

Glowing with Goodness: Understanding the Indian Consumer's Preference for Organic Cosmetic Products

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Abstract

In present times, the concept of sustainability seems to be greatly influencing the consumption pattern and decision process of consumers in different segments; leading to evolving of manufacturing and operating processes of the organizations to promote higher sustainability. This trend is particularly evident in the beauty and personal care industry, where there is a growing demand for organic cosmetic products. Some of the contributing factors could be concerns about the potential for skin damage and allergy issues caused by synthetic beauty products. The personal care market of India inclusive of beauty products was worth US\$ 26.1 billion in 2020 and it is expected to witness a growth of CAGR of 6.325% during 2030 across India (GlobeNewswire, 2022).

A change in preference of the consumers can be identified towards the sustainable organic cosmetic products across the world - creating business opportunities leading to rapid growth of homegrown cosmetic companies in India. For present marketers, it is essential to understand different factors that can successfully influence consumers to purchase organic cosmetics.

Based on Consumer Values theory (Sheth et al., 1991), the Value-Belief-Norm Theory Model for Environmental Behaviour (Stern et al., 1999) and Responsible Consumption Theory (Fisk, 1973), this study aims at identifying the consumption values leading to consumer's purchase intention towards organic cosmetic products in India.

Data was systematically gathered from consumers using organic cosmetic products to ascertain whether consumption values positively influence their purchasing behavior.

The findings from this study would assist marketers in refining their communication program and promoting their product to the target market based on the consumption values influencing the consumers' decision process in organic cosmetic products in India.

JEL Classification: M30, M31

Keywords-organic cosmetic products, consumption values, buying motivation, environmental consciousness, responsible consumption, consumer choice, consumer buying behaviour

Introduction

Over the years, growth in the concept of sustainability has influenced the consumption pattern and process of the consumers in different segments. The personal care market of India inclusive of beauty products was worth US\$ 26.1 billion in 2020 and it is expected to witness a growth of CAGR of 6.325% during 2030 across India (GlobeNewswire, 2022). The cosmetic industry of India holds a strong potential for growth which can be justified by the increasing demand level of the market. This strong improvement in the organic cosmetics product market created business opportunities which can be observed in the rapid growth of homegrown cosmetic companies in India. Lauri (2022) claimed that green consumption or green shopping in India is highly based on the group membership on social media that raise the environment-conscious behaviour. Thus, for marketers, it is essential to consider different factors that can successfully influence consumers to purchase organic cosmetics.

It has also been observed that in emerging markets, like India, young consumers are mainly driven by their knowledge, attitude and personal norms to purchase green purchase behaviour (Nguyen, Lobo, & Nguyen, 2018). In this process, a higher impact was observed to be formed on the consumers of green consumption on organic apparels with cosmetics along with different situational motivators (Choi & Johnson, 2019). Such a spillover effect brings consumer psychology to be undertaken with examination of the association and also with the green consumption values for recent behaviour. This is found to be influenced by the part of the societal benefit that may be able to be engaged from the economic concerns (Tanrikulu, 2021). On the other hand, planned behavioural aspects and opportunities of product exploration are observed to create a strong impression on the purchase intention of the young consumers of green products (Varah, Mahongnao, Pani&Khamrang, 2021).

The Food & Drug Administration Agency of the United States (FDA) define Cosmetics as “a product (excluding pure soap) intended to be applied to the human body for cleansing, beautifying, promoting attractiveness, or altering the appearance”. On the other hand, it has been found that the situation is based on the conceptualization of either the morality or the constructivist process based on grounded theory, that brings the green practices to be a product of the psychosocial mechanism of the Indian consumers (Luthra &Deshwal, 2022). Along with that, environmental awareness, skin safety aspects and environmental safety awareness are also two essential factors that drive the perceived value and intention to purchase green and organic cosmetics (Choi & Lee, 2019).

Rationale for increase in organic consumption behaviour

At the time assessing behavioural aspects of green product user's product related information and the green advertising approach incorporated by the consumers are also essential to undertake (Wei, Chiang, Kou & Lee, 2017). The purpose of this study is to gain a deeper understanding consumer's buying behaviour towards organic cosmetics products. With the use of three P's, People-Planet-Profit, it has been found that the premium pricing for the organic product has been undertaken with respect to the disposal attraction and the additional expenses in the logistics (Kumari et al., 2022). Literature review conducted indicates that environmental consciousness, health consciousness, appearance consciousness (Ghazali et.al, 2017) and the product attributes (Kim & Chung, 2011) are some of the factors that largely affects the consumer decision process with regards to organic cosmetic products. The trend of using green cosmetics can be identified as being significantly influenced by young consumers where their value-belief-norms are playing a crucial role to consider (Jahari, Hass, Idris & Joseph, 2022). In this regard, different factors like demographic, past experience, eco-awareness and others, are observed to create a strong influence on the buyers when choosing green cosmetics (Stita&Alkhayyat, 2021). As per (Joshi & Rahman, 2017) education level and subjective norms are also crucial for young consumers to steer the sustainable purchase behaviour. In the case of Indian consumers of green products their intention, norms and behaviour can affect green product consumption level (Jaiswal & Kant, 2018).

