



Perceived Benefits and Adoption Behavior of Organic Skincare Products: A Study Among Female Consumers in Rural and Urban Areas

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ABSTRACT

Growing awareness of health, sustainability, and environmental issues has led to a significant shift in consumer preferences toward organic skincare products. This study explores consumer perceptions of organic skincare by examining key factors such as awareness, trust in natural ingredients, brand influence, and purchasing behavior. Primary data was gathered through surveys to understand consumer attitudes and the motivations behind choosing organic alternatives over conventional skincare products. Findings reveal that while organic skincare is widely viewed as safer and more environmentally friendly, barriers such as higher costs, doubts about product effectiveness, and limited availability hinder broader adoption. The study provides actionable insights for marketers and manufacturers to align better with consumer expectations and encourage more informed purchasing decisions in the organic skincare market.

Keywords: Organic skincare, consumer perception, buying behavior, sustainability, natural ingredients, brand trust, health awareness.

Introduction

Organic skincare products are formulated using ingredients grown without synthetic pesticides, fertilizers, GMOs, or artificial chemicals, making them a safer and more environmentally conscious choice. Although they may not always deliver quick results like some conventional alternatives, they are typically rich in natural, plant-based ingredients such as aloe vera, shea butter, and rosehip oil—known for their nourishing, antioxidant properties. These products are often cruelty-free, biodegradable, and certified by reputable bodies like USDA Organic or Ecocert, ensuring adherence to strict farming and production standards.

Despite being more costly, having shorter shelf lives, and requiring careful storage, organic skincare appeals strongly to consumers who prioritize health, sustainability, and ethical sourcing. The global demand for these products continues to rise, particularly in regions like Europe, India, and North America. This growth is fueled by heightened environmental awareness, increasing interest in traditional wellness systems like Ayurveda, and the broader movement toward clean beauty.

However, certain misconceptions remain: not all natural products are truly organic, organic doesn't equate to allergy-free, and product effectiveness can vary depending on the formulation. Ultimately, choosing organic skincare is a personal decision—often reflecting one's values regarding health, environmental responsibility, and long-term skin care.

Review of literature

Recent research on organic skincare and cosmetics by various scholars reveals a common theme: rising consumer demand driven by concerns over health, ethics, and sustainability. Ajayi et al. (2024) emphasize the need for transparency in ingredient sourcing and quality control, especially for small producers. Sharma and Narang (2024) highlight how consumer concern over plastic pollution and sustainability is reshaping the industry, while Bharti et al. (2024) show how marketing can reduce consumer skepticism and improve well-being. Ameta and Tiwari (2024) note the shift toward plant-based, non-toxic products. Sharma et al. (2024) find health, social factors, and certifications significantly affect purchase decisions among Indian women. Kifaya (2024) explains how environmental knowledge mediates green skepticism in countries like France and Tunisia. Kosnin et al. (2024) identify green advertising, trust, and attitude as key purchase drivers among Malaysian women. Sewwandi (2023) and Minocha (2023) both report that brand, availability, and health/environmental consciousness shape attitudes and behavior. Mikail (2022) details the skincare benefits of natural ingredients, while Gamalathge and Azhar (2022) stress experience and awareness in Sri Lanka. Kaliyadan et al. (2021) find cost as a major barrier despite high awareness in Saudi Arabia. Šniepienė and Jankauskienė (2021) observed that consumers value clear labeling and eco-friendly packaging, but are discouraged by high prices. Tewary and Mishra (2021), Narang and Sharma (2021) identify young working women and income/education as critical market segments. Huang and Lu

(2020) show Chinese consumers value sensory appeal and natural ingredients most. Kumudhini and Kumaran (2020) find attitudes and past experiences predict behavior in Sri Lanka. Malik and Sharma (2020) and Shakeel and Karim (2019) emphasize skin safety and word-of-mouth in India. Mohammad (2019) and Mohameda and Nordinb (2018) highlight the role of perceived values, religious duty, and environmental consciousness in Malaysia. Ghazali et al. (2017) extend the Theory of Planned Behavior by incorporating perceived value dimensions. Kuzmina and Danbury (2017) analyze brand co-creation through online communities in Russia. Mohammad and Baharun (2016) explore values like health and religiosity among Malaysian women, while Hall (2016) shows growing organic interest in India tied to e-commerce. Correa (2015) critiques inconsistent certification and environmental risks in sustainable cosmetics. Mombeini et al. (2015) stress the importance of consumer education in Iran. Annis (2011) and Kim and Chung (2011) reveal low awareness but high potential among U.S. college women, influenced by environmental and appearance values. Collectively, these studies underline that consumer trust, education, affordability, and regulatory clarity are crucial for the organic cosmetics market's future.

