

Organic Skin Care Products Trust and Purchase Behavior of Gen Z Women in Chinese Social Media

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Abstract: This study constructs a theoretical model of Gen Z women's organic skincare consumption intention by integrating the Consumer Black Box Theory, taking social media characteristics (usefulness, dependence, participation, responsiveness, connectivity) as independent variables and purchase intention as the dependent variable. A quantitative research method with an online questionnaire survey was adopted to collect 411 valid samples of Gen Z women who have access to organic skincare information through social media. Descriptive statistics, reliability analysis, validity analysis, factor analysis, correlation analysis and regression analysis were used to process and analyze the data. The results show that all five dimensions of social media characteristics have a significant positive impact on Gen Z women's organic skincare purchase intention, among which participation and connectivity have the most prominent direct impact. Based on the research conclusions, targeted suggestions are put forward for organic skincare enterprises from the aspects of product R&D, content marketing, social interaction optimization, and platform function improvement, so as to help enterprises accurately reach the consumption demand of Gen Z women and improve market share.

Keywords: Social Media, Gen Z Women, Organic Skincare, Consumption Intention, Consumer Black Box Theory.

1. Introduction

With the rapid development of the digital economy, the scale of China's internet users has reached 1.108 billion, with an internet penetration rate of 78.6%, and the post-20s group has become the core user group of social media with a high usage rate [3]. Social media represented by Xiaohongshu, Douyin and Weibo has not only become an important carrier for information acquisition and social interaction of Gen Z, but also profoundly reshaped their consumption decision-making logic, especially in the beauty and skincare field. Meanwhile, with the continuous improvement of consumers' health awareness and environmental protection concepts, organic skincare products, which are characterized by natural ingredients, safety and environmental protection, have ushered in a period of rapid market development. China's organic skincare market sales reached 4.7 billion yuan in 2023, and it is expected to reach 9.2 billion yuan by 2030, with a compound annual growth rate of 9.7% from 2024 to 2030 [2].

Gen Z women (born between 1995 and 2009) are the core consumption power of the organic skincare market. As digital aborigines, they have a high degree of dependence on social media, and 94% of them will collect product information on social platforms before purchasing skincare products [4]. Their consumption behavior has obvious characteristics such as socialization, rationality and personalization, and the information from social media such as KOL recommendation, user word-of-mouth and product evaluation has become a key factor affecting their purchase decision of organic skincare products. However, the existing research on organic skincare consumption mostly focuses on the overall market trend, and the in-depth research on the influence mechanism of social media on the consumption intention of Gen Z women, the core group, is relatively insufficient. There is a lack of systematic exploration on which dimensions of social media characteristics can effectively drive the purchase intention of

this group and the intensity of their influence.

Against this background, this study takes Gen Z women in China as the research object, explores the key factors affecting their organic skincare consumption intention from the perspective of social media characteristics, verifies the relationship between social media characteristics and purchase intention, and puts forward targeted marketing suggestions for organic skincare enterprises. The research questions of this paper are as follows: (1) What are the key social media characteristics that affect the organic skincare consumption intention of Gen Z women? (2) What is the relationship between different dimensions of social media characteristics and organic skincare purchase intention of Gen Z women? (3) What social media marketing strategies can be formulated to help organic skincare enterprises improve the purchase intention of Gen Z women consumers?

2. Literature Review

2.1. Gen Z Women and Organic Skincare Consumption

Gen Z women are a consumer group with independent consumption concepts and strong spending power, growing up in the era of rapid economic development and information explosion. Their mobile internet active user scale has exceeded 120 million, and they have a high degree of participation and interaction in social media [8]. In the field of skincare consumption, they pay more attention to product safety, natural ingredients and environmental protection attributes, and are willing to pay a premium for products that conform to their values [9]. Organic skincare products refer to skincare products made of organic plant raw materials, without adding artificial synthetic chemical components, and passing strict certification. They have the advantages of safety and health, rich nutrition and environmental protection, and are highly consistent with the consumption demand of Gen Z

women [7].

The existing research shows that Gen Z women's organic skincare consumption behavior is significantly affected by social media. Gao (2025) pointed out that KOL seeding and user word-of-mouth on social media have become important sources of organic skincare information for Gen Z women [12]. Wei et al. (2024) found that this group pays more attention to the actual use experience of products, and the real evaluation on social media has a greater impact on their purchase decision than traditional advertising [11]. However, the existing research lacks the systematic division of social media characteristics and the in-depth discussion on the internal mechanism of its influence on consumption intention-especially which specific dimensions of social media characteristics can effectively drive Gen Z women's purchase intention and the intensity of such driving effects, which remains to be further explored.

