

## FEMALE CONSUMERS' ATTITUDE TOWARDS ECO-FRIENDLY COSMETIC AND PERSONAL CARE PRODUCTS IN CALICUT TALUK

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### ABSTRACT

*The growing of eco-awareness around the world has created big implications for beauty industry. One of them is the introduction of green beauty products. In India, the market for eco-friendly cosmetics and personal care is still immature. Consequently, to explore and understand more about consumer behaviour in purchasing eco-friendly cosmetic and personal care product, this present study main objective is to examine Indian consumers' purchasing intention of eco-friendly cosmetics and personal care product. Total respondents are 200 college going female students were selected in Calicut Taluk, Kerla. The results indicate that health consciousness, environmental consciousness and appearance consciousness have significant relationship with attitude toward buying eco-friendly cosmetic and personal care product.*

*Keywords: eco-friendly cosmetics, personal care products, consumer attitudes, Environmental Consciousness, Health Consciousness, Appearance Consciousness.*

### INTRODUCTION

Environmental degradation and awareness of the destruction of natural resources are rising issues in the last decades. Surveys and opinion polls globally, reveal an increasing concern of people about environmental problems. Furthermore, consumers are becoming increasingly aware of the impact of consumption of everyday products on the environment. As a result, the issue of environmental protection has created eco-friendly consumption, called "green consumerism" (Moisander, 2007). Green consumerism can be described as being a multifaceted concept, including protection and preservation of the environment, pollution decrease, animal welfare, species preservation and responsible use of non-renewable resources (McEachern and McClean, 2002). As the issue of environmental protection has been raised, consumers have translated their environmental concern into actively demanding and purchasing green products. Evidence suggests that an increasing number of people are becoming more environmentally responsible in terms of their personal habits and lifestyles and are looking for green products (Stone et al., 1995; Starch, 1996). As a result of the growing number of green consumers, marketers are targeting the green market segment. From this global shift to green products, the cosmetics industry could not be excluded. More and more companies in the personal care products sector are turning to organic ingredients to win over environmentally conscious consumers.

Until recently, the literature provided little understanding of the determinants and consequences of attitudes toward organic products. Although the rapid growth in sales of organic products, and particularly personal care products, has intrigued researchers' interests, the majority of the existing research on the organic cosmetics context has dealt with marketing strategies rather than consumer behavior. A deep understanding of consumer behavior for this product category is necessary to devise effective marketing strategies. Moreover, although there are numerous studies on consumer's attitudes and green purchase behavior, these studies have focused primarily on organic food products (Wandel and Bugge, 1997; Schifferstein and Oude Ophuis, 1998; Magnusson et al., 2001; Mei-Fang, 2009). Thus there is currently an imbalance between the growing use of organic cosmetics in the marketplace and the limited research attention focused on this product category. Therefore, the primary objective of this study is to examine Calicut consumers' attitudes toward organic cosmetics.

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Consumer purchase behavior in eco-friendly cosmetics

From the mid-1980s onwards, research into consumer behavior and the environment focuses on getting a better understanding of the motives of environmentally friendly behavior (Shrum et al, 1995; Straughan and Roberts, 1999; Laroche et al., 2001). The theory of reasoned action (TRA), proposed by Fishbein and Ajzen (1980), has been extensively utilized by research in the field of social behavior and

intention to predict and realize the motivational impacts on behavior. According to TRA, an individual's behavior is driven by behavioral intention while behavioral intention is driven by the combination of two factors, attitude and subjective norm. In reality, behavioral intention is an immediate antecedent of performing actual behavior and is also a function of beliefs about probability that performing a behavior will cause a specific outcome (Ajzen and Fishbein, 1975). In terms of this study, TRA is appropriate to marketers and organizations attempting to identify proper strategies to direct consumers' attitude and influence their purchase behavior in choosing organic products.

