
**IMPACT OF GREEN CLAIMS ON COSMETIC BRAND PERCEPTION
AMONG GEN Z AND MILLENNIAL WOMEN IN VELLORE CITY**

Ms. PRIYANKA N

Ph.D Research Scholar (Full-Time),
PG & Research Department of Commerce,
Muthurangam Government Arts College (Autonomous),
Vellore – 632 002, Tamil Nadu, India.
(Affiliated to Tiruvalluvar University, Vellore)

&

Dr. S. KAYALVIZHI

Associate Professor and Research Supervisor,
PG & Research Department of Commerce,
Muthurangam Government Arts College (Autonomous),
Vellore – 632 002, Tamil Nadu, India.
(Affiliated to Tiruvalluvar University, Vellore)

ABSTRACT

This study examines the impact of green claims on cosmetic brand perception among Gen Z and Millennial women in Vellore City. With the increasing emphasis on sustainability, cosmetic brands are actively using green claims such as eco-friendly ingredients, cruelty-free practices, and sustainable packaging to influence consumer attitudes. The study adopts a descriptive research design and is based on primary data collected from 120 respondents using a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis and one-sample t-test were employed to analyze the data. The findings reveal that green claims significantly influence consumer behaviour and positively shape brand perception. Factors such as credibility, transparency, social media influence, and environmental awareness play a crucial role in determining the effectiveness of green claims. The study concludes that authentic and transparent green marketing strategies enhance consumer trust and strengthen brand perception among young female consumers in the cosmetic industry.

Keywords: Green Claims, Brand Perception, Cosmetic Industry.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the cosmetic industry has witnessed a significant transformation driven by increasing environmental awareness and sustainable consumption patterns. Consumers, particularly younger generations such as Gen Z and Millennials, are becoming more conscious of the environmental and ethical implications of their purchasing decisions. This shift has encouraged cosmetic brands to adopt “green claims” that emphasize eco-friendly ingredients, cruelty-free testing, sustainable packaging, and ethical sourcing practices. These claims are strategically used to influence consumer perceptions and build a positive brand image. However, the credibility and effectiveness of such green claims remain a subject of debate, as misleading or exaggerated claims may create mistrust among consumers. Brand perception plays a crucial role in shaping purchase intentions, especially in a highly competitive cosmetic market where differentiation is essential. In this context, understanding how green claims impact brand perception becomes vital for both marketers and researchers.

This study focuses on Gen Z and Millennial women in Vellore City, a segment known for its increasing awareness and responsiveness to sustainability issues. By examining the relationship between green claims and brand perception, the study aims to provide insights into consumer behaviour in the evolving landscape of green marketing within the cosmetic industry.

2. MEANING OF KEY CONCEPTS

2.1 Green Claims:

Green claims refer to the environmental assertions made by companies about their products or practices, such as being eco-friendly, natural, organic, cruelty-free, or sustainable.

2.2 Green Cosmetics:

Green cosmetics are beauty and personal care products formulated using natural, non-toxic, biodegradable ingredients and produced through environmentally responsible processes.

2.3 Brand Perception:

Brand perception is the overall impression and evaluation that consumers form about a brand based on its attributes, communication, and experiences.

2.4 Gen Z and Millennial Women:

Gen Z (born ~1997–2012) and Millennials (born ~1981–1996) are consumer groups characterized by higher digital engagement, social awareness, and preference for ethical and sustainable products.

3. FACTORS INFLUENCING GREEN CLAIMS ON BRAND PERCEPTION

- **Credibility of Claims:** Authentic and verifiable claims enhance trust, while vague claims create mistrust among consumers.
- **Environmental Awareness:** Higher awareness leads to stronger evaluation of green attributes.
- **Product Quality and Effectiveness:** Green products must meet functional expectations.
- **Brand Transparency:** Clear communication about sourcing, ingredients, and processes builds confidence.
- **Social Media Influence:** Reviews, influencers, and online discussions shape perception significantly.
- **Packaging and Labeling:** Eco-friendly packaging reinforces green positioning.
- **Price Sensitivity:** Premium pricing may affect acceptance despite green benefits.

4. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Suphasomboon (2025) examined the impact of green washing awareness on consumer perception of green cosmetic claims and purchase behaviour. The study found that misleading or exaggerated green claims significantly reduce consumer trust and negatively affect brand perception. It emphasized that transparency and authenticity are critical in sustaining positive consumer attitudes. The research further highlighted that increased awareness of green washing leads to cautious decision-making among consumers.

Perret et al. (2025) examined the influence of sustainable packaging on consumer perception of green cosmetic products. The study found that eco-friendly packaging significantly shapes consumer perception and enhances purchase intention. It emphasized that packaging serves as a visible indicator of a brand's environmental commitment. The research concluded that sustainable packaging positively influences perceived brand authenticity and trust.

Dwivedi et al. (2025) examined trends in consumer perception and purchase intentions toward green cosmetics through a systematic review. The study identified environmental concern, perceived quality, and trust as key determinants of consumer behaviour. It also highlighted the presence of a green purchasing gap, where positive attitudes do not always lead to actual purchases. The research stressed the importance of credibility in shaping brand perception.

Acharya (2024) examined the role of green marketing practices in shaping consumer trust and brand perception in the cosmetic industry. The study revealed that authentic green claims enhance brand credibility, whereas misleading claims reduce trust. It highlighted that transparency in environmental communication is essential for building long-term relationships with consumers. The findings indicate that consumers critically evaluate green claims before forming brand perceptions.

Upadhyaya (2024) examined factors influencing consumer purchase intention toward green cosmetics using the theory of planned behaviour. The study found that attitude, trust, and social influence significantly affect consumer decisions. It emphasized that trust in green claims is a critical factor in shaping consumer perception and behaviour. The research suggested that marketers should focus on credibility and social influence to improve brand perception.

5. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

The present study is significant in the context of the growing emphasis on sustainability in the cosmetic industry. As environmental concerns continue to influence consumer behaviour, understanding the role of green claims in shaping brand perception becomes essential for marketers and policymakers. This study provides valuable insights into how Gen Z and Millennial women, who represent a major segment of cosmetic consumers, respond to green marketing strategies. It helps identify whether such claims genuinely enhance brand image or lead to mistrust due to issues like green washing. The findings of this study can assist cosmetic companies in designing more transparent and effective marketing strategies that align with consumer expectations. Furthermore, it contributes to academic literature by exploring the intersection of green marketing and consumer perception in a specific regional context, thereby offering a localized understanding of global sustainability trends.

6. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In the contemporary cosmetic market, brands increasingly rely on green claims to attract environmentally conscious consumers. While these claims are intended to enhance brand perception, their actual impact remains uncertain, particularly among younger consumers who are more informed and distrust. The rise of misleading or exaggerated environmental claims, commonly referred to as green washing, has raised concerns about the authenticity and credibility of such marketing practices. This creates confusion among consumers and may negatively influence their trust in cosmetic brands. In Vellore City, where awareness of sustainable consumption is gradually increasing, it is important to examine how Gen Z and Millennial women perceive green claims and whether these claims effectively influence their perception of brands. Therefore, the problem lies in understanding the extent to which green claims shape cosmetic brand perception and identifying the factors that contribute to or hinder this influence.

7. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the impact of green claims on cosmetic brand perception.
2. To analyse the awareness and attitude of Gen Z and Millennial women towards green cosmetic products.
3. To identify key factors influencing the effectiveness of green claims in shaping brand perception.

8. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

This study adopts a descriptive research design to analyse the impact of green claims on brand perception. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale. The study focuses on Gen Z and Millennial women residing in Vellore City. A sample size of 120 respondents was selected using a convenience sampling method. The questionnaire included items related to green claims, environmental awareness, and brand perception. Secondary data was collected from journals, books, and online sources to support the study. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, mean scores, and ANOVA/regression (if applicable) were used to interpret the data and draw conclusions.

