



The role of marketing and communication strategies in the perception of green beauty by  
millennials.

Trabajo de Grado

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Bogotá, Colombia

2023



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### **Declaration of originality and autonomy**

I declare under oath, that I have written the title document “The role of marketing and communication strategies in the perception of green beauty by millennials.”

in the degree option of Double degree program and that therefore, its content is original.

I declare that I have clearly and precisely indicated all direct and indirect sources of information and that this work has not been submitted to any other institution for grading or publication qualification or publication.

Valentina Fandiño Dueñas

### **Declaration of exoneration of responsibility**

I declare that the intellectual responsibility for this work lies exclusively with its author. Universidad del Rosario is not responsible for the contents, opinions or ideologies expressed in whole or in part in this work.

Valentina Fandiño Dueñas

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgments.....	3
Declaration of originality and autonomy.....	4
Declaration of exoneration of responsibility .....	5
Figures Index .....	7
Glossary.....	8
Resumen .....	10
Abstract .....	12
Keywords: .....	13
1. Introduction and Research Question .....	14
1.1 Justification .....	15
2. Literature Review.....	16
2.1 Beauty Industry .....	16
2.2 Sustainability .....	18
2.3 Green Beauty .....	21
2.4 Millennials (Gen Y) .....	22
2.5 Marketing And Communication Strategies.....	24
2.6 Consumer Behavior .....	26
2.7 Value Perception.....	28
2.8 Purchasing Decision Factors .....	29
2.9 Brand Awareness .....	31
3. Methodology.....	32
3.1 Research Methodology .....	32
3.2 Sampling And Recruitment.....	33
3.3 Data Collection .....	34
4. Analysis And Results .....	37
4.1 Beauty industry perception.....	39
4.2 Frequency .....	42
Figure 2: Frequency usage graph: Frequency of use of personal care products and cosmetics of users .....	42
Figure 3: Frequency purchase graph: Frequency of purchase of personal care products and cosmetics of users .....	44
4.3 Purchasing decision factors.....	45

4.4 Green beauty perception and importance.....	50
4.5 Generation Y awareness.....	55
4.6 Marketing tool impression .....	57
4.7 Purchasing behavior impact .....	60
5. Conclusions and Practical Recommendations.....	62
6. Limitations and Future Directions .....	64
7. Bibliography .....	66

### Figures Index

Figure 1.....	40
Figure 2.....	42
Figure 3.....	43
Figure 4.....	51
Figure 5.....	53

## Glossary

**Advertising:** The promotion of products, services, or ideas through various media channels to attract, inform, and persuade target audiences.

**Consumerism:** A social and economic ideology that emphasizes the acquisition and consumption of goods and services as a way of defining one's identity and achieving personal fulfillment.

**Consumer Behavior:** The study of how individuals, groups, or organizations select, purchase, use, or dispose of products and services to satisfy their needs and wants.

**Eco-conscious:** Being aware of and concerned about the environmental impact of one's choices, particularly regarding consumption and lifestyle.

**Engagement:** The extent to which consumers actively participate with a brand or product, including interactions on social media, feedback, and brand loyalty.

**Environmentally Friendly:** Characteristics of products or practices that have a reduced negative impact on the environment, often in terms of resource use, emissions, and waste.

**Gen Y:** The generational cohort born between approximately 1981 and 1996, characterized by their digital literacy, diverse interests, and influence on modern consumer trends.

**Gen Z:** The generational cohort born from the mid-1990s to the early 2010s, known for their digital native status, activism, and unique consumer behaviors.

**Greenwashing:** Misleading marketing tactics employed by businesses to make their products or practices appear more environmentally friendly than they genuinely are

**Green Beauty:** A segment of the cosmetics and skincare industry that focuses on producing products using sustainable, non-toxic, and environmentally-friendly ingredients and practices.

**Social Awareness:** Consciousness of and sensitivity to social issues, such as inequality, justice, and environmental concerns, often leading to social and consumer activism.

**Sustainability:** The practice of meeting present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs, often related to environmental, social, and economic factors.

**Value Perception:** How consumers assess the benefits and drawbacks of a product or service in relation to its price, forming the basis of their purchasing decisions.

## Resumen

Los últimos años se han caracterizado por una creciente concienciación medioambiental y un consumismo consciente; la industria de la belleza ha sido testigo de un notable giro hacia la sostenibilidad y el respeto por el medio ambiente. Esta investigación cualitativa profundiza en la relación entre las estrategias de marketing y comunicación y la percepción de la "belleza verde" entre los millennials. El estudio pretende revelar cómo estas estrategias conforman la comprensión que tienen los millennials de los productos de belleza ecoconscientes y su compromiso general con las marcas sostenibles.

La investigación adopta un enfoque cualitativo, utilizando entrevistas en profundidad como principal método de recogida de datos. Se seleccionó una muestra diversa de millennials para captar una variedad de perspectivas sobre el tema. Se pidió a los participantes que reflexionaran sobre sus percepciones, actitudes y comportamientos en relación con la belleza ecológica, al tiempo que hablaban de sus interacciones con una campaña de marketing y de los esfuerzos de comunicación empleados por las marcas de belleza que promocionan productos ecológicos. Los datos recogidos se sometieron a un análisis temático, proceso que consistió en identificar patrones y temas recurrentes en las respuestas de las participantes.

Los datos recogidos se sometieron a un análisis temático, proceso que consistió en identificar patrones y temas recurrentes en las respuestas de los participantes. Los resultados ponen de relieve la influencia de las estrategias de marketing y comunicación en la percepción de

la belleza ecológica por parte de los millennials. Un tema destacado fue la importancia de contar historias auténticas, transparentes y verificables. Los participantes se mostraron muy motivados para investigar estas buenas prácticas y expresaron su preferencia por las marcas que comunican un compromiso genuino con la sostenibilidad, en lugar de las que recurren al "lavado verde".

**Palabras clave:**

Belleza verde, comportamiento del consumidor, marketing, estrategias de comunicación, sostenibilidad

## **Abstract**

Recent years have been characterized by growing environmental awareness and conscious consumerism, the beauty industry has witnessed a remarkable shift towards sustainability and respect for the environment. This qualitative research delves into the relationship between marketing and communication strategies and the perception of "green beauty" among millennials. The study aims to reveal how these strategies shape millennials' understanding of eco-conscious beauty products and their overall commitment to sustainable brands.

The research adopts a qualitative approach, using in-depth interviews as the main method of data collection. A diverse sample of millennials was selected to capture a variety of perspectives on the topic. Participants were asked to reflect on their perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors regarding green beauty, while also discussing their interactions with a marketing campaign and the communication efforts employed by beauty brands promoting green products. The collected data underwent a thematic analysis, a process that involved identifying recurring patterns and themes within the participants' responses.

The findings highlight the impact of marketing and communication strategies in shaping millennials' perception of green beauty. A prominent theme that emerged was the importance of telling authentic, transparent and verifiable stories. Participants expressed strong motivation to

investigate these best practices, and expressed a preference for brands that communicate a genuine commitment to sustainability, rather than those that resort to "greenwashing."

**Keywords:**

Green Beauty, consumer behavior, marketing, communication strategies, sustainability

## 1. Introduction and Research Question

The beauty industry is one of the most important industries around the world, with a total revenue of over \$100 billion (Petruzzi, 2023) beauty brands are constantly looking to innovate in their products, packages and advertisements in order to connect with their users. The above, taking into account the consumer habits, which lately have been influenced by the green/clean beauty trend, a movement that has been booming for more than three decades but has grown exponentially in recent years. The awareness and concern of users about the impact that harmful chemicals used in beauty and personal care products have on their health and well-being, as well as the decision to be more environmentally responsible and live a more sustainable life, influence the purchasing behavior of users in this economic sector (Howarth, 2022)

Younger generations have been responsible for increasing the craze for this trend, the behavioral report conducted by Ypulse (2022), states that clean beauty is the No. 1 beauty trend that Gen Z and Millennial women are interested in trying. In addition, they are looking for products that make them feel good, leaving aside the product itself, they are looking for clean brands that are mainly characterized by natural and organic ingredients, but also that are sourced or manufactured with respect for ethical and environmental standards, thus promoting sustainability.

On the other hand, one of the most important areas of this industry is its constant innovation in marketing and communication strategies. Nowadays, human beings are greatly exposed to

these factors that can influence or change customer perception (Bhasin, 2021). That's is why beauty brands advertising is growing at a rate of 2.2% per year, with television being the leading channel, followed by digital advertising, which accounts for 34.1% of total spend (Gregg, 2022)

For this reason, this research aims to answer the following question: How do beauty brands' marketing/communication strategies influence millennials' perception of green beauty, and what implications does it generate on purchasing behavior?

