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## A study on adaptation of youth preference in green cosmetic industry

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### Abstract

Due to excessive chemical use, India's rising economy is currently dealing with numerous environmental issues. The ecosystem has been impacted by this growth spike as seen in various areas in India, leading to numerous anomalies. Pollutants in the environment have had an impact on both the atmosphere and people's health. Health hazards related to the intake of artificial, non-green goods and how they interact with the human body are a subject of growing concern. Numerous skin and hair diseases are the outcome of this.

The rapid environmental change has helped people understand how important it is to be "Organic" and "Natural." The use of renewable strategies is essential for sustainable development. The current consumer has a very different mindset now than they did in the past, which is in line with the changes in the corporate environment. The purchasing behavior for cosmetics today reflects how consumers are evolving into more informed ones.

This paper makes an effort to discover the aspects that influence customer decisions to buy eco-friendly cosmetics. The study employed a structured survey of 150 participants from Kolkata and suburban areas. The study looks on the correlation between significant factors for respondents who reside in this region. It aims to highlight the different difficulties consumers have while switching from conventional to eco-friendly cosmetics. Through thorough analysis, improvements can be made by marketers to better segment, target, and motivate their highly diverse client group.

**Keywords:** Eco friendly cosmetics, organic, sustainable, environment

### Introduction

Green cosmetics are unquestionably a new advantage for the developing world. Today, becoming "Green" is not just a necessity but also a chance for businesses and consumers alike. The words "organic," "sustainable," and "healthy" have all come to be associated with the color green. The idea of going green has become more popular as a result of the threat posed by climatic changes, global warming, and environmental difficulties. Environmental awareness among consumers has grown over time. Their cosmetics purchasing habits are evolving. They are adapting a healthy lifestyle and maintaining a clean atmosphere. They favor natural, safe items free of chemicals. Consumers now recognize the value and necessity of purchasing green items thanks to environmental deterioration.

Today, becoming "Green" is not just a need but also an opportunity for businesses and consumers alike. Based on the American Association for Marketing (Kotler, 2011–2013) [17], Green Marketing is the promotion of goods that are anticipated to keep the surroundings in mind. Green advertising includes a wide range of tasks, such as product modification, modifications to the manufacturing process, new packaging etc. Green marketing can be used differently as Ecological marketing and environmental marketing 2011–2013 (Kotler). "Green Marketing" is a comprehensive marketing strategy in which manufacturing, marketing, and products are used and discarded in a certain way which harms the environment the least. Green marketing is indicated by terms like recyclable, sourced from nature, ozone friendly, paraben free, and phosphate free. Green marketing must therefore be promoted for the sake of both human welfare and environmental harmony. In 1970, the first article on consumer attitudes toward going green appeared. Since then, consumers have become more likely to purchase various green items.

Green cosmetics are widely bought by young female consumers. They give a lot of thought to how they appear in general. Price was the primary element driving the industry in the past, even if consumers were aware of the risks associated with using artificial cosmetics.

In terms of product development and marketing, the Indian cosmetics business has unquestionably expanded throughout time. The uses of cosmetics had a significant role in the lives of consumers. It offers a wide range of cosmetic goods with chemical bases that may be less expensive, but are risky for the skin and environment.

According to Christopher Gan (2008) [22], there are numerous instances of pollution and a hazardous environment, which has increased young consumers' concern for their health and raised their standard of living. They now wish to be healthy, thus they are switching to green cosmetics when they shop (Kumar, 2014) [15].

### Indian Context

The green revolution, which is based on high yielding seeds and chemical-based fertilizers, was started in order to fulfill the growing need of a growing population and to make India self-sufficient in food grains. Overuse of fertilizers is detrimental to sustainable farming. Young businesspeople and the government are now recognizing the value of sustainable agriculture and the need to revive India's traditional agricultural practices. They are bringing a program to support small businesses in order to advance the industry. The only Indian company to successfully compete against well-established international corporations is Patanjali Ayurved Limited, which is praised by Indians for adhering to a tried-and-true, centuries-old method of producing natural food goods and skin care (Misra *et al.*, 2018) [10]. The young population is highest in India. The organic cosmetic industry is growing but the availability of the products was an issue (Misra R, & Singh D., 2016) [23] which recently through the online channels, it has been made available especially in Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities.

The younger generation, which is more technology inclined, prefers to shop online. Given consumers' worry over rising pollution and health awareness, it is critical to understand what drives people to purchase eco-friendly cosmetics. The study will assist marketers in identifying the issues and connecting with consumers. The study framework is focused on comprehending and recognizing the Indian context's customer motivations for green cosmetics.

### Literature Review

Due to increased concerns about the environment, animal welfare, human health, and hygiene, there is a global interest in and demand for green cosmetics. Many definitions emphasize the idea of "green," "natural," "organic," or "bio cosmetics," while others highlight the rising popularity of green cosmetics and customers' increased interest in online shopping (Sharma R., 2014) [9]. In order to create a green economy for our future generation, we must change our existing culture of consumption before our limited resources are depleted (Hunter, 2013) [3].

