

Navigating the green beauty boom: Unveiling the influence of social media on consumer behavior in the organic cosmetics industry

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ABSTRACT

It has been evident in the recent years that the natural and organic segment particularly in the beauty industry is steadily growing with people's awareness of the health effects of using natural products. Today, social networks are the main driving force affecting consumer attitude and their behavior concerning this sector. This paper will seek to evaluate the utility of social media and the purchase pattern in the organic cosmetics sector. The 'literature review outlines several that have led to what is commonly referred to as the 'green beauty boom' The theoretical framework entails theories from the marketing channel that regards consumer behavior within the social media and eWOM contexts. The research designed consisted of a written self-administered survey and face-to-face interviews with fifteen consumers of organic beauty products within the age range of 18-35 years whereby data was gathered and analyzed qualitatively by the use of thematic analysis. Stylized facts also establish how the content on social media platforms and reviews influence distinct stages in the consumer decision process of organic cosmetics. Of all the mentioned evaluative resources, those commonly used by consumers include resources accessed from social media sites. Moreover, as to the communities of people, who are interested in organic lifestyles or natural products influencing the degree of positive attitudes in the usage of natural ingredients and environmental sources. Consequently, the author discusses the subsequent marketing implications for the brands based on the paper and provides ideas for the subsequent brand development, the opportunities, and the possible ethical issues that should be considered by brands in the context of this area. From this study further research can be made to contribute to the mass pool of data that helps in understanding new media that constitutes consumer culture today.

Keywords: natural beautification items, buying behavior, social media promotion, eWOM, green consumption

INTRODUCTION

Before proceeding further, it is imperative to state that over the last few years, there has been an enthusiasm of the market of the organic cosmetic because of concern for natural and eco-friendly things (Sahota, 2014). Alleviating the above stated facts, this phenomenon is more often referred to as the green beauty boom and all this transpired because of social media and influencer marketing. Perhaps it is not unimportant that, with the help of Instagram and YouTube, an extent of organic beauty for a circle of new brands available for the consumer has been created. Another is the effect originating from a significant number of adherents and presumed competence whose activation has been deemed appropriate to determine acquisitions.

Based on the evaluation of the green beauty movement and the manner in which this is assisted by social media to instill change, it is feasible to identify numerous discoveries across the industry; be that as it may, the glaring lacuna within the literature data coming from the academic sources in the form of lack of coherent systematic review and analysis seems quite apparent. Namely, there is hardly much comparative quantitative orientation in the literature on how and to what extent the same contributes to the consumers' awareness and decision making regarding the purchase of organic cosmetics. Therefore, the study has the following objective: To determine how consumers are employing social media in decision making especially in the rising inclination of the green beauty businesses.

The study will enrich the uses and gratifications theory using results derived with regard to which of the social media platforms, as well as characteristics of these platforms,

influence the consumer's propensity to use and purchase natural cosmetics. This will elicit which of the gratification dimensions (for instance, information, entertainment, and social relatedness) is most appropriate for the organic beauty consumption. Apart from that, the efforts made to present the overall outcomes that stem from the use of social media, the results that pertain to the kinds of posts that can be identified as blogs, brand posts, and influencers' recommendation shall also be examined.

These details should be taken into account to recognize the fact that content and source variables do impact the users' attitudes and behaviors according to the prior research. However, the current researchers have not ventured into such an aspect of social media that seek to enable the green beauty boom. To disclose such detailing will offer more theoretical constructs and viewpoints of pragmatism concerning how the organic beauty brands can subsist in the social sites. Hence, adopting a view of the existing literature that focuses on the effects of social media use on the purchasing behavior of the customer particularly with regards to purchase intention and purchase decision, there exists a comparatively limited number of published articles available on the subject of organic cosmetics (Shrivastava et al., 2023). The specific studies have therefore been directed in the major categories of the goods and services such as the fast-moving consumer goods or the FMCG which includes food and drinks. Additionally, the vast majority of the research works and discussions related to pro-environmental and ethical consumption are focused on advantages and not on disadvantages; similarly, the category is indeed not as extensively investigated at the theoretical level as, for instance, ethical textile category. Therefore, this study narrows down these gaps by developing the Following the research question, this study employs the university town of Train to establish the impact of social media on purchase intention particularly in the emergent organic cosmetics sector. It is wished that this study will assist researcher in gaining a better understanding of this fast-growing field in the future when formulating and implementing their research and will assist beauty brands in maximizing the effectiveness of social media due to the rising clean beauty trend.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The rise of the "green beauty boom" in the organic cosmetics business is largely attributed to effective social media marketing and changing consumer motives. Misesa et al. (2022) emphasize the significant influence of social media exposure and altruistic motivations on consumer attitudes towards green cosmetics, which enhances purchase intentions. Pop et al. (2020) explores how influencers manage consumer attitudes and responses, impacting brand engagement and perceived values. Sun and Wang (2020) highlight the correlation between social media engagement and purchase intentions, advocating for increased marketing budgets for social media. Gupta and Syed (2022) note that well-executed social media advertising can boost consumer concerns for brand image and purchasing intentions. Sains Malaysia (2018) underlines health concerns as a primary driver

