

## **L'hédonisme dans la consommation de cosmétiques issus de produits locaux au Maroc**

Hedonism in the consumption of cosmetics of local products in Morocco.

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**Résumé :**

Face à une demande croissante pour une consommation durable, le marché des cosmétiques connaît un essor de produits responsables alliant naturalité, éthique et respect de l'environnement. La présente étude qualitative, menée au Maroc auprès d'un échantillon de 13 consommateurs marocains, s'intéresse au rôle des valeurs hédoniques dans leur intention d'achat responsable des produits cosmétiques locaux. Les entretiens réalisés révèlent que si les aspects utilitaires et éthiques sont fondamentaux, la valeur hédonique s'avère déterminante pour la satisfaction et la fidélisation. Par conséquent, il est conseillé aux marques marocaines d'intégrer davantage de dimensions sensorielles dans leurs offres afin de favoriser une consommation à la fois responsable et agréable, en tenant compte des particularités du marché local telles que le prix, la confiance envers les labels et l'accessibilité.

**Mots-clés :** consommation responsable, valeur hédonique, cosmétiques locaux, produits cosmétiques de terroir, comportement du consommateur

**Abstract :**

Faced with a growing demand for sustainable consumption, the cosmetics market is witnessing the emergence of responsible products that combine naturalness, ethics, and respect for the environment. This qualitative study in Morocco, conducted with a sample of 13 Moroccan consumers, examines the role of hedonic pleasure in the sustainable purchase intention of local, responsible cosmetics products. Interviews show that while practical and ethical aspects are essential, hedonic value is important for satisfaction and loyalty. Moroccan brands should therefore integrate more sensory pleasure to encourage both responsible and enjoyable consumption, taking into account the specificities of the local market (price, trust in labels, accessibility).

**Keywords :** responsible consumption – hedonic value – local cosmetics – consumer behavior

## **Introduction**

In a world facing ecological, economic and social crises, individual choices are taking on increasing importance in modern societies, playing a central role in the transition towards sustainable models. Socially responsible consumption is today seen as a key lever for promoting sustainable development, particularly in emerging economies and developing countries. Many factors have reinforced awareness of the power of the consumer as an actor of change, actively contributing to the achievement of sustainable development goals. However, the factors influencing consumer choices remain varied and complex – environmental concerns, price, quality, trust in labels – which makes their analysis difficult in the context of responsible consumption. Multiple dynamics have contributed to transforming consumption habits, notably the COVID-19 pandemic, health crises and the rise of digitalization, which are making information increasingly accessible and consumers better informed in their daily decisions.

Growing consumer interest in sustainable products first emerged in the food sector, following scandals linked to poisoning caused by industrialized products. A form of fear regarding globalization has generated a certain resistance to mass consumption and marketing techniques (Kozinets, 2002)[1]. This led to an orientation towards alternatives perceived as healthier, consolidating a new trend in Western consumption habits, particularly after the economic crisis of 2008, which further weakened trust in companies and institutions.

The vast and ever-changing international cosmetics market not only represents a major source of economic growth opportunities, but also imposes increasing responsibilities in terms of sustainability. The intensive use of environmentally harmful chemicals and resources in the cosmetics sector raises significant ethical challenges, particularly with regard to working conditions and human rights. Environmental issues such as deforestation, concerns about product safety, as well as social issues such as unfair commercial practices, have increased interest in so-called “green” cosmetics. According to Future Market Insights (FMI, 2023)[2], the sustainable cosmetics market is expected to reach USD 48.4 billion in 2023 and could rise to USD 54.5 billion by 2027. This rapid development encourages an in-depth exploration of emerging products, new consumption practices, and the players who structure this dynamic sector.

In Morocco, the promotion of local products is part of a logic of responsible consumption, responding to ecological, economic and social issues. This includes the promotion of cultural heritage and the development of the local economy, in particular through the use of natural ingredients in food and the manufacture of artisanal cosmetics. In this perspective, the Green

Morocco Plan (2008–2020) was launched to respond to the country's major challenges such as climate change, food security, the preservation of natural resources, poverty reduction and inclusive economic growth (INDH, 2018). This program highlights the importance of local production as a central driver of sustainable development.

Although the literature offers various avenues on the determinants of responsible consumption, few studies have focused on the relationship between hedonism and responsible behavior, particularly in the Moroccan context. This paradox — between pleasure and responsibility — deserves to be explored to the extent that hedonic motivations strongly influence purchasing behavior (Parvatiyar & Sheth, 2023[3]; Lelkes, 2021[4]; Carranza et al., 2022[5]). Cosmetic products, associated with well-being and pleasure, constitute a relevant field of observation for this dynamic, because responsible consumption is generally based on thoughtful choices guided by personal values. Consumers today seek a balance between efficiency and pleasure. Although our focus is on hedonism, it is essential to take into account the intrinsic values of individuals which influence the perception of pleasure and the perceived functional value of the product.

The objective of this article is therefore to analyze whether hedonic values constitute a brake or a lever for the responsible consumption of cosmetics from local products in Morocco. While much research focuses on environmental motivations, we take a more global view of responsible consumption, integrating both ethical (Smith, 1990)[6] and ecological (François-Lecompte & Roberts, 2006)[7] dimensions. Local products indeed have several advantages in terms of sustainability: reduction of the carbon footprint, support for fair trade and the rural economy, and cultural and ecological enhancement. Our study thus explores the extent to which responsible and hedonic values jointly influence the intention to purchase these products.