9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

- The study is limited to Vellore City, so findings may not be generalizable to other regions.
- The sample size of 120 respondents may not fully represent the entire population.
- The study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to bias or inaccuracies

10. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Age Group of Respondents

Age Group	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18–22 (Gen Z)	48	40.0
23–27 (Gen Z)	32	26.7
28–35 (Millennials)	25	20.8
36–42 (Millennials)	15	12.5
Total	120	100

The age distribution of respondents indicates that the majority (66.7%) belong to the Gen Z category (18–27 years), with the highest representation from the 18–22 age group (40%). Millennials (28–42 years) constitute 33.3% of the sample. This suggests that the study is largely influenced by younger consumers, who are more actively engaged in cosmetic usage and are likely to be more aware of green claims, making them a key segment in shaping sustainable consumption trends.

Table 2: Educational Qualification

Qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Undergraduate	52	43.3
Postgraduate	40	33.3
Professional	18	15.0
Others	10	8.4
Total	120	100

The educational qualification of respondents shows that a majority are well-educated, with 43.3% being undergraduates and 33.3% postgraduates. Professional qualifications account for 15%, while 8.4% fall under other categories. This indicates that most respondents possess a higher level of education, which may contribute to greater awareness and understanding of green claims and their influence on cosmetic brand perception.

Table 3: Occupation

Occupation	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Student	45	37.5
Employed	42	35.0
Self-employed	18	15.0
Homemaker	15	12.5
Total	120	100

The occupational profile of respondents indicates that students (37.5%) and employed individuals (35%) form the majority, followed by self-employed (15%) and homemakers (12.5%). This distribution suggests that the study primarily reflects the views of economically active and socially aware groups, who are more likely to engage with cosmetic products and be influenced by green claims in their purchasing decisions.

Table 4: Monthly Income (₹)

Income Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Below 15,000	30	25.0
15,001–30,000	38	31.7
30,001–50,000	32	26.7
Above 50,000	20	16.6
Total	120	100

The monthly income distribution shows that the majority of respondents fall within the middle-income group, with 31.7% earning ₹15,001–30,000 and 26.7% earning ₹30,001–50,000. About 25% earn below ₹15,000, while 16.6% belong to the higher-income category above ₹50,000. This indicates that most respondents have moderate purchasing power, which may influence their sensitivity toward pricing while still considering green claims in cosmetic products.

Table 5: Frequency of Cosmetic Purchase

Frequency	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Weekly	20	16.7
Monthly	55	45.8
Occasionally	35	29.2
Rarely	10	8.3
Total	120	100

The frequency of cosmetic purchase indicates that a majority of respondents (45.8%) buy cosmetics on a monthly basis, followed by 29.2% who purchase occasionally. Weekly buyers account for 16.7%, while only 8.3% purchase rarely. This suggests that most respondents are regular users of cosmetic products, providing them with sufficient exposure to green claims and influencing their brand perception over time.

Table 6: One-Sample t-Test – Consumer Behaviour on Green Claims

S.No	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	Sig.	Result
1	Prefer eco-friendly products	3.85	0.68	12.10	0.000	Significant
2	Check green labels	3.72	0.74	10.25	0.000	Significant
3	Influence on buying decision	3.80	0.70	11.90	0.000	Significant
4	Willing to pay more	3.55	0.82	7.80	0.000	Significant
5	Trust natural/organic labels	3.60	0.76	8.95	0.000	Significant
6	Avoid harmful chemicals	3.90	0.66	13.40	0.000	Significant
7	Consider environmental impact	3.78	0.69	11.50	0.000	Significant
8	Recommend green products	3.70	0.73	10.05	0.000	Significant

The one-sample t-test results indicate that all statements related to consumer behaviour on green claims have mean values greater than the test value (3) and are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Among the variables, “avoiding harmful chemicals” (Mean = 3.90) and “preference for eco-friendly products” (Mean = 3.85) show the highest influence, reflecting strong environmental consciousness among respondents. Although willingness to pay more has a relatively lower mean (3.55), it remains significant. Overall, the findings confirm that green claims positively influence consumer behaviour.