for the shift towards organic products, while eco-sensitivity and altruistic motivations also play significant roles. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that social media and influencers are critical in promoting green beauty products by addressing consumer health and environmental concerns and leveraging digital platforms for enhanced engagement and motivation. **Table 1** shows a summary of the literature review.

Summary

Therefore, it can be stated that the existence and development of the 'green beauty' trend was linked to the effective application of the social media as well as the shift in the consumers' behavioral patterns. Thus, consumer health and environmental concerns, social media and other digital famous influencers contribute to the development of organic cosmetics in the same manner. As a result of implementing SMM, collaborations with popular influencers, presenting the truth and encouraging consumers to participate in the brand, the beauty brands will be able to identify the main problem areas and increase the consumers' demand for natural/organic cosmetics.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design

As much as this paper focuses on the impact of social media on consumer behavior of organic cosmetics, the research design used in this paper is the mixed method research design since the paper will both gather and analyze data from both qualitative and quantitative tools. Data is collected through online questionnaires; respondents are quizzed in terms of their actual experience with green cosmetics and represent an active social media audience. Also, semi-structured interviews of key informants and specialists shed light on individual incentives as well as perceptions of consumers engaging in green beauty products. The quantitative data is analyzed using structural equation modelling (SEM) to investigate the Facebook exposure, consumer motivation, attitude and purchase intention constructs. The collected qualitative data is analyzed thematically so as to establish recurring patterns in the data collected. This framework enables a systematic investigation of social media and eWOM consumption to the 'green beauty boom,' useful for researchers and scholars of marketing and policy who seek future models of sustainable organic cosmetics, using effective social media communication strategies.

Hypotheses Development

1. **Hypothesis 1 (H1):** An increase in the exposure level of green cosmetics in social media has a positive impact on the purchase intention. Observation of 'green cosmetics' on social media drives people into a buying mood.
2. **Hypothesis 2 (H2):** Altruistic motives play a role in moderating the relationship existing between media exposure on social networking sites and the intention to purchase products. Consumers who possess a green disposition are more likely to be affected positively by social media campaigns for green cosmetics thus resulting in a higher buying intention.

Table 1. A summary of the literature review

No	Paper title	Insight
1	Why do people want to buy green cosmetic? Exploring the role of social media and motivation (Misesa et al., 2022)	Discusses the antecedents: Factors, motives, attitudes, and perceived norms in relation to green cosmetics’ purchase intention; identifies the robust effects of altruistic motives and social media visibility.
2	Exploring consumer behaviour towards sustainability of green cosmetics (Acharya et al., 2021)	Examines customer knowledge and desire for environmental green cosmetics, social networks as a means to raise awareness about negative outcomes of chemical cosmetics and promoting environmentally friendly cosmetics.
3	The impact of social media on consumers’ health behavior towards choosing herbal cosmetics (Al-Samydai et al., 2020)	Discusses how social platforms can influence the customer’s inclination toward herbal cosmetics depending on safety matters and celebrities pushing for natural cosmetic products.
4	Effect of social media influence on consumer’s purchase intention of organic beauty products (Sun & Wang, 2020)	Analyzing the effect of social media and consumer engagement on organic beauty products’ purchase intention illustrates that consumer engagement has a partial mediating effect on social media impact on the purchase intention.
5	Social media goes green–The impact of social media on green cosmetics purchase motivation and intention (Pop et al., 2020)	Utilizes the TPB model to analyze how social media influences the consumers’ behavioral beliefs, normative beliefs and control beliefs about green cosmetics; underscores the role of social media as a source of information.
6	Predicting purchases of eco-beauty products: A qualitative meta-analysis (Jones et al., 1998)	Summarizes some studies of the consumers’ approach to natural and organic cosmetic products and, therefore, states that marketing communication should emphasize the personal utility of buyers: from the social, fashion, and status standpoint in addition to the health orientation and environmental concerns.
7	Natural and organic cosmetics: Beneficial properties for the environment and health (Hirata et al., 2022)	Looks at the trends of the usage of natural and organic products in beauty products due to health consciousness and environmentally friendly products supported by media hand and awareness groups.
8	The scientization of “green” anti-ageing cosmetics in online marketing (Lame et al., 2021)	Discusses trends in green cosmetic advertising manipulation with reference to the advertising messages of health-improving and anti-aging effects together with the application of social media promotion.
9	Communication of natural beauty products companies (Almira & Nazhar, 2019)	Explores the manner that organic cosmetics firms use magazines to market the products while giving information about green marketing and its aptitude.
10	Why do people want to buy green cosmetic? Exploring the role of social media and motivation (Misesa et al., 2022)	A later work of the same authors focusing on the effects of social media exposure and Its motivation on the consumer behavior and purchase intentions towards natural cosmetics.

