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Understanding Green Purchase Intention in the Digital Era: Green Communication, Brand Image, And Brand Trust

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to examine the impact of Digital Green Communication (DGC) on Green Purchase Intention (GPI) through the mediating roles of Green Brand Image (GBI) and Green Brand Trust (GBT) among Generation Z consumers in the Indonesian green beauty product industry. Based on the Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) theory, DGC is conceptualized as an integrated organizational capability, rather than just a tactical promotional message. Primary data was collected through an online survey conducted between May and October 2026, using purposive sampling on 164 Generation Z respondents. Structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the proposed model. The empirical analysis revealed that DGC had a positive and significant impact on GBI ($\beta = 0.83$; $p < 0.00$), which in turn increased GBT ($\beta = 0.85$; $p < 0.00$), and directly influenced GPI ($\beta = 0.81$; $p < 0.00$). This structural model demonstrates a strong explanatory power, with R-squared values of 0.70 for GBI, 0.72 for GBT, and 0.66 for GPI. Theoretically, this research expands the literature on sustainability by positioning digital green communication as an organizational capability within the SOR framework. Practically, cosmetic companies are advised to manage sustainability communication transparently, consistently, and authentically in order to build trust and encourage the purchase of environmentally friendly products.

KEYWORDS: Digital Green Communication, Green Brand Image, Green Brand Trust, Green Purchase Intention, Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR).

INTRODUCTION

The transformation of digital technology has altered consumer interaction and behavior in the decision-making process, particularly in the beauty and cosmetics industry (M. Lee & Lee, 2022). The development of the digital ecosystem encourages consumers to seek information, recommendations, and evaluations, and to form preferences for brands through various platforms. The global beauty industry is experiencing rapid growth, with a CAGR of 5.14% and a value of USD 605 billion by 2025 (Research, 2026). Simultaneously, the global internet user base is estimated to reach 6 billion people (Research, 2026). This has driven the cosmetics industry to adapt by implementing omnichannel models, integrating various consumer interactions, including beauty tutorials, influencer recommendations, user reviews, and personalized product experiences (Research, 2026).

Currently, the digital space is no longer just a platform for transactions, but has evolved into a strategic environment for companies to shape consumer perceptions, relationships, and responses to their brand. The use of digital channels is a crucial tool for companies to build consumer trust, perceptions, and ultimately, their purchasing intent (Garg & Bakshi, 2024; Senalasari et al., 2025). The development of digital communication also expands a company's ability to convey its brand's value, identity, and commitment to consumers in a more comprehensive and interactive manner (Jha & Verma, 2023).

Changes in consumer preferences among young Indonesians are evident in the growing trend of sustainable beauty. While awareness of environmental issues is increasing, this does not automatically translate into purchase intention (Novita, 2025). The research indicates that a more complex process occurs before consumers decide to purchase products marketed as environmentally friendly. This complexity stems from the difficulty consumers face in independently assessing corporate environmental claims, including whether firms incorporate sustainable inputs, adopt environmentally conscious packaging, implement responsible manufacturing practices, and achieve measurable reductions in environmental harm. This creates an information asymmetry between cosmetic companies and consumers.

Digital green communication plays an increasingly significant role in addressing this challenge by enabling firms to communicate their environmental initiatives, underlying values, and sustainability commitments across multiple digital channels (Ru-Zhue et al., 2026). Integrated

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digital communication enables companies to respond to green consumers through a broader and more sustained multi-channel approach (Oncioiu et al., 2023). On social media, green communication is not just about disseminating information, but also about responding to and engaging with green content (Crapa et al., 2024). Green communication also possesses characteristics of being informative, consistent, transparent, and credible within a digital ecosystem (Tan et al., 2026).

Empirical evidence demonstrates that green communication through digital channels can influence consumer responses. Wu & Long (2024) found that social media marketing, green thinking, and receptivity to green communication significantly impact green consumption intention. The challenge in green communication is a critical factor in determining the formation of an environmentally friendly attitude and the intention to consume green products. This research highlights that digital green communication is not just about delivering environmental messages, but also about how consumers receive and respond to those messages. In other words, digital green communication represents a strategic process that connects a company's ability to communicate with consumers.