This study aims to determine the role and effect of environmental consciousness, health consciousness, product attributes like quality, packaging and design, price, brand and social media marketing strategies on the consumer's purchase intention towards organic cosmetic products.

Literature Review and Research Gap

Hsu, Chang & Yansritakul (2017) highlighted in their study along with attitude, norms and perceived behavioural aspects, price sensitivity and manufacturing or origin country of the products observed to create an impact purchase of green skin care products. Even the product strategies and designs along with the attributes adopted by the consumers hold a significant potential to drive the green consumption pattern of the consumers (Sharma & Foropon, 2019). Requirement of the consumer in terms of the strategic approach that is to be accompanied with green marketing to have a higher influence in the environmental groups and in the social media communities (Chi, 2021). In this process, (Pham, Nguyen, Phan & Nguyen, 2019) identified that the safety concerns of young consumers can strong

impact on the other hand, For the developing nations, green consumption is comparatively new to consider and in India intention and perceived aspects along with payment willingness are crucial aspects to consider by the marketers (Yadav & Pathak, 2017). The social cognitive theory from social media undertakes that there is a positive mediation effect which can be found in the green purchase intention of the Indian consumers. Undertaking with respect to the recycling participation and engagement from structural equation modelling, green media reporting are being reported with respect to possible environmental knowledge (Testa et al., 2021).

Demographic factors like the gender of the consumers and their attitudes are also witnessed to drive the purchasing intention of the consumers for green cosmetics (Quoquab, Jaini & Mohammad, 2021). Nowadays, consumers are highly health conscious (especially millennials) and trying to reduce consumption of chemically produced products. From the study performed by (Putri, Wahyuni & Yasa, 2021), it was identified that environmental knowledge, along with consumer attitude towards the environment, is highly crucial to look after as these factors are effective to influence the intention to purchase green cosmetics. Thus, an interrelationship can be identified between the environmental antecedents and consumers' green purchasing behaviour as environmental concern and knowledge are highly impactful for the consumers (Heo & Muralidharan, 2019). Similarly, (Lin & Niu, 2018) supported in their study that customers who possess a higher knowledge and consciousness of the environment tend to possess a positive attitude towards the environment as well as sustainable products. Chaudhary & Bisai, 2018 elaborated that intention and subjective norms are highly effective for the millennials to purchase green products. Even (Naderi & Van Steenburg, 2018) also focused on targeting psychographic factors of millennials and the findings highlighted that rationality and self-orientation are the two most influential factors to drive their green consumption behaviour. As per (Yu & Lee, 2019) value perception, like emotional, green, aesthetic and experience) is an essential factor to consider that promotes sustainable consumption of the consumers. In this aspect (Kirmani & Khan, 2018) recognised that the consumers are even willing to pay premium prices for green products in case they hold a strong attitude toward collectivism and environmental concern. Along with pricing changes in the product design and sustainable quality of the product in relation to environmental impact tend to form a positive impact on the purchasing behaviour of the consumers (Shen, Cao & Xu, 2020). Along with age, gender is also an essential aspect to consider for female consumers where subjective norms and higher involvement with the product are influencing their shopping

intention for green cosmetics (Shimul, Cheah & Khan, 2022). This is because higher awareness levels of the consumers tend to deliver a higher level of enjoyment or positive experience to the consumers following the consumption of green products (Tezer&Bodur, 2020). However, the market positioning pattern brings the green companies to attract the consumers with respect to creation of eco-friendly goods and also adds to the strategies towards the sustainable economy future (Sen &Guchhait, 2021).

Theoretical Framework and Research Gap

The review of literature unfolds that researchers have been exploring the various factors affecting the consumption of organic products and some prominent ideas at work include the environmental concept theory and responsible consumerism (Fisk, 1973).

The proposed theoretical framework is based on the integration of the consumer values theory (Sheth et al., 1991), the value-belief-norm theory of model for environmental behaviour (Stern et al., 1999) and Theory of Planned Behaviour.

This study aims to determine the role and effect of environmental consciousness, health consciousness, product attributes like quality, packaging and design and willingness to pay a premium price on the consumer's purchase intention towards organic cosmetic products.