## **1.1 Justification**

As previously mentioned, generation Y has been characterized by the awareness that it has taken on the importance of living a sustainable life. The study conducted by (Shamsi et al., 2022), showed that millennials are highly motivated to use organic products mainly because of their concern for environmental sustainability. In fact, 70% of participants stated that was the reason for buying or using organic products. Nowadays, it is more common for consumers to decide to carry out research prior to purchasing the product, either in digital media, social networks, or with recommendations from their friends or family. These investigations generally revolve around the formula, packaging, ingredients or social and environmental impact of the product or the company itself. That's why, 60% of companies had a sustainable strategy in 2022 (Bhasin, 2022), brands around the world have focused on openly and publicly communicating their sustainable practices, their environmentally friendly actions, and have defined themselves

under a green, clean, natural, or environmentally friendly identity through marketing and advertising strategies. For this reason, it was necessary to evaluate and analyze how millennials perceive clean beauty, how informed they are, and to what extent they are influenced by brand advertising and communication strategies. To finally determine how this affects their perception of the concept and likewise, their buying behavior.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Beauty Industry**

The beauty industry comprises the worldwide economic sector that manufactures and sells cosmetic products. According to the EU Cosmetics Regulation (Regulation (EC) No 1223/2009), the definition of a cosmetic product is:

"Any substance or mixture intended to be placed in contact with the various external parts of the human body (epidermis, hair system, nails, lips and external genital organs) or with the teeth and the mucous membranes of the oral cavity with a view exclusively or mainly to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance and/or correcting body odors and/or protecting them or keeping them in good condition."

This sector encompasses different categories which includes color cosmetics, skin care, hair care, fragrances and personal care (ctpa, n.d)

According to ResearchAndMarkets.com's "Global Beauty & Personal Care Market - Growth, Trends, and Forecast (2021-2026)" report, the growth of the beauty industry is driven by factors such as increasing awareness of health and wellness, as well as the influence of beauty trends on social media.

Technology and innovation are also playing a crucial role in the transformation of this sector. Augmented reality, artificial intelligence and online platforms have revolutionized the way consumers explore, choose and buy beauty products. Personalization has also become critical, as brands seek to tailor their offerings to meet the unique needs of each individual.

The year 2020 meant many changes for the industry, covid-19 affected the consumption habits and purchasing behavior of users, which caused a 10% market decrease compared to the previous year (Orús, 2022). According to NPD (2021), 1 in 5 women changed their skin care routine due to the pandemic, spending more time and money and looking for products that would improve the well-being of their skin. All this made this category represent 40% of the global sales of the cosmetics industry (Petruzzi, 2022) and its value was estimated at \$171.7 billion worldwide.

The beauty industry has undergone a significant transformation in recent decades, evolving from an aesthetic pursuit to a more holistic approach that incorporates health and

wellness. Consumers are increasingly embracing products and treatments that highlight authenticity and promote diversity. This trend is reflected in the growing demand for skin care and makeup products that embrace a variety of skin tones and body types. According to Euromonitor International's market report (2020), this evolution toward an inclusive outlook has driven the growth of brands focused on diversity and sustainability, suggesting a continued shift toward a more conscious and value-driven beauty industry.

Another of the changes that emerged in the wake of the pandemic was a movement towards awareness of the products that people apply to their skin on a daily basis, especially on the face, consumers are now more informed and more demanding when buying a product, questioning the origin of products, their production methods and their ecological impact, and demanding that brands be more transparent (Sahota, 2014). All this is enclosed in a movement called, green/ clean beauty.

## **2.2 Sustainability**

Sustainability has become a central issue on the global agenda, addressing the need to balance economic progress, social equity and environmental conservation for present and future generations. The Brundtland Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) defined the concept of sustainability in the context of sustainable development as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the

ability of future generations to meet their own needs". From an economic perspective, sustainability requires the adoption of responsible business practices that do not deplete natural resources or generate negative externalities. On a social level, it involves the promotion of equity, fairness and well-being for all people, regardless of gender, race or socioeconomic background. Finally, from an environmental perspective, sustainability focuses on the conservation and regeneration of ecosystems, as well as on reducing the ecological footprint and mitigating climate change.

In the beauty sector, the concept of sustainability has gained importance as consumers become more aware of the environmental and social impact of the products they choose. According to Kari Gran Skincare's Green Beauty Barometer report (2021), sustainability has become an influential factor in consumers' beauty product purchasing decisions.

The environmental impact of the beauty industry is undeniable, especially as many of its practices are related to toxicity, bioactivity and bioaccumulation (Gioffre, 2020). First, there is the impact of raw materials. Most of its oils and preservatives come from the petrochemical world, a practice that, according to chemist Gerard Prats (2020), consists of extracting oil, polluting the environment.

As for the products, the Canadian David Suzuki Foundation, dedicated to the protection of nature, created a list of the twelve most harmful ingredients found in most cosmetics that people use on a daily basis. These include BHA and BHT, diethanolamine and DBP, ingredients that are toxic, allergenic and dangerous to human health and well-being, but also have a negative

impact on the environment, especially aquatic ecosystems (Revista Circle, 2019). Finally, parabens, an ingredient that, according to a study by the University of Cordoba (2019), is one of the main pollutants in Spanish marine waters and, according to the European Scientific Committee for Consumer Safety (2019), is directly related to breast cancer in women.

Moreover, in the production process, companies often decide to mix and package their products in factories in China to reduce costs. However, in this country, environmental legislation is much laxer, preventing waste control and polluting the environment.

Finally, it is possible to see the negative impact as the beauty industry generates approximately 120 billion units of plastic packaging per year (Power, 2021), and the time it takes for this material to disappear ranges from 100 to 1000 years.

As mentioned above, users are increasingly seeking to lead a more sustainable and environmentally friendly life, as they are aware of the environmental and social consequences that their purchases and consumption have on the planet. Therefore, companies cannot ignore the importance of sustainability, so they have started to develop sustainable business practices and solutions, without compromising product quality and performance (Power, 2021). These practices are oriented to the development of safe and sustainable formulas and ingredients, recyclable packaging - minimizing waste -, carbon footprint reduction and optimal use of water, among others.

### 2.3 Green Beauty

Green beauty, also known as clean beauty, refers to sustainable beauty, an approach that aims to highlight the importance of making choices that promote a balance between human well-being and involvement in the care for the environment and society (Nielsen, 2023) For this decision making, it is important to be informed and aware of the beauty products that are used on a daily basis. Within personal care, sustainable beauty seeks that people choose products formulated without harmful, toxic and unhealthy ingredients (Santoro, p.1, 2022) These products are characterized by being safe, natural and organic, in addition to having the appropriate label indicating their composition and the origin of the ingredients. Sustainable practices such as vegan and cruelty-free products are also included within this concept.

On the other hand, being aware of the environmental impact of the beauty industry means choosing environmentally friendly products, products that come in eco-friendly or sustainable packaging, either made of recyclable or biodegradable materials. Likewise, sustainable beauty promotes waste reduction, a practice that can include actions such as recycling of packaging, proper disposal of products and moderate use.

One of the trends in green beauty is sustainable packaging, a practice that seeks to minimize waste. However, this includes not only the material, but also how it is produced and how it is disposed of at the end of its useful life. Some examples of sustainable practices by clean beauty brands are eco-friendly materials, either biodegradable or recyclable, such as paper or

cardboard, or compostable materials, which means that they decompose faster than traditional plastic packaging (Nielsen, 2023). Another common practice is the offer of reusable packaging, a practice that is generally linked to the sale of "refillable" products at a lower price. One company that has developed this trend is Garnier, a brand of L'Oréal's Consumer Products division, which in 2020, thanks to the use of recycled plastic, managed to save 9019 tons of virgin plastic, and that since February 2021, its brands in the hair care category in Europe have been using 100% recycled plastic packaging (Garnier, 2022)

Another trend within this green beauty movement is the "free of" claims, phrases that highlight the absence of ingredients or chemicals generally considered harmful and not clean and that can be found on product packaging or advertising pieces (Nielsen, 2023). This trend is part of the communication strategies of brands, as it attracts users who are concerned about these factors and seek sustainable products. An important aspect to mention is that these statements are regulated by government agencies such as the FDA in the United States and the EFSA in the European Union, in order to avoid false marketing or lies by brands that claim to be clean but they are not.

## **2.4 Millennials (Gen Y)**

Millennials are the generation of people born between 1980 and 2000 (Rainer, T., Rainer, J., 2011) and currently make up 25% of the population. This group is of great importance for all

economic sectors as they are the most lucrative market, with an annual purchasing power estimated at more than one trillion dollars (Moraes, 2020). Millennials represent a generation that has undergone a significant transition in terms of technology, culture and values. This generation has been shaped by the rise of digital technology and social networks, which has influenced their consumption habits, social behavior and preferences in various areas, including the consumption of products and services. According to Pew Research Center (2020), millennials are known to be digital natives and show a high level of online interaction, which has led to an increase in online shopping, online information search and the influence of social networks in their purchasing decisions.