Companies that implement green marketing are making a strategic move that will not only draw in informed customers but also keep them around. The use of green marketing is crucial in resolving the issues. Many businesses use green marketing as a way to demonstrate their commitment to the environment. In order to obtain the largest profits feasible through innovation, it is therefore crucial to satisfy the requirements and wants of the consumer.

Health and the environment are topics of growing awareness and concern. Green cosmetics are now more popular among consumers. More organic, green, bio, or natural cosmetics

are being used because consumers are becoming more environmentally conscious (2014). Green marketing has had a quick growth. Despite green cosmetics' higher price compared to chemical cosmetics, customer purchasing habits have shifted. Customers have embraced green cosmetics as awareness and concern about health and the environment have grown. The market share of organic beauty products has increased, as predicted (Research, 2017), from 13500 million USD in 2016 to 26123 million USD in 2023.

In order to seem nice, youthful, healthy, and attractive without harming their motherland, young Indians are willing to pay more (Kaufmann R., 2012) [1]. Every year, there are more and more cosmetic brands that are green. Despite their concern and awareness for the environment, Indian customers are still wary and believe that green cosmetics are expensive, of the highest calibre, and only appropriate for people of a higher social class (Lehri V., 2015) [16]. Even if businesses are working hard to investigate natural components and introduce more clinically validated, safe goods with a distinctive selling proposition, raising awareness is essential (Khan A., 2013) [18]. Customers who buy eco-friendly cosmetics are distrustful as a result of a lack of market rules. Therefore, businesses must clearly communicate the advantages of green cosmetics for both the environment and human health (Puh, 2016) [14].

Numerous studies on consumers' purchasing habits with regard to green cosmetics have been conducted. (Khan M., 2013) [18] discovered that availability of the product (Kaufmann, 2012) [1] and demographic characteristics (Age, gender, income, occupation, and ethnicity) influence the purchasing of green cosmetics by women in Madhya Pradesh. The expansion of green cosmetics depends on consumer trust, adaptive attitudes, positive buying intentions, and word-of-mouth. Online buying offers a large selection with attractive discounts and simple exchange and return policies, in addition to saving time and facilitating quick comparisons (Kanchan U., 2015) [11]. Due to its prompt delivery, attractive packaging, and simple usage, young males and married people favor it most often (Sharma R., 2014) [9]. Numerous studies have also found that young people and married people are more likely to make online purchases because they are more willing to view the transaction as secure (Sharma R., 2014; Kanchan U., 2015) [9, 11]. Lotus Organics, Himalaya Herbals, Shahnaz Hussain, Khadi Naturals, Ayur Herbals, Biotique, Jovees Herbals, Aroma Essentials, and many more are the top green company brands in India. On top of that we also have brands like Organic Harvest, Patanjali Ayurveda, Wow Naturals, Mama Earth and more. They do cost more than the standard line of chemical cosmetics. It is difficult for businesses to effectively launch a product in the market because young Indian consumers are price-sensitive. Consumers are willing to pay more for ecologically friendly items, according to a study by Nilsson (2016) [13].

For the green cosmetic product to be properly positioned, an efficient marketing mix is required. Young shoppers and married women with kids are significant buyers of eco-friendly cosmetics. This is a reference to the fact that young people and women are more prevalent when it comes to domestic shopping and family safety. Green marketing is still in its infancy in emerging nations, thus businesses must correctly position their products. Additionally, the sale of green cosmetic items will be impacted by an effective communication strategy (Desore, A., 2016) [20]. This study

aims to identify the factors that affect this behaviour of young Indian consumers particularly in West Bengal.

### Research Methodology

Students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs at universities make up the study's population. The structured questionnaire was personally used to administer the survey. The purpose of the first section of the questionnaire was to gauge consumer knowledge about green cosmetic brands and products. Items relating to measure factors impacting buying decisions are included in the second section. The third section includes items on a 5-point Likert scale that have been developed from the elements discovered via various studies to assess consumer attitudes toward green cosmetics. Cronbach's alpha reliability statistics for the data indicated a value of 0.931 which is appropriate and consistent. 150 questionnaires were collected and convenient sampling was used. Then correlation between the constructs was found and finally multiple regression was done to check how importantly each

of the factors contributed in predicting the young consumers' buying preferences for green cosmetics.

### Analysis and Results

Understanding customer attitudes and behaviors toward eco-friendly cosmetics depends greatly on awareness and perception. Customers were asked to rate their agreement and disagreement with a set of statements linked to various features of green cosmetics on a five-point Likert scale (1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Neutral, 4-Agree, and 5-Strongly Agree). 20 variables were used in an exploratory factor analysis, with the number of factors retrieved being limited by an Eigen value greater than 1 and the rotation method Varimax. KMO statistics showed a result of 0.966, indicating that the retrieved variables were suitable for factor analysis. The analysis resulted in selection of four factors. The factors explained a total of 74.369 percent of total variance explained by the model. The rotated component matrix was used, using 0.45 as cut off point for factor loading and naming the factors.