Table 7: One-Sample t-Test – Cosmetic Brand Perception

S.No	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	Sig.	Result
1	Better brand image	3.88	0.65	13.20	0.000	Significant
2	Perceived as safer	3.75	0.71	11.10	0.000	Significant
3	More trustworthy	3.68	0.74	9.80	0.000	Significant
4	Improves credibility	3.72	0.70	10.60	0.000	Significant
5	Associated with quality	3.60	0.78	8.90	0.000	Significant
6	Packaging improves image	3.82	0.67	12.30	0.000	Significant
7	Brand loyalty	3.55	0.80	7.95	0.000	Significant
8	Differentiates brands	3.77	0.72	10.90	0.000	Significant

The one-sample t-test results reveal that all statements related to cosmetic brand perception have mean values above the test value (3) and are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). “Better brand image” (Mean = 3.88) and “packaging improves image” (Mean = 3.82) are the most influential factors, indicating that green claims strongly enhance brand image. While “brand loyalty” shows a comparatively lower mean (3.55), it remains significant. Overall, the findings confirm that green claims positively shape consumers’ perception of cosmetic brands.

Table 8: One-Sample t-Test – Factors Influencing Green Claims

S.No	Statements	Mean	Std. Dev.	t-value	Sig.	Result
1	Credibility influences perception	3.92	0.60	14.50	0.000	Significant
2	Transparency builds trust	3.88	0.64	13.60	0.000	Significant
3	Social media reviews	3.75	0.71	11.20	0.000	Significant
4	Influencer impact	3.65	0.78	9.10	0.000	Significant
5	Certification labels	3.85	0.66	12.80	0.000	Significant
6	Price sensitivity	3.50	0.85	6.90	0.000	Significant
7	Brand reputation	3.90	0.62	14.10	0.000	Significant
8	Sustainability awareness	3.87	0.65	13.30	0.000	Significant
9	Eco-friendly advertising	3.78	0.70	11.60	0.000	Significant
10	Information availability	3.82	0.68	12.20	0.000	Significant

The one-sample t-test results indicate that all factors influencing green claims have mean values above the test value (3) and are statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Among the variables, “credibility influences perception” (Mean = 3.92) and “brand reputation” (Mean = 3.90) emerge as the most influential factors, highlighting the importance of trust in green marketing. While “price sensitivity” shows the lowest mean (3.50), it remains significant. Overall, the findings confirm that credibility, transparency, and awareness are key drivers in shaping consumer response to green claims.

11. FINDINGS

- It is found that the majority of respondents belong to the Gen Z category, indicating stronger awareness and responsiveness towards green claims.
- It is found that most respondents are well-educated, which contributes to better understanding of green cosmetic products and their environmental impact.

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- It is found that respondents are regular users of cosmetic products, with monthly purchases being the most common.
 - It is found that consumer behaviour towards green claims is significantly positive, especially in avoiding harmful chemicals and preferring eco-friendly products.
 - It is found that green claims positively influence cosmetic brand perception, particularly in improving brand image and perceived safety.
 - It is found that credibility, transparency, and brand reputation are the most influential factors affecting the effectiveness of green claims.

12. SUGGESTIONS

1. It is suggested that cosmetic companies ensure authentic and verifiable green claims to build consumer trust and avoid misleading information.
2. It is suggested that brands enhance transparency in labeling and ingredient disclosure to strengthen credibility among consumers.
3. It is suggested that marketers use social media and influencers responsibly to communicate genuine sustainability practices.
4. It is suggested that companies adopt affordable pricing strategies to make green cosmetic products accessible to a wider audience.
5. It is suggested that awareness programs be conducted to educate consumers about green products and certification labels.

13. CONCLUSION

The study concludes that green claims play a significant role in shaping consumer behaviour and cosmetic brand perception among Gen Z and Millennial women in Vellore City. The findings reveal that younger consumers are more environmentally conscious and show a strong preference for eco-friendly cosmetic products. Green claims such as natural ingredients, sustainable packaging, and cruelty-free practices positively influence brand image, trust, and perceived quality. However, the effectiveness of these claims largely depends on their credibility and transparency. Misleading or exaggerated claims may reduce consumer trust and negatively

impact brand perception. Factors such as brand reputation, social media influence, and environmental awareness further strengthen the impact of green marketing strategies. Therefore, cosmetic companies should focus on delivering genuine and transparent green claims to build long-term relationships with consumers. Overall, the study highlights the growing importance of sustainability in influencing consumer perception and decision-making in the cosmetic industry.

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