For brands, it is important to focus on the attraction and retention of millennials, because according to a Millennial market research carried out by Daymon Worldwide, only 29% of Millennials buy the same brand (Moraes, 2020), which makes it easier for them to be attracted by several brands, but demonstrates a low level of loyalty, demanding constant action from brands to satisfy their needs. Likewise, this is the technology-savvy generation. According to Pew Research, almost 100% of them say they use the Internet (Moraes, 2020), which shows an advantage for brands since they have a way to reach them through digital media.

Social awareness and responsibility are also prominent characteristics of millennials. This generation tends to value sustainability, ethics and social responsibility in the brands and products they choose. According to Nielsen's "Millennials, Gen Z and Sustainability" report (2019), millennials are particularly inclined toward brands that promote sustainable practices and engage in social initiatives and according to a study carried out by AlixPartners survey, for

millennials beauty is closely related to well-being, which is why they look for products with natural or organic ingredients that are produced following ethical and environmental standards. This trend has had a significant impact on a number of industries, including beauty, where brands have had to adapt their marketing and communication strategies to address these evolving concerns and values.

Regarding the beauty industry, this generation is the one that drives sales (Santoro, p.15, 2022), and who are always at the forefront of new trends, innovations and news, demanding from brands a wide range of high-quality products that meet their needs. They have been in charge of reshaping the industry and imposing new trends.

According to the research firm TABS Analytics (2019), women of this generation are the most concerned about these sustainable and clean beauty issues, with ingredients being the most recurring theme. Among the other important factors for this group is the label, which they expect to be detailed and transparent. Finally, they want to know the manufacturing and production history of the ingredients and the product as well, which indicates an opportunity for brands to educate consumers on this aspect in an attractive way through advertising and marketing on social networks or digital media (Masory, A).

## **2.5 Marketing And Communication Strategies**

Marketing and communication strategies play an important role in the beauty industry by creating a connection between brands and consumers. These strategies range from identifying target audiences to creating persuasive messages and selecting appropriate communication channels. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2021), marketing efforts must adapt to evolving consumer preferences, which are currently skewed toward seeking beauty solutions that reflect their individual values and needs.

The beauty industry is constantly evolving, brands employ a variety of marketing and communication strategies to differentiate themselves and attract consumers. Online presence has become an essential tool for establishing a direct relationship with consumers and generating engagement. According to an eMarketer report (2022), beauty brands are using techniques such as engaging visual content, video tutorials and collaborations with influencers to reach a wider and more diverse audience. In social media and digital media, there has been a boom in ethical and sustainable marketing, as brands seek a holistic consumer-centric approach where, in addition to engaging consumers, they can interact effectively and thus build a strong brand identity.

Due to the change in consumer habits and purchasing behavior, beauty brands have not only been forced to commit to the environment and sustainability, but must also increase their efforts to communicate this commitment to their users in an effective, direct, transparent and creative way. Sustainable marketing strategies in the beauty industry often focus on telling authentic and emotional stories about the brand's values and responsible practices. The narrative of how ingredients are sourced, ethical manufacturing processes and social responsibility

initiatives become key elements in attracting a conscious audience. According to the Sustainable Brands Community report (2020), brands that can effectively communicate their commitment to sustainability and social responsibility have the opportunity to build stronger, long-term relationships with consumers who are looking for brands aligned with their values.

These communication strategies are vital for the performance of the brand, and have a direct effect on the sales and figures of the company. Through marketing and advertising, companies seek the opportunity to attract and retain their desired audience, publicize their position on sustainability and proclaim themselves as a brand within the concept of clean or green beauty. Finally, it is important to mention that successful sustainability marketing requires transparency and authenticity, as well as an understanding of the needs, values and priorities of the target audience. In this way, beauty brands can differentiate themselves in the marketplace and appeal to consumers who prioritize environmental responsibility.

## **2.6 Consumer Behavior**

Consumer behavior is defined as the study of the processes that take place when one or more individuals choose, purchase, use, or discard products, services, or experiences to satisfy their needs or tastes (Solomon, 2021) This field encompasses a wide range of psychological, social, and cultural factors that influence people's purchasing decisions. From internal motivations and perceptions to external influences, such as advertising and the opinions of

others, consumer behavior is a crucial field of research for understanding how people interact with the marketplace. On the other hand, consumption habits are the repetitive behaviors that individuals carry out when making purchasing decisions (Verplanken & Wood, 2006), which can be influenced by factors such as social norms or personal values.

These two concepts are of great importance in the development of a company's marketing strategies, since by identifying the factors that influence purchasing behavior and consumption habits, the process of marketing campaigns is facilitated, directed, and optimized. When it comes to the beauty industry, consumer behavior plays a fundamental role in the way brands design and market their products. Consumption patterns in this industry are influenced by a variety of factors, such as fashion trends, culturally established beauty canons and a growing awareness of sustainability and ethics. According to market research conducted by Mintel (2020), consumer behavior in the beauty industry is evolving towards an increased demand for natural, organic and ethical products, reflecting the growing awareness of sustainability and ethics.

It is important to analyze the purchasing behavior of millennials, since their consumption preferences are unique and are the ones that shape their decisions. Research shows that millennials are highly informed and demanding consumers, seeking high-quality products that align with their personal values and beliefs (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2018). Likewise, they place great value on recommendations, comments and trends on social networks. (Khamitov & Aliyev, 2020). Within the beauty industry, Generation Y places great importance on brand reputation, product quality, and specifically, natural and organic ingredients, cruelty-free practices, and

product safety (Loureiro & Kaufmann, 2018). These are factors that influence the user's perception and, therefore, their purchasing behavior.

## **2.7 Value Perception**

Value perception plays a key role in consumer decision making, it refers to how consumers evaluate the benefits received from a product or service relative to its cost. In the beauty industry, users evaluate the value proposition based on several factors, such as product efficacy, brand reputation and personal preferences. Zeithaml's (1988) research highlights the multidimensional nature of value perception, suggesting that consumers weigh not only the tangible attributes of a beauty product, but also the emotional and symbolic benefits it provides.

That consumer perception of value strongly influences the beauty industry, since as mentioned above the products are often associated with improved appearance and self-esteem. This link between beauty products and personal well-being highlights the subjective nature of value perception. According to Solomon et al. (2019), consumers make an emotional connection with beauty products, perceiving value not only through functional attributes, but also through the emotional satisfaction and confidence boost these products provide. Brands that effectively communicate how their products positively impact consumers' self-perceptions can foster a stronger value perception, thereby influencing purchasing decisions.

## 2.8 Purchasing Decision Factors

Consumer behavior is directly related to purchase decision factors, as it reflects the mental and emotional process that guides individuals to choose among the various alternatives available in the market. Purchase decision factors, such as price, quality, personal preferences and social influence, directly impact how consumers evaluate, select and purchase products or services. Some of the fundamental factors in making purchasing decisions in the beauty industry are as follows:

**Price:** In this factor, consumers carefully evaluate whether the cost of a product is justified by the value they perceive they will receive. In the beauty industry, products come in all price ranges, from affordable options to luxury products that may have exorbitant price tags.

**Perception of quality:** Consumers are willing to invest in products that promise effective and long-lasting results. A study by Deloitte (2021) reveals that product quality is a crucial factor in the choice of beauty and personal care products.

**Personal identity and lifestyle:** Beauty products have become a form of self-expression and self-presentation. Consumers seek products that reflect their values and align with their desired image. According to a Nielsen report, this factor shows how consumer preferences are influencing brands to adopt more sustainable practices.

Online reviews and recommendations: Consumers rely on the experiences and feedback of others (mostly friends or experts) to make informed decisions, and this has led to an increase in the importance of social media and online review platforms in the beauty industry.

Brand recognition: Consumers tend to trust more and feel more inclined towards brands that have established a solid reputation in terms of quality, reliability and customer satisfaction. Research from Aaker's (1991) study highlights the importance of brand reputation in purchase decision making, where a brand with a favorable reputation can influence consumer choice by creating a sense of security and minimizing perceived risk.

Convenience: Refers to the ease and convenience a consumer experiences when purchasing a product. Users value convenience in terms of accessibility, location, availability and the simplicity of the purchasing process. In an increasingly fast-paced world where time is a precious resource, options that offer a hassle-free shopping experience often gain preference. Whether it is the proximity of a physical store, the ease of navigation on an online shopping platform or the speed of product delivery, convenience significantly influences purchasing decisions by simplifying the experience and meeting consumers' needs efficiently.