To address this issue, this article is structured as follows: the first part presents a theoretical review of the literature on responsible consumption, hedonic values and local cosmetics; a second part sets out the Moroccan context and the structuring of the local cosmetics sector; a third part develops an empirical study aimed at identifying the main factors influencing the intention of responsible consumption; finally, a final section discusses the results and implications for sustainable marketing strategies.

**As part of this research, we pursue the following objectives:**

- ✓ Presentation of a literature review on the key concepts linked to our problem;
- ✓ Identification of the variables determining responsible consumption behavior in the Moroccan context;

✓ proposal of an empirical analysis to measure the influence of hedonic and functional values on the responsible consumption of local cosmetic products.

## **1. Context of local cosmetics in Morocco**

### **1.1. The change in consumption habits in the cosmetics sector on a global scale:**

The beauty market encompasses different categories of products used for the care and beautification of the face, body, hair and even teeth, namely cosmetics, hygiene and toiletry products, hair products, and perfumery. This sector constitutes a dynamic market in full development. Almost daily, new cosmetic brands and companies are created around revolutionary concepts. The cosmetics sector is highly sensitive to the aspect of innovation. Companies are increasingly looking to diversify their offerings to comply with standards to attract more customers on a global scale while taking into consideration the diverse cultural preferences of consumers.

Consumers today increasingly question the industrialized nature of cosmetic products and perceive them as constituting a risk both for health and the environment. The latter are now opting for healthy natural alternatives, or made by producers they trust, or even products made by themselves (Do It Yourself; DIY). Consumers are now demanding the harmfulness of chemicals used in the composition of cosmetic products such as parabens, sulfates, and other synthetic substances, and often tend to favor products that use natural resources, part of a responsible consumption approach that respects both health and nature. “Traditional”, “natural”, “organic”, “local products” today constitute the key to success in the cosmetics sector to gain consumer confidence. Thus, numerous labels and designations have emerged in order to promote these products and take advantage of the growing interest of modern consumers in these products.

### **1.2. Socially responsible consumption of cosmetic products**

In an attempt to understand socially responsible consumption. A. François Lecompte (2005)[8], presented five key dimensions of socially responsible consumption, the latter defines responsible consumption by “The act of purchasing goods or services perceived as having a positive (or less bad) impact on one's environment and using one's purchasing power to express one's social and/or environmental concerns”. **Lecompte (2005)[8]** identified five dimensions of socially responsible consumption: (1) The boycott of companies whose behavior is considered irresponsible. (2) The purchase of share products which results in the purchase of products from which part of the income supports a good cause, demonstrating a commitment to social initiatives. (3) Support for small businesses encourages people to prefer purchases

from small businesses rather than buying from large stores. (4) Favor purchasing products of local geographical origin, emphasizing the importance of supporting traditions and the regional economy. (5) Favor independent consumption practices in order to avoid overconsumption and reduce consumption as much as possible. These forms represent the dimensions of socially responsible consumption promoting both the ecological and social objectives of sustainable development, encouraging the consumer to make more rational choices instead of relying solely on irresponsible individual needs. Responsible consumption behavior is therefore not limited only to the purchase of environmentally friendly products, but also the responsible use or elimination of consumption of products. In this context, many responsible consumption practices have been developed such as minimalism, reuse of products (recycling) and avoidance of waste or practices that amount to the reduction of consumption (Syed et al., 2024)[9]. The intention of socially responsible consumption can also be defined by two types of actions, boycott which refers to stopping consuming products from irresponsible companies and buycott, that is to say the choice to buy from companies that they perceive as responsible.

Green cosmetics are sustainable products, as these products often refer to products made from natural and organic ingredients. Many definitions have been given to green cosmetic products. Oishi (2002)[10] defined these products as a mixture of ingredients intended to be applied to any external part of the human body or to the teeth, with the aim of cleaning them, perfuming them, modifying their appearance and/or correcting body odors and/or protecting them or maintaining their condition. Beyond the composition of the product, companies in this sector are increasingly striving to adopt eco-responsible techniques in the manufacturing process that they adopt for production, supply, up to packaging, meeting restrictive ecological standards, through the optimization of energy and water consumption while mitigating the release of pollutants and carbon emissions. In terms of sourcing, there is an inclination towards ingredients sourced from sustainable sources, often from organic farming or harvested fairly (ingredients of natural origin/certified organic), which makes it possible to safeguard natural resources and support local communities. Likewise for product packaging, these companies increasingly tend to favor recyclable materials to minimize their ecological footprint. Companies therefore face the challenge of innovating while protecting the traditional and natural aspect of products in order to guarantee consumer confidence. Innovation is necessary to guarantee sustainable production that is beneficial for the environment and meets the modernization requirements imposed by consumers. However, this new transition requires many challenges in the commercialization of these products due to the additional costs required

for production and innovation in this sector, in addition to the quality requirements required, given that the formulation of these products risks sometimes harming the performance and appearance of the products. Hence the need for the development of innovative solutions that integrate sustainability without compromising quality.