2.2. Social Media Characteristics

Scholars at home and abroad have conducted in-depth research on the characteristics of social media, and formed different division standards from different perspectives. Boyd et al. (2022) believed that social media has the characteristics of persistence, searchability and replicability [6]; Wang (2006) summarized the characteristics of social media as user-centered, integrated service platform and social relationship-based information acquisition; Zhong (2018) pointed out that social media has the characteristics of direct network externality, we-media and diverse participation roles. Combining the research context of Gen Z women's organic skincare consumption, this study divides social media characteristics into five dimensions: usefulness, dependence, participation, responsiveness and connectivity on the basis of combing existing literature [10]. Usefulness refers to the ability of social media to provide rich and accurate organic skincare information for Gen Z women; dependence refers to the behavioral habit of this group to take social media as the main channel to obtain organic skincare information; participation refers to the active participation of users in organic skincare information browsing, sharing and online activities on social media; responsiveness refers to the two-way interactive communication of organic skincare information on social media; connectivity refers to the cross-platform information sharing and purchase conversion function of social media through links.

2.3. Consumer Black Box Theory and Trust Theory

The Consumer Black Box Theory is a core theory in marketing, which holds that consumers will form purchase behavior through internal psychological processing after receiving external marketing stimuli and environmental stimuli [5]. The theory divides the consumer's internal psychological process into two core parts: consumer characteristics and decision-making process, which can well explain the internal logic of consumers' purchase decision-making. In the context of social media, social media information has become an important external stimulus, and its characteristics will directly affect consumers' internal psychological judgment and further drive the generation of purchase intention. Based on this, this study takes social media characteristics as the external stimulus of the consumer black box and purchase intention as the final consumer response, constructing the theoretical framework of this

research to explore the direct impact of social media characteristics on Gen Z women's organic skincare purchase intention.

3. Theoretical Model and Research Hypotheses

Based on the Consumer Black Box Theory, this study takes social media characteristics (usefulness, dependence, participation, responsiveness, connectivity) as the external stimulus of the consumer black box and purchase intention as the final consumer response. The theoretical model constructed in this study focuses on the direct impact relationship (Fig. 1).

Combined with the existing research and the research context, the research hypotheses of this paper are proposed as follows:

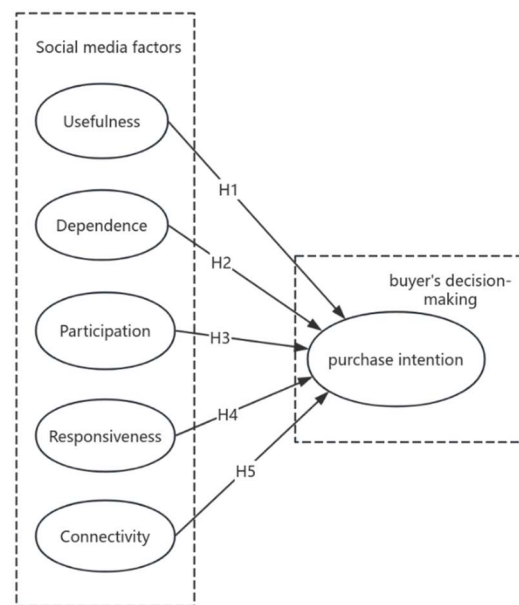


Fig. 1 Hypothetical Model of Influencing Factors on Gen Z Women's Organic Skincare Consumption Behavior in Social Media

- H1: The usefulness of organic skincare information on social media is positively correlated with Gen Z women's purchase intention.
- H2: The dependence of organic skincare information on social media is positively correlated with Gen Z women's purchase intention.
- H3: The participation of organic skincare information activities on social media is positively correlated with Gen Z women's purchase intention.
- H4: The responsiveness of organic skincare information activities on social media is positively correlated with Gen Z women's purchase intention.
- H5: The connectivity of social media is positively correlated with Gen Z women's organic skincare purchase intention.

4. Data Source and Sample Analysis

Specifically, this study takes Gen Z women aged 18-30 who obtain organic skincare information through social media as the research object, adopts a random sampling method to distribute questionnaires online via Questionnaire

Star, and sets screening conditions to ensure the validity of the samples; according to the 1:20 ratio of scale items to sample size, a total of 696 questionnaires were distributed, and 411 valid questionnaires were finally obtained, with an effective recovery rate of 59%; the questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale to measure social media characteristics and purchase intention, and the scale items are designed with reference to AJZEN I.'s research on behavioral intention[1] and adjusted according to the research context.