Environmental and social impact: Lately, it has gained substantial relevance in the purchasing decision process of conscious consumers. It refers to the consideration of how a

product or service affects the natural environment and the community at large (Pelsmacker, P. et al., 2021). Consumers are increasingly concerned with making choices that minimize their ecological footprint and contribute positively to social well-being. From choosing sustainably manufactured products to preferring companies committed to ethical practices and social responsibility.

## **2.9 Brand Awareness**

Brand awareness is a fundamental concept in marketing, which reflects the visibility and prominence of a brand in the minds of consumers. It encompasses the ability of consumers to recognize and remember a brand name, logo, and other brand-related elements (Pappu, R. et al, 2005). Two key components of brand awareness are brand recall and brand recognition. In this research it will be important to understand these two concepts and their interaction.

As mentioned above, the beauty industry thrives on aesthetics, innovation, and emotional appeal. Thus, brand awareness plays a key role in this industry due to the personal and intimate nature of beauty products. Consumers often develop strong affiliations with beauty brands that align with their self-expression and values. Effective brand awareness strategies make it easy to establish these connections, allowing brands to forge lasting relationships with their consumers.

On the other hand, brand recognition and recall are critical to success. For example, a single mention of a specific product could instantly evoke one specific brand due to its status and market positioning and that is called a strong brand recall, thanks to the effectiveness of the branding efforts in creating a lasting impression in the minds of consumers. In addition, brand recognition greatly influences purchasing decisions in the beauty industry. Consumers faced with numerous choices often rely on recognizable brands as shortcuts to ensure quality and familiarity.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Research Methodology**

The focus of the study will be qualitative, and its main objective will be to analyze the perception that generation Y has about the “green/clean beauty” movement, study how it is influenced by the communication strategies and advertisements of some brands and finally, determine to what extent these factors impact the behavior and purchase decisions of the consumers.

The decision to conduct a qualitative study is made because it allows a deeper and broader vision of the issues to be addressed, since it gathers the experiences, perceptions and behaviors of the participants, thus responding to patterns of human behavior that are more difficult to explain through other methodologies (Tenny et al., 2022). That is the reason why a 20-25 questions interview will take place between the months of May and June of 2023. Interviews with open end questions will facilitate the analysis of this research as it will be possible to identify the level of importance that millennials give to organic beauty products and the behavior of these brands with sustainability. On the other hand, it will be possible to study the performance of marketing and communication strategies of one brand in the beauty sector in relation to their commitment to the environment and sustainability, allowing participants to give more detailed answers.

### **3.2 Sampling And Recruitment**

It is of utmost importance to ensure quality and accuracy in the information and answers received in the interviews, for this reason a non-random and intentional sampling will be carried out, in which people that are selected need to fulfill some requirements, among them are: Being part of the Y generation, being regular users of beauty products (makeup or skin care products) and finally, with university studies.

The sample size will be of 16 people, among which a minimum of 3 people should have professional or academic experience in the beauty industry, in order to guarantee in the answers critical opinions and with a deeper knowledge and understanding in the topic. On the other hand, recruitment will be done through direct personalized messages, making an invitation to be part of the research, mentioning the approximate duration of the interview (15min) and the purpose of it, without clarifying the main topic (green beauty) to avoid a bias in the opinions and thus obtain sincere, real and personal knowledge-based answers.

### **3.3 Data Collection**

The interview will be done through two different methods: Face to face and through digital platforms like Teams and Zoom. It is important to mention that interviews will start with the informed consent for the use and publication of the information provided. This methodology is chosen because it is a format that allows respondents to express themselves freely, without limiting themselves to a specific number of words or time, and without feeling pressure from an interviewer, and giving real answers without the fear of being judged, fulfilling the initial objective, which is to identify the concept of the participants. It will be a semi-structured interview with open-ended questions to encourage and motivate participants to give their point of view and extend their answer giving their opinion on the topic, beyond the questions.

Thus, the guide interview is divided into three parts. The first one corresponds to the general and personal information of the participant, with information such as age, gender, nationality and occupation. Then, the second division corresponds to the subject to be studied, including questions to identify the level of awareness, importance, relevance and proximity that the participants have with green beauty concepts, trends, products and news. Finally, the last part will approach the ads and communication strategies of some beauty brands and the impact they have on participants, measuring some KPIs such as performance and likeability.

The interview guide will be as follows:

Personal information questions:

1. What is your name?
2. What is your gender?
3. What is your age?
4. What is your nationality?
5. What is your occupation?

- 
6. What are 3 words that you associate with the beauty industry?
  7. How often do you use Personal care and cosmetic products?
  8. How often do you buy Personal care and cosmetic products?
  9. Does the price of a cosmetic brand impact your purchasing decision? Why?
  10. Does the quality of a cosmetic brand impact your purchasing decision? Why?
  11. Do the reviews of a cosmetic brand impact your purchasing decision? Why?
  12. Does the brand recognition of a cosmetic brand impact your purchasing decision? Why?

13. Does the environmental and social impact of a cosmetic brand impact your purchasing decision? Why?

14. Do you know what the concept “green beauty” refers to? Elaborate your answer

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Definition:

Green beauty, also known as clean beauty, refers to sustainable beauty, an approach that aims to highlight the importance of making choices that promote a balance between human well-being and involvement in the care for the environment and society (Nielsen, 2023)

Green beauty refers to the use of natural, non-toxic, and eco-friendly ingredients in skincare and cosmetic products, avoiding harmful chemicals commonly found in conventional beauty products. It prioritizes sustainability, health consciousness, and transparency.

15. After knowing, or understanding a little more about what green beauty is, how important do you consider it when making a purchase?

16. Would you be able to give some examples of brands that are considered clean/green/organic?

17. Do you perceive a difference in the value of brands that are considered green/clean beauty versus brands that are not? How?

18. Do you think new generations are more aware of the environmental impact of beauty brands?

---

Watch this video: <https://youtu.be/1a7XU52JD5k> (GarnierUSA, 2021)

19. Please describe how interesting the video was for you.
20. How did the video make you feel about Green beauty?
21. Did the video make the Green beauty movement seem much more appealing? Why? Why not?
22. Do you think this video would influence your purchase decision of Green cosmetics?
23. After watching the video, are sustainable practices and clean beauty important to you?

#### **4. Analysis And Results**

To facilitate the analysis of the qualitative research results, each participant's interview was transcribed (these transcripts can be found in *Appendix b*). In this way, a complete analysis of each response and experience reported was ensured to identify Generation Y's perception of the green beauty movement and subsequently analyze how a brand's communication strategies can impact participants' purchasing decisions.

Having established this, the analysis will be presented by groups, following the sections previously mentioned in the methodology. First, the demographics of the participants will be analyzed, including gender, age, nationality and occupation. Then, the users' knowledge and

perception of the concept of green beauty without a previously provided definition and, finally, the analysis of the effects of a communication strategy on the purchase decision of a beauty industry product.

As expected, all participants are millennials. Among them, 56% are between 23 and 30 years old and 44% are between 31 and 39 years old. In terms of gender, the majority of users are women (75% vs. 25% of men) since cosmetic purchasing statistics by gender reveal interesting consumption patterns in the beauty industry. According to data provided by ResearchAndMarkets.com's "Cosmetic Products Market - Growth, Trends, and Forecast (2021-2026)" report, women have historically been the dominant segment in terms of spending on cosmetic products, accounting for a significant share of the market. However, a considerable number of male participants are factored into the sample as in recent years, there has been an increase in demand for beauty products from men, which has driven growth in the male sector. The same report notes that this trend is due to factors such as increased awareness of the importance of self-care and cultural acceptance of diversity in male beauty. These statistics underscore the evolution in attitudes and buying habits in the beauty industry, where gender differentiation is losing relevance in favor of a more inclusive and diverse offering.

In terms of nationality, the participants are from different countries around the world, among them we can find: Colombia (5), Mexico (2), Peru (2), Morocco (1), United States (1), Canada (1), Germany (1) Spain (1), France (1) and India (1). As can be seen, more than half (9) of the participants are from Latin American countries. In this region, the beauty industry has experienced impressive growth in recent years, consolidating itself as one of the most prominent

economic sectors. With a steady increase in purchasing power and a growing awareness of the importance of personal care, the figures reveal a dynamic and promising outlook. According to Statista's research department (2023), its market value is estimated at US\$39 billion. This growth is largely attributed to product diversification, the expansion of international brands in the region and the growing demand for cosmetics, skin care, perfumes and hair care products.

To conclude the demographic analysis, it is possible to say that 100% of the participants are of a medium-high socio-economic level, since the answers to the question: "What is your last level of study?" show that all participants had the opportunity to access higher education in their countries. In addition, the answers of the following question: "What is your occupation?", show professional positions in different educational areas. An important aspect to be mentioned is that 4 out of the 16 participants have a deeper knowledge of the concepts of the beauty industry because they have had academic or professional experience with companies and brands in this sector.