Based on this framework, this research develops the concept of Digital Green Communication (DGC), which refers to a company's ability to manage environmental communication effectively through a digital ecosystem, characterized by being informative, consistent, transparent, and credible. This conceptualization represents an advancement over previous research, which primarily focused on operationalizing green communication through specific channels, such as social media marketing and green advertising (Crapa et al., 2024; Wu & Long, 2024). By framing green communication as a capability, DGC in this research goes beyond simply the presence of environmental messages on digital media, but rather on a company's ability to manage and integrate these communications consistently across various digital channels. The use of Digital Green Communication as a research construct is also gaining traction, as demonstrated by the work of Ru-Zhue et al. (2026) which examines the relationship between digital green communication and customer behavior.

The company's ability to manage green communication digitally can contribute to the formation of a Green Brand Image (GBI). GBI reflects the perceptions formed through various information and experiences gained by consumers when interacting with the brand, including through marketing and communication activities that emphasize sustainability (Jabeen et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2024). Jabeen et al. (2023) research indicates that green marketing and CSR are related to the development of a green brand image. GBI serves as an intervening mechanism through which these factors influence consumers' purchase intention. The findings indicate that corporate communication regarding sustainability-related information and initiatives can strengthen consumers' favorable perceptions of a brand. Accordingly, green communication plays a significant role in shaping a company's environmentally oriented brand image

The development of a positive GBI is becoming increasingly important as consumers cannot directly perceive or evaluate the environmental attributes of a product. Consumers' perception of GBI is formed through the information and experiences they gain when interacting with a brand Crapa et al. (2024). Information about sustainability can help consumers form green brand associations, particularly when the brand's environmental attributes are not directly observable (Riva et al., 2024). Credible green communication has the potential to strengthen GBI, while perceptions of unreliable information can increase consumer skepticism about a brand's sustainability claims. Consistency and credibility of environmental information are crucial in shaping consumers' perceptions of a brand. Research by Kumar et al. (2024) shows that green brand image and receptivity to green advertising have a positive. Studies with green brand trust have shown a positive impact on purchase intention. Prior studies have also identified green brand image and green trust as potential mechanisms through which sustainability-related factors shape consumers' purchase intention (Kumar et al., 2024).

Green Brand Trust (GBT) functions as a psychological mechanism that links consumer perceptions of a green brand image with purchase decisions. GBT represents the level of consumer confidence in a brand's environmental claims and commitments. The development of GBT occurs gradually through associations with green attributes and brand engagement following receipt of signals from the company (Al-Husain et al., 2025; Riva et al., 2024). Previous studies have found that consumers' favorable perceptions of a brand's environmental positioning are significantly associated with both green brand trust and purchase intention (Kumar et al., 2024). Green Purchase Intention (GPI) refers to consumers' inclination to purchase a product after assessing a brand's environmental information, perceived image, and credibility.

Despite the growing body of literature, the connection between digital green communication and consumer responses warrants further investigation. Prior research has linked social media-based green communication to green consumption intention (Wu & Long, 2024), whereas studies of green branding have highlighted the relevance of green brand image (GBI) in influencing green brand trust (GBT) and consumers' purchasing responses (Jabeen et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2024). However, research that positions digital green communication as an organizational capability and then explains the process of forming GBI and GBT before leading to GPI is relatively limited. Therefore, the research gap is not solely due to the lack of a relationship between variables. However, the lack of integrated digital green communication as a company capability, involving a sequential process of building brand image and trust, and the conditions related to consumer credibility and psychological response, pose challenges.

Based on this gap, this study developed a model: Digital Green Communication → Green Brand Image → Green Brand Trust → Green Purchase Intention. DGC is positioned as a strategic stimulus, referring to a company's ability to manage sustainability communication through a digital ecosystem. GBI represents the consumer's evaluative process regarding the environmental character of the brand, GBT represents the psychological mechanism related to belief in environmental claims, and GPI represents the consumer's response. The study not only examines the relationship between Digital Green Communication and Green Purchase Intention, but also explains how this relationship can change within the context of these mechanisms.

This study examines how DGC relates to consumers' GPI for beauty products, with GBI and GBT serving as mediating variables. Theoretically, this research expands the study of green communication by shifting the perspective from communication as an activity or message to communication as an organizational capability.

