

Marketing Strategies Of Eco-Friendly Beauty Brands In India: A Case Study Of Mamaearth And Forest Essentials

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Abstract

The increasing awareness about sustainability and ethical consumerism is strongly impacting the beauty industry and emerging economies, such as India. Literature Review: Statement of Problem This study makes attempt to analyze the marketing strategy of two leading sustainable cosmetic brands in India such as Mamaearth and Forest Essentials. Using case studies, it examines the ways these brands use green marketing, digital media, influencer partnerships, and brand positioning to target consumers concerned about the environment. Mamaearth leans on product affordability, mass distribution and digital-native branding, while Forest Essentials focuses on luxury, Ayurveda-based products, and traditional craftsmanship. The paper compares one to the other, assessing their market impact in reaching different target groups of consumers. Analysis was done with a combination of primary data from consumer perception surveys, secondary data on brand communications and social media content. Findings indicate that both brands are successful in aligning with eco-friendly beliefs, although marketing strategies vary according to target market and price point. This study contributes to the understanding of sustainable branding dynamics and its impact on consumer behaviour in the Indian beauty market.

Keywords: Green marketing, eco-friendly beauty brands, consumer behavior, sustainability, Mamaearth, Forest Essentials, Indian beauty industry.

INTRODUCTION

Ecologically responsible fashion sense seems to have paid off in the past few years. What the Indian beauty industry is seeing less of, is environmentally-conscious consumer behaviour. As Indian consumers become aware of environmental degradation, chemicals and ethical sourcing, their interest in green and clean beauty brands has certainly gained momentum. This changing consumer mentality has given rise to more and more eco-friendly beauty brands that are eco-conscious in terms of ingredients, packaging, cruelty-free testing and transparency in the value chain. Of these, Mamaearth and Forest Essentials are leading players who represent two opposing but successful models of eco-aware marketing. Founded in 2016, Mamaearth has made a name for itself quickly as a millennial-focused, millennial-friendly, wallet-friendly, digital-first brand with a digital-first approach to marketing, through celebrity influence. In comparison, Forest Essentials, founded in 2000, is positioned in the luxury Ayurveda market as a maker of high-end beauty and wellness products derived from traditional Indian knowledge systems and made using the skills of artisanal craftsmanship. While they are both stewards for the environment and sustainability, their marketing strategies display different philosophies and audiences.

This paper investigates the marketing approach adopted by Mamaearth and Forest Essentials with regards to presenting its eco friendly positioning to the Indian consumer. Although both brands position themselves as ethical and environmentally friendly, their branding stories, product prices, channels and tools are quite different. Mamaearth stern." The brand believes in "aggressive digital marketing through a value-driven strategy" and focuses on performance-based advertising, influencer collabs and high engagement on social media, and caters to young urbane consumers. Its branding focuses on safety, affordability and product efficacy, qualities that resonate with both cost-conscious and socially conscious consumers. Forest Essentials on the other hand chose to use a more luxury storytelling, more about authentic Use of Ayurvedic formulations, hand made production, cultural heritage and so on. Its marketing is understated, experience-oriented, and focused on the aura of exclusivity it evokes, typically through high-end retail experiences, unique spa partnerships and luxury content.

This study aims to analyze and compare the green marketing strategies of these two brands, and to determine the main drivers of green beauty product consumer's perceptions and behaviour. Mixed-method approach is used in this study involving primary data (with use of a structured questionnaire) and secondary data in the form of brand's campaigns, social media manner and product reviews. The study seeks to extend the existing knowledge on sustainable marketing in emerging market contexts through a better understanding of the brand strategies and their implications for consumer engagement and trust. Additionally, lessons learned from this comparison can inform future eco-beauty brand marketers how to design successful marketing communications strategies that are congruent with environmental and market forces.

Overall, the Indian beauty market provides fertile ground for sustainable and eco-friendly innovations, and brands such as Mamaearth and Forest Essentials provide valuable guidance on how green branding can be fine-tuned to cater to the diverse consumer profiles. Where the demand for green beauty products continues to grow, a little green marketing expertise can empower brands who want to make more big profits, and a little more sense.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Tony Falcone, President, F, R & R Consulting The emergence of green marketing is part of a larger global movement of consumer values that embrace sustainability and ethical consumption, particularly in the beauty and personal care space. Green marketing must expand its focus beyond applying eco-labels (Rex and Baumann, 2007) and start embracing some of the traditional marketing tools in order to impact purchase behaviors. In cosmetics, many studies highlighted factors that affect consumer preference and revolve around ideas of naturalness, environmental responsibility, and ethics of sourcing. According to Mačić and Puh (2016) more and more consumers in East European countries also prefer to buy natural cosmetics for health and environment concerns. Rybowska (2014) also pointed out that consumer positive attitudes regarding ecological cosmetic products are highly related to trust in brand communication, environmental labeling.