#### **4.1 Beauty industry perception**

First, it was important to know the respondents' perceptions of the beauty industry. The question: "What are 3 words that you associate with the beauty industry?" would allow to identify what this industry means to them, and if in some way or another, they relate it to issues of environmental or social impact, or suddenly, sustainability. After all the interviews were

completed, a word cloud was created, a diagram that facilitates the analysis because it represents the qualitative answers and is in charge of visually showing the importance of the words, the more a specific word appeared in the answer, the larger it appears in the image. In this way, it is visualized what the participants think about this concept:



*Figure 1*

**Figure 1: Word Cloud concept:** This diagram that facilitates the analysis because it represents the qualitative answers and is in charge of visually showing the importance of the words.

Source: Author's own work

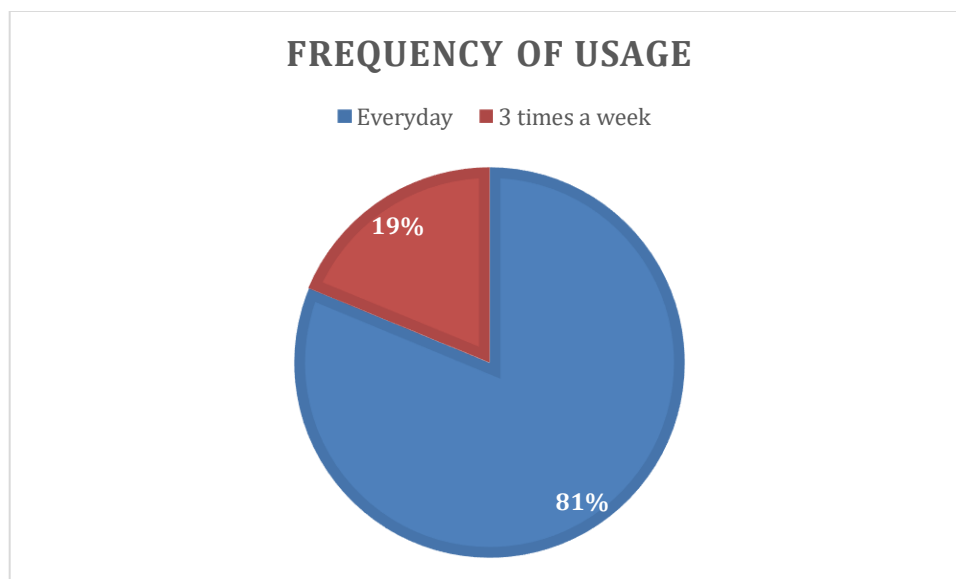
As it can be seen in the image, the most repeated words were: makeup, fashion, care and skin care, respectively, which are larger than the others. These words reflect the first thought of the participants when mentioned: beauty industry. These answers are related to the data provided by Statista, who, after a study carried out in 2019, predicted that in 2025 the segment revenue and growth rate within the beauty industry would be led by the categories of personal care, skincare, and cosmetics (Statista, 2020).

Other words were also mentioned, which are reflected in the diagram with a medium or small size, which are related to trends, innovation and expectations. The beauty industry is a constantly changing landscape, with new trends and innovations responding to consumer preferences and demands. From skincare innovations to makeup techniques, this fast-paced industry never fails to introduce novel concepts and products. New beauty trends arrive every day, fueled by technological advances, changing social norms, and today, social media influencers. As a result of these dynamic changes, beauty industry players must remain agile and adaptable to stay ahead in this competitive market, catering to the ever-evolving preferences of their users (Jones et al., 2020).

Other industry-related words were money and expensive. With this, it can be induced that the participants compare it to one of the largest industries globally since beauty is present in all countries and everywhere you look. According to Statista (2023) the beauty industry generates over \$100 billion in revenue worldwide, thus becoming one of the largest industries in the world. This relationship between beauty and money has been driven by a combination of factors, including effective advertising highlighting the benefits of premium products, as well as the influence of celebrities and public figures endorsing exclusive brands. In this context, the concept of social status and self-image also play an important role in consumers' willingness to invest significantly in their appearance. However, it is important to consider the socioeconomic implications of this dynamic, as accessibility to idealized beauty standards may be limited for certain demographic groups.

## 4.2 Frequency

Following this question, the interview aims to identify the frequency of use and purchase of personal care products and cosmetics of each user. When analyzing the results, it can be seen in the Figure#2 that the vast majority (81%) of the participants state that they use these products daily, depending on whether they are personal care products or, in some cases, makeup. On the other hand, three people say they use the products only 3 times per week.



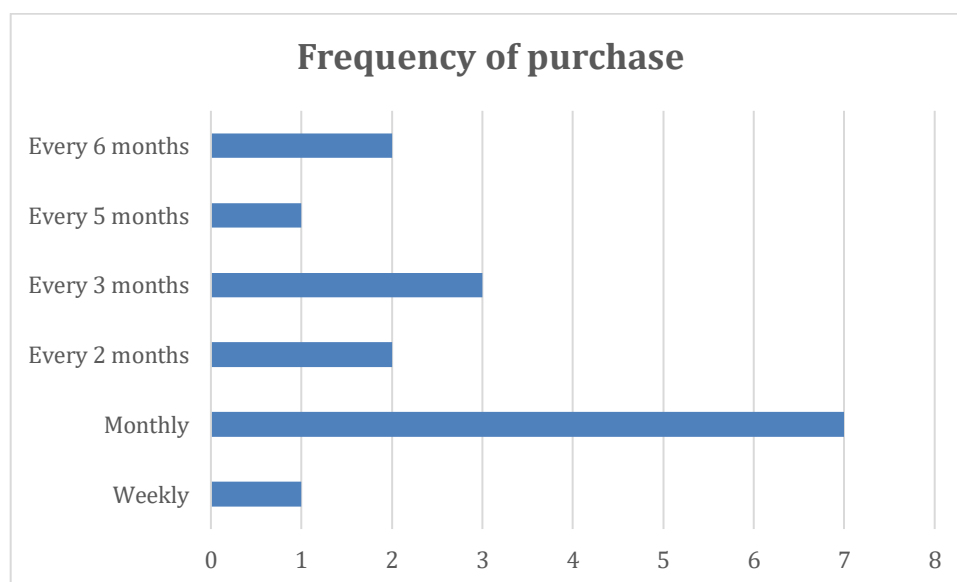
*Figure 2*

**Figure 2: Frequency usage graph:** Frequency of use of personal care products and cosmetics of users

Source: Author's own work

According to studies, millennials are a generation that tends to use beauty and personal care products more frequently compared to previous generations. This may be due to the rise of social media and beauty influencers (Jones et al., 2018). For example, on digital platforms and social networks, the exposure of this generation to beauty trends and multiple product recommendations has led these beauty and personal care products to be an integral part of their daily routines (Smith & Johnson, 2019).

Regarding the purchase frequency, as seen in the Figure #3 there was a common response with 7 participants stating that they buy these products at least once a month. On the other hand, 6 people stated that they buy them every 3 months or longer. Only one person stated that she buys beauty products once a week, their response was "It is very common that during the week I need to buy facial care products, soaps, moisturizers or makeup" (Navarro, 2023).



*Figure 3*

**Figure 3: Frequency purchase graph:** Frequency of purchase of personal care products and cosmetics of users

Source: Author's own work

On this same question, a large number of participants mentioned that although the approximate purchase time is once a month, they are not limited to this, but that their purchase depends on the duration of the product and the specific need of each product. As soon they run out of the product they are currently using, or even before, participants decide to buy and replace their product. If one day they need a product, they decide to buy it regardless of whether days, weeks or months have passed since the last purchase of their last cosmetic. For example, when asking this question to Aditi, she mentions: "It depends on when the products are running out then I need to buy" (Harsulkar, 2023)

However, it is important to note that the approximate time a beauty product lasts when used daily can vary depending on the type of product and its formulation. For example, in cosmetic products, according to the American Academy of Dermatology (2021) a liquid foundation lasts from 3 to 6 months, according to the American Academy of Ophthalmology (2019) an eyelash mask usually lasts 3 months with daily use. Finally, according to the American Academy of Dermatology (2021), skin care products such as cleansers, toners, and moisturizers typically last 3-12 months when used daily, depending on their formulation and type of packaging. This would indicate that most of the participants would not be using their products correctly and therefore consuming these products in excess.