From an empirical perspective, this study brings together four related constructs: DGC, GBI, GBT, and consumers' intention to purchase environmentally friendly products. Practically, the findings are expected to provide a foundation for companies to develop consistent, transparent, authentic, and verifiable sustainability communication, thereby enabling the development of GBI and GBT and increasing GPI.

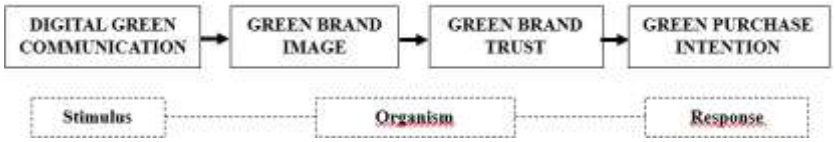
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LITERATURE REVIEW

Stimulus-Organism-Response (SOR) framework

SOR framework can significantly aid research by elucidating the relationship between environmental stimuli, consumer psychological processes, and behavioral responses (Bigne et al., 2020). This concept helps in understanding various marketing activities and their impact (Suhan et al., 2022). Previous research has demonstrated that various factors influencing consumer stimuli, as well as the cognitive factors determining their behavior, intentions, and perceptions related to purchasing decisions (Qayyum et al., 2023). SOR highlights that individual evaluations are formed through stimuli that influence action, thereby determining cognitive functions, leading to a specific response (Mogaji et al., 2022).

This research examines DGC as an external stimulus, processed through consumer evaluation mechanisms. Companies can use digital channels to communicate various information and messages to stimulate consumer interest. GBI and GBT are considered as internal factors. The cognitive processing of DGC by consumers can shape the perception of GBI towards a brand. This perception of GBI can evolve into trust in the brand due to its commitment to the environment. GPI is defined as the consumer's intention to purchase a product.



Picture 1 Framework

Digital Green Communication and Green Brand Image

An increasing number of companies use social media to disseminate information about their environmental initiatives and encourage sustainable consumption (Giacomini et al., 2020). Understanding the extent to which green communication through these platforms shapes consumers' green consumption behavior is therefore essential. DGC plays a role in shaping a GBI through consistent, transparent, and credible environmental information across various digital channels (Oncioiu et al., 2023; Ru-Zhue et al., 2026; Tan et al., 2026). Effective digital communication allows companies to convey their brand's values and commitment to sustainability to consumers, thereby fostering a positive perception of the brand's environmental attributes.

Consistent and reliable sustainability information enables consumers to form an understanding of a brand's environmental awareness and commitment (Riva et al., 2024). This process aligns with the formation of GBI – the consumer's perception of a brand, developed through information and interaction experiences, including sustainable marketing and communication (Jabeen et al., 2023; Kumar et al., 2024). Furthermore, DGC not only serves as a channel for delivering environmentally friendly messages, but also as a strategic capability that supports the formation of GBI. The better a company manages its environmental communication through digital media consistently and credibly, the greater its potential to build a brand image associated with environmental concern. Based on the above explanation, the research hypothesis is:

H1: Digital Green Communication has a positive and significant impact on Green Brand Image.

Green Brand Image and Green Brand Trust

Green Brand Image (GBI) is a cognitive representation of consumer commitment to and responsibility for the environment claimed by a brand (Esmaelnezhad et al., 2023; Nguyen-Viet & Nguyen, 2024). In general, GBI can contribute to strengthening consumer loyalty and fostering enduring relationships between customers and firms. A brand with a strong and positive image, consumers tend to trust the company more, thereby increasing the likelihood of choosing and purchasing the brand's products (Alam et al., 2024). Kumar et al. (2024) research shows that green brand image has a positive and significant effect on green brand trust. A positive green brand image can increase consumer belief that a brand is committed to and responsible for the environment.