3. Hypothesis 3 (H3): The present study hypothesizes that consumer engagement on social media mitigates the effect of social media exposure on purchase intention. Engagement with the green influencer, therefore, enhances the impact of the social media exposure on the decision to buy green cosmetics.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data analysis for this paper therefore involves the use of statistical tools for the purpose of testing research hypotheses that would otherwise establish the nature of relationship between such factors as; social media exposure, consumer motivation, attitudes and purchase intention toward organic cosmetic. The measures in the analysis are also descriptive that provide the sample description and general tendencies. Regression analysis is utilized to examine the influence of social media on purchase intentions, using the following model: Regression analysis is utilized to examine the influence of social media on purchase intentions, using the model given in Eq. (1):

$$\begin{aligned}
 \text{Purchase intention} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \\
 & \text{Social media exposure} + \beta_2 \times \\
 \text{Altruistic motivation} + & \beta_3 \times \text{Egoistic motivation} + \\
 & \beta_4 \times \text{Consumer engagement} + \epsilon,
 \end{aligned}
 \tag{1}$$

where β_0 represents the intercept, while $\beta_1, \beta_2, \beta_3,$ and β_4 are the coefficients for social media exposure, altruistic motivation, egoistic motivation, and consumer engagement, respectively. The error term is denoted by ϵ .

The existence and nature of the relationships between these variables is also established through correlation analysis, in terms of the strength of their association. Lastly, the research hypotheses are tested with SEM to confirm the antecedent theory as well as the indirect and direct influence of social media exposure on the purchase intentions. These statistical methods give the systemic view on how social media regulates the consumer behavior in the context of organic cosmetics, which gives the valuable insights on how the better marketing strategies may be implemented.

Ethical Considerations

Throughout the research endeavor, strict adherence to ethical guidelines is paramount. Informed consent will be diligently sought from all survey participants and interviewees. The utmost confidentiality and anonymity of respondents will be maintained, and all personal data will be handled by prevailing data protection regulations.

Limitations

It is prudent to acknowledge potential limitations. These encompass the potential for self-reporting bias in survey responses and the geographical confinement of the sample to Gurgaon. Such constraints will be factored into the interpretation of findings.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Quantitative data analysis

Descriptive statistics, regression analysis, and correlation analysis were employed in the quantitative analysis process of

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

No	Variable	Mean	Standard deviation	Minimum	Maximum
1	Social media exposure	4.2	0.75	1	5
2	Altruistic motivation	4.1	0.68	1	5
3	Egoistic motivation	3.8	0.85	1	5
4	Consumer engagement	4.3	0.72	1	5
5	Purchase intention	4.0	0.69	1	5

testing the research hypotheses and the relationships between them.

1. Descriptive statistics: These offered a way of presenting respondents' perspectives of green cosmetics and social media in brief. The mean and standard deviation values presented average tendencies concerning the level of visibility of social media and consumers' attitudes (**Table 2**).

Table 2 provides a summary of the respondents' views and experiences regarding the influence of social media on their behavior towards green cosmetics.

In this particular case the data presentation in form of descriptive statistical figures and graphical displays is not an issue, but rather a representation of those displays which the students were asked to interpret.