That consumerism evidenced in the interviews can be triggered for different reasons. Users have a growing tendency to purchase a large number of beauty products, mostly due to this

constant social and commercial pressure to meet certain aesthetic standards. Furthermore, effective marketing has fueled a significant increase in the demand and consumption of beauty products. The so-called "throwaway culture" has led to increased consumption and disposal of products, which contributes to the negative environmental impact of the industry (Lee & Carter, 2020). On the other hand, brands also have a lot to do with this, as they launch limited-edition products or limited-time promotions on the market to generate a sense of urgency in consumers and increase sales (Jones et al., 2019). This culture of consumerism in the beauty industry can lead to an accumulation of unnecessary products and a constant search for satisfaction through the purchase of more products, which ultimately has both economic and environmental implications (Miller, 2021)

### **4.3 Purchasing decision factors**

The following five questions revolve around the factors that influence the consumer's purchase decision. In this part, the participants were questioned as to how important the following factors are when making a purchase decision. These factors were: Price, quality, reviews, brand recognition and finally, environmental and social impact. The latter, in order to determine if it is currently a determining factor and if it is, to what degree it influences and if it is more or less decisive than the other aspects mentioned.

The first factor to study was the price. 14 out of 16 people stated that price is one of the most important factors when making a purchase, since most of them have a budget to follow. After analyzing the answers, it was possible to conclude that users are highly sensitive to price, because although they say they want to invest in products, when the price is very high, they are not willing to pay it. In addition, one of the answers was "I am always guided by the price to analyze if the product is good or not. For me, a very cheap product in the beauty industry does not attract my attention since the skin is very delicate and I feel that it is important to use quality products" (Navarro, 2023) which indicates that when the price is very low, there are also doubts about the quality and effectiveness. However, it is also important to mention the answers of two participants, who mentioned that price is not a factor that influences their purchase decision at all, as they argue that regardless of the price, they invest in certified products with good ingredients and approved by dermatologists.

In the competitive dynamics of the beauty industry, price sensitivity emerges as a key determinant of consumer decisions. Users in this sector tend to be aware of the alternatives available and seek a balance between quality and cost. Given the diversity of options, buyers are increasingly meticulous in their choices, comparing prices and considering the relationship between price and perceived benefits. Pricing strategies and promotions are therefore crucial for industry players, as they must respond to fluctuations in demand and changing consumer preferences, while maintaining a focus on delivering valuable and affordable beauty experiences.

The second factor is quality. Not a single person mentioned or implied that this is not an important factor. After conducting all the interviews, it is possible to conclude that this is the

most influential factor in the decision to buy cosmetics of the interviewees, who argue that they look for quality in the products they buy because they are aware that the poor quality of the ingredients can have serious consequences on the well-being and appearance of their skin, especially on the face. Consequences such as allergies, reactions, etc. Finally, many answers were like this one: "I normally go for products with an equilibrium between price and quality" (Chavez, 2023) where they indicate a search for a balance in the relationship between quality and price.

Continuing with the analysis, the next factor to be studied was the reviews. Again, the vast majority of participants mentioned that this is an influential factor, as they look for honest opinions in the reviews of people who have tried the product and thus have a clearer vision of the true benefits of the product, they have a feedback and real opinions. This gives them more confidence in purchasing the product. However, among those who responded that reviews do influence their decision, many mentioned that although they sometimes search on social networks, most of the reviews they truly believe are those of their social circle and/or family members, because generally the ones on social networks are from influencers or public figures who are paid by the brands to give a good opinion. Word of mouth is the act of people sharing information, opinions, and experiences about products or services with others, and it is of significant importance to millennials in today's digital age. It is a generation that values authentic and genuine recommendations from their peers more than traditional advertising. Therefore, they are more likely to trust the opinions and experiences of friends, family, and influencers they follow on social media than traditional ads (Smith & Johnson, 2019). On the other hand, three people stated that reviews do not influence their purchase decision. It is relevant to mention that

two of them were men, who mentioned that in addition to not knowing how to look for these reviews, they think they are not honest: "No, I don't look for them and I don't even know where to find them. A lot of times I don't think they're honest so I don't go by that." (Castillo, 2023).

While generalizing about the beliefs and behaviors of an entire gender is not appropriate, as each individual is unique and may have different opinions and attitudes, some research suggests that a portion of the male gender may show some skepticism toward influencers compared to other audiences. This may be due to a number of cultural and social factors that have shaped expectations of masculinity and perceptions of authenticity in influencer marketing. Traditional gender stereotypes may influence how some men view influencers, associating product promotion with femininity or a lack of authenticity (Martinez & Rodriguez, 2018)

The fourth factor to be studied was brand recognition, in this point the objective was to determine to what extent the name, reputation and recognition of a specific brand can impact the purchase decision of a beauty product. When analyzing the responses, it was found that 38% of the participants argued that it was not an influencing factor vs. 63% who said it was.

In the first place, the affirmative answers to the question include reasons of greater security in knowing that the brand is recognized, affirming that if the brand is recognized it is because it has had to go through studies and critics, where the quality has been tested. Therefore, they equate brand recognition with quality. However, it is not the most important and influential factor.

Except for one person, who stated that this was the most important factor saying: "TOTALLY! I don't tend to try new brands as I like to use brands that are established in the market" (Ayers, 2023). This again, shows the security that the brand recognition can give to a consumer at the time of making a purchase.

Finally, more than half of the participants stated that the environmental and social impact is not something that influences their decision when buying a beauty product. The most repeated reason lies in the difference in price compared to conventional products, since they affirm that although the environment is something that matters to them and they would like to pay more attention to it, products that do not have a bad environmental impact tend to have a much higher price. higher and are not willing to pay more.

For example, the response from one of the participants is as follows: "Honestly, this is not a key player in my final decision, however, it influences my decision. If I see a brand that is socially responsible or cruelty-free, and the price is comparable and not too high compared to other products or brands, I'll buy it. On the other hand, if there's too big of a price difference between these two products, I'll probably go with the one with the lower price." (Chavez, 2023) In this answer it is evident that although the environmental impact of the products is important for the user, it is not the most important factor when deciding on a product or not, because if there is a very high price difference, she will not think about sustainability.

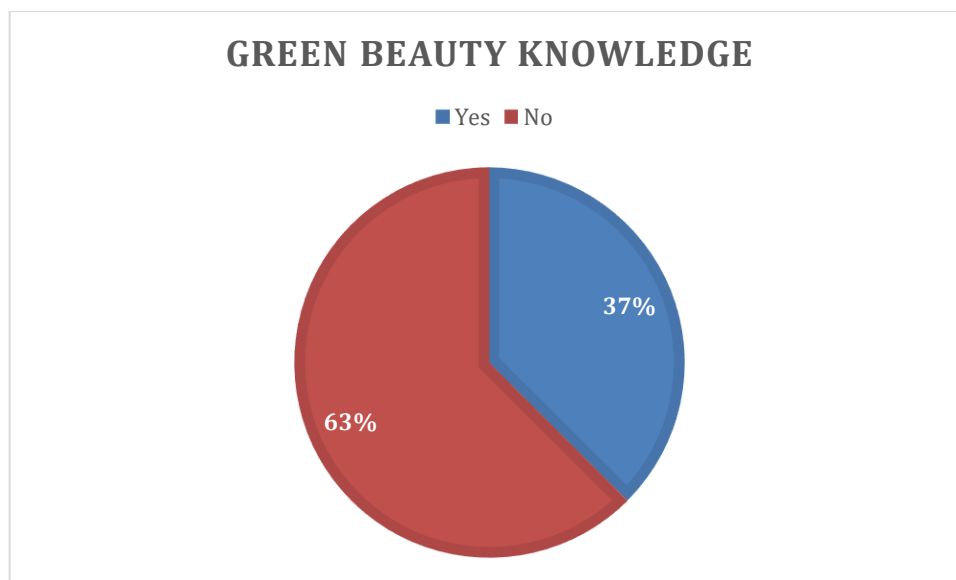
On the other hand, seven people affirmed that this is a determining factor when making purchases. Daniela and Katya, for example, responded: "Yes. I purchase from cruelty free, organic brands. Also, when the product package is made of recycled plastic or carton it makes me feel better" (Martinez, 2023) and "Yes, because the beauty industry has a huge impact on the environment and I'm working on lowering my carbon footprint" (Gonzalez, 2023) respectively. These answers show a sense of appropriation, they are aware of the negative impact that the

industry has and when buying products that help the environment, they feel that they are contributing and doing their part to it.

#### **4.4 Green beauty perception and importance**

After understanding the factors that influence the purchase decision of the participants, one of the most important questions of this study is asked. Each respondent is asked: “Do you know what the concept “green beauty” refers to?” in order to determine if they have knowledge or if they have had some approach to this concept and this movement, either through a brand or product.

After the answer to the last question about the importance of the environmental and social impact when making a purchase, it was possible to induce that most of the participants would not have a clear concept of what green beauty means. And after conducting the interviews, this theory was proved, the results show that out of 16 people, 10 responded that they did not know what green beauty meant. However, many of them tried to guess and shared that by the adjective "green" they assumed that the term was related to sustainable and environmentally friendly practices, which is true but is not the whole of this movement.



*Figure 4*

**Figure 4: Green beauty knowledge graph:** This graph shows the amount of users who knew or didn't know about green beauty concept.