Green cosmetics have experienced worldwide growth. These products are represented in Morocco by local products made locally using natural ingredients. These products stand out both for their authenticity, their originality, and their ecological and social impacts which are manifested through the support of local farmers. These products enrich Moroccan cultural heritage and are often associated with traditional artisanal know-how. This authentic and ethical character reinforces their appeal to consumers, who appreciate not only their quality but also their traditional value. Being produced by women's cooperatives, these cosmetics promote financial and social autonomy while promoting gender equity in disadvantaged areas. By stimulating the local economy, they play a crucial role in the country's economic growth and represent a cultural asset for Moroccan heritage. The ecological impact of these products is manifested by their contribution to biodiversity and the efficient management of natural resources. Local production reduces transport distances, thereby minimizing carbon emissions and contributing to environmental protection.

### **1.3. Responsible consumption attitude and intention**

Attitude is defined by the individual's positive or negative evaluation of the behavior in question or a person's general feeling about the favorability or unfavorability of a concept. In the context of responsible consumption, numerous studies have confirmed that environmental attitudes play a key role as predictors of the intention to adopt environmentally responsible behavior (**Chen & Tung, 2014** [11]; **Paul et al., 2016** [12]; **Rahman & Reynolds, 2016** [13]). In the green cosmetics sector, Nguyen et al. (2024)[14] highlight the importance of strengthening attitude as a factor determining responsible purchasing intention in the Vietnamese context, showing that attitude can be reinforced through communication strategies oriented towards health and environment. These elements significantly impact environmental concerns and the intention of responsible consumption in this sector. In this same context, Mathur et al. (2024)[15] underline the significant impact of attitude in responsible consumption in this sector while raising the role of the quality of arguments relating to the environmental benefits of products, he also insists on the role of the credibility of the information communicated through the source of the message, hence the importance of the clarity of information and credibility in order to convince the customer to adopt responsible purchasing behavior in this sector.



Thus, existing work converges on the idea that consumer attitude constitutes an essential lever for stimulating responsible purchasing intention in the cosmetics sector, and that its strengthening requires effective communication strategies, based on credible arguments and a discourse structured around environmental and health issues. We therefore assume that attitude significantly impacts the intention of responsible consumption of local cosmetic products.

## **2. Hedonism and Responsible Consumption**

In the post-industrial revolution era, liberalism has profoundly transformed all aspects of life, including consumption. This has become an omnipresent social activity in daily life, going beyond the simple satisfaction of essential needs. Consumer preferences have thus evolved towards consumption which favors pleasure and the satisfaction of desires under the influence of multiple external stimuli (Fromm, 1991)[16]. At a time when responsible consumption has become an important lever for collective well-being, it has become important to increase debates around the determining factors of responsible consumption, and to examine the place of hedonism in the era of sustainability increasingly requiring the surpassing of personal needs. It is therefore important to identify the causal relationship between responsible consumption and perceived hedonic values of the product. Studies carried out on this question have revealed results that are sometimes convergent, and sometimes contradictory, between hedonic motivations for consumption and responsible consumption behavior; other studies have highlighted the complementarity between these two elements. Before studying this causal relationship, it is essential to first identify the principles of each of these two concepts.

According to O'Shaughnessy, (2000)[17] Responsible consumption is based on two postulates, that of the acceptance of an immediate effort with a view to longer-term benefits and that of the sacrifice of personal interest for a common benefit, brought either to loved ones or, more broadly, to the general interest. As for hedonism, it is based on the pursuit of pleasure as the ultimate goal of desire. Hirschman and Holbrook (1982)[18] define hedonic consumption by the aspects of consumer behavior driven by the search for multisensory, imaginative and emotional experiences when using a product. Hedonic products are thus based on subjective entities often associated with sensory and emotional gratification, requiring the surpassing of consumer expectations. Furthermore, studies on consumer behavior have identified two main reasons explaining the purchase of a product; Hedonic gratification justified by the sensory attributes of the product or for functional, utilitarian, non-sensory reasons. While the hedonistic aspect is centered on the meaning, the utilitarian aspect of the product is centered on the product, and the rather rational choice of a product. The question therefore arises in relation to the



evaluation of the importance of the perceived functional and hedonic values of the products to identify which of these factors is important for the choice of a sustainable offer. Some studies have advocated the possibility of combining both hedonic and utilitarian criteria. This combination would promote both the impact of sensory aspects through texture, fragrances and practicality aspects which influence the purchasing decision but also customer satisfaction, because a cosmetic product must not only be perceived as a responsible and healthy alternative, but also offer a pleasant sensory experience to promote its long-term adoption ([Karaduman,2014](#))[19]. In this same context, hedonic consumer behavior based on the search for pleasure and personal satisfaction in the act of purchasing could have a greater impact on responsible consumption than other more altruistic behaviors based on rational motivations. Favoring pleasure and avoiding constraints can influence the perception of responsible consumption, to the extent that this pleasure-oriented approach makes consumers more reluctant to sacrifices and restrictions linked to responsible choices[20], through the use of the product to satisfy purely personal needs, which directly makes consumption associated with environmental pollution, and the destruction of limited natural resources, and irresponsible consumption behavior. Hence the paradox raised by numerous research between hedonism and responsible consumption which is based rather on more objective motivations oriented towards common well-being. Furthermore, green purchases may be motivated by emotional factors more than by a true environmental conviction. Negative emotions linked to self-consciousness, such as guilt, play an important role in consumer decision-making. Indeed, these emotions can explain the influence of hedonic behaviors on responsible consumption, to the extent that an individual may be led to purchase an ecological product not out of authentic commitment, but to alleviate a feeling of guilt linked to moral dissonance (Adomaviciute,2014b)[21].