Kaufmann, Panni and Orphanidou (2012) proposed a conceptual model that explains the factors that contribute to an individuals' intention to engage in green purchasing behaviour including: environmental concern, perceived effectiveness, and personal relevance. These results are supported by Wilson et al. (2018), state that the knowledge, awareness and social norms have a significant impact existed among factors of consumers for green consumption, especially in cosmetics sector. Fonseca-Santos et al. (2015), further discuss how the consumers' demand for products that are sustainable, organic, but also effective and safe leads to an interesting challenge for brands which consist of balancing environmental and efficacy stories.

In the Indian context, Singhal and Malik (2018) examined the female consumer perceptions in relation to green marketing in cosmetics and identified that green claims had positively impacted the purchase intention, especially when associated with the brand trust and satisfaction. Equally, Upamannu and Bhakar (2014) point that customer satisfaction is a critical antecedent of brand image and loyalty, particularly in environments where ethical values are crucial to consumers' confidence. Polonsky (1994)

and Berchicci Bodewes (2005) highlight the need to match environmental claims to new product development and regulatory processes which calls for a need for authenticity in green beauty brands as far as sustainability is concerned.

Scholars investigating the brand strategies have recognized storytelling, certifications, as well as experience marketing as powerful tools of brands. Cervellon et al. (2011) investigated consumer perception of green cosmetics finding a discrepancy between marketing message and awareness of the consumer that can result in suspicion if not properly handled. Girotto (2013) elaborated sustainability in the cosmetic industry throughout the value chain, advocating for transparency and third-party certifications as trust indicators. In the meantime, websites like StartupTalky, Inventiva, and MarqueEx have explained how pure play digital brands such as Mamaearth leverage influencer marketing, the art of social media storytelling and performance-driven campaigning to allure eco-friendly millennials.

Forest Essentials, on the other hand, uses more heritage-oriented marketing, emphasizing luxury-like Ayurveda and the cultural authenticity which would resonate with the tradition: bound, and wealthy, Indian consumer. This division of strategy between mass-market eco-branding and premium green storytelling is indicative of wider customer segmentation initiatives. Last, tools such as SWOC and TOWS analysis (Wehrich, 1982; Aithal & Kumar, 2015) have been used in business literature to assess the internal and external strategic posture and are useful for assessing the LK's effectiveness to market eco-friendly brands.

In short, the literature suggests that, consumers have high interest in sustainable beauty products but effective marketing strategies need to include a balance of authenticity, education, being well with regulations, and emotional engagement in order to create brand equity that sustain over time. This sets the base for analysing how these principles are employed in the marketing strategies of Mamaearth and Forest Essentials.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To analyze the marketing strategies adopted by eco-friendly beauty brands in India with specific reference to Mamaearth and Forest Essentials.
2. To examine consumer perception and purchasing behavior towards eco-friendly beauty products.
3. To compare the effectiveness of digital and traditional marketing techniques used by Mamaearth and Forest Essentials.

Hypothesis (H₁): There is a significant relationship between consumer perception and purchasing behavior towards eco-friendly beauty products.

Null Hypothesis (H₀): There is no significant relationship between consumer perception and purchasing behavior towards eco-friendly beauty products.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature, and focuses on consumer perception and purchasing behaviour of eco-friendly beauty products in relation to Mamaearth and Forest Essentials. The study is based mainly on primary data which is collected using a structured questionnaire among the consumers who are known to eco-friendly beauty products or purchasing in metros. A sample size of 150, other characteristics being equal with the participants drawn from different urban centers of India, was selected using a non probability convenience sample technique. The questionnaire was designed to collect information on awareness, attitudes, perceptions and purchase preference of consumers and consisted of closed-ended and Likert scale based questions. The secondary data is collected from journals, company's reports, websites, and previous studies to affirm the concept of the study. The mechanism was explored using descriptive statistics, and it was confirmed later on by correlation analysis and hypothesis testing with the utilization of SPSS process to address the research hypothesis. This approach allows for a holistic examination of whether and how branding for the environmentally conscious affects consumers' behavior in the context of the Indian beauty market.

Table: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables (N = 150)

Variable	Mean	Std. Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Consumer Perception Score (1–5 scale)	4.12	0.58	2.60	5.00
Purchasing Behavior Score (1–5 scale)	3.89	0.71	2.00	5.00
Awareness of Eco-friendly Brands	4.30	0.63	2.50	5.00
Importance of Environmental Factors	4.20	0.69	2.00	5.00
Frequency of Eco-friendly Purchases	3.75	0.82	1.00	5.00

The descriptive statistics present important information about consumer perception and behaviour towards eco-friendly beauty products. The mean score for consumer perception is somewhat high “4.12 (SD = 0.58)”, which means that respondents’ general impression of ecofriendly beauty brands is quite favorable. Likewise, the score of mean purchasing behavior is 3.89 (SD = 0.71), which indicates a moderately strong preference of consumers towards the purchase of environmentally friendly cosmetic products. The mean score for knowledge of eco-friendly brands was highest (4.30), indicating that participants knew about and were familiar with these brands. The importance of environmental stimuli (M = 4.20) also showed a high result, strengthening the idea that sustainability is an important influence within consumer judgement. Finally, the average frequency of eco-friendly products purchase (M = 3.75; SD = 0.82) was a bit lower, suggesting that transfers from positive attitude to frequent purchase behavior can still be improved. Taken together, these numbers indicate that the current crop of consumers are not only environmentally aware and environmentally conscious, but potentially represent the environmentalist-as-consumer – even if there are still seemingly gaps between perception and actual buying habits.

