

## **A Conceptual Framework of Sustainable Marketing: Factors Shaping Generation Z's Green Purchase Intention toward Bottle Tumblers**

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### **Abstract**

Environmental sustainability became a worldwide issue, leading businesses and consumers alike to reconsider their role in advocating for environmentally considerate behaviors. In such an environment, sustainable marketing plays an overriding impact on the trajectory of consumer behavior toward sustainable offerings. Through such a conceptual paper, an outline for the drivers of Generation Z's purchase intent toward the green direction is presented with particular focus on reusable bottle tumblers. Generation Z, with their digital interconnectivity and rising ecological awareness, creates a target population for the formation of sustainable consumption behaviors. In virtue of theories of sustainability and models of consumer behavior, the present study integrates psychological, social, and behavioral variables such as environmental awareness, perceived ability among consumers, social pressure, and attitudes toward sustainable products. In distinction from empirical studies, the focus herein is on integration for purposes of highlighting the sustainable marketing inclinations toward environmentally considerate purchase behaviors. The conceptual outline presented herein not only develops the scholarship but also provides practical applications for businesses and policymakers who wish for marketing strategies for environmentally considerate consumers. Through the positioning of Generation Z as change agents, the study highlights the strategic value of sustainable marketing for the realization of sustainable purchase behaviors through the consumption of reusable bottle tumblers.

### **Keyword**

Consumer Behavior, Sustainable Marketing, Green Purchase Intention

### **Introduction**

In recent years, growing concerns about environmental issues such as climate change, plastic pollution, and the depletion of natural resources have increased public awareness of sustainable consumption and corporate accountability (Baste & Watson, 2022). Within this context, Generation Z has emerged as a key demographic for brands aiming to integrate sustainability into their strategic positioning. As digital natives and socially aware consumers, Gen Z

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individuals are particularly responsive to branding that emphasizes ecological transparency, ethical production practices, and alignment with personal values—factors that can meaningfully shape their purchasing intentions (Theocharis & Tsekouropoulos, 2025). Reusable tumblers, as one category of sustainable products, not only offer practical alternatives to single-use plastics but also serve as symbolic expressions of environmental identity and commitment. Thus, they provide a compelling case for exploring the intersection of sustainable branding and consumer psychology.

A persistent gap remains between environmental attitudes, intentions, and actual behavior. Although many individuals, including members of Generation Z, hold positive attitudes toward environmental issues, these views do not always result in consistent purchasing behavior (Zhuo et al., 2022). This inconsistency may be driven by skepticism toward corporate greenwashing, sensitivity to pricing without clear value propositions, or limited product accessibility (Gomes et al., 2023). Existing research has frequently investigated psychological drivers, such as environmental concern, perceived consumer effectiveness, and trust, as well as branding constructs like green brand image. However, these factors are often examined in isolation, without sufficient attention to how they interact and influence one another. For example, a study by Ayu (2025) investigated the influence of the green marketing mix (product, price, place, promotion) on Gen Z's sustainable purchase intentions, mediated by green brand image. However, it did not fully integrate internal consumer motivations with branding approaches. Addressing this gap, the present study proposes a comprehensive conceptual framework that interlinks psychological determinants and green branding strategies to better explain Gen Z's intention to purchase reusable tumblers, ultimately aiming to provide insights into mitigating the attitude–behavior gap.

From the standpoint of sustainable marketing, firms are expected to pursue not only economic performance but also the creation of enduring environmental and societal value (Belz et al., 2025). Contemporary literature emphasizes the importance of aligning green marketing strategies, including eco-innovation, sustainable promotion, and environmentally conscious distribution, with stakeholder values to strengthen brand quality, awareness, and loyalty (Ghobbe & Nohekhan, 2023; Nohekhan & Barzegar, 2024). However, scholars have warned against the phenomenon of “sustainability marketing myopia,” wherein an excessive focus on ecological attributes may overshadow consumer-oriented benefits, thereby diminishing marketing effectiveness and consumer relevance (Belz et al., 2025).

