

A CONCEPTUAL MODEL OF E-IMC’S INFLUENCE ON GENERATION Z’S FEMALE CONSUMER BEHAVIOR

Paisarn Arunchoknumlap

DBA Student of Doctor of Business Administration Program in Marketing,
Siam University

E-mail: paisarnarun@gmail.com

Abstract

This study examines the moderated-mediation effects of eco-friendly product purchases and eWOM through E-IMC, with a focus on influencer marketing. It explores how digital marketing strategies like SEM, social media ads, native ads, and remarketing influence consumer perceptions, engagement, and behavior towards sustainable bottled water. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research found that digital influencers and eWOM significantly shape Gen Z’s purchase decisions by enhancing trust and credibility in eco-friendly products. The findings suggest that E-IMC strategies, when aligned with authentic sustainability efforts, can improve brand loyalty and reduce greenwashing concerns, offering practical insights for businesses targeting eco-conscious consumers.

Keywords: E-IMC, Generation Z, Influencer Marketing

Introduction

In the digital era, marketing strategies have undergone a significant transformation, driven by advancements in technology and the increasing influence of social media platforms. One of the most notable shifts has been the rise of Electronic-Integrated Marketing Communication (E-IMC), which integrates digital marketing tools such as social media advertising, influencer marketing, search engine marketing, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) to enhance consumer engagement and brand perception. The bottled water industry, particularly the mineral water segment, is an example of a sector that has leveraged E-IMC to connect with eco-conscious consumers and differentiate itself through sustainability-driven marketing strategies. Among consumer demographics, Generation Z (Gen Z) females have emerged as a key target group for brands due to their digital fluency, environmental awareness, and reliance on online influencers for product recommendations. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z females place a high value on authenticity, trustworthiness, and sustainability in their purchasing decisions. They actively engage with social media platforms, rely on influencer endorsements, and participate in online discussions regarding product sustainability. Given these behaviors, understanding how E-IMC shapes their consumer journey is crucial for brands aiming to foster brand loyalty and drive purchase decisions in the eco-friendly bottled water market. Despite the increasing use of digital marketing, research on the effectiveness of E-IMC in influencing Gen Z female consumer behavior, particularly in eco-friendly product categories, remains limited. While previous studies have explored various aspects of influencer marketing and eWOM, there is a gap in understanding how these digital marketing elements interact within an integrated model to shape consumer perceptions and decision-making. Furthermore, the risk of greenwashing—the misleading portrayal of environmental benefits—poses a significant challenge for brands attempting to build consumer trust through sustainability-driven messaging. This study aims to develop a moderated-mediation model that examines the impact of E-IMC on eco-friendly product purchases among Generation Z female consumers. Specifically, the study investigates the role of electronic influencer marketing and

eWOM as key factors influencing consumer perceptions and behavior. By analyzing the effectiveness of E-IMC strategies in fostering trust, authenticity, and purchase intent, this research seeks to provide valuable insights for marketers looking to optimize their digital communication strategies. The findings will contribute to the existing body of knowledge on digital marketing while offering practical recommendations for brands seeking to enhance their competitive advantage in the sustainable bottled water industry.

Research Objectives

1. To study the moderated-mediation on eco-friendly product purchase and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through electronic-integrated marketing communication (E-IMC).
2. To analyze moderated-mediation on electronic influencer marketing of eco-friendly product purchase, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) through electronic-integrated marketing communication (E-IMC).
3. To seek modelling moderated-mediation enhancing the influence of electronic influencer marketing on eco-friendly product purchases through electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) and to electronic-integrated marketing communication (E-IMC).

Scope of the Research

1. Population Scope

This study examines Gen Z females in Thailand who engage with E-IMC, influencer marketing, and eWOM on TikTok when purchasing eco-friendly bottled water with sustainable packaging, reflecting their digital engagement and eco-consciousness.

2. Variable Scope

The conceptual framework examines eco-friendly product marketing through digital communication strategies, focusing on consumer behavior, eWOM, and influencer marketing as a moderator, entertainment value and information quality as a mediator. E-IMC strategies like SEM, display ads, social media ads, native ads, and remarketing serve as dependent variables shaping digital marketing outcomes.

3. Time Scope (Estimation)

The research will be conducted over two-year period from 2024 to 2026

Literature Review

1. Electronic-Integrated Marketing Communication (E-IMC)

E-IMC integrates digital channels like search engine marketing, social media, display ads, native advertising, and remarketing to create cohesive brand messaging (Rabhi & Ensaad, 2022). SEM boosts visibility through SEO and PPC (Google Ads, 2023), while display advertising enhances brand awareness by 80% (Pohorielova, 2025). Social media ads drive conversions, with 27% of consumers discovering brands through them (Searle, 2020). Native advertising sees 53% higher engagement than traditional ads (Burns, 2024), and remarketing increases conversions by 150% (Zaki, 2024).