### **2.1. Hedonism and the attitude of responsible consumption:**

Responsible consumption is not necessarily seen as a constraint, but can also be a source of pleasure. A new perspective is emerging, suggesting that hedonism and responsible consumption can coexist, and even reinforce each other, in certain circumstances. Companies increasingly aim to include hedonic characteristics in the sustainable offering in order to maximize pleasure while ensuring they offer performance, innovation and sustainability at the same time (Sarac et al., 2019)[22]. These criteria are also used as a means to motivate consumers to opt for more responsible behavior. Ecological products are thus appreciated not only for their sustainable aspect, but also for their aesthetic qualities, their pleasure of use and the emotions they feel through their consumption.

Recent research shows a trend toward integrating ethical values into hedonistic experiences, where consumers seek products that provide sensory satisfactions while still adhering to ethical standards, given that hedonism plays a significant role in how they choose to consume or not consume certain products. Thus a new concept emerged; “Sustainable hedonism” is gaining momentum, advocating the idea that personal pleasures can be experienced while respecting the environment and society ((Lelkes, 2021b)[4]; (Adomaviciute, 2014c)[21]). Thus, consumers with strong ecological values tend to seek products that combine both pleasure and sustainability, and sometimes even perceive these products as being of better quality and offering greater enjoyment than conventional products. According to this perspective, consumption transforms the consumption choice into a positive hedonic experience by reinforcing the idea that hedonism and sustainability are not necessarily opposed. According to Issock et al. (2023)[23], the consumption of organic products not only provides pleasure and positive emotions, but also promotes a feeling of accomplishment and personal growth.

In the cosmetics sector, hedonic values have been proven to be important factors for consumption decisions[24]. Hedonic values are presented in the cosmetic sector by the sensory effect of products (fragrances, texture, etc.) which provide the consumer with a sensation of pleasure through the consumption experience or by the emotions provided by the experience of consuming these products ((Ghazali et al., 2017[25]); (Marroquín-Ciendúa et al., 2023[26]); (Zanoli and Naspetti ; 2002)[27]). This trust is further explained by the consumer's emotional attachment to local origins and by the provenance of these products which make these products perceived as authentic products, or even products evoking memories, authentic or even generating emotional sensations (Charters et al., 2017)[28]

Numerous studies have raised the role of hedonistic values in the attitude of responsible consumption in the cosmetics sector motivated by the values of self-transcendence (Jasrotia et al.; 2022b)[29] and by feelings of self-reward and the positive belief of acting in favor of good health, the environment and for collective well-being (Arvola et al.; 2008)[30]

To answer our research question, we chose to study socially responsible consumption based on the case of the consumption of local cosmetic products in Morocco. Indeed, responsible consumption has been the subject, for several years now, of keen interest and debate in Morocco, on the part of the political class, the media and researchers. Its development is placed among the priority objectives of the Green Morocco Plan set up by the Ministry of Agriculture and Maritime Fisheries, as a very promising alternative for the implementation of viable and sustainable local development, particularly in marginal and difficult areas. Responsible

consumption of local products in Morocco is part of a fair trade dynamic driven by micro-enterprises with a social vocation, mainly in the form of cooperatives and similar structures. These initiatives allow local producers to promote their know-how, improve their living conditions and develop income-generating activities. They also contribute to territorial development by promoting stable employment, strengthening regional identity and protecting the environment through sustainable practices. At the same time, a growing number of Moroccan consumers are adopting a more responsible approach by favoring local products, aware of the social and environmental issues linked to their production. This awareness reflects a desire to support an ethical and sustainable local economy, while preserving the country's natural resources and cultural heritage.

Indeed, during the confinement period, fair trade products, perceived as having a positive effect on health, were among the categories of goods which experienced strong growth in their market. The development of this mode of responsible consumption will allow small producers to benefit from a fair and sustainable income and develop their activities. To increase demand and encourage more consumers to consume fair trade products, it would be relevant to understand their purchasing behavior on the one hand, as well as their motivations for socially responsible purchasing. To thus identify the place of hedonistic values in their choices of this type of product.

And on the other hand their contribution to improving the living conditions of producers as part of a reverse social innovation. To explore this phenomenon, we conducted qualitative research. We conducted long interviews with Moroccan consumers in order to reveal their consumption patterns, their motivations and their receptivity to social innovations. Concerning the choice of the sample, we took a sample of people who had purchased a local cosmetic product at least once. The latter is made up of 15 Moroccan consumers (11 women and 3 men), aged between 18 and 50 years old, with different profiles (age, sex, CSP, profession, city, etc.), living in the city of Casablanca (city chosen for the conduct of our studies). The common point between the chosen respondents is the fact that they all take care of the shopping themselves within their households.

### **3. Research methodology:**

To carry out our research, we opted for an exploratory qualitative study which will allow us to have an integralist and holistic vision of our research object. We used the semi-structured interview to access the qualitative data.

