

An Empirical Study on Exploring Motivational Factors Behind Organic Cosmetic and Personal Care Product Consumerism in India

Discipline: Commerce

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Abstract

The Indian beauty industry has undergone remarkable growth and change in recent years, becoming one of the most vibrant sectors in the country's economy. It blends traditional practices with local brands and global giants, creating a dynamic landscape where innovation and diversity thrive. Organic products and their relevance were increasing gradually. People are very much acquainted with the products that they were using especially on their bodies. So the organic cosmetic products have made an influential impact among the consumers. The study spotlights on the driven forces behind the purchase of organic products from the part of consumers. The usage of Organic cosmetic products are more among the female consumers as they are more towards cosmetic products in general. The study tries to analyse why consumers showed favouritism towards Organic cosmetic and wellness products in the past ten years. In recent times, there is a huge paradox shift of consumers to organic products in total and organic cosmetic and wellness products are no longer excluded from that. The study focuses on the radical change of consumers from conventional or natural cosmetic products to organic ones. People are now more vigilant about their intake in terms of their skin and hair. Additionally, the article highlights the foundation for distinguishing sustainable cosmetic products from traditional cosmetics and wellness items for consumers. The purpose of this paper is to develop this framework.

Keywords: Sustainable, Organic Cosmetic, Buying Behaviour, Personal Care Products

Introduction

India's skincare market has rapidly transformed to cater to the varied preferences and demands of its consumers. Despite the pandemic's disruptions, the market has continued to grow significantly and holds a promising future. Changes in lifestyles and greater awareness have been key factors in the progress of India's cosmetic industry. India came in fourth in 2023 among world markets by income for personal care and beauty. Local brands have become more well-known, even while multinational brands like Unilever, Procter & Gamble, and L'Oreal still control the international market. Due to these foreign brands' incapacity to adequately cater to Indian skin types, local businesses such as Mama Earth, Khadi Essentials, Plum and Soul Tree have been able to thrive with their line of handmade cosmetics and personal care products.

Organic Products

Ingredients from organic farming are used to make organic products. The most popular products are organic foods, but organic farming methods can also be used to make apparel and personal hygiene products. These products only use natural farming practices and devoid of artificial chemicals and genetically modified ingredients. To protect consumers, several nations have strict laws, and authorities frequently certify goods as organic. Utilising only permitted ingredients, preserving bio diversity, and safe guarding natural resources are the main goals of organic farming.

Organic Cosmetic and Personal Care Products

Organic cosmetics meet the highest international certificate criteria and are composed of at least 95% certified organic components. These goods are made from components that are grown without the use of dangerous chemicals which are bad for the environment and human health like pesticides, herbicides and artificial additives. Organic beauty products are environmentally beneficial because they do not contain pesticides, genetically modified materials, artificial colouring or scents. By giving birds, insects and other species a place to live, organic farms also promote bio diversity and wild life.

Organic cosmetics are typically more costly than conventional ones, but they are manufactured with better components and less likely to irritate skin or trigger allergic responses. In contrast, conventional cosmetics are often cheaper but may behave harshly on both the skin and the environment. Organic ingredients are strictly non-GMO and grown without synthetic fertilizers or pesticides. Typically, organic products contain 95-100% chemical-free ingredients, while natural products usually range between 50-70%.

Objectives

- To understand how consumers can distinguish between Organic Cosmetic and Personal Care Products and natural cosmetic products.
- To explore the key factors influencing consumers' decisions to purchase Organic Cosmetic Products and Personal Care Products.
- To study the way consumer demand for Organic Cosmetic and Personal Care Products has developed over the last decade.

Research Methodology

This study employs an empirical research approach, relying on secondary data and focusing on a review of various published research articles from different journals related to organic cosmetics and personal care products. There is a limited amount of research available on organic personal care products. To better understand this gap, it is necessary to organize and categorize the existing studies. This paper seeks to establish a framework to support that effort. All the articles used were published between 2014 and 2024 and include studies conducted nationwide.

What is the distinction between Organic cosmetic Products and Natural Products ?

Certified natural cosmetics are made from raw materials, aligned with natural processes, and are cruelty-free. These products must not include:

Paraffin

Silicones

Petroleum-based synthetic dyes

Parabens

Organic cosmetics, on the other hand, consist of plant-based ingredients that are cultivated without synthetic chemicals or GMOs. To be classified as organic, a cosmetic must contain at least 95% organic ingredients, without any petroleum-derived compounds, paraffin, formaldehyde, or synthetic dyes. Furthermore, organic cosmetics are eco-friendly in both their formulation and packaging, which is recyclable and biodegradable.

