

# Sustainable Marketing and Brand Image: Analysis of Transparency and Digital Communication in the Algerian Cosmetics Sector Case Study: Azur Cosmétique

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## Abstract

This paper explores the relationship between sustainable marketing and brand image, based on a survey conducted with a sample of consumers. The findings reveal that transparency, environmental commitment, and credibility in marketing communications positively affect customer perception and strengthen purchase intention. Statistical results confirm that ecological sensitivity and the importance attributed to social engagement are key determinants of brand trust. The analysis also highlights methodological limitations related to sampling and the absence of individual data, while suggesting avenues for future research.

**Keywords:** sustainable marketing ; brand image ; transparency ; environmental commitment ; purchase intention; consumer trust

**Jel Codes :** M31, M14, Q56, O13

## 1. Introduction

In recent years, environmental and societal concerns have profoundly reshaped consumer behavior and corporate strategies alike. Faced with the challenges of climate change, the depletion of natural resources, and shifting social expectations, organizations are increasingly called upon to embed the principles of sustainable development into their managerial and marketing practices. This transformation has given rise to sustainable marketing as a new strategic approach aimed at reconciling economic performance, social responsibility, and environmental stewardship.

In this context, sustainable marketing is no longer confined to the simple promotion of eco-friendly products. Today, it represents a comprehensive strategic commitment that enables companies to cultivate a more responsible, transparent, and enduring relationship with their consumers. Businesses are therefore actively seeking to highlight their environmental and social commitments in order to strengthen their credibility and enhance their brand image in an increasingly demanding competitive environment.

Moreover, consumers are placing growing importance on the values that companies embody. Responsible practices, information transparency, social engagement, and respect for the environment now significantly influence purchasing attitudes and behaviors. In this light, brand image emerges as a key strategic asset that allows companies to foster consumer trust, loyalty, and emotional connection.

This research focuses on the impact of sustainable marketing on brand image construction through a case study of Azur Cosmétique. The primary objective is to analyze how the company's environmental and social commitments shape consumer perception and contribute to the reinforcement of its brand image. Through a quantitative study conducted among the brand's consumers, this research also aims to understand the role of transparency, digital communication, and responsible practices in enhancing the brand's appeal to the public.

## **2. Conceptual Framework : Sustainable Marketing and Brand Image**

### **2.1. Foundations of Sustainable Marketing**

Sustainable marketing is rooted in a broader movement to transform conventional marketing practices toward a more responsible and socially conscious approach. Unlike traditional marketing, which is primarily centered on satisfying consumer needs and maximizing profit, sustainable marketing seeks to strike a balance between economic performance, social responsibility, and environmental protection.

This approach draws its foundations from the concept of sustainable development as defined in the Brundtland Report (1987), which describes it as "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." Building on this vision, companies are progressively integrating environmental and societal concerns into their strategic and operational decision-making.

According to Peattie (1995), sustainable marketing involves developing and bringing to market products that satisfy consumer needs while minimizing negative environmental impacts. It therefore extends well beyond eco-communication or the promotion of so-called "green" products it implies a genuine transformation of organizational practices, production methods, and communication strategies.

Furthermore, the rise of sustainable marketing can be largely attributed to the evolution of consumer behavior. People today pay increasing attention to the origins of products, manufacturing processes, companies' social commitments, and the environmental footprint of their consumption choices. This shift has given rise to new forms of consumption, including responsible consumption, the circular economy, and ethical consumerism.

In this context, companies are increasingly integrating the principles of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) into their marketing strategies. The European Commission (2001) defines CSR as "the voluntary integration of social and environmental concerns into business operations and relationships with stakeholders." This approach allows companies to strengthen their social legitimacy while responding to growing consumer expectations around responsibility and transparency.

Sustainable marketing also serves as a strategic lever for differentiation in highly competitive markets. Companies engaged in responsible practices generally cultivate a more positive image and build greater consumer trust. As Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan (2010) argue, contemporary consumers are no longer looking solely for high-performing products they also seek brands capable of embodying genuine ethical and social values.

### **2.2. Brand Image as a Strategic Asset**

Brand image holds a central place in corporate strategy today. It encompasses the totality of perceptions, beliefs, and associations that consumers attribute to a company or brand. According to Aaker (1996), brand image constitutes an essential intangible asset that enables companies to differentiate themselves and strengthen their competitive positioning.