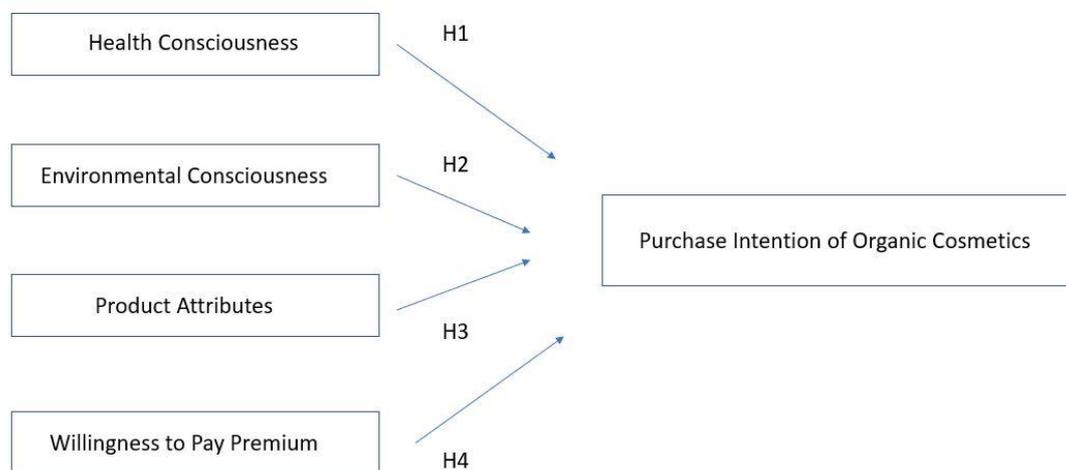


Figure 2: Proposed Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis

Attitude towards purchasing

In the context of organic food choices and for modelling of organic food choices, the theory of planned behaviour(TPB) has been widely used by scholars.(Chen, 2007;

GraciaRoyo and de Magistris, 2007,Dean et al., 2008). As per Fishbein and Ajzen, 1977, p.289 the likelihood of a person behaving in a specific manner refers to an individual's behavioural intention and intentions play a pivotal role in shaping a person's attitude. Behavioural intention can also be known as purchase intention (Ajzen, 1991, 2011; Chen, 2007). The TPB Theory indicates that the intention of purchase can be determined by three factors of which behavioural attitude poses to be one of the most critical factors which lead towards purchasing attitude (Ajzen, 1991, 2011;Chen, 2007).

Based on the said arguments, we propose the following hypotheses:

H1. Environmental consciousness significantly influences the purchase intention of consumers towards organic cosmetic products.

H2. Health consciousness significantly influences purchase intention of consumers towards organic cosmetic products.

H3. Product attributes significantly influences purchase intention of consumers towards organic cosmetic products.

H4. Willingness to pay premium significantly influences purchase intention of consumers towards organic cosmetic products.

Research Methodology

The primary research objective of this study is to examine and understand which factors influence the consumer buying behaviour towards organic cosmetic products in India. The aim is to gather data related to consumers' perception and attitude towards organic cosmetic products,

and the influence of such information on their purchase intentions, decisions and buying behaviour. The study also aims to understand which consumption values are affecting these factors. This in turn will help marketers position their organic cosmetic products in the market.

Descriptive research has been implemented in this study and primary data has been collected by means of a structured questionnaire. Purposive sampling technique (Non-probabilistic) has been implemented to collect primary data from consumers using organic cosmetic products. The data has been collected from the regions of Kolkata, West Bengal; Hyderabad, Telengana; Bangalore, Karnataka; and New Delhi, concentrating on the metropolitan database. The structured questionnaire was used to collect data from consumers using organic cosmetic products using closed statements measured with 5-point Likert's scale. With 1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, 5-Strongly agree. The usable sample size turned to 200. The pilot survey was conducted to validate

the relevance of these questions and further refinement led to 14 questions related to the various consumption values that affect the consumer's purchase intention and thereby their purchase behaviour towards organic cosmetic products. The value of 0.82 for the Cronbach alpha reliability test signifies that the scale is reliable. The questionnaire was primarily divided into three sections. The first section had questions related to the demographic profile of the consumers with their gender, age, education, occupation, monthly income and marital status. The next section focused on the role of different consumption values namely biospheric value, epistemic value, conditional value, social value, functional value, emotional value and personal norms on the consumer's purchase intention and thereby their purchase behaviour towards organic cosmetic products. The variables identified here were environmental consciousness, health consciousness, product attributes like quality, packaging and design, brand and willingness to pay a premium price. The last question probed into the level of brand awareness, frequency and the most preferred location of purchase of organic cosmetics and the actual customer of the organic cosmetic products.

Correlation analysis and multiple linear regression analysis was done in order to test the hypothesis.

Following is the summary of the respondent's profile.