Opting for an organic private label cosmetic helps protect your skin from premature aging caused by harmful chemicals present in non-organic alternatives. These products are not only safe but also effective, promoting beauty while maintaining skin health.

How to Recognize “Natural” or “Organic” Cosmetics

Although many cosmetic products advertise themselves as “natural” or “organic,” these claims aren’t always backed by verifiable evidence. Consumers can try to evaluate these claims by examining the on-pack ingredient list (INCI), but since manufacturers are not legally required to disclose the source of ingredients (whether natural, synthetic, or petrochemical), this method has its limits. So, how can consumers be confident that a product truly aligns with natural or organic standards? Independent certifications like the NATRUE Label provide that assurance. This label allows consumers to easily identify products that meet stringent, transparent criteria related to formulation, ingredients, and production methods. Under the NATRUE certification, the terms “natural” and “organic” are clearly defined and guaranteed at different levels—ranging from natural cosmetics to organic cosmetics with a higher organic content.

Organic skincare products are made from plant-based raw materials sourced from organic farming. They are always accompanied by valid certification to ensure their safety.

Here are some of the most recognized certification bodies for organic cosmetics:

- **Ecocert Greenlife Standards**
 A minimum of 95% of the ingredients must be of natural origin or naturally derived.
 At least 95% of the plant-based components must be sourced from organic agriculture.
 A minimum of 10% of the entire product, including water, must be organically produced.
- **BDIH**
 Uses raw materials sourced naturally or through approved ecological processes.
 Some plant materials are required to be organic.
 Only certain synthetic preservatives are allowed.
- **Soil Association**
 At least 95% of the agricultural ingredients must be organic by weight.
 Only specific non-organic ingredients, processing aids, and water are permitted.
 Water is excluded from the organic calculation.
 Products containing 70-95% organic ingredients can be labeled as “contains X% organic ingredients.”

- **ICEA**
Requires plant and animal materials to be organic. It prohibits certain ingredients and chemical processes.
- **COSMOS**
Requires at least 20% organic content (except for rinse-off products and powders, which require 10%). 95% of physically processed agricultural ingredients must be certified organic. It only allows specific chemically processed agricultural ingredients.
- **NATRUE**
Specifies minimum levels of natural and “derived natural” substances based on product type. Most products must contain at least 20% natural substances, with no more than 15% being derived natural substances. At least 95% of natural substances from plant and animal origins must be organic.

Always check the label for these certifications to ensure the product’s organic origin. Start caring for your skin with certified organic cosmetics.

Factors for opting Organic Cosmetic Products over Conventional Products

- **Price Sensitivity in Purchasing Decisions**
As of 2018, price was the main factor affecting consumers’ choices regarding natural or organic beauty and personal care products. Other important considerations included the need for products to be BPA-free and cruelty-free. However, the high costs and limited availability of organic cosmetics were significant barriers for many consumers.
- **Harmful Ingredients in Conventional Skin Care Products**
Many non-organic skin care products contain synthetic chemicals that can be harmful to health, including sodium lauryl sulphate, mineral oils, and possible pesticide residues. Studies have shown that these products may also include ingredients like petroleum, parabens, and mineral oil, which—when used over time—can cause skin irritation, disrupt hormones, damage organs, and even increase cancer risk. Mainstream beauty products often feature dangerous compounds such as formaldehyde, phthalates, and heavy metals, which can be absorbed through the skin and enter the bloodstream. Organic skin care products, on the other hand, use natural, safer substitutes that are safe for long term usage in place of such harmful component. Toxic compounds

found in personal care products can accumulate in the body and eventually cause health hazards, according to research from the Campaign for safe cosmetics.

- **Organic Products Are Less Likely to Cause Allergies**

Organic skin care products are less likely to cause irritation, inflammation or allergic reactions because they don't include harsh synthetic ingredients. When allergies do arise, they are usually associated with natural substances (such as peanuts or strawberries), which helps in identify the cause.

- **Organic Skin Care Products Offer Greater Effectiveness**

Compared to conventionally cultivated plants, organic plants frequently have higher amounts of essential anti oxidant vitamins. These ingredients remain pure because they are grown without the use of pesticides or herbicides, providing additional advantages for body and skin. Furthermore, conventional skin care products often include only 5% to 10% active ingredients, but organic treatments can have up to 95% active components.