Research Methodology

Objectives of this study

1. To analyze the awareness and understanding of organic skincare products among rural and urban women.
2. To compare the preferences, purchasing behavior, and influencing factors between rural and urban women regarding organic skincare products.
3. To assess the perceived benefits, concerns, and barriers to adoption of organic skincare products among females.

Sampling : Responses from total of 268 respondents was collected for the study, after visual binning 205 came to be valid. Among these valid responses, 109 females were from rural areas and 96 females were from urban areas. Convenience sampling was used for data collection as it chooses participants based on their availability and ease of access to the researcher. Participants in this technique are chosen because they are readily available to the researcher, as opposed to being chosen at random from a larger community. Since this is an exploratory study hence the questionnaire method was used as a tool to collect the primary data. The questionnaire comprised of MCQ's, dichotomous questions (Yes / No) and Likert Scale. On the basis of data collection tools some of the probable Stastical tools used for data analysis included, Chi square test, Independent Sample T- Test and Levenes's test.

Results

A demographic analysis of the respondents based on region indicates that 53.1% are from rural areas, while 46.8% are from urban areas, as presented in Table 1. The analysis of respondents based on age group reveals that 10.7% are under 18 years, 32.6% fall within the 18–25 age group, 28.3% belong to the 26–35 age group, 12.7% are in the 36–45 age group, 9.8% fall within the 46–55 age group, and 5.9% are above 55 years. These details are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 : Demographic Profile of respondents

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Rural	109	53.1	53.2	53.2
	Urban	96	46.8	46.8	100.0
	Total	205	100	100.0	
Age					
Valid		Frequency	Percent	Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Below 18	22	10.7	10.7	10.7
	18-25	67	32.6	32.6	43.4
	26-35	58	28.3	28.3	71.7
	36-45	26	12.7	12.7	84.4
	46-55	20	9.8	9.8	94.1
	Above 55	12	5.9	5.9	100.0
Total		205	100	100.0	

Familiarity with organic skincare products.

Chi-Square tests were conducted to examine the relationship between region (rural vs. urban) and four aspects of consumer behavior: familiarity with organic skincare products, perception of "organic," checking for certification labels, and purchase frequency. For familiarity, the test yielded $\chi^2 = 2.180$, $df = 2$, $p = 0.336$, indicating no significant association, supported by the Likelihood Ratio ($\chi^2 = 2.585$, $p = 0.275$) and Linear-by-Linear Association ($\chi^2 =$

0.748, $p = 0.387$). Perception of “organic” also showed no significant difference ($\chi^2 = 2.670$, $p = 0.445$), with both rural and urban respondents sharing similar views. Regarding certification label behavior, results ($\chi^2 = 0.905$, $p = 0.636$) revealed no regional influence. Finally, purchase frequency was consistent across regions ($\chi^2 = 0.136$, $p = 0.934$). These results confirm that regional differences do not significantly impact consumer awareness, interpretation, certification-checking habits, or purchase frequency of organic skincare products.

Usage of organic skin care products

Mama Earth is the most popular organic skincare brand among both rural and urban users. Rural respondents show a stronger preference for brands like True Botanicals and 100% Pure, while urban users spread their choices more evenly across different brands. Overall, both groups use a variety of products, with rural users slightly more focused on specific brands.

Preference of organic skincare ingredients

Among ingredients Aloe Vera and Coconut Oil are the most preferred organic ingredients in skincare products across both rural and urban regions. Aloe Vera leads overall, with 66 users favoring it, followed by Coconut Oil with 51. Rural respondents show stronger preferences for Argan Oil, Jojoba Oil, and Rosehip Oil, while urban users lean slightly more toward Chamomile and Lavender. Overall, natural oils and soothing plant-based ingredients are commonly favoured, with some variation in specific preferences between regions.