The sample profile shows that Gen Z women organic skincare consumers are mainly aged 21-26, with medium and high consumption capacity, and their consumption behavior has obvious socialization and rationality characteristics. They have a high degree of dependence on social media, and the frequency of browsing organic skincare information is high,

but the satisfaction rate after purchase is only 50.1% (Table 1), indicating that the existing organic skincare products have not fully met the consumption demand of this group. In terms of information acquisition (Table 2), they pay more attention to the practicality and authenticity of information, and the recommendation of friends, beauty experts and user word-of-mouth are the core information sources, which is different from the traditional consumption group's dependence on offline experience and counter recommendation. In terms of product demand (Table 2), they pay attention to the refined care of core parts such as eyes and face, reflecting the professional cognitive level of skincare, which puts forward higher requirements for the R&D and product positioning of organic skincare enterprises.

Table 1. Description of the overall situation of the sample (single selection)

| Variable | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|------------|
| Age | 18-20 years old | 91 | 22.1% |
| | 21-23 years old | 124 | 30.2% |
| | 24-26 years old | 119 | 29% |
| | 27-30 years old | 77 | 18.7% |
| Place of Residence | City | 156 | 38% |
| | Town | 160 | 38.9% |
| | Village | 95 | 23.1% |
| Monthly Living Expense | 500 yuan and below | 78 | 19% |
| | 501-3000 yuan | 93 | 22.6% |
| | 3001-6000 yuan | 113 | 27.5% |
| | Above 6000 yuan | 127 | 30.9% |
| Satisfaction after Purchasing Organic Skincare Products Online | Satisfied | 206 | 50.1% |
| | Dissatisfied | 205 | 49.9% |
| Intention to Repurchase after Online Purchase | Yes | 209 | 50.9% |
| | No | 202 | 49.1% |
| Search for Product Information on Social Networks Before Purchase | Yes | 245 | 59.6% |
| | No | 166 | 40.4% |
| Experience of Purchasing Organic Skincare Products Through Social Media | Yes | 196 | 47.7% |
| | No | 215 | 52.3% |
| Duration of Understanding Organic Skincare Information Through Social Media | 1 year and below | 32 | 7.8% |
| | 1-2 years | 86 | 20.9% |
| | 2-3 years | 96 | 23.4% |
| | 3-5 years | 91 | 22.1% |
| | Above 5 years | 106 | 25.8% |
| Frequency of Browsing Organic Skincare Information on Social Media | More than twice a day | 79 | 19.2% |
| | Once a day | 87 | 21.2% |
| | Once every 2-3 days | 90 | 21.9% |
| | Once every 4-5 days | 86 | 20.9% |
| | Once a week or longer | 69 | 16.8% |

Table 2. Impact of Social Networks on Organic Skincare Consumption Behavior (Multiple Choice)