For consumers, a product brand that shows environmental concern and awareness has strong GBI. This indicates the company's seriousness because it can demonstrate commitment to protecting the environment as well as enhancing brand appeal to consumers (Kumar et al., 2024). GBI not only functions as a representation of consumer perception but can also help reduce consumer uncertainty in assessing brand credibility regarding its commitments. Positive perception allows companies to respond to consumers' concerns about environmental issues and support sustainable achievement (Huo et al., 2022). A favorable GBI can reinforce consumers' confidence in a brand's capacity and commitment to uphold its environmental promises. Accordingly, GBI is closely associated with consumers' trust in the brand (Qayyum et al., 2023). Based on the above explanation, the research hypothesis is:

H2: Green Brand Image has a positive and significant impact on Green Brand Trust.

Green Brand Trust and Green Purchasing Intention

The relationship between Green Brand Trust (GBT) and Green Purchasing Intentions (GPI) is crucial in ongoing research, as consumers are increasingly aware of evaluating a company's genuine environmental commitments (Godrati & Bashirkhodaparasti, 2024). Zhao et al. (2026). Found that consumer trust in a company's environmental claims positively influences Green Purchasing Intentions in the fashion industry. This is because increased consumer trust can reduce perceptions of risk, thereby positively impacting purchasing intentions (Y. K. Lee, 2020). Consumer trust in a company's commitment to environmentally friendly practices can also increase consumer commitment to purchasing products (Ha, 2022; Yu et al., 2021).

Consumers may favor companies they consider trustworthy because doing so reflects their environmental values and reinforces their intention to buy from those companies (S. Huang et al., 2024). In addition, GBT can foster emotional connections with consumers, making them more inclined to select environmentally friendly products (Sio et al., 2022). These findings underscore the relevance of GBT in shaping consumers' green purchasing decisions (Godrati & Bashirkhodaparasti, 2024; S. Huang et al., 2024). Based on the above explanation, the research hypothesis is:

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H3: Green Brand Trust has a positive and significant impact on Green Purchasing Intention

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Data

The research data was collected through an online survey targeting consumers who use green beauty and cosmetic products. The study specifically focused on respondents from Generation Z who use these types of products. Given the specific characteristics of the target respondents, purposive sampling was the most appropriate method for this research. This approach enabled the researchers to recruit participants with relevant knowledge of the subject under investigation (Zickar & Keith, 2023). The survey was conducted between May and October 2026, using social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Telegram, and Instagram. A significant number of respondents expressed enthusiasm for participating.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents

Variable	Category	Freq.	%
Gender	Men	42	25.61%
	Women	122	74.39%
Average purchase frequency of beauty products per month	Once every three months	70	42.68%
	Once a month	67	40.85%
	More than once a month	27	16.47%
The average spending on purchasing beauty products in one month.	< Rp 100.000	62	37.80%
	Rp 100.001 – Rp 250.000	80	48.78%
	Rp 250.001 – Rp 500.000	18	10.98%
	Rp 500.001 – Rp 1.000.000	3	1.83%
	>Rp1.000.000	1	0.61%
Types of platforms for acquiring Information about beauty products	Instagram	17	10.37%
	Tiktok	114	69.50%
	YouTube	0	0.0%
	Website resmi	4	2.44%
	Marketplace/ E-commerce	14	8.54%
	Others	15	9.15%
The impact of online platforms on purchasing decisions	It has a significant impact	84	51.22%
	Influencing	47	28.66%
	It has a significant influence	33	20.12%
	It has no significant impact	0	0.0%

Source: data processing results

Measurement

The variables used in this study were adapted from previous research, with modifications made to suit the specific needs of the study. The "green communication" variable was adapted from the research conducted by Ru-Zhue et al. (2026). The "green brand image" and "green brand trust" variables were adapted from the research conducted by Ha (2022). The "green purchase intention" variable was adapted from the research conducted by Wibowo et al. (2022).

Table 2: Measurement Items and Loadings.