### **3.1. Conduct of interviews:**

The semi-structured interview as a data collection technique is one of the most widely used methods in the social sciences. According to **Thiétart (2014) [31]<sup>1</sup>**, semi-structured interviews have a certain structure, namely one guided by the researcher's points of interest, which asks few direct questions to allow the interviewee to express themselves freely on the issues discussed. The interview allowed us to determine the factors that influence the responsible consumption intention among Moroccan consumers, so we conducted interviews with consumers, each interview lasted 30 minutes. Due to availability of interviewees. All interviews were done face-to-face, which helped us establish a personal connection, allowing for smoother communication and making it easier to obtain detailed and nuanced responses. This interactive approach also made it possible to observe non-verbal responses, thus enriching the qualitative understanding of the participants' motivations and attitudes towards responsible consumption. The interview was conducted with a sample of consumers living in the city of Casablanca, out of a sample of 13 people.

### **3.2. Method of analysis**

After faithfully transcribing the responses of our interviewees, we will opt for a horizontal analysis. The latter reflects an idea about the overall perception of our interviewees in each axis, namely:

- First axis: Perception of responsible consumption;
- Second axis: Purchasing experience and attitude;
- Third axis: Perceived value and trust;
- Fourth axis: The impact of social influence;

We will proceed to the presentation of the horizontal analysis which boils down to a synthesis of all the answers to the same question to compare the different points of view.

Although the interview guide covers several dimensions of perceived value (functional, social, ethical), our analysis particularly focuses on elements related to hedonic value, in accordance with the research question. This approach makes it possible to contextualize hedonic perception within the broader spectrum of consumer motivations.

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<sup>1</sup> Thiétart, R. A. (2014). *Méthodes de recherche en management* (4e éd.). Dunod.  
<https://doi.org/10.3917/dunod.thiet.2014.01>

## **4. Results and discussion :**

### **4.1. Results**

The results of the administration of the interview guide will be presented in this part. So we start with the perception of responsible consumption, followed by an analysis of customer experience and purchasing attitude. Next, we will examine the perceived value and influence of the social factor on consumer behavior.

The sample consists of 13 participants, the majority of whom are female (76.9%) and have a university-level education (92.3%). The most represented age group is 18–25 years (46.2%). Further details on the sociodemographic profile of the sample are provided in **Annex 1**.

#### ***Axis 1: Perception of responsible consumption***

##### **a. What does responsible consumption mean to you?**

The analysis of the responses shows an understanding generally focused on environmental impact and an encompassing approach integrating social and economic aspects. The majority of participants associate responsible consumption with a reduction in the ecological footprint and respect for the environment. Recurring terms include “waste reduction,” “eco-friendly products,” and “animal welfare.” To define socially responsible consumption, the majority of respondents present answers such as “It is rational and environmentally friendly consumption”, “Adoption of the purchasing choice while minimizing the environmental impact”.

2 out of 13 respondents expressed ignorance of the concept, with some indicating that they did not know precisely what it covers. Some respondents associate socially responsible consumption with personal well-being, for example "It's choosing the well-being of oneself" and through the social impact resulting from the purchase of these products by evoking respect for the working conditions of producers and by defining socially responsible consumption by a responsibility towards global society. “Respect for the working conditions of producers”.

Compared to the definition of responsible consumption specific to cosmetic products. The majority of participants associate responsible consumption with the use of natural products, without danger to health and the environment, expressing an implicit distrust of industrial products. This includes organic ingredients, the absence of harmful chemical substances, and an eco-responsible approach.

Thus we find the following answers: “It is to consume natural products, which do not have a negative impact on health or the environment”; “Prioritize natural, ecological and ethical products with healthy ingredients...”; “Choose natural, ethical and environmentally friendly products”; “Natural-based products”; “Have problem-free skin”. Only one respondent

highlighted the importance of avoiding overconsumption as part of responsible consumption, citing the importance of a minimalist approach aimed at reducing the overall ecological impact.

b. Discovering responsible cosmetic products:

The discovery channels for responsible cosmetic products identified in the responses are varied. The majority of participants mentioned social networks and influencers as the main source of exposure to the concept. Social networks (Instagram, YouTube, etc.) and influencers appear to be the dominant channels in raising awareness of responsible cosmetics. This digital mediation is often associated with targeted advertising, reflecting the importance of the attention economy in discovery behavior. The answers are as follows: “Influencers”; “Advertising and influencers”; “Influencers and RS”; “Responsible cosmetics are often discovered via social networks...”; “Social networks”.

The answers to the question (How did you discover responsible cosmetics?) are presented as follows: “Friends”; “Recommendations from friends”; “Through my wife...”; “Word of mouth”. The responses also show the importance of informal recommendations which also play a notable role. Thus the influence of those around you and those close to you (e.g. friends, spouse) constitutes a lever of trust which contributes to the adoption of the product or concept. While more marginal responses evoke a professional context or a personal research approach. One respondent mentions an independent approach to information through personal reading. This reflects an individual curiosity or specific concern towards the effects of conventional cosmetics. Some respondents refer to the overall environmental footprint, including eco-design of packaging, sustainability of production, and waste reduction.

c. What criteria do you think are essential for a cosmetic to be truly “responsible”?