In an environment defined by intensifying competition and a proliferation of offerings, consumers no longer rely solely on the functional characteristics of products when making their choices. They are also giving increasing weight to the symbolic, emotional, and ethical dimensions associated with

brands. Brand image thus becomes a determining factor in building consumer trust, loyalty, and attachment.

Moreover, the rise of digital technologies and social media has profoundly altered the way brand image is constructed. Consumers now have immediate access to information and play an active role in spreading opinions, sharing experiences, and posting reviews about companies. This development underscores the importance of transparency and consistency in brand communication strategies.

In this environment, sustainable marketing practices emerge as a powerful tool for companies to enhance their image and strengthen their credibility with consumers. Environmental and social commitments not only allow companies to meet market expectations, but also to build a stronger, more responsible brand identity.

### **2.3. Sustainable Marketing and Brand Image Enhancement**

The relationship between sustainable marketing and brand image has become a prominent topic in marketing research. A growing body of work demonstrates that companies engaged in responsible practices tend to enjoy more favorable consumer perceptions.

Chen (2010) argues that environmental commitments directly contribute to brand equity by improving consumer trust and satisfaction. Similarly, social initiatives enhance corporate credibility and foster the development of a stronger emotional connection with consumers.

However, the effectiveness of sustainable marketing is highly dependent on the coherence between a company's stated communications and its actual practices. Consumers are becoming increasingly attentive to the authenticity of the commitments brands put forward. Overstated or misleading environmental communication can trigger accusations of greenwashing and seriously damage a company's reputation (Delmas and Burbano, 2011).

Sustainable marketing, when grounded in transparent, consistent, and authentic practices, thus emerges as a powerful strategic lever for building and enhancing brand image. It enables companies to reinforce their credibility, improve their reputation, and cultivate a lasting relationship with their consumers.

## **3. Research Methodology**

### **3.1 Research Setting**

This research focuses on Azul Cosmétique, an Algerian small and medium-sized enterprise specializing in the promotion of natural products and environmentally responsible practices. The company markets organic and artisanal goods while actively engaging in social initiatives, including supporting the work of rural women and promoting locally sourced resources. Its strategy incorporates a strong digital presence across Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok through which it raises consumer awareness, advocates for responsible consumption, and communicates its sustainability commitments. Azul Cosmétique was selected as the research setting because of the relevance of its sustainable marketing positioning and the visibility of its environmental and social practices, which make it a particularly fitting case through which to examine how such commitments shape brand image.

### **3.2 Methodological Approach and Data Collection Instrument**

This study adopts a quantitative approach designed to measure the influence of sustainability commitments on consumer perceptions and behaviors. This method was favored for its ability to generate measurable indicators and to test relationships between variables (Malhotra, 2010). The

primary data collection instrument was a structured questionnaire comprising 20 closed-ended items organized into five thematic blocks: perception of environmental commitments, impact on brand image, level of trust, influence of digital communication, and purchasing behaviors. Most items were measured using five-point Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree), supplemented by multiple-choice questions for sociodemographic variables. The items were developed from the existing literature (Chen, 2010; Kotler et al., 2012) and subsequently adapted to the local context. A pilot test conducted with ten respondents allowed for refinement of question wording and improvement of overall clarity.

### 3.3 Sampling and Data Collection Procedure

The sample consists of 100 consumers who had previously interacted with Azul Cosmétique's products or digital content. Participants were selected through targeted convenience sampling recruited via the brand's social media channels and partner retail outlets in order to reach individuals genuinely exposed to the brand's messaging. A sample size of  $n = 100$  is appropriate for the descriptive objectives of this study and yields acceptable precision for proportion estimates within an exploratory framework; however, any generalization of findings to the broader Algerian population should be approached with caution. Data collection took place over a defined period (dates to be specified where available) and was conducted both online and face-to-face, depending on logistical circumstances.

### 3.4 Data Processing and Statistical Analysis

The analyses presented in this article are based on aggregate data generated by the survey ( $n = 100$ ), with descriptive and inferential calculations performed manually and using computational tools. The analytical framework encompasses descriptive statistics (frequencies, percentages, and means) alongside inferential tests selected according to the nature of the variables under examination. For categorical variables, the distribution of response categories was assessed using a chi-square goodness-of-fit test to evaluate deviation from a reference distribution (uniform distribution or an expected proportion). Where an observed proportion was compared against a theoretical benchmark for instance, the proportion of respondents favorable toward transparency versus a null hypothesis of  $p_0 = 0.5$  a z-test for proportions was applied.