| Variable | Option | Frequency | Percentage |
|---|---|-----------|------------|
| Social Media Platforms for Obtaining Organic Skincare Information (Max 3) | Social networking sites (Douyin, Taobao, JD.com, Xiaohongshu, etc.) | 149 | 17.50% |
| | Blogs (Sina Blog, Sohu Blog, NetEase Blog, etc.) | 136 | 16.00% |
| | Weibo (Sina Weibo, Tencent Weibo, etc.) | 148 | 17.40% |
| | E-commerce communities (Taojianghu, Mogujie, etc.) | 133 | 15.60% |
| | E.BBS (Douban, Tianya Forum, etc.) | 153 | 18.00% |
| | Others | 131 | 15.40% |
| Main Purposes of Obtaining Information Through Social Media (Max 3) | Understand the latest beauty trends | 109 | 13.40% |
| | Understand the latest organic skincare product information | 132 | 16.20% |
| | Obtain coupons | 118 | 14.50% |
| | Obtain practical beauty and skincare information | 127 | 15.60% |
| | Increase organic skincare knowledge | 118 | 14.50% |
| | Obtain others' product evaluations | 103 | 12.70% |
| | Others | 106 | 13.00% |
| Sources of Interesting Organic Skincare Products on Social Media (Max 3) | Official homepage of an organic skincare brand or product | 118 | 14.80% |
| | Dynamics, posts, etc. shared or published by users | 86 | 10.80% |
| | Users' comments or messages | 69 | 8.60% |
| | Popular topics related to organic skincare products | 98 | 12.30% |
| | Beauty and skincare discussion groups | 103 | 12.90% |
| | Promotional activities of an organic skincare brand or product | 83 | 10.40% |
| | Beauty and skincare-related applications or games | 61 | 7.60% |
| | Advertisements | 93 | 11.60% |
| | Others | 88 | 11.00% |
| Information Sources on Social Media (Multiple Choice) | Official institutions such as companies and enterprises | 228 | 24.30% |
| | Beauty experts and specialists | 233 | 24.80% |
| | Friends | 243 | 25.90% |
| | Other users | 234 | 24.90% |
| On social media platforms, which types of organic skincare product information do you mainly want to obtain? (Select up to 5 items) | Facial cleansing (exfoliation, facial cleanser, makeup remover, etc.) | 116 | 9.60% |
| | Basic facial care (cream, toner, facial essence, etc.) | 120 | 10.00% |
| | Basic eye care (eye cream, etc.) | 123 | 10.20% |
| | Sun protection products | 121 | 10.00% |
| | Functional care (anti-irritation, acne removal, skin whitening, etc.) | 96 | 8.00% |
| | Facial masks and eye masks | 100 | 8.30% |
| | Base makeup (foundation, primer, blush, etc.) | 102 | 8.50% |
| | Lip makeup (lip gloss, lip balm, etc.) | 96 | 8.00% |
| | Eye makeup (eye pencil, mascara, etc.) | 111 | 9.20% |
| | Hand and foot care and body lotion | 101 | 8.40% |
| | perfume | 120 | 10.00% |
| On social media platforms, which aspects of organic skincare do you generally pay the most attention to? (Select up to 5 items) | New product launch | 102 | 8.20% |
| | Product attributes (product functions, product ingredients, origin, etc.) | 100 | 8.00% |
| | Product price | 119 | 9.60% |
| | Product reviews and user experiences | 124 | 10.00% |
| | Promotional activities | 116 | 9.30% |
| | Source of information | 100 | 8.00% |
| | Number of people interested in the product | 111 | 8.90% |
| | Number of product reviews | 114 | 9.10% |
| | Beauty effect | 127 | 10.20% |
| | Shopping location | 127 | 10.20% |
| | Others | 106 | 8.50% |

Reliability analysis indicated that the overall Cronbach's α coefficient of the scale was 0.932 (Table 3), and the Cronbach's α coefficients of all dimensions were above 0.800 [13], which demonstrated excellent internal consistency and

good reliability of the scale. For validity test, the KMO value reached 0.928, and the significance level of Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was 0.000 (Table 4). Exploratory factor analysis extracted 6 common factors with a cumulative variance

explanation rate of 73.862% (Table 5), and all item factor load coefficients were greater than 0.6 (Table 6), reflecting good convergent validity and discriminant validity [14]. Pearson correlation analysis revealed that all dimensions of social media characteristics were significantly and positively correlated with purchase intention at the 0.01 level (Table 7). Multiple regression analysis was conducted with social media characteristics as independent variables and purchase intention as the dependent variable, and the results showed that the adjusted R^2 of the model was 0.480 ($F=76.680$, $p=0.000<0.001$), with no serious multicollinearity ($VIF<2$) (Table 8). In addition, all the five dimensions had significant

positive standardized regression coefficients, which verified Hypotheses H1 to H5. The hypothesis test results showed that all the five dimensional characteristics of social media had a significant positive impact on Gen Z women's purchase intention of organic skincare products. Among them, participation and connectivity exerted the most prominent influence, followed by dependence; while usefulness and responsiveness had a relatively weaker impact, the positive effect was still significant. This finding was highly consistent with the consumption characteristics of Gen Z women and the functional attributes of social media [15,16,17].

Table 3. Reliability Analysis Results of Each Scale

| Variable | Cronbach's Alpha | Overall Cronbach's Alpha |
|--------------------|------------------|--------------------------|
| Usefulness | .853 | .944 |
| Dependence | .880 | |
| Participation | .940 | |
| Responsiveness | .880 | |
| Connectivity | .848 | |
| Purchase Intention | .887 | |

Table 4. KMO and Bartlett Sphericity Test Analysis Table

| KMO Sampling Adequacy Measure | | .933 |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|----------|
| Bartlett's Test of Sphericity | Approx. Chi-Square | 8040.252 |
| | df | 406 |
| | Significance | .000 |