### **Consumer Values and Attitude**

The term value has been defined as "the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product based on perceptions of what is received and what is given" (Zeithaml, 1988, p. 14). It is also defined as a belief about desirable end states (Rokeach, 1973). Attitudes are largely based on values which are considered to be more stable than attitudes and act as their building blocks (Eagly and Chaiken, 1995). The current study expects that individuals with different value systems will shape different attitudes toward organic cosmetics because one's values are guiding principles in one's life (Rokeach, 1973). Therefore, values can influence the formation of consumers' behavior by guiding them to look for objects that satisfy their values (Poortinga et al., 2004). Since organic products are commonly viewed as encouraging a healthy lifestyle, explained by the acronym LOHAS (Lifestyles of Health and Sustainability) (Essoussi and Zahaf, 2008), some similarities in consumers' purchase behaviors are expected to exist between organic food and organic cosmetics. Some differences are also expected since eating food and using cosmetics are distinct consumption behaviors. Relevant literature suggests that health and environmental consciousness affect attitudes toward purchasing organic food (Chryssohoidis and Krystallis, 2005), whereas studies on health care context show that people use these products to manage their appearances (Marcoux, 2000).

### **Environmental Consciousness**

The role of environmental concerns on consumer purchasing intention is becoming clear on the consumption of environmentally friendly products. Environment awareness is not only a concern for its ecological associations and organizer but also important for marketing and sales (First & Khatriwal, 2010; Bartels & Onwezen, 2014). Based on Olsen, Slotegraaf, & Chandukala, (2014) consumer's interest regarding ecological matters explained their attitudes towards a goods and buying behaviors, exceptionally for environmentally or ecological products. Nevertheless, many studies were done on the relationship of environmental consciousness and organic consumption (Salleh et al, 2010), others have found environmental consciousness as an important determinant on consumer decision to buy automobile (Hellier et al, 2003) and green hotel (Davies et al, 2012)

### **Health Consciousness**

Based on M. Chen, (2009) women can adapt their consumption patterns when they accepted that their behaviors affect their health. Female consumers purchase green or environmentally-friendly goods not only as of their relevance for eco-friendly protection but also for their own health (de Mooij & Hofstede, 2011). Supported in another study, Dutch customers also pursued by health consciousness when buying organic food purchase. Even though investigation have focused in health as the compared to environmental protection (Yadav & Pathak, 2016) the outcome may be combined by customers' position of natural nutrition and time.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The respondents for this study are female students who have been using the eco-friendly cosmetics and personal care products for the past two years. These respondents are able to understand the phenomenon of using eco-friendly cosmetics and consequences on chemical substance in conventional product. Data were collected using questionnaires that were distributed among the potential respondents, in which the data is collected from the right sample group.

### **Data collection and sample**

A convenience sample was employed, due to the fact that women are more interested in eco-friendly cosmetics, they are heavy users of cosmetics in general and they invest much time and effort in improving the way they look. Moreover, women are more motivated than men to answer the questionnaire because they are highly engaged in purchasing cosmetics and personal care products.

Survey data were collected from 200 female students in Kozhikodu taluk The current study employed structured questionnaires in order to identify respondents’ attitudes toward eco-friendly cosmetics.

**Measurement Instrument**

To assess attitudes toward organic cosmetics, a questionnaire of 29 items was developed. The questionnaire consisted of three sections of established scales and a section on demographic information. Section A consisted of items measuring environmental, health and appearance consciousness. Environmental consciousness was measured using a ten-item scale adapted from Dunlap et al. (2000). An eleven-item scale was used to measure health consciousness based on Oude Ophuis (1989). Seven appearance consciousness items were adapted from Carr et al. (2000). All the responses were measured on a five-point Likert scale, with 1 = “strongly disagree” and 5 = “strongly agree”. The section B consisted of basic demographic data such as age, monthly family income level and education level.

**DATA ANALYSIS**

**Demographic Characteristics of Respondents**

There was a wide distribution of age range, with the majority of the respondents were between 21-25 years, with 63% falling into this range. 22 percent of the respondents aged up to 20 years while just 15% were 25 and above. In terms of education level, 8% of the respondents pursuing diploma course, 45% of the respondents pursuing a under graduation, 18% of the respondents pursuing post graduation, 6% percent of the respondents doing research and 23 percent of the respondents doing professional course. Regarding the monthly family income, the vast majority (48%) has an income ranging from Rs. 30001to Rs. 40000, 18 percent of the respondents have an income range from Rs.20001-Rs.30000, 12 percent of the respondents have an income less than Rs. 20000, 13 percent of the respondents have an income range from Rs. 40001-Rs.50000 and 9 percent of the respondents have an income more than Rs. 50000.