E-IMC enhances purchase intent, brand trust, and Gen Z loyalty (Wandhe, 2024), but challenges include ad fatigue and privacy concerns (Hariguna & Ruangkanjanases, 2024). AI-driven campaigns improve targeting and personalization, yielding a 30% ROI increase (Nassar, 2024). Future research should explore ethical data use and AI's role in digital marketing.

2. Influencer Electronic Marketing (IEM)

IEM leverages niche influencers to enhance credibility and drive sales (Pitafi & Awan, 2024). Key success factors include expertise, trustworthiness, likability, and

information quality, which influence consumer trust and engagement (Nugroho et al., 2022; Abbas & Salim, 2023). Transparency increases purchase intent by 70% (Ao et al., 2023). Gen Z values influencers who align with their ethics, reinforcing long-term brand loyalty (Lukianenko, 2024).

IEM faces challenges like authenticity concerns and ethical issues in sponsorships (Wellman et al., 2020). AI-driven influencer targeting enhances personalization and boosts ROI by 30% (Kumar, 2024). Future research should explore AI's long-term impact on influencer marketing.

3. Electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM)

eWOM, through reviews, testimonials, and social media shares, influences consumer trust in sustainable products. Reviews impact 70% of purchase decisions (Kumar, 2023), while positive green reviews strengthen brand credibility (Zhang & Berhe, 2022). Testimonials increase green purchase intent by 65% (Szabo & Webster, 2021), and social media shares affect 75% of Gen Z's eco-conscious choices (Nielsen, 2023).

Challenges include greenwashing and misinformation (Aliano et al., 2024). AI-driven verification and audience targeting can improve credibility (Daolomchan & Worapishet, 2023). Future research should focus on enhancing eWOM's authenticity and impact in sustainability marketing.

4. Eco-Friendly Product Purchase

Consumers are increasingly prioritizing sustainability in their purchasing decisions, particularly in the bottled water industry. Patsiaouras (2024) highlighted this shift, emphasizing the growing awareness of environmental impact in everyday choices.

4.1 Sustainable Packaging Preferences

Sustainable packaging significantly influences consumer behavior and brand perception. Zaman, Iftikhar, Rehmani, and Irshad (2023) found that biodegradable plastics and recycled materials enhance consumer trust and preference for eco-conscious brands. However, transitioning to sustainable packaging presents cost and education challenges, yet it offers opportunities for innovation and market differentiation. Gen Z, in particular, actively supports brands committed to environmental responsibility (Svensson & Gottfridsson, 2024).

4.2 Preference for Eco-Friendly Brands

Consumers increasingly align with brands demonstrating genuine sustainability efforts. Bhosale (2025) found that transparency and accountability drive loyalty, particularly among Gen Z. Avoiding greenwashing is crucial, as consumers scrutinize sustainability claims (Isac, Javed, Rădulescu, & Șerbu, 2024). Brands that effectively communicate their environmental impact build stronger relationships and long-term customer loyalty.

4.3 Willingness to Pay a Premium for Green Products

Tawde and R.V. (2024) explored consumer willingness to pay more for sustainable products, framing it as an investment in environmental stewardship. Gen Z leads this trend, viewing sustainability as a core purchasing factor (Heiberg Jørgensen, Møller Jensen, & Yang, 2024). However, businesses must ensure authenticity in sustainability efforts to maintain credibility and justify premium pricing (Abel & Kenechukwu, 2024). The shift toward sustainability is evident in packaging, brand loyalty, and pricing strategies. Sagar (2023) underscores the necessity of transparency and innovation. Businesses must integrate genuine sustainability efforts to enhance brand loyalty and competitiveness in the evolving green economy.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

This study develops a conceptual framework through a comprehensive literature review and theoretical model construction, rather than primary data collection. By synthesizing existing research, the framework identifies key factors influencing Generation Z female consumers' eco-friendly purchasing behavior through Electronic-Integrated Marketing Communication (E-IMC). It explores the interplay between influencer marketing, electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), digital advertising strategies, and sustainability perceptions, providing a structured model to understand their impact on consumer decision-making.

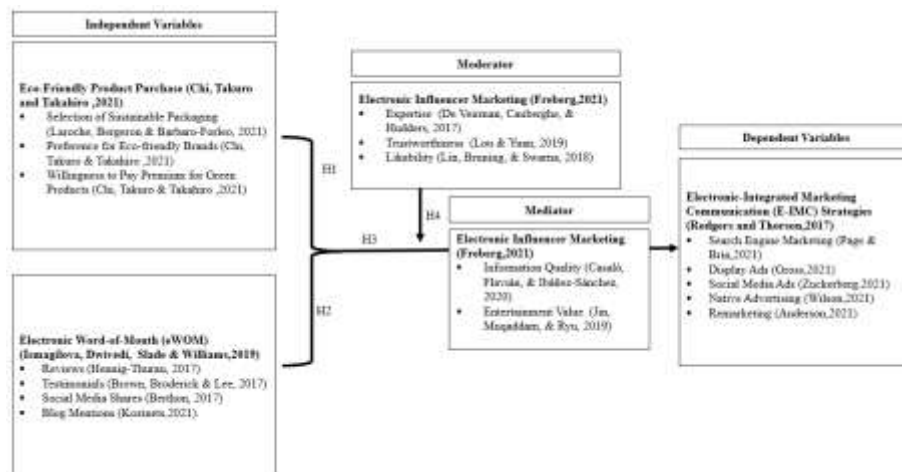


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

2. Research Steps

Literature Review

- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing research and publications related to electronic-integrated marketing communication (E-IMC), eco-friendly product purchases, and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM).