In relation to Generation Z, consumer behavior research identifies identity formation, digital connectivity, and social influence as key factors influencing sustainable consumption patterns. Empirical studies highlight that green product knowledge, perceived corporate social responsibility, and brand trust play crucial roles in shaping Gen Z's propensity to engage in environmentally responsible purchasing (Borah et al., 2024). Experimental work by Ewe and Tjiptono (2023) demonstrates that brand familiarity, environmental awareness, and individual regulatory orientation collectively influence Gen Z's attitudes and intentions toward green products. In the German context, Krippes et al. (2024) found that distinct dimensions of sustainability, namely environmental and social concerns, have different effects on behavioral intentions when examined using the Theory of Planned Behavior framework. Furthermore, digital factors such as online brand experience, consumer engagement, perceived trustworthiness, and brand image significantly affect Gen Z's sustainable consumption decisions (Theocharis & Tsekouropoulos, 2025). Collectively, these findings underscore the need for an integrated sustainable marketing framework that strategically combines branding initiatives with psychological and digital engagement dimensions to effectively address the persistent attitude–behavior gap.

## Methodology

Figure 1. Conceptual Model, The proposed conceptual framework delineates the relationships among core sustainable marketing constructs that influence Generation Z's intention to purchase reusable bottle tumblers. Within this model, *Green Brand Knowledge* and *Environmental Concern* serve as primary antecedents, shaping both *Green Brand Trust* and *Green Brand Identity*, while also exerting a direct influence on *Green Attitude*. In turn, *Green Brand Trust*, together with *Green Brand Positioning*, further strengthens *Green Attitude*. Along with *Green Brand Identity*, this attitude serves as a direct predictor of *Green Purchase Intention*. The model thus captures the dynamic interplay between brand-oriented and consumer-oriented variables, highlighting the mediating roles of *Green Brand Identity* and *Green Attitude* in translating environmental awareness and brand-related perceptions into sustainable purchasing behavior.

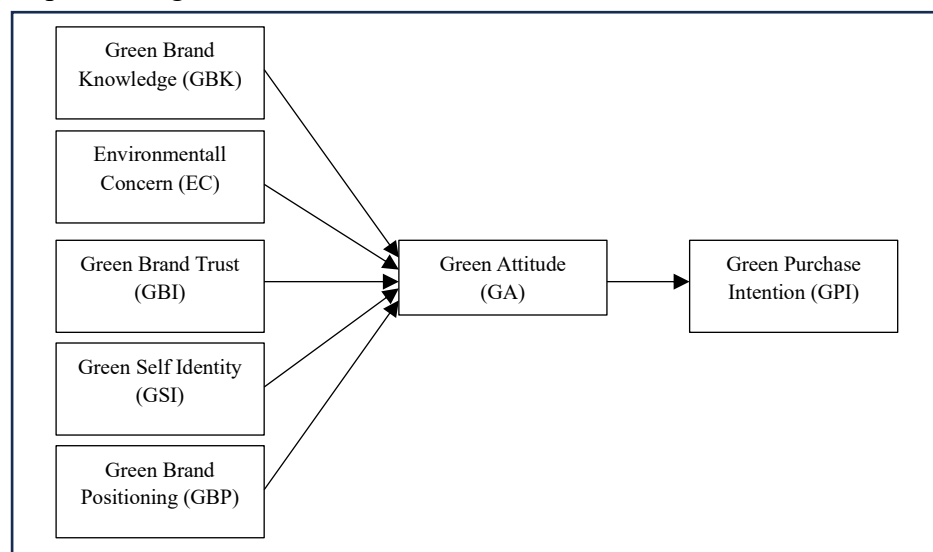


Figure 1. Conceptual Model

This study adopts a conceptual research design, emphasizing theoretical synthesis rather than empirical hypothesis testing. Conceptual research plays a critical role in advancing academic discourse by integrating fragmented theoretical insights and addressing underexplored areas within the literature (MacInnis, 2011). The primary objective is to construct a theoretically grounded framework that elucidates the determinant of Generation Z's green purchase intentions with respect to reusable bottle tumblers. This is achieved through an exploratory, qualitative approach that connects psychological dimensions (e.g., environmental concern, green attitudes) with branding constructs (e.g., brand trust, green brand identity) into a cohesive and testable model.