Table 2

Which of the following organic ingredients do you prefer in skin care products?										
Count										
		Which of the following organic ingredients do you prefer in skin care products?								
		Aloe Vera	Coconut Oil	Argan Oil	Jojoba Oil	Rosehip Oil	Tea Tree Oil	Chamomile	Lavender	Total
Region	Rural	32	28	16	8	11	9	0	5	109
	Urban	34	23	7	5	4	8	7	7	96
Total		66	51	23	13	15	17	7	12	205
Pearson chi square = 15.662, P value = 0.047, df = 8										

Significant difference in the responses of rural and urban females was observed as evident from the significant Chi square pearson value(.047)

Regular usage of organic beauty products

The data shows that skincare products are the most regularly used organic beauty products across both rural and urban respondents, with 65 users in total. Rural users show higher usage of haircare and fragrances, while urban users slightly favor makeup and bodycare. Overall, both groups prioritize skincare, but there are slight variations in preferences for other product categories based on region. Table 3

Which organic beauty products do you regularly use ?							
Count							
		Which organic beauty products do you regularly use ?					
		Skincare	Haircare	Makeup	Bodycare	Fragrances	Total
Region	Rural	34	25	18	18	14	109
	Urban	31	15	20	19	11	96
Total		65	40	38	37	25	205
Pearson chi square = 2.316, P value = 0.678, df = 4							

- Benefits of organic beauty products.**

Consumers in both rural and urban areas value organic beauty products mainly for their quality and gentleness on the skin. Rural respondents showed slightly more concern for environmental and chemical safety. Overall, there's a shared focus on health, quality, and sustainability.

Table 4

What benefits do you expect from organic beauty products ?								
Count								
		What benefits do you expect from organic beauty products ?						Total
		Gentler on the skin	Free from harmful chemicals	Environmental friendly	Higher Quality ingredients	Improved skin health	Other	
Region	Rural	23	18	22	28	17	1	109
	Urban	26	13	20	20	17	0	96
Total		49	31	42	48	34	1	205
Pearson Chi square = 2.605, P value = 0.761, df = 5								

- **Factors influencing repurchase decisions of organic beauty products.**

Effectiveness is the top factor influencing repurchase of organic beauty products across both regions. Rural consumers prioritize effectiveness and price, while urban consumers place slightly more emphasis on brand reputation.

Table 5

What factors influence your decision to repurchase organic beauty products?				
		What factors influence your decision to repurchase organic beauty products?		
		Effectiveness	Price	Brand Reputation
Region	Rural	45	36	28
	Urban	31	31	34
Total		76	67	62
Pearson Chi square = 7.719, P value = 0.0257, df = 2				

Significant difference in the responses of urban and rural females was observed wherein urban females were more likely to make purchase decisions based on the Brand reputation, whereas the rural females prefer effectiveness. (significant Pearson Chi Square value of .0257)

Findings

Among 205 respondents, 90.2% were familiar with organic skincare products, with urban respondents slightly more aware, though the Chi-Square test ($\chi^2 = 2.180$, $p = 0.336$) showed no significant regional difference. Both rural and urban groups commonly perceived “organic” as natural and chemical-free ($\chi^2 = 2.670$, $p = 0.445$), and about 85% from both regions checked certification labels when purchasing ($\chi^2 = 0.905$, $p = 0.636$). Mama Earth emerged as the most preferred brand across regions, though rural users favoured some brands more ($\chi^2 = 17.295$, $p = 0.186$). Ingredient preference, particularly for Aloe Vera and Coconut Oil, significantly varied by region ($\chi^2 = 15.662$, $p = 0.047$). Most respondents purchased organic beauty products occasionally, regardless of location ($\chi^2 = 0.136$, $p = 0.934$), with skincare being the most used product type across regions ($\chi^2 = 2.316$, $p = 0.678$). Both groups valued these products for quality, gentleness, and health benefits ($\chi^2 = 2.605$, $p = 0.761$), and preferred hybrid shopping through both online and physical stores ($\chi^2 = 0.821$, $p = 0.663$). Effectiveness was the primary reason for repurchase across regions, with slight rural-urban differences in price and brand considerations ($\chi^2 = 2.719$, $p = 0.257$). A significant difference was found only in the belief that organic products are gentler and safer for long-term use, with urban respondents agreeing more (t-test, $p = 0.005$). Finally, most respondents, regardless of region, said they would recommend organic skincare products ($\chi^2 = 2.253$, $p = 0.522$).

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