Going Organic: Benefits Your Skin

Non-organic products that contain synthetic substances may yield immediate benefits, but they can also be intrusive and dangerous, resulting in invisible harm. Long term usage of these chemicals can weaken and damage your skin as your body tries to cope with these foreign substances, even if they may provide instant aesthetic benefits including minimising blemishes, sunspots and wrinkles. Reduced oxygen exchange in the skin may result from this, increasing the risk of sunspot development and premature ageing. On the other hand, you can get real nutritional advantages by using natural organic skin care products. It is well recognised that a variety of nutrients including honey, coconut oil, shea butter and aloe vera, may nourish, moisturise, calm, and encourage soft, smooth skin. Organic skin care products are safer and kinder to your skin over time, although the effects might not show up right way.

Natural Ingredients in Organic Skin Care Products

Plants and other naturally derived ingredients are the source for certified organic products. These organic elements are grown without the use of pesticides, herbicides, synthetic fertilizers, GMOs, or other harmful additives. As a result, your skin and body receive only pure, natural ingredients that are safe and non-toxic.

Supporting Cruelty-Free Skin Care Products

The beauty industry has been criticized for relying on animal testing to determine the safety of products for human use. However, organic products do not need such testing since their natural ingredients are inherently safe and non-toxic. By opting for

organic skin care products, you are supporting cruelty-free alternatives and playing a part in the fight against animal testing within the industry.

Sustainability and Ethical Practices

Many organic beauty brands focus on ethically sourcing their ingredients and adhering to fair-trade practices. By opting for organic products, consumers support companies that prioritize sustainability and the fair treatment of workers. A survey by FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry) found that 71% of consumers prefer natural and cruelty-free products.

Helping to Preserve the Environment

Organic products are made from naturally grown ingredients that do not rely on harmful pesticides and fertilizers, resulting in a minimal environmental impact, especially on soil, water, and air. Organic farming benefits wildlife, reduces pollution from chemical sprays, and generates less carbon dioxide and hazardous waste. By using organic skin care products, you help decrease your environmental footprint and support sustainable practices. Organic and natural cosmetics are typically produced using sustainable methods that avoid synthetic pesticides and fertilizers, lessening environmental harm. Additionally, many organic beauty brands use biodegradable packaging to reduce plastic waste. The Soil Association notes that organic farming helps preserve biodiversity, enhances soil health, and reduces pollution compared to conventional farming methods.

A Decade of Transition of Cosmetic and Wellness products to Organic Way

Natural and organic cosmetics are significantly shaping the cosmetics landscape. Although “beauty” remains the primary association with cosmetic products, more consumers are looking for qualities like “sustainable,” “environmentally friendly,” and “ethical” in their purchases. Since they are fundamental to their core beliefs and commitment to protecting biodiversity, the environment and human health, natural and organic cosmetics are a perfect example of these ideals. Indian consumers have been drawn more and more to organic health and cosmetics over the last ten years for a variety of reasons.

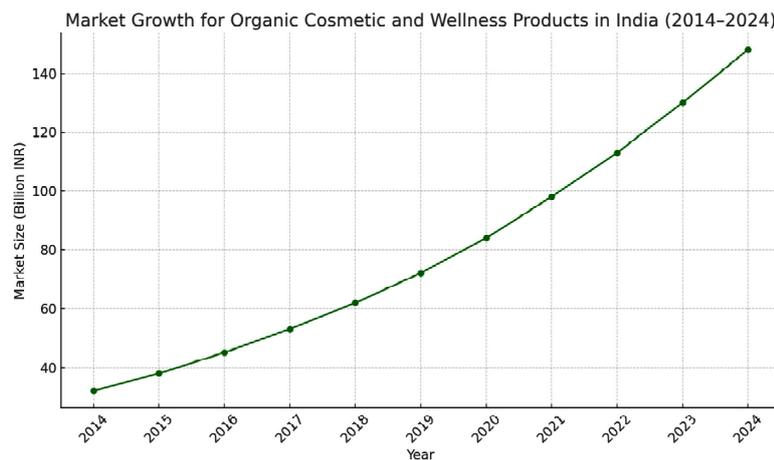
Market Digitalization

With e-commerce sites like Nykaa, Purplle and Amazon giving customers a greater access to arrange of beauty items, the digital revolution has greatly accelerated the expansion of the cosmetics industry. Customers nation wide may now shop for beauty products more easily thanks to this change. With INR 2,440 crore (about USD 330 million) in FY 2021, Nykaa a prominent online retailer demonstrated the cosmetics industries significant shift to digital platforms.

Origination of Indian Organicbrands

By providing goods that are suited to the particular taste and skin requirements of Indian consumers, local businesses are significantly expanding their market share. To appeal to consumers, companies like Sugar Cosmetics, Mama Earth and Forest Essentials combine traditional Indian components with contemporary formulations. In 2021 Mama Earth that specialises in natural products free of toxins achieved unicorn status in the business with a valuation of USD 1.2 billion. By catering to local preferences this success story demonstrates how local preferences can help home grown firms flourish in particular.

