



Extended Abstract | The 1st Research Innovations in Sustainable Marketing: A Global Virtual Symposium

Exploring Consumer and Industry Perceptions of Circular Economy Cosmetics

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Extended Abstract: In the circular economy, the paradigm of "reduce, reuse, recycle" replaces the linear economic system's "take, make, dispose" approach (Kirchherr et al., 2017). The circular economy entails several ways of changing current modes of production and consumption, including rethinking, reusing, and remanufacturing (Potting et al., 2017). One such circular economy strategy is repurposing, which is defined as using a discarded product (or its parts) in a new product with a different function (Potting et al., 2017). Waste-to-value, valorization, utilization, value-added, and up-cycling are some of the terms used to describe this repurposing of waste, with a particular emphasis on (mostly) agricultural and food science by-products (Aschemann-Witzel et al., 2023; Bhatt et al., 2018). For the circular economy to be successful, a significant percentage of industry and consumers must participate. This research focuses on the cosmetics industry, which is transitioning to sustainable ingredients and packaging, to explore the perceived benefits and barriers to waste-to-value cosmetics from the perspectives of consumers and industry. We conducted 15 semi-structured online interviews, including 9 consumers (both green and non-green) and 6 industry professionals, and analyzed the transcripts thematically (128 pages). Consumer participants were recruited via social media, using

convenience and snowball sampling methods, while purposeful and snowball sampling methods were used for industry interviews. The research revealed several barriers, including concerns about perceived quality, cost, skepticism, contamination, and disgust. However, waste-to-value products were seen as incorporating resource efficiency and waste minimization, making them a more authentic (not greenwashing) business practice that appealed to both green and non-green consumers. In the case of "likeable" ingredients, such as wine, cocoa, and coffee, manufacturers and marketers should highlight these and use storytelling to explain their quality and help alleviate concerns about less desirable ingredients, such as fish. The findings discuss product and consumer characteristics that could impact the diffusion of waste-to-value cosmetics, providing several insights to aid in marketing these products.

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