Source: Author's own work

On the other hand, the 6 people who affirmed they knew this term, related the concept to practices that are not eco-friendly from the production of the products, but also the promotion of sustainable awareness. Laura Camacho answered: "Green beauty encourages the adoption of sustainable practices, from the consumption of beauty to the design of the environment. Thus, it seeks the integration of nature in built spaces and the incorporation of environmentally friendly materials and technologies. This approach is also related to environmental awareness and responsibility towards our planet. Green beauty seeks to promote a conscious lifestyle, where natural resources are valued and protected, excessive consumption is reduced and reuse and recycling are encouraged" (Camacho, 2023) After this analysis, it can be concluded that there is a lot of misinformation and low knowledge among the participants, who although in some cases related this movement to environmentally friendly practices, are not aware of all the sustainable

practices that the industry beauty and brands can perform. And this may be an indicator of why this factor is not so important to them when making a cosmetic purchase.

In order for the participants to have knowledge about this term, they were given the following definition:

"Green beauty, also known as clean beauty, refers to sustainable beauty, an approach that aims to highlight the importance of making choices that promote a balance between human well-being and involvement in the care for the environment and society (Nielsen, 2023)

Green beauty refers to the use of natural, non-toxic, and eco-friendly ingredients in skincare and cosmetic products, avoiding harmful chemicals commonly found in conventional beauty products. It prioritizes sustainability, health consciousness, and transparency."

This, with the objective of identifying if after knowing exactly what it means, for them this is something important at the time of buying a beauty product or not. At the end of all the interviews, the results showed that 100% of the participants stated that they consider it important. Most of them argued that it is important to take this into account because the chemicals and ingredients of the products can not only affect the well-being of the skin, but also the environment. Marie, for example, responded: "I think it is very important, and it aligns with my lifestyle. I would add this aspect next time when going to purchase any cosmetic product I might need." (Cely, 2023) Thus, it is possible to conclude that when participants have knowledge about the practices of a pro-environment and pro-society movement, they show more interest and give it importance at the time of a purchase.

Understanding which brands come to mind first is essential, as this provides insight into the impact of marketing strategies and consumer perception of a company. Brands that are recognized spontaneously and quickly often have a competitive advantage, as consumers tend to associate them with quality, reliability, and success, and in this case, green beauty. Knowing the leading brands in the minds of people also allows companies to measure their success in the marketplace and make informed decisions to drive long-term growth and performance. For this reason, the participants were asked "Would you be able to give some examples of brands that are considered clean/green/organic?" Among the most repeated answers were: Yves Rocher, The Body Shop and Fresh. Again, a word cloud was made to visualize and capture the answers to this question.



Figure 5

**Figure 5: Word Cloud Brands:** This diagram that facilitates the analysis because it represents the qualitative answers and is in charge of visually showing the importance of the words. This graph shows the top of mind brands when asking for green beauty brands.

Source: Author's own work

It is important to mention that during the interviews, the participants took a long time to answer this question, they were hesitating and trying to think of an answer. Out of 16 participants, 5 of them answered that they could not give any name of any brand, as they did not know or did not know if they followed this business model. In addition, 7 other participants could only give 1 or 2 brand names. This means that only 4 people gave 3 or more company names, which is a really low percentage for such a large industry, with so many brands of both personal care and cosmetic products, national or international.

Among the most prominent responses was Yves Rocher, a French company which is based on vegan, natural and committed cosmetics (Yves Rocher, n.d) and on the other hand, The Body Shop, a British cosmetic, skin care and fragrances company, that claims its products are 100% natural and therefore, cruelty free. According to the above, the participants' answers were correct and aligned with the question they were asked. A relevant factor is that these brands focus all of their products, their image and their message to the public on naturalness and support for the environment, in conclusion, sustainability. When studying their social networks, for example, it is evident that 100% of their content, posts, images, videos and others, are focused on showing that they are brands that support and promote sustainability and the environment. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that it was easy for the participants to associate these two brands with green beauty and the business model.

It was important to identify whether participants perceived a difference in value between brands, so they were asked the following question: Do you perceive a difference in the value of brands that are considered green/clean beauty versus brands that are not? How? The majority of respondents (96%) argued that they do perceive a difference in value. First, as precisely mentioned, they consider that brands that are green tend to be more expensive than traditional and common brands. On the other hand, they affirm that they perceive a value because by supporting these brands, they feel committed to the environment, they feel that they are contributing to a lower socio-environmental impact and therefore, being sustainable. This is what Katya mentions in her answer: “Yes, when you're buying such brands, you are supporting the business of sustainability a bit more”. (Gonzalez, 2023)

On the other hand, only two participants said no. Ana Maria (2023) argued by giving an example, saying that the brand Yves Rocher, discussed above, offers clean products but they are not considered expensive, but rather affordable: "Not that much, for example for Yves Rocher, I consider their products clean but their products are not as expensive as other brands like Fenty beauty, etc."

#### **4.5 Generation Y awareness**

After knowing the perception that participants had about this movement and the value they give to this aspect, they were asked question #18, which reads as follow: Do you think new generations are more aware of the environmental impact of beauty brands? This question was of vital importance to understand if Gen Y felt more aware than past generations, such as Gen X and Baby Boomers.

31% of the participants gave a negative answer, arguing that they did not believe that the new generations were more aware of this impact, instead, they believe that this awareness is due to other factors such as culture, education and socioeconomic level. Marie Cely responded: "I think also old generations are aware, I believe it is more about culture and the type of education they received. I believe that people that have more income have access to a more exclusive and healthier lifestyle. They can invest more on very expensive products not only for beauty and personal care but also for food, furniture, cars and other very expensive environmentally friendly products" (Cely, 2023). This is directly related to what was mentioned above, where the respondents stated that products from environmentally conscious brands were more expensive than traditional products. And in this answer, Marie shows her position that the higher a person's income is, the more access they can have to expensive products and therefore be more aware of the impact that this has on the environment.

On the other hand, the remaining 69% mentioned agreed with the statement that the new generations are more aware of the environmental impact of the beauty industry. After the transcription of the interviews, it was evident that the participants believe that millennials are people who are more committed to the environment and the main reason is the amount of

information and the ease of access to it. Alejandro replied: "Yes absolutely, the fact that we can have more information and access more easily about what happens in the world and how our daily activities affect the environment makes younger people more aware of it. Also, we are looking at the consequences every day, and I think that makes us more aware. (Castillo, 2023). According to recent studies, the amount of digital data generated and shared on the Internet has been doubling approximately every two years, a trend commonly known as the "information explosion" (Smith & Johnson, 2019). Thanks to smartphones, tablets, and other devices, new generations now have instant access to a wide range of information sources, such as online libraries, scholarly databases, and educational websites (Jones et al., 2022).

#### **4.6 Marketing tool impression**

To continue, there is the section of the most important questions to fulfill the initial objective of this research. After being shown the video entitled "COMMITTED TO MAKING GARNIER A GREENER BEAUTY BRAND" from the Garnier brand, the participants answered some questions regarding their perception of the stimulus, how interesting they found it, and the impact it might have on their purchase behavior. Taking this into account, the first question was: "Please describe how interesting the video was for you". For most of the participants the stimulus was rated as interesting, informative and explanatory, it had good visual images, numbers and information that the respondents did not know about that specific brand. They also

commented that it was interesting not only to learn about the sustainable practices of this brand in the production and manufacturing of the products, but also in the whole sales process, such as packaging and user consumption.

On the other hand, only two participants commented that they found the video "Mildly interesting" (Gonzalez, 2023) and "Not that much, I found it super long" (Martinez, 2023). As can be seen in the responses, for one of them the video was considered very long, as it has a time of 2 minutes and 14 seconds. One of the participants, Jorge Cohen (2023), also had a similar comment, as he said that the video could be very long, and that according to his perception, the most successful videos are the ones with a maximum length of one minute. It is also mentioned by HubSpot in its blog " 18 métricas de video que debes conocer". According to a survey they conducted with more than 500 specialized marketers around the world, 83% of respondents recommended that the optimal length of a short form video on platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube should be less than 60 seconds (Santos, 2021)

The next question was: "How did the video make you feel about Green beauty?" With this question, the purpose was to identify the impact that the video had on the participants' conception of the green beauty movement. On this occasion, people responded positively, as they consider green beauty as a sustainable practice, and many of them stated that this type of video makes them feel curious and motivated to investigate more and make a change in their purchasing decisions, leaning more towards clean and green products. A response that reflects this was from Clara, who said: "It made me feel like we can all do our little something to help the planet, if we are more aware of the products we use and buy, for example giving prioritization to

this green brand, we are also helping the environment" (Debruil, 2023). There, you can see a feeling of commitment and motivation, where it is evident that each individual act has a consequence in the welfare of the environment.