Table 5. Total Variance Explained Table

| Component | Initial Eigenvalues | | | Extracted Squared Loadings | | | Rotated Squared Loadings | | |
|-----------|---------------------|------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------|--------------|--------------------------|------------|--------------|
| | Total | Variance % | Cumulative % | Total | Variance % | Cumulative % | Total | Variance % | Cumulative % |
| 1 | 11.473 | 39.562 | 39.562 | 11.473 | 39.562 | 39.562 | 5.850 | 20.172 | 20.172 |
| 2 | 3.367 | 11.611 | 51.173 | 3.367 | 11.611 | 51.173 | 3.468 | 11.959 | 32.131 |
| 3 | 1.740 | 6.002 | 57.175 | 1.740 | 6.002 | 57.175 | 3.042 | 10.490 | 42.621 |
| 4 | 1.595 | 5.499 | 62.674 | 1.595 | 5.499 | 62.674 | 2.428 | 8.374 | 59.300 |
| 5 | 1.230 | 4.242 | 66.916 | 1.230 | 4.242 | 66.916 | 2.409 | 8.305 | 66.925 |
| 6 | 1.146 | 3.951 | 73.862 | 1.146 | 3.951 | 73.862 | 2.211 | 7.626 | 73.862 |

Table 6. Rotated Component Matrix

| Item Code | Component | | | | | |
|-----------|-----------|------|------|------|------|------|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| CY7 | .836 | | | | | |
| CY4 | .816 | | | | | |
| CY8 | .812 | | | | | |
| CY6 | .790 | | | | | |
| CY5 | .785 | | | | | |
| CY1 | .784 | | | | | |
| CY2 | .783 | | | | | |
| CY3 | .780 | | | | | |
| G5 | | .749 | | | | |
| G4 | | .748 | | | | |
| G3 | | .742 | | | | |
| G2 | | .730 | | | | |
| G1 | | .710 | | | | |
| X4 | | | .828 | | | |
| X3 | | | .772 | | | |
| X2 | | | .770 | | | |
| X1 | | | .763 | | | |
| Y3 | | | | .839 | | |
| Y1 | | | | .825 | | |
| Y2 | | | | .782 | | |
| C3 | | | | | .823 | |
| C2 | | | | | .820 | |
| C1 | | | | | .783 | |
| L3 | | | | | | .784 |
| L2 | | | | | | .781 |
| L1 | | | | | | .692 |

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.
Rotation Method: Kaiser Normalization Varimax Rotation.
a Rotation converged after 6 iterations.

Table 7. Correlation Analysis Table

| Measurement Dimension | Usefulness | Dependence | Participation | Responsiveness | Connectivity | Purchase Intention |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|---------------|----------------|--------------|--------------------|
| Usefulness | 1 | | | | | |
| Dependence | .423** | 1 | | | | |
| Participation | .325** | .216** | 1 | | | |
| Responsiveness | .365** | .508** | .385** | 1 | | |
| Connectivity | .449** | .401** | .479** | .458** | 1 | |
| Purchase Intention | .451** | .455** | .517** | .485** | .575** | 1 |

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

Table 8. Regression Analysis of Purchase Intention Variable

| | R ² | Adjusted R ² | F | Standardized Coefficient (Beta) | t | p | Collinearity Statistics | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------------|--------|---------------------------------|-------|------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | | | | | | Tolerance | VIF |
| (Constant) | .486 | .480 | 76.680 | | 2.497 | .013 | | |
| Usefulness | | | | .127 | 3.019 | .003 | .711 | 1.406 |
| Dependence | | | | .173 | 3.950 | .000 | .659 | 1.517 |
| Participation | | | | .263 | 6.269 | .000 | .722 | 1.384 |
| Responsiveness | | | | .128 | 2.850 | .005 | .630 | 1.587 |
| Connectivity | | | | .264 | 5.804 | .000 | .612 | 1.635 |

a Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention

5. Conclusion

This study confirms that the five dimensions of social media characteristics, namely usefulness, dependence, participation, responsiveness and connectivity, all have a significant positive impact on Chinese Gen Z women's purchase intention of organic skincare products, and this finding is a reasonable extension of the Consumer Black Box Theory in the social media context. Among them, participation and connectivity exert the most prominent influence, which aligns with the "social consumption" characteristics of Gen Z women, while usefulness, dependence and responsiveness also drive their purchase intention through different paths. Based on this, organic skincare enterprises should refine product R&D and pricing strategies to match the core consumer demand, optimize practical content output on core social media platforms, strengthen platform interaction and response mechanisms, and improve cross-platform information connectivity to effectively boost consumers' purchase intention.

This research has certain limitations in sampling and variable design, and future research can expand the research scope, enrich the variable system and innovate research methods and scenarios to further deepen the relevant research.

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