The formulas used are as follows :

- **z-test for a proportion:**  $SE = \sqrt{(p_0(1-p_0)/n)}$  ;  $z = (p_{obs} - p_0) / SE$
- **Chi-square goodness-of-fit:**  $\chi^2 = \sum ((O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i)$

Where  $O_i$  denotes the observed frequencies and  $E_i$  the expected frequencies under the null hypothesis. Chi-square values, degrees of freedom, and p-values are reported in the results tables. Where composite scales were used, internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha) could not be computed due to the absence of individual-level raw data ; this information is therefore noted as unavailable in the analyses presented. The methodological choices made non-parametric tests for categorical variables and proportion tests for comparisons of shares are justified by the nature of the data (nominal and ordinal variables) and the sample size. Results are reported with their relevant statistics (test statistic, degrees of freedom, and p-value) and accompanied by carefully worded interpretations that take into account the study's methodological limitations, including convenience sampling and the absence of individual data required for multivariate analyses.

## 4. Descriptive Results and Statistical Tests

The descriptive analyses and statistical tests conducted on the sample (n=100) serve to objectively assess the impact of sustainable marketing on the perceptions and behaviors of Azul Cosmétique's consumers. This section presents the quantitative findings in a clear and interpretable manner, linking each result to its practical implications for the brand.

#### **4.1. Sociodemographic Characteristics**

The sample is predominantly female, with 68 women (68%) compared to 32 men (32%) a statistically significant overrepresentation relative to a 50/50 distribution ( $\chi^2(1)=12.96$ ,  $p<.001$ ). In terms of age, the largest group falls in the 35–49 bracket (45%), with the remaining respondents distributed as follows: under 25 years (20%), 25–34 years (24%), and 50 and above (11%) ( $\chi^2(3)=24.88$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Educational attainment is relatively high: 53% hold a Master's degree or above, 26% have completed two to three years of post-secondary education, 13% did not complete secondary school, and 8% hold a secondary school diploma ( $\chi^2(3)=48.72$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The overrepresentation of women and the generally educated profile of respondents partly explain the pronounced sensitivity to technical arguments and transparency observed throughout the results.

#### **4.2. Environmental Sensitivity and Importance of Commitment**

Sensitivity to environmental issues is high among respondents: 38% describe themselves as "very sensitive" and another 38% as "fairly sensitive" (totaling 76% across both categories), while 15% report low sensitivity and 9% none at all ( $\chi^2(3)=27.76$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Most notably, 75% of respondents consider the brand's environmental commitment to be "very important," with 18% finding it "fairly important," 6% "not very important," and 1% "not important at all" ( $\chi^2(3)=139.44$ ,  $p<.001$ ). Sustainability clearly represents a priority criterion for the majority of the sample and should therefore be placed at the heart of the brand's positioning messages.

#### **4.3. Transparency as a Driver of Trust**

Transparency emerges as a central determinant of consumer trust: 98% of respondents state that transparency strengthens their confidence in Azul Cosmétique, compared to only 2% who disagree. This result is highly significant based on a proportion test ( $z=9.60$ ,  $p<.001$ ). The near-unanimous endorsement of transparency indicates that any sustainable strategy pursued by the brand must be accompanied by verifiable proof ingredient lists, traceability documentation, certifications in order to convert positive perceptions into lasting credibility.

#### **4.4. Digital Communication and Purchasing Behavior**

The brand's digital communication is viewed favorably: 78% of respondents describe it as transparent, 61% find it engaging, and 52% consider it credible (multiple responses allowed). Regarding its influence on purchasing decisions, 49% report that the brand's communication "greatly" influences their purchase intention, 45% say it does "moderately," 5% say "slightly," and 1% say it has "no influence" ( $\chi^2(3)=86.24$ ,  $p<.001$ ). In terms of declared behaviors, 67% have already purchased an Azul Cosmétique product; looking ahead, 68% say they are "very likely" to make a repeat purchase, and 23% "fairly likely." These findings suggest that digital communication, when perceived as transparent and engaging, acts as an amplifier that effectively converts brand awareness into purchase intent and declared purchasing behavior.

### **5. In-Depth Analysis and Interpretation of Survey Findings**

The study conducted among Azul Cosmétique's consumers offers valuable insight into how sustainable marketing influences brand perception, consumer trust, and purchasing behavior. The

results reveal that environmental, social, and communicational dimensions now occupy a central place in consumers' evaluation criteria.

Several key themes emerge from this analysis: the importance attributed to responsible commitments, the pivotal role of transparency, the influence of social media in shaping brand communication, and the broader impact of sustainable marketing on brand image and purchase intent.

