goods may be able to gain a competitive edge through differentiation strategies. Green cosmetics marketers can further advance their corporate social responsibility (CSR) efforts by showing their promises and commitments to enhancing the environment, incorporating their environmental initiatives with business processes, and including charitable contributions into their business operations. It is imperative for cosmetics companies to highlight their brands' environmental sustainability initiatives while aiming to attract environmentally sensitive consumers. The findings also show that brand image has a significant influence on purchase intention, which implies that marketers of green cosmetics should concentrate on fostering trust and design their communication strategies to develop and promote a brand image by demonstrating their dedication to environmental sustainability and boosting customers' faith in their companies' environmental claims.

Marketers and merchants can create promotional programmes that highlight the advantages of their eco-friendly cosmetics over conventional alternatives, given the strong negative connections that psychological barriers like tradition and image barriers have with the purchase intentions of eco-friendly cosmetics. Promotional campaigns should emphasise the advantages of using eco-friendly cosmetics in terms of environmental well-being, particularly ecological beauty, product safety, and reasonable costs, in order to sway the attitudes and behavioural intents of environmentally conscious consumers. Promoting green cosmetics can benefit the environment by highlighting its ecological beauty, product safety, and affordability. This will help shape the attitudes and behaviour intentions of environmentally concerned consumers.

Figure 4- Word Cloud of GCPI and GCPB

Conclusion

This systematic review set out to compile the empirical research that looked at the factors influencing GCPI and GCPB. "Attitude, subjective norms, perceived behavioural control, marketing mix, consumer consciousness concerns, consumer values, brand-related attributes, experience and knowledge, self-efficacy, and perceived barriers" are the 10 theme clusters that we discovered for the elements linked to GCPI and GCPB. These results will aid in the development of marketing plans for the promotion of eco-friendly cosmetics.

Limitations and Future Research Implications

Additionally, it's possible that every green cosmetic firm will have something distinctive to offer, which could lead to variations in how customers view green goods. Therefore, by contrasting two or more green cosmetic goods, future research can investigate the predictors of GCPI and GCPB. Future studies can also take moderating variables and research model complexity into account. Another possible direction for future investigation is the theoretical diversity in the pertinent literature. Researchers, for instance, support a wider range of theoretical frameworks than just trait theory of personality (TPB), such as attitude-behaviour-contextual theory, trait theory of personality, and many value theories. Future studies can also concentrate on methodological decisions and data features. Future research should think about adopting an experimental or mixed-method study design, as the majority of the papers in this review used cross-sectional survey methods. Furthermore, it is preferable to use a more varied data analysis method rather than SEM-PLS.

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