**Table 1:** Factor analysis

Factors	Factor Loading	Eigen Value
<b>F1- Environment Concerns</b>	15.423	26.822
Green cosmetics is environment friendly	0.799	
Green cosmetics is pollution free	0.623	
Green cosmetics is animal cruelty free	0.452	
Green cosmetics consists of natural chemical free substances	0.877	
<b>No of items: 4</b>		
<b>F2- Health Concern</b>	4.556	17.555
Green cosmetics has no side effects on skin	0.722	
Green cosmetics nourishes the skin effectively	0.633	
Green cosmetics are better in quality although higher in price	0.454	
Green cosmetics is needed to maintain good health in long term	0.524	
<b>No of items: 4</b>		
<b>F3- Awareness</b>	2.563	8.421
Green cosmetics uses authentic labelling	0.824	
Green cosmetics uses appropriate product packaging	0.693	
Green cosmetics are certified by various competent authorities	0.778	
Green cosmetics abide by the rules and regulations of the govt.	0.456	
Proper ads are given to promote green cosmetics	0.521	
<b>No of items: 5</b>		
<b>F4- Easy Availability</b>	1.431	6.393
Green cosmetics are easily available online	0.777	
Good discounts are offered on purchase of green cosmetics	0.743	
It is easy to compare various green cosmetics products online	0.625	
Green cosmetics are easily refundable and exchangeable	0.456	
Small samples are available for testing	0.639	
Much information about green cosmetics is available online	0.786	
There are more positive customer reviews about green cosmetics	0.582	
<b>No of items: 7</b>		

Based on the result, there were four factors motivating young consumers towards green cosmetics.

The preference for green cosmetics is explained by Factor 1 (Environmental Concerns). They are a recommended option due to qualities including environmentally friendly behavior, use of natural substances, healthy environmental impact, and composition of natural ingredients. Green consumers are concerned about environmental issues and are interested in the origin of the raw materials. They favor purchasing goods that don't contribute to pollution. The substances in cosmetics have a big impact on people's preferences.

Factor 2 (Health Concern) describes the qualities of cosmetics in terms of health concerns, such as their safety

for the skin and their ability to provide desirable results. People who live an environmentally responsible lifestyle who care about their health, appearance, and beauty use natural/green cosmetics (Dimitrova, Teodoro, & Kaneva, 2009) <sup>[15]</sup>. The current trend toward better living is increasing customers' interest in natural products, including green cosmetics.

The characteristic that improves the perception of green cosmetics in terms of advertising, labeling, certification, and governmental laws is explained by Factor 3 (Awareness). For green consumers, certifications and product information are crucial. The inclusion of eco labels on cosmetic items undoubtedly encourages consumers to buy eco-friendly cosmetics. The value of eco labels to consumers influences

their decision to buy eco-friendly products (Sangkumchaliang & Huang, 2012) [8].

The advantages of purchasing green cosmetics online are described in Factor 4 (Easy Availability). It includes things like simple purchasing, quick product comparison, numerous payment choices, simple exchange, and return

policies. Green cosmetics are expanding at an exponential rate, and online shops and other e-commerce sites have started to carry them. Young Indian consumers now prefer green cosmetics for sustainable living due to increased health and environmental awareness (GlobalNewswire.com, 2017).

**Table 2:** Regression analysis

Hypothesis	Independent Variable	Dependent Variable	Beta	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	F value
H1	Environmental concerns	Buying of green cosmetics	0.142	0.865	1024
H2	Health concern		0.425		
H3	Awareness		0.366		
H4	Easy Availability		0.102		

**Note:**  $p < 0.01$  (1% level of significance)

### Conclusion

From table (2), it can be inferred that consumers are more motivated to purchase green cosmetics by their concern for their health, then for the environment. While happiness is seen as a dependent component, information and certification are two additional important factors, with online accessibility contributing the least. In conclusion, the elements influencing customer behavior toward green cosmetics are health, information about and certification of green cosmetics, and environmental concern. There is a need to increase customer knowledge about internet shopping.

The present study's analysis identified health consciousness as the most important aspect for marketers to change customer attitudes toward green cosmetics. The primary driver of green marketing is concern for the environment, thus companies should concentrate on raising consumer awareness and their propensity to favour eco-certified goods. The analysis suggests that marketers should focus on green cosmetics' labelling and certification since they will help to fulfill consumers' environmental concerns. Government regulations and environmental organizations can help promote environmentally and health-friendly goods, especially in urban areas where pollution levels are frighteningly high.

### Future Scope

This study approach has discovered a number of elements, including a sharp focus on the four Ps of product, reaching a large, diverse consumer base, raising consumer knowledge of the environment, and generating consumer concern over their health. Businesses should seek to increase consumer trust. It will be better the earlier it is! The idea of green cosmetics is obviously beneficial to both consumers and marketers. The potential to capitalize on this and use mass media to educate people has now become marketers' top priority. According to the findings, customers are the least satisfied group. In order to see a sustained increase in consumer purchasing of green cosmetics, marketers must develop an innovative approach.

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