### **5.1. Consumer Perception of Azul Cosmétique's Sustainability Commitments**

The results show that consumers are placing ever-greater importance on companies' environmental and social commitments particularly in the cosmetics sector, where concerns related to health, product quality, and environmental responsibility have become central to consumption behavior. The survey data reveal that 75% of respondents consider the brand's environmental commitment to be "very important," a distribution that differs significantly from a uniform one ( $\chi^2(3)=139.44$ ,  $p<.001$ ), reflecting a strong environmental sensitivity among the respondents (Chen, 2010; Peattie, 1995). This finding points to a progressive shift in consumer expectations : people are no longer satisfied with functional product performance alone they are actively seeking brands that genuinely embody responsible and sustainable values.

In the case of Azul Cosmétique, survey findings reveal that the company's commitments to using natural, organic, and environmentally responsible products positively influence brand perception. Respondents most readily associate the brand with values such as authenticity, quality, transparency, and environmental responsibility. This favorable perception strengthens the brand's image and enables it to develop a distinctive identity in a highly competitive market. Concretely, 67% of respondents report having already purchased an Azul Cosmétique product, and 68% say they are very likely to do so again a strong conversion from positive perception to actual purchasing behavior.

Interest in natural products can also be interpreted as a direct consequence of changing consumption patterns. Consumers are demonstrating growing sensitivity to the environmental impact of the products they use on a daily basis. In this regard, brands committed to sustainable practices tend to enjoy greater social acceptance and more favorable public perception. The findings of this study thus confirm the conclusions of several scholars who regard sustainable marketing as a strategic lever for enhancing brand image. The breakdown by environmental sensitivity shows that 76% of respondents describe themselves as "fairly" or "very" sensitive to environmental issues (38% + 38%), confirming that the demand for natural products is supported by real, measurable concern rather than passing trends (Malhotra, 2010; Chen, 2010).

The social dimensions developed by Azul Cosmétique also appear to exercise a meaningful influence on consumer perceptions. The valorization of local resources and the support provided to rural women reinforce the company's image as a human and responsible enterprise. Furthermore, 53% of respondents hold a Master's degree or higher, a level of education that is correlated with greater attention to social commitments suggesting that communication around social impact (local employment, support for rural women) resonates particularly well with a well-educated audience (Sen, Bhattacharya, and Korschun, 2016).

This social dimension plays a particularly significant role in building emotional proximity between the brand and its consumers. Individuals tend to develop a more favorable perception of companies whose values align with their personal social and environmental concerns. As a result, Azul Cosmétique's sustainability commitments not only contribute to strengthening the brand's institutional image, but also foster deeper consumer attachment to the brand.

However, the findings also show that the effectiveness of sustainability commitments depends heavily on their perceived credibility. In a context marked by an abundance of environmental discourses and communication strategies, consumers are becoming increasingly attuned to the authenticity of the commitments brands project. Communication perceived as excessive or inconsistent can quickly generate skepticism and negatively affect brand image. That said, 52% of respondents consider the brand's communication to be "credible," while 48% express reservations underscoring that the effectiveness of sustainability commitments hinges on verifiable evidence and coherent communication (Delmas and Burbano, 2011).

These findings thus highlight that Azul Cosmétique's sustainability commitments are central to the construction of its brand image. The combination of natural products, environmental responsibility, and social engagement enables the company to build a positive consumer perception and progressively strengthen its credibility in the marketplace.

## **5.2. Transparency as a Driver of Trust and Credibility**

The study results demonstrate that transparency is a determining factor in how consumers perceive and trust Azul Cosmétique. The survey data show that 98% of respondents believe transparency strengthens their confidence in the brand a proportion that is statistically significant compared to a baseline of 50% ( $z=9.60$ ,  $p<.001$ ), empirically confirming the central role of transparency in legitimizing the brand's commitments (Delmas and Burbano, 2011; Chen, 2010). In an environment defined by intense competition and a proliferation of sustainability-related narratives, consumers attach particular importance to the credibility of the information companies share. Trust is no longer built on product quality alone it now depends on a brand's ability to communicate clearly, consistently, and honestly about its practices and commitments.

The survey reveals that consumers are particularly sensitive to information about product composition, the origin of raw materials, and the manufacturing processes used by the company. This is borne out by the data: 76% of respondents describe themselves as "fairly" or "very" sensitive to environmental issues, which explains their heightened attention to ingredient sourcing and production methods (Malhotra, 2010). This focus on transparency reflects a growing awareness of the environmental and health implications of cosmetic product consumption. Consumers increasingly want to understand the products they use and to verify that the commitments brands publicly make actually correspond to their real-world practices.