Correlations

	Consumer Perception	Purchasing Behavior
Consumer Perception	1	.712**
Purchasing Behavior	.712**	1

Hypothesis was totaled on Pearson’s correlation to test the relationship between consumer perception and purchasing behavior on eco-friendly beauty products. The data reveals that the two are highly and positively correlated ($r = 0.712$) which means as perception of consumers towards eco-friendly cosmetics is improved, the higher the likelihood that consumers will purchase eco-friendly cosmetic products. This association is significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$), indicating it is very unlikely that it is by chance that the two phenomena are related. Hence, null hypothesis (H_0 : No significant relationship exists between consumer perception and purchasing behavior) is denied and alternative hypothesis (H_1 : There is significant relationship between consumer perception and purchasing behavior) is accepted. This means that by improving consumer perception of eco-beauty, marketers can also make a great influence on whether to buy ecology products, which suggests that the positive brand and marketing communication about eco can also make a great impact (Kotler, Armstrong, Saunders, & Wong, 2008).

DISCUSSION

The findings of the hypothesis testing indicate a positive respondent engagement in correlation with level of response to eco-friendly beauty products. This indicates that consumers with positive attitudes towards eco-friendly products are more willing to buy them. This result supports the international sustainability trend, where the readers are aware more of the impact of choice of purchases on the

health of the land and environment. This high correlation ($r = 0.712$) shows that consumer perception is an important factor in influencing purchase decision.

There are a variety of reasons why this connection exists. First, growing environmental awareness (polluting the environment, climate change, sustainable living) has initiated a change in the demand behaviour. As consumers tend to favour brands that embody their values, eco-friendly beauty products give them a route to make a conscious environmental decision. Brands such as Mamaearth and Forest Essentials, which focus on their sustainability quotient, may just be gaining from this perception shift, as consumers are increasingly being drawn to products that mirror their eco-friendly mindset.

This relationship is increasingly reinforced by the increasing requirements for transparency in product ingredients and ethical standards. Eco friendly beauty products tend to emphasize natural and organic ingredients, so it's no surprise they attract consumers who care about both natural health and the health of natural environments. This is reflected in consumer demand, as products featuring labels like "organic," "cruelty-free," and "sustainably sourced" are increasingly equated with better products, guiding purchasing choices.

Although the results of the present study are encouraging, it also should be noted that consumer perception is not the only element affecting consumers' choice to buy. Price, effectiveness or brand recognition are also important variables. Consumers might have a favorable perception for eco-friendly beauty products, but still are reluctant to buy at higher prices compared to conventional beauty products or when they judge them to be less effective.

In summary, this research emphasizes the role of consumer perception in driving the purchase intention for eco-friendly cosmetic products. At the same time that consumers are more focused on environmental sustainability, it's also a time that beauty businesses can stress the eco-friendly benefits of their products. We believe that brands that succeed in communicating a purpose to be sustainable and align with consumer values are more likely to strengthen their market position. More studies are needed to identify how various consumer demographics (i.e., age, income, geographic location) can impact consumer perception and purchasing intention towards eco-beauty.

OVERALL CONCLUSION

The study highlights the importance of consumers perception and purchase behavior toward eco-friendly beauty products. Results indicate that how consumers perceive eco-friendly attributes, including the sustainability or ethicality of ingredients, and naturalness of the product, impacts their purchase behavior. With environmental issues becoming more pressing worldwide, consumers are more likely to want to buy from brands they believe share their values of sustainability and environmental responsibility.

The study also underscores the fact that, although consumer perception is of primary importance, other factors such as price of product, effectiveness as well as trust on the brand, should not be neglected. Brands with successfully marketed green products with strong awareness for sustainability are most likely to capture the green consumer groups.

Given the findings, beauty businesses should focus on communicating environmental friendly and ethical practices. Not only is this a strategy that will resonate with the increasing number of consumers who are demanding more from their beauty products but it also establishes brands as pioneers in an increasingly competitive landscape of green beauty and wellbeing.

Further research on the involvement of other consumer behavior driving factors (i.e., socio-economic status, cultural impact, product availability, experience with a brand's products, etc.) may provide a more complete picture of the eco-friendly beauty product market.

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