However, while everyone commented that the video was interesting, three people agreed that they do not believe 100% of what the video says about their practices. They stated that, although they care and believe in the movement, sometimes brands, especially large corporations, lie about their sustainable practices in order to generate more revenue and get attention from users, two of these people referred to the term "greenwashing". Here is an example: "(...) It feels good to see big brands being more sustainable. But at the same time, I don't completely trust the ad since other big brands such as P&G do a lot of green washing" (Martinez, 2023). Greenwashing is a marketing tactic used by some companies to project an environmentally responsible and sustainable image, although their actual commitment to green practices may be questionable. This strategy seeks to position itself as leaders in sustainability, but in many cases, it is a facade intended to obtain commercial benefits, obtain more customers and, therefore, higher income (Harris, 2002). Companies involved in greenwashing may use unsubstantiated claims, misleading labels, or advertising campaigns that highlight their environmental commitment, without solid backing of concrete actions and sustainable practices. This practice can and tends to confuse and misinform consumers, hindering their ability to make informed decisions on behalf of the environment and support companies genuinely committed to sustainability.

#### **4.7 Purchasing behavior impact**

To complete the analysis of the results, it was important to analyze the interviews and the responses that the participants gave after watching the video. As mentioned above, it is evident that for the vast majority the video was interesting and although in some cases there was disbelief, this was more towards the brands than towards the green movement as such, which would mean that by asking the participants if they are practices were important to them and if video could influence their buying decision, most responses would be positive.

Before answering those questions, it was important to identify if the stimulus made the movement more interesting or appealing to the participants, because before making any purchase decision, this is the first important factor, to know if the perception of green beauty changed, And if it did, in a negative or positive way. A large number of participants were more interested, more knowledgeable and more motivated to learn more about this movement. The responses showed that people valued the images in the videos and the context that was provided to fully understand the concept of clean beauty. However, a couple of them wondered if this was a marketing tool and doubted that the results shown in the video were true.

On the other hand, although in 100% of the interviews it can be seen that sustainable practices and clean beauty is important, that the participants became more aware of the impact of the bad practices of some brands in the industry on the environment and in the communities, and perceive themselves as more responsible, the results showed that a large number of respondents

(6 people) argued that the video would not influence their purchase decision. The main reasons are linked to what was commented in section F. Impression of the marketing tool, in which many affirm that being from such a large brand and with so much purchasing power, perhaps it is just marketing and they do not trust that everything commented be true. This demonstrates the incredulity that characterizes millennials, especially on digital platforms. With access to a vast amount of information online, millennials have become more skeptical and wary of the veracity of the information they find online. According to a study carried out by the Pew Research Center (2015) millennials tend to question the accuracy and impartiality of online news and content, displaying a distrustful attitude towards traditional sources of information. This critical attitude has led millennials to look for various sources, verify data and contrast information before accepting it as true. For this reason, in this investigation they say they need more data, reliable facts and proofs than what Garnier affirms. Furthermore, the spread of fake news and the manipulation of information on social media have further increased the skepticism of this generation. This mistrust can have major implications for online marketing and communication strategies, as brands and companies must strive to build trust and credibility among millennials in order to earn their loyalty and support. People affirm that they will definitely take this issue more into account when buying, but they do not promise that their purchase decision will always be guided or prioritized by organic, natural or green products. In addition, they claim that for a video like this to influence their behavior, they need more information, more evidence, numbers, verifiable facts and more education, to be sure of their purchases.

Regarding the affirmative answers, it is evident that many of them did think that this would influence their purchase decision towards green cosmetics, because thanks to the video,

they were more aware of the impact not only on the well-being of each one, but also on the environment and society, of the consequences and impact that the beauty industry has on the planet earth, affirmed that after this they will make sure to investigate and read the labels of the products before making any purchase.

## **5. Conclusions and Practical Recommendations**

The objective of this research study was to analyze the influence that marketing and communication strategies have on millennials in the context of the "Green beauty" movement and sustainability in the beauty industry. This, due to the great implication that these strategies that brands use have on consumer behavior and purchase decision factors. Therefore, a qualitative research was developed to collect data and analyze the level of this influence of marketing and communication strategies on the Y generation. As a result of the literature review and the interview conducted by 16 Gen Y participants, data was collected, and the results highlighted pertinent and relevant conclusions that are valuable for analyzing consumer behavior and improving communication and marketing strategies.

During the research, it became evident that generation Y plays a very important role in the beauty industry, when studying and analyzing the frequency with which they use products of this sector, it is seen that it is part of their daily life, and as for the frequency of purchase, it is also evident that there is an overconsumption in most of the participants. It was also evident that

the knowledge that people have about the green and clean movement is very vague, based on guesses and similarities of the name with other movements related to sustainability. Similarly, it was shown that there is no good brand recall or brand recognition in terms of sustainability. All the above, shows that among millennials, there is no habit or culture of conscious and sustainable purchasing when it comes to cosmetic and personal care products.

However, after all the analysis it was possible to conclude that participants are aware of the impact of the beauty industry on the environment and society. They are simply not committed enough to change their actions. In fact, one of the biggest reasons is that although they consider this business model as a good alternative, many of the participants recognize that sustainable beauty products are expensive.

Considering the above, there are two types of recommendations. First, for brands that already have a sustainable business model and green and clean products, it is recommended to implement the appropriate and necessary marketing tools to inform their main target, in this case millennials, and create a bond with customers. As evidenced with the video that was chosen as a stimulus, it was evidenced that although a video is a good communication format, there are factors to take into account and the selection of tools must be improved, the duration, the stimuli must be taken into account. visual, auditory, etc. It can be concluded that although the video motivated the participants to investigate and learn more about the brand's sustainable practices, there are conceptual gaps and the data provided in the video was not 100% verifiable or reliable, and may end in a perception of the brand for doing greenwashing practices. To improve the effectiveness of these strategies, it is essential to take a holistic approach that combines

authenticity and emotional connection with the changing needs of consumers. Brands must focus on transparency, sharing detailed information about ingredients, production processes, and ethical practices. Additionally, leveraging digital platforms in innovative ways, such as the use of interactive tutorials, user reviews, and collaborations with trusted influencers, can build a deeper bond with your audience. Personalization also plays a key role, using technologies like artificial intelligence to tailor product recommendations to individual customer needs. In short, brands that manage to balance authenticity, transparency and personalization in their communication and marketing strategies will be in a strong position to excel in the competitive market of the beauty industry. In this way, the disbelief of this generation is combated. In addition, the good use of strategies will help brand recall and recognition in the minds of consumers, which enhances market positioning and brand loyalty.

On the other hand, for brands in the beauty industry that have not yet developed ingredients, products and have not opted for sustainable practices in all manufacturing, development and marketing processes of their products, it is recommended to carry out adequate research on all the consequences and impact that their company, brand and products have on the environment and society. In this way, they can start a change and adopt sustainable practices, which will follow the trends that, as seen earlier in the literature review, are becoming increasingly powerful not only to millennials, but to all generations.

## **6. Limitations and Future Directions**

Based on the results of this research, future studies could be conducted, discussed, and analyzed. The collected data provided useful information to analyze the role of marketing and communication strategies in the perception of green beauty among millennials. Despite valuable insights, this qualitative research is not without its limitations. First, the study sample size for the interviews was relatively modest, consisting of 16 participants. In addition, as evidenced in the results, half of them were from the same geographical area, Latin America. This limited scope might restrict the generalizability of the findings to a broader context. A larger and more diverse group of participants would improve the representativeness of the study, capturing a broader range of perspectives and prevailing practices in the landscape. For the future, a quantitative study could be used as a complement in order to have more precise results from the data collected through a questionnaire. In this way, a larger sample could also be obtained.

Second, as with any qualitative research, the potential for investigator bias and subjectivity remains a concern. Although efforts were made to minimize these biases, the interpretation of participants' responses could be influenced by preconceived notions or expectations. This subjectivity could affect the depth and objectivity of the insights gleaned from the data. For future studies that may be desired, methods such as member verification or multi-investigator participation could be considered to mitigate this limitation and ensure a more complete analysis.

Another of the limitations in this study was that only one brand stimulus was chosen to find out the role it would have in the perception of the movement of green beauty in the participants. However, for future studies, a second and even a third stimulus from the same or

another brand would expand the amount of information collected and would propose a more complete perspective of communication and marketing strategies.

Finally, for the study it was important to have the opinion of people who work or have a broader knowledge in the beauty sector, as this allowed a broader and different perspective. And although 4 out of 16 people were involved and worked in companies in this industry, they did not have complete knowledge regarding sustainability issues, which made it difficult to understand and analyze this part of the research. For future studies, it is proposed to ensure an adequate number of responses from people who have clear and complete knowledge about the main topic of the investigation.

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