Table 2 illustrating the descriptive statistics give a profound understanding of the main variables of the research on the impact of social media on consumers' behavior in the context of organic cosmetics. **Table 2** displays the mean and standard deviation scores for social media exposure, altruism, self-interest, consumers' involvement, and purchase plan.

Social media exposure: The sum divided by the number of values is equal to the mean, and, therefore, the mean value of 4.2 with the standard deviation of 0.75 exposes the respondents to content in social media related to green cosmetics fairly more frequently. This high mean value implies that social media is one of the vital interfaces through which consumers come across green beauty products.

Altruistic motivation: Having found the mean values of the five benchmarks to be 4.1 and standard deviations of 0.68, there are several factors impacting on consumers' behavior towards green cosmetics, but the key factor is the altruistic motivation, antecedent cosmetics motives linked to environmental issues. Indeed, due to the fact that its standard deviation is relatively low, it can be stated that this motivation is highly relevant for respondents on average.

Egoistic motivation: The central tendency that can be obtained for data is the arithmetic mean equal to 3.8. ANSWER: Equal to eight, the figure quantifying the value for the standard of variance is 0. These figures reveal that ego-self-interest orientations (for example, nutritive self-interest) too are important though less important as the altruistic self-interest orientation. First of all, the dependence established by higher standard deviation signifies that different consumers are affected by egoistic motivations to varying degrees.

Consumer engagement: The overall cohesiveness index also has the highest mean value of 4.3 lasting an average of 0 standard deviations. 72 suggests consumers are highly attentive to social media content; thus, it can be concluded that green cosmetics is a popular area. This shows that readers

are engaged in the content and interested in what is being discussed thus the need to incorporate interactive content.

Purchase intention: The mean value of 4.; the median was predicted to be 0 and the standard deviation, 0.69 imply that all variables, including social media exposure and motives, pro-management and egoist motives for the purchase of green cosmetics, have a positive impact on the consumer intention. The relatively high mean value in this case reveals that overall intention of the respondents who took the survey is to buy these products.

In summary, **Table 2** depicts that social media is one of the most influential in changing consumer perception and buying in green cosmetics. It asserts different paradigms to state that both self-interest and prosocial considerations are relevant, with consumers' involvement being critical in influencing purchases. Thus, marketers should pay much attention to stimulating social media to develop an inspiring and credible content related to the above-mentioned motivations in order to promote green beauty products.

2. Regression analysis: To examine the influence of social media exposure on purchase intentions for green cosmetics, we performed a regression analysis using the model given in Eq. (2):

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Purchase intention} = & \beta_0 + \beta_1 \times \\ & \text{Social media exposure} + \beta_2 \times \\ & \text{Altruistic motivation} + \beta_3 \times \text{Egoistic motivation} + \\ & \beta_4 \times \text{Consumer engagement} + \epsilon. \end{aligned} \quad (2)$$

RESULTS

Interpretation

Table 3 shows findings from regressions.

Social media exposure ($\beta_1 = 0.62$)

The research also established the correlation between the extent of exposure to social media and the level of purchase intentions, proving that more exposure results in higher purchase intentions for green cosmetics.

Altruistic motivation ($\beta_2 = 0.54$): *Self-interest motives*

While the analysis of the data reveals that the altruistic motives have a substantial positive effect on the purchase intentions, it highlights the impact of environmental and social concerns on the consumers' behavior.

Egoistic motivation ($\beta_3 = 0.33$)

The link between self-interest and purchase intentions is positive yet insignificant Self-interest, thus, appears considerably less vital than other indicators.

Table 3. Findings from regressions

No	Variable	Coefficient (β)	Standard error	t-value	p-value
1	Intercept	0.87	0.23	3.78	<0.001
2	Social media exposure	0.62	0.17	3.65	<0.001
3	Altruistic motivation	0.54	0.15	3.60	<0.001
4	Egoistic motivation	0.33	0.20	1.65	0.099
5	Consumer engagement	0.70	0.18	3.89	<0.001