The composition of the product is the most recurring criterion. Respondents expect cosmetics without aggressive chemicals, formulated with natural, organic, healthy and transparent ingredients (10 respondents). The most frequent answers are: “No chemicals”; “Natural and organic ingredients”; “A limited quantity of ingredients but high quality”; “What the body needs”; “I look primarily at the composition...”. After the composition it turns out that the origin of the raw materials is perceived as essential to judge the responsible nature of a cosmetic. It is about traceability, support for the local economy, and proximity. Thus, this criterion is put forward by 6 respondents out of 13, as follows: “Origin of ingredients”; “Preferably local”; “Promotes local production. At the same time, 5 respondents say labels are seen as a criterion guaranteeing the credibility of a responsible product. They make it possible to validate the marketing discourse, guaranteeing real commitment on several dimensions (environment,

animal ethics, quality). 4 respondents highlight the importance of taking into consideration the product life cycle and the overall environmental footprint of the product, including the eco-design of packaging, the sustainability of production, and the reduction of waste (4 respondents). 2 respondents (minority) refer to the social dimension by linking responsibility to the ethics of the production process through respect for workers' rights, fair trade and artisanal production. Another marginal criterion is presented by respondents through social validation by peers as a criterion of trust, which reflects the importance of feedback in the perception of the product.

### ***Axis 2: Experience and purchasing attitude***

#### **a. Have you already purchased responsible cosmetics? Why or why not?**

11 respondents out of 13 declared that they had already had a first experience of consuming local cosmetic products except, one respondent who has never purchased this type of product and another respondent argued that he does not pay attention to the nature of the products and the responsibility of the brands that he buys without presenting an explicit explanation for this distance vis-à-vis these products. Consumer concerns behind the purchase of responsible cosmetic products differ depending on their motivations and priorities. The most frequently cited reason is linked to personal health, to the extent that respondents are looking for non-toxic, natural products that are beneficial for the skin, reflecting a strong dermatological concern (7 responses). 5 respondents associate their purchasing act with a desire to reduce their ecological footprint, in particular through sustainable packaging or ecological traceability of products. Some purchases are motivated by adherence to moral values: respect for animals, support for craftsmanship, production ethics. This reflects a responsibility extended beyond oneself (4 responses).

#### **b. What are the main obstacles that prevent you from buying local cosmetic products more often?**

The obstacles to regular purchasing of responsible cosmetics expressed by respondents are varied. The most frequently cited factor is the high price, mentioned by 7 respondents, who consider these products to be less financially accessible than conventional cosmetics. Lack of trust comes in second place, noted by 4 people, highlighting doubts about the reliability of the promises made by brands or the real effectiveness of the products.

Limited availability also constitutes an obstacle for 3 respondents, due to a reduced presence in supermarkets and a need to turn to specialized channels or online purchases. Two participants mentioned an effectiveness perceived as insufficient compared to traditional products, while 2



others pointed out a lack of knowledge of the labels, making it difficult to identify truly responsible products.

Finally, one respondent mentioned the shorter lifespan of these cosmetics as a barrier to their adoption, and another reported that he tended to buy more when he was abroad rather than in Morocco, which relates to issues of geographic accessibility.

c. Feedback after consumption.

Four respondents mentioned perceived ineffectiveness: products that do not give the expected results (hair care, creams, deodorants). This sometimes leads to a return to classic products, showing a limit of acceptability linked to performance.

Two respondents were disappointed by sensory aspects, in particular the smell, considered unpleasant or intrusive. This type of feedback underlines the importance of sensory dimensions in the acceptance of natural products.

Two people say they have never been disappointed, which may reflect a good match between expectations and user experience, or limited exposure to responsible products.

Among the seven participants who answered this question, five have already been disappointed by at least one responsible cosmetic product. The lack of effectiveness constitutes the main source of frustration (4 respondents), particularly for hair care or deodorants deemed ineffective, sometimes leading to a return to conventional products. Two people also mentioned a smell that was too strong or unpleasant, hindering the sensory experience. On the other hand, two respondents said they had never been disappointed, thus expressing overall satisfaction or well-calibrated expectations with regard to these products.

***Axis 3: Perceived value and trust***

a. Impact of labels on the purchasing decision:

8 respondents affirm that labels influence their choice, as benchmarks of quality, safety, and environmental and ethical commitment. Some emphasize the notoriety or credibility of the label (Ecocert, Nature & Progrès), others emphasize the impact of the media or awareness.

One respondent qualifies his support, explaining that not all labels are equal and that only recognized and transparent labels influence his purchase.

4 respondents express distrust of labels, seen as unreliable or useless marketing tools for those who rely on their own judgment or a rational approach to purchasing.

Only one respondent does not know if he is influenced by labels, reflecting an absence of awareness or specific attention to this criterion at the time of purchase.

b. Importance of sensory experience:

The majority of participants (10 out of 12) believe that a responsible product must also offer a pleasant sensory experience, including smell, texture and packaging. These elements are perceived as reinforcing pleasure of use, emotional commitment to the brand, as well as loyalty. Some particularly insist on the importance of packaging, in particular to visually reflect the product's commitments (e.g.: vegan products). Conversely, 2 participants adopt a more pragmatic stance: for them, the priority goes to the effectiveness of the product, which can be minimalist as long as it meets its functions.

c. Importance of ecological arguments:

Regarding the trust placed in brands that promote ecological arguments, the responses reveal an overall cautious attitude. Four out of twelve respondents express conditional confidence, which is based on the verification of objective criteria such as composition, the presence of recognized labels, or the transparency of practices. In contrast, five participants demonstrate marked distrust, justifying their position by fear of greenwashing, lack of institutional control, or the perception of a purely marketing use of ecological arguments. Finally, three people adopt a more nuanced stance, granting relative trust depending on the context, the product or the message perceived.

d. Opinion on trends for responsible consumption:

The majority of respondents (10 out of 13) believe that there is an evolution in trends towards more responsible cosmetic products. This development is attributed to increased consumer awareness of ecological, health and ethical issues, often reinforced by the rapid dissemination of information via social networks and the media. Several participants also observed an adaptation by brands, which now offer organic, natural or zero waste products to meet these expectations.