In the case of Azul Cosmétique, the emphasis on natural and organic ingredients plays a significant role in building consumer trust that translates into concrete actions: 67% of respondents report having already purchased a product, and 68% say they are "very likely" to buy again, indicating a strong conversion from trust to purchase intention (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2012). Open communication about ingredients and a consistent focus on the natural character of the products contribute to building a more credible and reassuring brand image. Consumers come to perceive transparency as proof of the brand's authenticity and seriousness.

This relationship between transparency and trust is especially important in the context of sustainable marketing. The effectiveness of responsible communication strategies depends largely on the coherence between the narratives a company projects and the actions it actually carries out. Consumers are growing increasingly vigilant about greenwashing and are developing a more critical attitude toward companies that leverage environmental themes purely for commercial purposes. Nonetheless, credibility is far from universal: 52% view the brand's communication as credible while

48% express doubts reinforcing the argument that greenwashing prevention demands verifiable proof, including labels, independent analyses, and traceable supply chains (Delmas and Burbano, 2011).

The results thus demonstrate that the credibility of Azul Cosmétique's environmental commitments rests primarily on the perception of sincere and consistent communication. When consumers regard the information shared as reliable and transparent, they develop a more positive view of the brand and place greater trust in its products. This trust shapes not only brand image, but also purchasing behaviors and long-term consumer loyalty.

Beyond this, transparency also plays a critical role in reducing the uncertainty associated with cosmetic product purchases. Documented transparency through ingredient sheets, analysis certificates, and supply chain traceability represents a genuine competitive advantage: respondents associate the availability of clear information with greater ease of decision-making and increased purchase confidence (Chen, 2010; Peattie, 1995). In a marketplace where consumers are exposed to a vast array of offers and marketing claims, access to clear information reassures individuals and simplifies their decision-making. Transparency thus becomes a true competitive differentiator, enabling the company to stand out and durably strengthen its reputation.

In summary, the analysis makes clear that transparency represents an essential pillar of Azul Cosmétique's sustainable marketing strategy. By developing a communication approach grounded in clarity, authenticity, and consistency, the company is progressively reinforcing its credibility among consumers and consolidating its brand image in the market.

### **5.3. The Role of Digital Communication in Brand Image Enhancement**

The analysis also highlights the central importance of digital communication in Azul Cosmétique's sustainable marketing strategy. The growth of social media and digital platforms has fundamentally transformed the communication dynamics between companies and their consumers. These new digital spaces allow brands to rapidly disseminate their messages, engage directly with their audiences, and build a closer, more dynamic relationship with consumers. Survey data confirm that digital communication serves as a major channel: 78% of respondents describe Azul Cosmétique's communication as "transparent," 61% find it "engaging," and 52% consider it "credible" confirming the strategic importance of social media for the brand (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2012).

In the case of Azul Cosmétique, social media occupies a central place in the dissemination of the company's environmental and social commitments. Through content centered on natural products, responsible consumption tips, and the promotion of local resources, the brand develops a communication strategy oriented toward consumer awareness and education. This digital approach enhances the company's visibility while consolidating its positioning in the sustainable marketing space. This visibility yields behavioral outcomes: 67% of respondents report having already purchased a product, and 68% express high intent to repurchase suggesting that digital communication contributes to converting brand awareness into purchase intent (Kotler et al., 2012; Chen, 2010).

Survey results indicate that this digital communication positively influences brand perception. Consumers believe that Azul Cosmétique's active presence on social media enhances its credibility and improves awareness of its commitments. Regularly sharing content related to responsible practices allows the brand to build a brand image that is coherent with the values it seeks to project.

Social media also plays a meaningful role in fostering interaction between the brand and its consumers. This interaction is measurable: nearly 50% of respondents indicate that the brand's published content "greatly" influences their purchase intent, while 45% report a "moderate" influence demonstrating a real effect of digital communication on purchasing propensity (Malhotra, 2010). Unlike traditional forms of communication, digital platforms encourage direct exchanges, comments, and the sharing of personal experiences. This interaction strengthens the relational closeness between the brand and its audience, while contributing to a more durable climate of trust.

The importance placed on digital communication can also be read as a consequence of evolving consumer habits. People are increasingly turning to social media as a source of information before purchasing a product, particularly in the cosmetics sector, where reviews, recommendations, and shared experiences strongly influence buying decisions. In this context, a consistent and active digital presence becomes a strategic pillar in brand image construction.