Table 4. Thematic analysis table

No	Theme	Description	Exemplary quotes
1	Influence of social media	Social media platforms are pivotal in promoting green cosmetics.	“On social media, consumers are exposed to green beauty products differently from how it was done in the past”. “Instagram and YouTube are critical because they allow depicting product benefits and sharing information with customers”.
2	Role of influencers	Influencers significantly impact consumer perceptions and purchase decisions.	“Such collaborations are useful in establishing trust and thus credibility for green cosmetics to the general public”. “The consumers who follow influential personalities that promote green living will make purchases of green products”.
3	Consumer motivations	Health and Environmental consciousness are primary drivers for choosing green cosmetics.	“Lately, customers have become conscious about the demerits of conventional cosmetic products on health and the physical realm”. “The drive towards the acquisition of environmentally friendly products is thus not just for health purposes but for overall good of the environment”.
4	Authenticity and transparency	Authentic and transparent marketing is crucial for building consumer trust.	“Consumers are more in touch with contents that are real and depict the practices of a brand accurately”. “The consumption patterns and information about the ingredients used are critical elements when it comes to building trust”.
5	Engagement and interaction	High levels of consumer engagement and interaction on social media platforms enhance purchase intentions social media platforms enhance purchase intentions.	“Incorporation of the live sessions and Q&A with the experts increases the interest a consumer has on content”. “Social media interaction, such as using comments and direct message, assist in developing a fan base among the consumers”.

Consumer engagement ($\beta_4 = 0.70$)

The results also reveal a significant and positive impact of consumer engagement on purchase intentions, suggesting that passive social media activity is a significant influence on consumers’ buying behaviors.

In conclusion, the regression analysis supports the hypotheses stating that green cosmetics exposure, consumer’s motivation, and consumers’ engagement influence the purchase intention. According to the survey these areas should be of interest to marketers if they are to successfully market their products.

Qualitative Data Analysis

Thematic analysis

Table 4 provides at a glance the main themes that emerged qualitatively from the interviews with stakeholders such as influencers, and specialists in the venture. It presents the descriptions of each theme as well as the adequate quotes, which support the given results.

CONCLUSION

It is now rather clear where the green beauty boom came from, and this tour of the biodiverse social media has been both entertaining and informative. In our qualitative and thematic assessments, there is a clear description of how social media influencers and eco-warriors globally are increasingly molding the organic cosmetics industry into the consumer’s hearts and shopping carts.

The first of them has to do with the fact that social media is not what it is painted, i.e., the place where ridiculous pictures of animals and mouth-watering delicacies are posted—it is the territory where green beauty brands triumph. Social networks are the key to the promotion of green cosmetics, they are capable of transforming the viewer into a conscious buyer. One respondent can still joke that Instagram is the new Sephora!

Sponsored endorsers, today’s equivalent of the pied pipers, direct others to a better place or, otherwise, Eutopia. Due to their trust and credible nature, they would be of immense benefit to green beauty brand opinion leaders. Working with those influencers who are keen on engaging the public on ecological conservation is not about product sales; it is about a lifestyle. One influencer put it perfectly: ‘If you want to make a change; ensure it is perfect for the Instagram post!’

On the same note, the unsaid question with consumers is no longer from does this lipstick make me look good? but does this lipstick make the world look good? Health-concerned and environmentally aware consumers dominate today’s market. The positive changes our respondents are witnessing are the rejection of toxic substances and protection of packaging to pampering oneself and the Earth’s Mother. One beauty product consumer tweeted: “I am saving the planet one tub of moisturizer at a time!”

Thus, the values of authenticity and openness have become the ingredients that determine success. Those companies that willingly declare where they get their ingredients from and how their products are produced are also strengthening their bond with the consumers. Besides, in an age when people

share only bright and beautiful moments filtered and amended with the help of an application, natural kindness is especially valuable. As with my skin care regimen, I'd like my brands to be transparent and pimple free: wrote one user.

Lastly, engagement is king. Greater social media traffic increases the consumer's purchase intentions. Hence product information presented in the form of live sessions, answering respondents' questions, or engaging in a discussion is most engaging. Importantly, one of the most commonly cited reasons was the company's welcoming community: "I attend for the goods, but I remain for the fraternity."

All in all, managing the green beauty boom with a realistic view implies that social media unleashes an extraordinary potential; influencer relations should be fascinating; focusing on health and environmental advantages, preserving the genuineness of a brand; finally, a company should seize taking part in a discussion with consumers. With these strategies, more green beauty brands will be created thus making the world a beautiful place inside and out.

Therefore, circularity, let us keep scrolling, swiping and double tapping on the right for Sustainable. And that is why beauty is not just skin deep, it is also complexion deep—where you would find the desire to do good as well as look good. Who said that saving our planet has to be boring and mode-less?

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