Items	Loadings
Digital green communication (DGC)	
DGC1: My beauty product brand provides information about its environmental commitment through online media.	0.85
DGC2: I always want to be kept up-to-date on the environmental efforts of the beauty brands I use.	0.83
DGC3: The environmental concerns of the beauty brands I use are consistently communicated.	0.86
DGC4: The beauty product brand I use quickly responds to my questions and suggestions regarding environmental issues.	0.77
DGC5: The beauty brand I use encourages consumers to participate in environmentally-focused activities through digital media.	0.88
DGC6: My beauty product brand communicates its environmentally friendly policies through various online platforms.	0.90
Green Brand Image (GBI)	
GBI1: The beauty brand I use is known for its environmentally friendly practices.	0.93
GBI2: The beauty brand I use is known for its commitment to environmental sustainability.	0.95
GBI3: The beauty products I use are from a brand that is committed to environmental sustainability.	0.94
Green Brand Trust (GBT)	
GBT1: I believe that the brand of beauty products I use is committed to environmentally friendly practices.	0.94

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GBT2: My concern for the environmental impact of the beauty products I use, as I expect it to be.	0.93
GBT3: I believe that the brand of beauty products I use is fulfilling its promises and commitments to the environment.	0.93
Green Purchase Intention (GPI)	
GPI1: I intend to purchase this product because the brand is committed to environmental responsibility.	0.81
GPI2: I'm interested in learning more about this product from friends, family, or other users before making a purchase.	0.88
GPI3: I will compare similar products before making a purchase.	0.86
GPI4: I am willing to purchase this product if it is more environmentally friendly than other brands.	0.79
GPI5: I am very satisfied with this product and intend to purchase it again.	0.86

Source: data processing results

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Analysis

This study utilized PLS-SEM to analyze the relationships between variables. The use of PLS-SEM in this research is appropriate due to its relatively small sample size and lack of requirement for normal distribution assumptions (Hair Jr et al., 2021; Pooja & Upadhyaya, 2025). PLS-SEM was chosen for this research because it offers greater flexibility and the ability to explore and test various configurations (Dash & Paul, 2021).

This researcher also used validity and reliability analysis to assess the research model. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α) and composite reliability (CR). Both measures yielded values exceeding the commonly accepted minimum criterion of 0.70. The analysis also revealed that all variables had an AVE value above 0.5. Therefore, convergent validity was established, and all items had outer loadings exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.5, indicating that no items were removed. The findings indicate that all measurement items adequately reflect their respective latent variables in the proposed measurement framework.

Table 3: Validity and Reliability of The Measures.

	Cronbach's alpha	CR (rho a)	CR (rho c)	AVE
DGC	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.72
GBI	0.94	0.94	0.96	0.89
GBT	0.93	0.93	0.96	0.88
GPI	0.89	0.90	0.92	0.70

Source: data processing results

Discriminant validity is used to assess the extent to which one construct can be empirically distinguished from others. This evaluation uses the Fornell and Larcker criterion and the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), by comparing the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with its correlation with other latent variables. Based on the HTMT test results, all pairs of constructs had values within the acceptable threshold of 0.90, thus meeting the criterion for discriminant validity. An acceptable range for HTMT is between 0.85 and 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2016).

The analysis results indicate that the entire model meets the criteria, and therefore, the proposed model is deemed to have adequate discriminant validity and is acceptable. Furthermore, the structural model's predictions were measured using coefficient of determination (R^2). The results showed R^2 values of 0.70 (GBI), 0.72 (GBT), and 0.66 (GPI). These values indicate an acceptable level of explanatory power for analysis using SEM (Lim et al., 2025). The standardized root mean square residual (SRMR) value was 0.083, and the normed fit index (NFI) was 0.861. The model evaluation results indicated that the SRMR value was within the acceptable criteria (<0.10). Both model values demonstrated acceptable levels of fit (Hair Jr et al., 2021).

Table 4: Discriminant Validity (Fornell and Larcker)

	DGC	GBI	GBT	GPI
DGC	0.84			
GBI	0.83	0.94		
GBT	0.80	0.84	0.93	
GPI	0.71	0.75	0.81	0.83

Source: data processing results

Table 5: Discriminant Validity (HTMT Ratio)

	DGC	GBI	GBT	GPI
DGC	0.84			
GBI	0.83	0.94		
GBT	0.80	0.84	0.93	
GPI	0.71	0.75	0.81	

Source: data processing results

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The path analysis reveals a direct and indirect relationship between digital green communication, green brand image, green brand trust, and green purchase intention. Digital green communication is positively related to green brand image (β = 0.83, p = 0.00), supporting H1. Green brand image is positively related to green brand trust (β = 0.85, p = 0.00), supporting H2. Green brand trust is positively related to green purchase intention (β = 0.81, p = 0.00), supporting H3. Table 6 presents the results of the path analysis.