**Table 1 show the frequency and percentage of respondents profiles.**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
Up to 20 Years	44	21
21-25 Years	126	63
Above 25 Years	30	15
<b>Education</b>		
Diploma	16	8
Under Graduation	90	45
Post Graduation	36	18
Research Scholar	12	6
Professional Course	46	23
<b>Monthly Family Income</b>		
Below Rs. 20000	24	12
Rs. 20001- Rs.30000	36	18
Rs. 30001- Rs.40000	96	48
Rs. 40001- Rs.50000	26	13
Above Rs. 50000	18	9
Total	200	100

**Table 2 Respondents Attitudes toward Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and Personal Care Product(PCP)**

Sl. No.	Attitudes Toward Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP	Mean	SD
1	I like the idea of purchasing organic cosmetics.	4.10	.609
2	Purchasing organic cosmetics is a good idea.	4.14	.714
3	I have a favorable attitude toward purchasing organic cosmetics.	4.54	.607
4	Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are healthier	4.50	.621
5	Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP have superior quality	3.93	.734
6	Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are a fraud	2.83	1.080

7	Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are worse than conventional product	2.14	1.284
8	Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are in fashion	3.36	.871
9	Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are more expensive	3.95	.840
10	Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are more attractive	4.09	.499

Table 2 shows the mean and standard deviation of the attitude towards eco- friendly cosmetics and personal care product. The respondents attitude have ten statements like, ‘I have a favorable attitude toward purchasing organic cosmetics’ which has the highest mean score (mean = 4.54; SD = 0.607) followed by Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are healthier(mean=4.50, SD=.621), purchasing organic cosmetics is a good idea. (mean = 4.14; SD = .714), ‘I like the idea of purchasing organic cosmetics’ (mean = 4.10; SD = .609), Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are more attractive(mean=4.09; SD=.499), Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are more expensive (mean = 3.95; SD = .840), Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP have superior quality (mean = 3.93; SD = .734), Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are in fashion (mean = 3.36; SD = .871), Eco-Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are a fraud (mean = 2.83; SD = 1.080) and Eco- Friendly Cosmetics and PCP are worse than conventional product (mean = 2.14; SD = 1.284).

Table 3 Influence of environmental consciousness, appearance consciousness and health consciousness on attitude towards eco-friendly cosmetics and personal care product

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.789 <sup>a</sup>	.778	.777	.08546	12.471	.000 <sup>b</sup>

- a. Predictors: (Constant), Environmental Consciousness, Appearance Consciousness, Health Consciousness
- b. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards Eco-friendly

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model	Independent Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	18.333	1.651		11.102	.000
	Environmental Consciousness	.147	.074	.125	2.021	.041
	Appearance Consciousness	.203	.065	.180	3.045	.002
	Health Consciousness	.182	.074	.155	2.557	.010

a. Dependent Variable: Attitude towards Eco-friendly

There are three factors that influence the attitude towards eco-friendly cosmetics and personal care product. To test the influence of independent variables taken up for the study on dependent variable, regression analysis was applied. The regression analysis for independent variables namely environmental consciousness, appearance consciousness and health consciousness and dependent variable namely attitude towards eco-friendly cosmetics is explained in the above table.

An examination of t – values of this table shows that ‘Appearance Consciousness’ (t = 3.045), ‘Health Consciousness’ (t=2.557) and ‘Environmental Consciousness’ (t = 2.021) contribute significantly to the prediction of attitude towards eco-friendly cosmetics. The adjusted R<sup>2</sup> is 0.777. This indicated that 77.7% of the variance in the dependent variable (attitude towards eco-friendly) is explained by the independent variables (environmental consciousness, appearance consciousness and health consciousness). This regression model results in the ANOVA which is reported by F = 12.471 (p < 0.00). This indicated that the regression model is significant. Results of this study support the findings reported by Contrary to Kim and Chung (2011) where only environmental consciousness and appearance consciousness were found to be significant in predicting consumers’ attitudes.

**CONCLUSION**

The results indicate that appearance consciousness influence are important predictors of attitude toward eco-friendly cosmetics and personal care products. Health consciousness, environmental consciousness, on the other hand, appear to have an insignificant impact on attitude. The sample contained only consumers living in an urban city and further research should seek to explore a larger and

geographically more diversified sample of consumers. This study suggests that marketers should develop more effective marketing strategies, by communicating the environmental benefits of organic cosmetics. The use of endorsements could also contribute to improving marketing communication initiatives. This study provides valuable insight into Indian consumer behavior regarding eco-friendly cosmetics by examining the factors that influence consumers' attitudes.

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