However, this perceived trend is qualified by persistent obstacles. Respondents mention high prices, a limited or not very credible offer, and a preference for the price criterion, particularly in Morocco. Three participants expressed a skeptical or negative view of this development, believing that responsible consumption remains marginal or hampered by economic constraints.

## **5. Discussion of results:**

The study aims to determine to what extent the hedonic value understood as the sensory and emotional pleasure provided by the product determines the responsible purchasing intention of local cosmetics among Moroccan consumers.

The interviews show that hedonic value (texture, fragrance, packaging) reinforces the motivation to buy, but is never cited alone; it acts in conjunction with the perceived effectiveness and naturalness of the ingredients.

Respondents associate the consumption of responsible cosmetic products with personal health and the reduction of the ecological footprint, while the social dimension (fair trade, respect for producers) emerges only marginally.

The dominant obstacles are price, lack of trust (greenwashing) and limited availability. These elements constitute obstacles already identified in the literature for the consumption of green or responsible cosmetic products (Ladraa, S., 2015)[32].

Several recent studies confirm that the hedonic dimension stimulates the intention to purchase green cosmetic products: pleasure of use, sensory experience and estimation of the “small luxury” offered by natural products (Limbu & Ahamed, 2023)[33]. Our results are in the same direction: 10 out of 13 interviewed believe that a responsible product must be pleasant to use. This suggests that, in a market dominated by a quest for naturalness, sensory pleasure remains a competitive differentiator.

However, in an economic context where price constitutes a major obstacle, hedonic value may appear as a “secondary luxury” or “added value”, but not essential. Thus, some respondents prioritize efficiency or cost, limiting the impact of sensory pleasure on purchasing intention.

Le cadre de la Theory of Consumption Values (Sheth, Newman & Gross, 1991)[34] recalls that several values co-exist in the purchasing decision: functional, social, emotional, conditional and epistemic. Our interviews reveal a co-construction of hedonic value with functional/health value through the priority given to the absence of chemicals and efficiency; The ecological value through the importance of local ingredients and the life cycle, the social value for the (more limited) search for fairness towards producers and through the information value through the importance of the role of labels as objective proof of quality.

This interaction enriches the theoretical model initially centered on hedonism; it pleads for an expanded model that takes into account the accumulation of values mobilized by the Moroccan consumer, in accordance with observations made on other emerging markets ((Oukerrou, 2022)[35] ; (Harouchi et al., 2020)[36])

Eight participants from the selected sample associate the reliability of responsible cosmetics with obtaining recognized labels (e.g. cited labels; Ecocert, Nature & Progrès). The literature shows that labels improve trust when they are identified as independent and transparent (Zollo et al., 2021)[37]. However, distrust persists when consumers doubt the rigor of controls,

corroborating the risk of greenwashing regularly denounced in research on green cosmetics (Limbu & Ahamed, 2023b) [33].

Social networks and influencers appear to be the main gateway to responsible cosmetics, confirming recent studies on the impact of digital e-WOM strategies in the cosmetics sector ((Pop et al., 2020)[38] ;

(Pandey et al., 2024)[39]). Given that direct word of mouth (friends, spouse) provides a guarantee of proximity which can compensate for the lack of institutional trust.

Designing an offer around a “pleasure - health” binary while reinforcing the sensory benefits (natural fragrances, pleasant textures) as well as documenting clinical effectiveness proves to be important ways to strengthen consumer confidence. Consumer confidence will be further strengthened by the establishment of communication focused on tangible proof and certification by credible labels, transparent on the origin of the ingredients and certifying the local value chain to give greater credibility to the products. The mobilization of partnerships with trusted micro-influencers is also important by emphasizing both communication through educational content and sensory storytelling. Educational content is especially important following the critical need for awareness and education associated with the lack of knowledge regarding the subject studied, hence the importance of educational initiatives aimed at promoting shared understanding to encourage the adoption of responsible consumption behavior.

The obstacles associated with the high price of these products raised in this study (ex. “However, its adoption is hampered by the high cost and lack of information. Raising awareness and encouraging sustainable alternatives is essential for a more responsible future) can be mitigated by putting travel sizes on the market in quantities with a small capacity. The implementation of these formats would allow consumers to test products at a lower cost, while reducing the psychological barrier associated with price. This approach offers double added value: on the one hand, it facilitates access to a broader and curious clientele, particularly young people and price-sensitive consumers; on the other hand, it allows the brand to strengthen the notoriety of its products by promoting trial and progressive loyalty. Recent studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of this type of format in the natural and niche cosmetics sectors (Kapferer, 2015[40] ; Euromonitor, 2023[41]), particularly in emerging markets where purchasing power is a decisive criterion in the act of purchasing.

The results of the study thus highlight strong expectations in terms of safety and ethics (composition, labels, origin). However, the hedonic dimension – through the smell, the texture,

the packaging are perceived as a factor of pleasure and loyalty, without taking precedence over functional or health expectations.