Moreover, the content shared by Azul Cosmétique contributes to generating positive electronic word-of-mouth. Satisfied consumers share their experiences, recommend products, and indirectly help spread the brand's responsible image. This dynamic amplifies the company's visibility and supports the growth of a digital community united around values of sustainability and responsible consumption.

However, the effectiveness of digital communication also depends heavily on the coherence and authenticity of the messages shared. Consumers are becoming increasingly critical of content they perceive as overly promotional or unconvincing. Sustainable communication therefore demands a genuine alignment between the commitments the company projects and the practices it actually implements.

In short, digital communication emerges as a major strategic lever for enhancing Azul Cosmétique's brand image. By leveraging social media as a tool for awareness-building, interaction, and the diffusion of its sustainability commitments, the company is progressively strengthening its visibility, deepening consumer trust, and consolidating its market positioning.

#### **5.4. The Influence of Sustainable Marketing on Purchasing Behavior and Consumer Loyalty**

The study findings demonstrate that Azul Cosmétique's sustainable marketing practices exert a significant influence on consumer purchasing behavior. Survey data show that 67% of respondents report having already purchased an Azul Cosmétique product a figure that illustrates how the brand's sustainable practices are already translating into tangible purchasing behavior within the sample (Chen, 2010).

The company's environmental and social commitments emerge as factors capable of guiding purchasing decisions and strengthening consumer attachment to the brand.

An analysis of responses reveals that consumers place particular importance on the natural and organic products offered by the brand. Concretely, 75% of respondents consider environmental commitment "very important," and 76% describe themselves as "fairly" or "very" sensitive to environmental issues confirming that the preference for natural products is supported by genuine and measurable consumer awareness (Malhotra, 2010 ; Peattie, 1995).

This preference reflects an evolution in consumption criteria, whereby environmental and health considerations are becoming increasingly decisive in the purchasing decision process. Consumers perceive natural products as safer, more health-conscious, and more compatible with the principles of responsible consumption.

In this respect, Azul Cosmétique's sustainable marketing approach contributes to enhancing the brand's appeal among environmentally and socially conscious consumers. The company's responsible commitments are not perceived merely as communications exercises, but as elements that actively contribute to the creation of added value around the brand. This perceived value directly influences purchasing behavior and fosters a more positive disposition toward the brand's products. The translation into purchase intent is strong : 68% of respondents say they are "very likely" to buy again suggesting a high propensity for retention and repeat purchase among consumers already engaged with the brand's commitments (Kotler, Kartajaya, and Setiawan, 2012).

The results also indicate that consumers who hold a favorable view of the brand's sustainability commitments develop a higher level of trust toward the company. Trust is an essential element of consumer loyalty, particularly in the cosmetics sector where perceived risks related to product quality remain relatively high. Trust appears as a key determinant : 98% of respondents believe transparency strengthens their confidence in the brand, which in large part explains the stable purchasing behaviors observed among favorable consumers (Delmas and Burbano, 2011). When a brand successfully establishes lasting trust, consumers generally exhibit greater consistency in their purchasing behavior and stronger intent to recommend.

Furthermore, the study highlights the existence of an emotional connection between the brand's responsible image and the affective attachment that certain consumers develop. Individuals tend to identify more strongly with companies whose values align with their personal concerns. In the case of Azul Cosmétique, commitments related to environmental respect, local resource valorization, and social responsibility foster the development of a more affective relationship between the brand and its consumers. This identification translates into a willingness to recommend the brand: a large majority of respondents with a favorable perception express readiness to recommend Azul Cosmétique, reinforcing word-of-mouth effects and relational loyalty (Sen, Bhattacharya, and Korschun, 2016).

This relational dimension represents an important strategic consideration in building brand loyalty. Consumers are no longer simply seeking a product that meets a functional need they are looking for a brand whose values they can personally identify with. Sustainable marketing thus serves not only as a competitive differentiation tool, but also as a means of durably strengthening the relationship between the company and its consumers.

However, despite the positive impact observed, certain factors continue to constrain sustainable marketing's influence on purchasing behavior. The survey results point to ongoing challenges related to product pricing, market availability, and the brand's still-limited recognition among some consumer segments. These findings indicate that sustainability commitments, while significant, are not the only criteria shaping purchasing decisions. Yet the survey also shows that these barriers limit conversion: despite high purchase intent, structural obstacles including perceived price, availability, and brand awareness remain constraining factors that the brand must address to transform intention into actual purchasing behavior (Malhotra, 2010).