Demographic Profile	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	6	2.985074627
Female	193	96.0199005
Transgender	1	0.497512438
Non-Binary/Non-Confirming	1	0.497512438
Total	201	
Age		
18-25	90	44.7761194
26-35	106	52.73631841
36-45	2	0.995024876
46-55	1	0.497512438
Above 55	2	0.995024876
Total	201	
Education		
Class 12 pass	4	1.990049751
Graduation	154	76.61691542

PostGraduation& above	43	21.39303483
Total	201	
Occupation		
Student	3	1.492537313
Service	6	2.985074627
Business	160	79.60199005
Homemaker	32	15.92039801
Other	0	0
Total	201	
Monthly Income		
Less than Rs 25,000	87	43.28358209
Rs. 25,000- to Rs. 50,000	102	50.74626866
Rs. 50,000- to Rs. 75,000	10	4.975124378
Rs. 75,000- to Rs.1,00,000	1	0.497512438
Above Rs.1,00,000	1	0.497512438
Total	201	
Marital Status		
Single	65	32.33830846
Married	132	65.67164179
Divorced/Separated	4	1.990049751
Widowed	0	0
Total	201	

Findings of the study

A correlation analysis was performed to examine the linear association between health consciousness, environmental consciousness, product attributes, and willingness to pay a premium for organic cosmetic products and purchase intention towards these products. The result as depicted in Table 1 indicate that there is statistically linear significant and positive relationship between independent variables HC, EC, PA, WPP and PI.

Table1: Correlation between Independent variable (HC, EC,PA, WPP) and dependentvariable(PI)

Variable		PI
HC	PearsonCorrelation	.774**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000
EC	PearsonCorrelation	.595**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000
PA	PearsonCorrelation	.726**
	Sig.(2-tailed)	0.000
WPP	PearsonCorrelation	.626**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000

**Correlation issignificantatthe0.01 level(2-tailed)

Table 2: Multiple Regression results of factors affecting the Purchase Intention of Organic Cosmetics

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-.943	.218		-4.335	.000
HC	.591	.060	.458	9.878	.000
EC	.211	.047	.189	4.443	.000
PA	.342	.053	.312	6.483	.000
WPP	.083	.038	.102	2.175	.031
a. Dependent Variable: Purchase Intention					

According to the table 2 unstandardized constant statistic is -.943 it shows that the model would predict if all of independent variables were zero. Multiple regression result indicates that the b value of Health Consciousness (HC) is 0.591. This signifies that if purchase intention is increased by one-point HC is increased by 0.591. The significant of t value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05, thus it denotes that HC has a positive impact on Purchase intention of Organic cosmetic products. Further, it signifies that Health consciousness is the best predictor of purchase intention in this model.

The b value of Environmental consciousness (EC) is 0.211. This signifies that if purchase intention is increased by one-point EC is increased by 0.211. The significant of t value is

0.000 which is less than 0.05, thus it denotes that EChas a positiveimpact on Purchase intention of Organic cosmetic products.

The b value of Product Attributes (PA) is 0.342. This signifies that if purchase intention is increased by one-point PA is increased by 0.342. The significant of t value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05, thus it denotes that PAhas a positiveimpact on Purchase intention of Organic cosmetic products.

The b value of Willingness to pay a premium (WPP) is 0.083. This signifies that if purchase intention is increased by one-point WPP is increased by 0.342. The significant of t value is 0.000 which is less than 0.05, thus it denotes that PAhas a positiveimpact on Purchase intention of Organic cosmetic products.

Thus, we accept all the hypothesis.

Implications for theory and practice

This research examined the influence of the role of health consciousness, environmental concern, product attributes and willingness to pay a premium price in shaping the purchase intention and buying behavior of Indian consumers towards organic cosmetics. The results highlighted the importance of health consciousness and product attributes in significantly influencing the customer towards purchasing organic cosmetic products. This aligns with previous studies from China, Taiwan and India (Cheung et al., 2015; Yadav and Pathak, 2017; Chiu et al., 2014; Prakash and Pathak, 2017).Furthermore, willingness to pay was found to be positively relatedwith purchase intent, clearly suggesting that consumers are willing to pay a premium for organic cosmetic products. Notably, willingness to pay was also found to influence the consumer's buying behavior indirectly through its impact on purchase intention. The results of this study indicates that the price-sensitive nature of Indian consumers does not apply to green products. This could be attributed to the perceived high value associated to green products, thereby leading to higher willingness to pay a premium.

Interestingly, the results indicate thatenvironmental concernsdid not significantly impact consumers' purchase intentions towards organic cosmetic products. This aligns with the findings of Khare (2015) where personal norms did not explain green buying behavior of consumers from India. However, it contradicts previous studies where a significant relationship between environmental concern and purchase intention was observed (Paul et al., 2016; Prakash and Pathak, 2017). This can be explained by the possibility that

environmental concern may not directly effect purchase intention but may exert an indirect influence through other variables, such as attitudes, subjective norms and perceived behavioral control (Chen and Tung, 2014; Hartmann and Apaolaza-Ibañez, 2012; Paul et al., 2016).

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