Table 6: Result of Path Analysis

Path	β	t	f^2	*P* values	Hypothesis
DGC →GBI	0.83	30.73	2.29	0.00	Accepted
GBI→GBT	0.85	25.56	2.55	0.00	Accepted
GBT→GPI	0.81	24.34	1.95	0.00	Accepted

Source: data processing results

DISCUSSION

This study examines the effect of Digital Green Communication (DGC) on Green Purchase Intention (GPI), with Green Brand Image (GBI) and Green Brand Trust (GBT) serving as mediating variables. The proposed conceptual model is grounded in the Stimulus–Organism–Response (SOR) framework, which provides the theoretical basis for explaining the relationships among these constructs. Hypothesis testing was conducted based on data analysis collected from respondents in Indonesia.

The findings demonstrate a positive association between DGC and GBI. They further suggest that DGC contributes to the development of GBI, which subsequently strengthens GBT and supports the formation of GPI. This aligns with Nekmahmud et al. (2022) research, which indicates a positive impact of social media on green purchase intention.

Delivering messages through digital media allows companies to demonstrate their commitment to the environment and to increase consumer understanding of the benefits and sustainability of their products. Research by Ru-Zhue et al. (2026) shows that digital green communication directly influences consumer behavior, particularly through the ease of access to information, which can encourage subscription intentions. Advertising that focuses on the product's benefits and environmental advantages (Vanessa & Ariestya, 2024) can also capture audience attention. Furthermore, advertising for green products tends to be perceived as credible (Rahman & Nguyen-Viet, 2023). Therefore, companies can employ various communication strategies to highlight the benefits of their products for both consumers and the environment (Tewari et al., 2022).

Repeated exposure to information can stimulate consumers' evaluation of a product (DelVecchio et al., 2024). Effective digital green communication can reinforce positive perceptions of green products, potentially leading to a better brand image for the company, which in turn can increase consumer preference, trust, and loyalty (Bashir et al., 2020). The formation of perceptions is not solely determined by the intensity of information exposure. Brand credibility can influence the image perceived based on consumer experience and judgment (Bańbuła, 2024). Green brands perceived as credible tend to be viewed as reliable and committed to environmental responsibility (Kumar et al., 2024). Therefore, effective communication is crucial for building a positive brand reputation (Lin & Zhou, 2022).

Based on this research and previous studies, it is evident that DGC has a positive impact on GBI. This indicates that digital green communication is a crucial tool for strengthening and influencing a brand's green image. Companies that can effectively communicate their environmental efforts and build a positive perception are better positioned to enhance brand credibility in the eyes of consumers.

High-quality perceptions contribute to brand image, which in turn fosters brand trust through consumer perception (Vanessa & Ariestya, 2024). This aligns with previous research indicating a positive relationship between GBI and GBT (Bashir et al., 2020; Kumar et al., 2024; Sarmiento-Guede et al., 2021). Trust in a brand is a key factor in the consumer psychology process, influencing purchase intention (Kumar et al., 2024). Research has shown that trust and purchase intention are linearly related. Previous studies also demonstrate that increased trust can lead to increased purchase intention (Y. Huang & Mohamad, 2026; Nguyen-Viet & Nguyen, 2024).

CONCLUSION

The findings provide empirical support for the proposed structural relationships between DGC and GPI in Indonesia's eco-friendly cosmetics industry. Grounded in the SOR framework, the PLS-SEM results indicate that DGC has a strong positive effect on Green Brand Image (GBI) (β = 0.83; p = 0.00). GBI, in turn, positively influences Green Brand Trust (GBT) (β = 0.85; p = 0.00), while GBT is associated with higher GPI among Generation Z consumers (β = 0.81; p = 0.00). The model also demonstrates substantial explanatory power, with R^2 values of 0.70 for GBI, 0.72 for GBT, and 0.66 for GPI. Overall, these findings suggest that DGC serves not merely as a channel for conveying environmental messages but also as a strategic organizational capability that shapes consumers' cognitive and affective responses and supports their intention to purchase environmentally friendly products.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that no conflicts of interest related this study.

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