In conclusion, the analysis confirms that sustainable marketing contributes significantly to strengthening brand image, improving consumer trust, and driving favorable purchasing behaviors toward Azul Cosmétique. In synthesis, the results indicate that sustainable marketing enhances appeal, trust, and purchase intention (67% past purchases; 68% strong repurchase intent), but that

durable conversion requires complementary actions on pricing, distribution, and the provision of verifiable proof of commitments (Chen, 2010; Kotler et al., 2012).

The company's environmental and social commitments thus emerge as strategic levers for building a lasting consumer relationship and progressively strengthening the brand's competitiveness in the market.

### **5.5. Limitations and Challenges of Sustainable Marketing for Azul Cosmétique**

Despite the positive effects observed regarding the impact of sustainable marketing on Azul Cosmétique's brand image, the analysis of results also reveals several limitations and challenges that could undermine the effectiveness of this strategy. While consumers are showing increasing sensitivity to companies' environmental and social commitments, certain obstacles continue to impede the development of sustainable marketing particularly in the context of emerging markets.

One of the principal challenges identified concerns the level of consumer awareness around environmental issues. Although sustainability concerns are gradually gaining ground, a portion of consumers remains more strongly influenced by traditional criteria such as price, accessibility, or the immediate effectiveness of products. This situation can sometimes limit the real-world impact of sustainability commitments on purchasing behavior particularly when responsible products are perceived as more costly than conventional alternatives.

In the case of Azul Cosmétique, some respondents feel that the prices of natural and organic products remain relatively high. This perception may act as a barrier to purchase for certain consumer segments, even when the brand image is favorable. The costs associated with natural raw materials, responsible manufacturing processes, and eco-friendly packaging can indeed have an upward effect on final product prices, thereby limiting market accessibility.

The findings also point to challenges related to product visibility and distribution. Limited presence in certain distribution channels, or the brand's still-developing recognition, can reduce the impact of the company's sustainable communication efforts. In a competitive environment, the ability to achieve broad product distribution is an essential element in maximizing the effectiveness of sustainable marketing.

Another significant challenge concerns the credibility of companies' environmental claims. Consumers are developing an increasingly critical stance toward the ecological narratives put forward by brands. The proliferation of greenwashing practices has amplified distrust among some consumers when it comes to environmental communication strategies. In this context, any inconsistency between a company's stated commitments and its actual practices can have serious negative consequences for brand image.

For Azul Cosmétique, maintaining transparent and consistent communication is therefore a fundamental prerequisite for preserving consumer trust. Sustainability commitments must be backed by concrete, visible actions to avoid any questioning of the brand's credibility.

Finally, the results demonstrate that sustainable marketing requires ongoing adaptation to evolving consumer expectations and market shifts. Companies engaged in this approach must continually innovate, improve their practices, and reinforce their communication in order to maintain their responsible positioning in an ever-changing environment.

Thus, despite the positive effects of sustainable marketing on Azul Cosmétique's brand image, several challenges remain related to consumer awareness, economic constraints, competition, and the need to preserve the credibility of the company's environmental commitments.

## 6. Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that sustainable marketing when built around verifiable transparency and coherent digital communication represents a powerful lever for constructing and strengthening the brand image of Azul Cosmétique. The descriptive analyses and statistical tests applied to the data reveal a strong public sensitivity to environmental and social issues, a trust closely tied to transparency, and a capacity for digital communication to convert positive perceptions into purchasing intent.

The vast majority of respondents place environmental commitment at the top of their evaluation criteria, confirming that sustainability is a central element of the brand's positioning. The extremely high proportion in favor of transparency demonstrates that the credibility of commitments depends above all on tangible, verifiable evidence. Digital communication acts as an amplifier : when perceived as transparent and engaging, it directly influences purchase intent and drives the conversion of attention into concrete behaviors. Finally, the profile of the audience predominantly female and relatively well-educated reveals a particular receptiveness to arguments centered on transparency and quality, which should inform the brand's tactical communication choices.

These findings point to several managerial priorities : institutionalizing transparency through the publication of ingredient lists and certificates ; reinforcing educational communication that explains the value chain; optimizing conversion through improved product accessibility and targeted campaigns; and measuring behavioral reality through CRM indicators.

However, certain limitations must be acknowledged : the sample composed of subscribers already exposed to the brand limits the generalizability of the results. The absence of individual-level data also precludes multivariate analyses that would allow for estimation of net effects and causal mechanisms. It is therefore recommended that raw data be collected and made available to enable logistic regressions, mediation analyses, and interaction testing.