- Identify gaps in the literature regarding the influence of E-IMC on Generation Z's female consumer behavior.

- Analyze theoretical frameworks and empirical studies to support the development of research hypotheses.

Participant Selection

Identify and select the study's target population: female Generation Z consumers in Bangkok aged 22-27 including:

- Use quota sampling to ensure proportional representation across different districts of Bangkok (inner, middle, and outer zones).

- The final sample size of 560 respondents is determined using statistical methods to ensure reliability and generalizability. (National Statistical Office of Thailand, 2024)

Development of Interview Guide

- Develop a structured questionnaire incorporating a 5-point Likert scale to assess consumer perceptions.

- Design open-ended and closed-ended questions focusing on

- o Perceptions of eco-friendly product purchases.
- o Influence of eWOM on consumer behavior.
- o Role of electronic influencer marketing (EIM) as a moderator.

○ Impact of entertainment value and Information quality as a mediate on consumer engagement.

Conducting Interviews & Surveys

- Schedule and conduct online surveys and structured interviews with selected respondents.

- Use audio recording (with consent) for interviews and take detailed notes for accuracy.

- Ensure a comfortable environment for participants to freely share their views on E-IMC and sustainable consumer behavior.

Transcription

- Transcribe recorded interviews and survey responses for data preparation and qualitative analysis.

- Convert audio data into text format to facilitate coding and thematic analysis.

Data Validation

- Conduct follow-up interviews or member checks to confirm the accuracy of responses and interpretations.

- Utilize statistical tests for reliability and validity of survey responses.

- Ensure the final dataset accurately represents consumer behavior insights and marketing influences.

3. Data Collection

The data collection process is digitally driven, leveraging email campaigns, social media ads, and online survey tools such as *SurveyMonkey*. By using a self-administered questionnaire, respondents provide insights into their purchasing behavior, perceptions of EIM, and interactions with digital marketing. The study carefully follows ethical research practices, ensuring participants provide informed consent and that their responses remain confidential and anonymous. To enhance accuracy, stratified quota sampling ensures that responses are balanced across Bangkok’s various districts, capturing a diverse representation of the target demographic.

4. Data Analysis

This study adopts a literature-based data analysis approach, systematically reviewing existing research on digital marketing strategies and consumer behavior in Thailand. Rather than collecting primary data, this method enables a comprehensive synthesis of prior findings to uncover key trends, theoretical frameworks, and practical implications. Through thematic categorization, the analysis identifies recurring patterns, emerging trends, and research gaps, providing valuable insights into the evolving landscape of digital marketing and consumer

Research Results

Electronic-Integrated Marketing Communication (E-IMC) plays a crucial role in shaping Generation Z female consumers’ eco-friendly purchasing behavior. The integration of SEM, display ads, social media ads, native ads, influencer marketing, and eWOM significantly influences purchasing decisions. Influencer marketing is a key driver of engagement, with Gen Z consumers valuing trustworthy and knowledgeable influencers for product recommendations. Similarly, eWOM—peer recommendations and online reviews—holds more weight than traditional ads, reinforcing brand credibility when sustainability claims are transparent. Digital advertising strategies, including SEM, social media, and native ads, enhance brand visibility and engagement. Remarketing further strengthens purchase intent, particularly when aligned with sustainability preferences. However, greenwashing concerns pose a risk, as Gen Z consumers actively scrutinize brand claims, demanding authenticity and

transparency. Entertainment and information quality also shape consumer engagement, with engaging content increasing interaction and credible information reinforcing trust. Gen Z consumers prioritize biodegradable, recyclable, or reusable packaging and are willing to pay a premium for authentic sustainability efforts. Ultimately, brands that integrate personalized, transparent, and sustainability-driven E-IMC strategies will build trust, loyalty, and long-term engagement with Gen Z female consumers.

Discussion

The findings highlight the critical role of Electronic-Integrated Marketing Communication (E-IMC) in shaping Generation Z’s female consumers’ eco-friendly purchasing decisions. Digital engagement, particularly influencer marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), significantly impacts trust and brand preference. Authenticity is key, as Gen Z actively scrutinizes sustainability claims and rejects brands engaged in greenwashing.

Brands must integrate transparent sustainability messaging, influencer partnerships, and interactive digital experiences to build credibility. Effective search engine marketing (SEM) and social media ads further enhance visibility and consumer engagement. The study underscores that businesses prioritizing genuine sustainability efforts and consumer-driven digital strategies will gain a competitive edge, fostering long-term trust and brand loyalty.

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