According to the study, it appears very clearly that sensoriality criteria can constitute key elements of differentiation for these products, particularly for consumers most accustomed to this type of product for whom sensoriality becomes a discriminating factor. According to this category, ineffective or unpleasant products (too strong odor, unpleasant texture) lead to a return to conventional cosmetics, showing that the pleasure of use determines the repeat purchase.

## **6. Limitations and avenues for future research**

The study was conducted with a sample of 13 participants, which implies that generalizations to the entire Moroccan population must be made with caution. This limited sample size limits the statistical power and the ability to generalize the results obtained.

It is possible that some participants made statements influenced by social desirability bias, particularly in the context of topics related to environmental and social responsibility. This bias could lead respondents to express attitudes and behaviors more aligned with perceived norms than with their actual actions.

To deepen the results of this research, quantitative extensions could be considered. We recommend testing a broader model integrating hedonic, functional, ecological, and social values, on a larger and representative sample of the population. In addition, it would be relevant to measure the moderating effect of price and trust on responsible purchasing intentions.

It would also be instructive to analyze generational differences and consider the role of income level in the trade-off between pleasure and price. In-depth segmentation could reveal how these variables influence responsible purchasing decisions and their potential evolution in the face of different consumer expectations.

## **Conclusion**

This qualitative research shows that, for Moroccan consumers, hedonic value is a powerful trigger for responsible purchasing intention: sensory pleasure makes local cosmetics desirable and distinguishes brands perceived as authentically responsible. However, its effect only materializes when it is combined with other dimensions of value – health, ecology, trust – and when it is legitimized by tangible evidence (labels, transparency) and disseminated via relational channels (social networks, entourage).

In answering the research question, the study concludes that hedonic value is not sufficient in itself; it acts as an amplifier of responsible purchasing intention when the functional and ethical conditions are met. These results enrich the academic debate and offer Moroccan companies a strategic lever to support the transition towards more sustainable consumption in the cosmetics sector.

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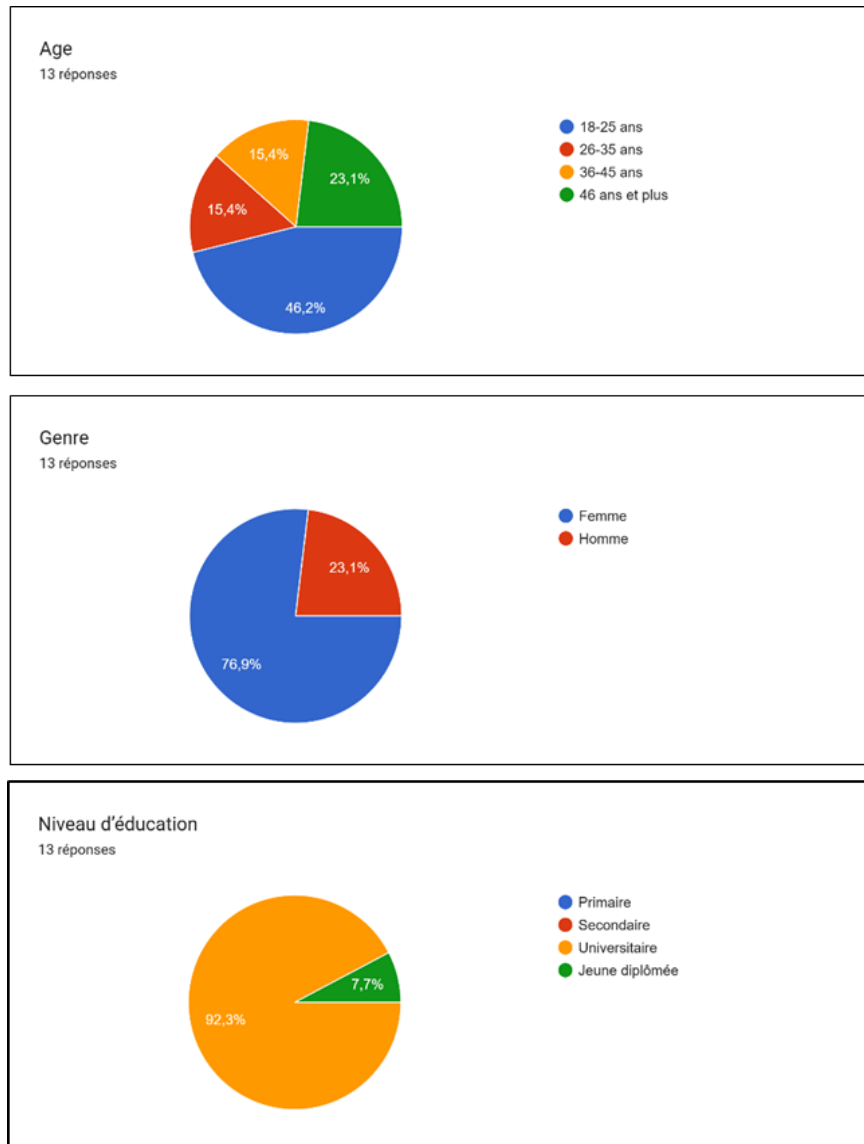


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## ANNEX



**Annex 1: Data from the qualitative survey conducted by the authors (2025)**