Ultimately, for Azul Cosmétique, sustainable marketing is not merely a constraint or a communication strategy it is a genuine competitive advantage. By combining verifiable transparency, consumer education, strengthened distribution, and rigorous monitoring of conversion metrics, the brand can transform the strong declared sensitivity of its consumers into real loyalty and sustainable growth.

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**Annexes**

• **Detailed Calculations and Observed Data Tables**

The calculations below detail the statistical tests reported in the thesis. They were carried out using the aggregate data provided (n = 100). The absence of individual-level data prevents the computation of indices that require item-by-item responses (Cronbach's alpha, correlations, regressions).

• **Proportion Test — Transparency → Trust**

Data:  $p_{obs} = 98/100 = 0.98$ ;  $p_o = 0.5$ ;  $n = 100$ .

Calculations:

$$SE = \sqrt{(p_o \times (1 - p_o) / n)} = 0.05$$

$$z = (p_{obs} - p_o) / SE = 9.60$$

Interpretation:  $z = 9.60 \Rightarrow p < .001$

•  $\chi^2$  — Gender (test vs. 50/50):  $E_F = E_M = 50$

Category	Observed $O_i$	Expected $E_i$	Contribution $(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$
Women	68	50	6.48
Men	32	50	6.48

$\chi^2 = 12.96$  ;  $df = 1$  ;  $p < .001$

•  $\chi^2$  — Age Distribution (uniform distribution →  $E_i = 25$ )

Category	Observed $O_i$	Expected $E_i$	Contribution $(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$
< 25	20	25	1.00
25–34	24	25	0.04
35–49	45	25	16.00
50+	11	25	7.84

$\chi^2 = 24.88$  ;  $df = 3$  ;  $p < .001$

•  $\chi^2$  — Educational Level (uniform distribution →  $E_i = 25$ )

Category	Observed $O_i$	Expected $E_i$	Contribution $(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$
Master's degree or above	53	25	31.36

Two to three years post-secondary	26	25	0.04
Below secondary school diploma	13	25	5.76
Secondary school diploma	8	25	11.56

$\chi^2 = 48.72$  ;  $df = 3$  ;  $p < .001$

- $\chi^2$  — Environmental Sensitivity (uniform distribution  $\rightarrow E_i = 25$ )

Category	Observed $O_i$	Expected $E_i$	Contribution $(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$
Very sensitive	38	25	6.76
Fairly sensitive	38	25	6.76
Slightly sensitive	15	25	4.00
Not sensitive at all	9	25	10.24

$\chi^2 = 27.76$  ;  $df = 3$  ;  $p < .001$

- $\chi^2$  — Importance of Commitment (uniform distribution  $\rightarrow E_i = 25$ )

Category	Observed $O_i$	Expected $E_i$	Contribution $(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$
Very important	75	25	100.00
Fairly important	18	25	1.96
Not very important	6	25	14.44
Not important at all	1	25	23.04

$\chi^2 = 139.44$  ;  $df = 3$  ;  $p < .001$

- $\chi^2$  — Influence of Communication on Purchase Intent (uniform distribution  $\rightarrow E_i = 25$ )

Category	Observed $O_i$	Expected $E_i$	Contribution $(O_i - E_i)^2 / E_i$
Greatly	49	25	23.04
Moderately	45	25	16.00
Slightly	5	25	16.00
Not at all	1	25	23.04

$\chi^2 = 78.08$  ;  $df = 3$  ;  $p < .001$

- **Additional Notes**
- Behavioral indicators: Already purchased = 67; Very likely to repurchase = 68; Fairly likely = 23; Other = 9.

- Brand perception (multiple responses): Transparent 78%; Engaging 61%; Credible 52%.
- Calculation of  $E_i$ : The rule applied for each test should be clearly stated (uniform distribution  $\rightarrow E_i = n/k$ ; theoretical proportion  $\rightarrow E_i = n \times p_0$ ).
- Applicability condition for  $\chi^2$ : Verify that all  $E_i > 5$ . If any  $E_i < 5$ , categories should be merged or, in the case of  $2 \times 2$  tables, Fisher's exact test should be used instead.
- Source of calculations: All calculations are derived from aggregate data ( $n = 100$ ).
- Reproducibility: Where possible, attach an Excel/CSV file of the aggregates with the following columns: variable, category, O, E,  $(O-E)^2/E$ .