This graph, which is a compilation of several reports, shows the expansion of the Indian market for Organic cosmetics and wellness goods between 2014 and 2024. The market has grown significantly, especially since 2019, which is indicative of rising consumer demand for Organic goods.



In FY 2024 the organic personal care market in India was valued at INR 83.68 billion. It is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate in (CAGR) of approximately 23.72% to reach INR to 236.34 billion by FY 2029. According to one study the market is expected to generate approximately USD 997.42 million in revenue by 2025, with a projected annual growth rate of 5.74% (CAGR 2025-2029). Furthermore, according to another source the retail value of India's health and wellness industry was approximately USD 8.4 billion in 2018, and it is expected to nearly double to USD 16 billion by 2023, with a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 14% from 2019 to 2023.

When taken as a whole, these sources shed light on the market values and grow patterns of organic wellness and cosmetic products in India within the given time frame.

Growing Awareness of Health and Wellness

Customers are now increasingly aware of the potential harm that synthetic chemicals found in conventional duty products might cause. Sulphates, Parabens and artificial perfumes are among the ingredients that are increasingly linked to long term health issues and skin irritation. The demand for chemical-free, organic substitutes is increasing as a result of increased health and wellbeing consciousness.

Rise of Conscious Consumerism

The choices made by modern customers are environmental conscious. The global trend towards sustainability, along with concern over pollution, deforestation, and climate change, has encouraged Indian consumers to opt for eco-friendly, organic products. Organic cosmetics and wellness brands often emphasize cruelty-free, biodegradable, and sustainable practices.

Celebrity and Influencer Endorsements

Celebrities and influences have been crucial in marketing organic beauty and wellness products since the advent of social media. Customer behaviour has been impacted by Indian celebrities promoting Organic products or stressing the importance of natural beauty and overall health who follow trends created by influencers have been especially impacted by this.

Growing Interest in Ayurveda and Traditional Knowledge

Natural treatments and Ayurveda have a long history in India and are currently gaining popularity. Customers looking for conventional, holistic methods to skin care and health may find many organic beauty and wellness products intriguing because they are made from herbal and ayurvedic formulations. Businesses based on indigenous techniques has increased as a result of the renewed interest in Ayurveda.

Rise in Disposable Income and Urbanization

More Indian consumers now have the means to buy high end and goods, such as organic cosmetics thanks to the countries economic expansion during the last ten years. The demand for these items has been further fuelled by lifestyle changes brought about by urbanisation, where health and beauty have become essential components of self care regimens.

Concerns Over Side Effects of Conventional Cosmetics

Long term usage of synthetic cosmetic products has been linked to an increase in allergies, skin disorders and other impacts. Consumer taste are changing as a result of the perception that organic alternatives are safer and better suited for long term use or sensitive skin.

Improved Availability and Product Variety

The availability of organic wellness products and cosmetics has increased dramatically during the past ten years. Numerous foreign and Indian brands have joined the market, providing a broad choice of goods at various price points. Customers have found it easier as a result of the greater accessibility, both online and in physical places.

COVID-19 and Wellness Focus

The pandemic hastened the transition to natural and Organic products by underscoring the significance of health and well being. Organic products are becoming more popular as consumers place a higher priority on their general well being and look for items that support holistic health in addition to improving appearance

Government Support and Certification Standards

Customer trust has increased as a result of government programs supporting sustainability and organic farming as well as the implementation of certification requirements for Organic goods. Customers are reassured that the items full fill quality and environmental criteria by certifications such as USDA Organic, ECOCERT and India Organic.

These elements along with a changing perception of well being and beauty have fuelled India's increasing trend towards organic wellness and cosmetics. Due to customer's growing alignment of their purchases with sustainability and health principles, these changes have helped the organic beauty and wellness sector in India to grow steadily.

Conclusion

From 2014 to 2024, there has been significant growth in beauty and wellness products in India, particularly in organic cosmetics. This paper concludes that various factors, both positive and negative, influence the purchasing decisions for organic cosmetics. Today, consumers are increasingly aware of the products they use. Since 2020, following the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a noticeable shift from synthetic and conventional products to organic cosmetics. Consumers often confuse natural and organic cosmetic products; however, the Government of India has introduced several certification standards to support the promotion of organic options. The increasing awareness and demand for organic products are undergoing a transformative change that benefits both people and the environment.

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