The framework draws on recent empirical findings to identify relevant variables. The independent variables, *Green Brand Knowledge* and *Environmental Concern*, have been consistently associated with pro-environmental behavior among Gen Z consumers (Borah et al., 2024b). These variables influence key mediators, including *Green Brand Trust*, *Green Brand Identity*, and *Green Attitude*, which encompass both cognitive evaluations and affective responses in consumer decision-making (Ewe & Tjiptono, 2023). The dependent variable, *Green Purchase Intention*, represents the behavioral outcome, capturing the consumer's readiness to act upon sustainability motivations. This model aligns with established theoretical frameworks such as the extended Theory of Planned Behavior (Ajzen, 2020) and the Value-

Belief-Norm Theory (Krippes et al., 2024), both of which have been widely applied in green consumer behavior research.

By integrating brand-related and consumer-related constructs within a unified model, this study contributes to the refinement of sustainable marketing strategies specifically tailored to the values and behaviors of Generation Z consumers.

## Results and Discussion

Drawing from the proposed conceptual framework, the model posits that *Green Brand Knowledge* and *Environmental Concern* function as foundational antecedents influencing both brand-related constructs—namely *Green Brand Trust* and *Green Brand Identity*—as well as individual psychological responses, particularly *Green Attitude*. This hierarchical relationship illustrates how cognitive awareness of a brand's sustainability initiatives, when combined with a broader ecological consciousness, cultivates consumer trust and a sense of identification with the brand. These mediating factors subsequently enhance *Green Attitude*, which—together with *Green Brand Identity*—directly contributes to *Green Purchase Intention* for eco-friendly products, such as reusable tumblers. This progression reflects the study's theoretical integration methodology, aligning with established behavioral theories, including the Theory of Planned Behavior and the Value-Belief-Norm framework (Ajzen, 2020; Krippes et al., 2024).

Within this context, Generation Z's sustainable decision-making is not influenced by isolated cues, but rather by the simultaneous activation of brand trust, positive attitude, and identity alignment with environmental and ethical brand values (Borah et al., 2024b).

The originality of this study lies in its integrative model, which unifies branding and psychological variables—two domains often examined separately in prior research. While studies such as Ayu (2025) have examined the influence of green marketing mix elements, they fall short in connecting internal consumer drivers with brand identity mechanisms. Similarly, although Ewe and Tjiptono (2023) explored Gen Z's green behaviors in emerging markets, their model does not fully capture how identity and attitude jointly mediate the transformation of environmental concern into actionable purchase intentions. By situating brand positioning and brand trust as central, rather than peripheral, determinants, the current model provides a more comprehensive conceptualization of sustainability-oriented consumer behavior.

This framework contributes to the ongoing theoretical development in sustainable marketing by emphasizing the importance of brand credibility and identity congruence in mobilizing Gen Z consumers. Practically, the findings suggest that brands must move beyond superficial sustainability claims and instead cultivate authentic, value-aligned identities that resonate with the psychological and ethical priorities of this emerging consumer segment.

## Conclusion

This study proposes a conceptual framework to explain Generation Z's green purchase intention toward reusable bottle tumblers by integrating brand-related factors and psychological drivers. *Green Brand Knowledge* and *Environmental Concern* are identified as key antecedents influencing mediators—*Green Brand Trust*, *Green Brand Identity*, and *Green Attitude*—that together predict purchase intention.

The framework bridges sustainable branding and consumer psychology, offering a unified perspective on how identity and trust translate ecological concern into behavior. Unlike previous models that treat these domains separately, this study highlights the interplay of values, attitudes, and brand authenticity in shaping green consumption. While conceptual, the

model opens practical and academic pathways. Future research may validate it using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) and test its relevance across product types and cultures. Incorporating digital engagement factors could further enrich the model and deepen understanding of Gen Z's sustainable consumption behavior.

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