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## Consumer Awareness of Organic Cosmetic and Personal Care Products: Insights from Himachal Pradesh

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### Abstract

Consumer awareness of the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products plays a crucial role in informed purchasing decisions. This study examines consumer awareness of organic cosmetic and personal care product availability across selected demographic groups in Himachal Pradesh. A descriptive and analytical research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 450 consumers who had previously used organic cosmetic and personal care products through a structured questionnaire. Snowball sampling was employed to identify eligible respondents. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, independent samples *t*-tests, and one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA). The findings reveal significant differences in awareness based on gender and education, with female respondents and individuals possessing higher educational qualifications exhibiting higher awareness levels. In contrast, age was found to have no statistically significant influence on awareness. The study highlights the importance of demographic characteristics in shaping consumer awareness and offers valuable insights for marketers and policymakers in designing targeted awareness and communication strategies, particularly in predominantly rural regions.

**Keyword:** Consumer Awareness; Organic Cosmetics; Personal Care Products; Demographic Factors; Himachal Pradesh

### Introduction

In recent years, consumer demand for organic products has expanded beyond food to include cosmetic and personal care items (Mordor Intelligence) <sup>[1]</sup>, driven largely by increasing concerns about health, safety, and environmental sustainability (Malik & Sharma, 2020; Sharma *et al.*, 2021; R&M report) <sup>[2-5]</sup>. This shift in consumer preference reflects a broader trend in green consumption, where individuals increasingly prioritize products that align with their personal well-being and ethical values (Kim & Chung, 2011) <sup>[6]</sup>. In accordance with this, organic cosmetic products are perceived as natural, chemical-free alternatives that minimize potential risks associated with synthetic ingredients commonly found in conventional products, such as parabens and sulfates (PCC Group, 2019; Amberg & Fogarassy, 2019; Ghazali *et al.*, 2017) <sup>[7, 8, 9]</sup>.

Research shows that awareness and attitudes toward organic personal care products can significantly influence consumer behaviour (Poojari *et al.*, 2024) <sup>[10]</sup>, but these factors vary considerably across demographic groups and cultural contexts (Patnam & Azeem, 2024; Sharma *et al.*, 2021; Malik & Sharma, 2020; Shweta and Abdin, 2020) <sup>[11-14]</sup>. For example, studies have found that knowledge of environmental and health benefits is positively associated with interest in organic cosmetics (Bhati *et al.*, 2025; Martinez, 2020) <sup>[15, 16]</sup>, while willingness to pay a premium is shaped by personal values and perceived product efficacy (Limbu & Ahamed, 2023; Natsir, *et al.*, 2025) <sup>[17, 18]</sup>. Despite the rapid growth of the organic cosmetic segment, there remains a need for comprehensive studies that explore how demographic characteristics such as gender, education, and age relate to consumer awareness of product availability particularly in emerging markets like India, where such empirical research is limited.

Given this backdrop, the present study aims to deepen understanding of consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products among different

demographic groups in Himachal Pradesh, offering insights that can inform marketers and policymakers seeking to expand the reach of organic personal care offerings.

### Literature Review

Ghazali *et al.* (2017) <sup>[19]</sup> identify environmental and ethical considerations as primary factors influencing consumer interest in organic cosmetic products, as consumers increasingly seek safer and more sustainable alternatives to conventional formulations. Similarly, Shrivastava and Pujari, (2021) <sup>[20]</sup> along with Kirdar (2018) <sup>[21]</sup>, report that organic cosmetics are widely perceived as free from harmful chemicals and more compatible with natural skin processes, which enhances their appeal among health- and environment-conscious consumers.

Research in the field of green cosmetics and personal care products also emphasizes the importance of consumer attitudes and awareness in shaping purchasing behaviour (Malik & Sharma, 2020; Shweta & Abdin, 2020) <sup>[21, 23]</sup>. This underscores a growing academic and market interest in understanding how consumer perceptions evolve in response to sustainability issues and product innovations.

Several empirical studies such as Shcherenkov & Ryen, 2019; Nagy *et al.*, 2022; Teixeira *et al.*, 2021; Ali *et al.*, 2023; Rahman *et al.*, 2024) <sup>[24-28]</sup> have examined consumer awareness and behaviour toward organic products, though much of the earlier research has focused more extensively on organic food rather than cosmetics or personal care. Additionally these studies suggested that consumer awareness of organic food has been linked to health consciousness, environmental sustainability, and certification literacy, indicating that awareness influences not only attitudes but also purchasing decisions. These findings suggest parallels in the organic personal care sector, where consumers may similarly weigh health and environmental benefits when forming awareness and preferences.

Specific to cosmetics, research underscores the role of demographic and psychographic variables in shaping consumer attitudes and purchase intentions. For instance, gender differences have been observed in natural cosmetics consumption, with studies in India reporting that both male and female consumers are becoming more open to natural and organic cosmetic products, driven by factors such as skin health concerns, perceived quality, and environmental awareness (Tengli & Srinivasan, 2022) <sup>[29]</sup>. The study also notes that product knowledge and environmental attitudes indirectly influence purchase behaviour, highlighting the complex interplay between awareness and behavioural intentions.

Despite the apparent growth in consumer interest and academic work on organic or green personal care products, literature specific to the India especially in rural context remains relatively limited. Sharma *et al.* (2021) <sup>[30]</sup> indicate that research focusing on organic personal care purchase behaviour in India is scarce compared to studies on organic food, pointing to a need for more empirical investigations in this sector. This gap emphasizes the relevance of examining consumer awareness of organic cosmetics and personal care products within Indian states, particularly those with rural populations where organic consumption patterns may differ from urban settings.

In summary, extant literature establishes that consumer awareness of organic products is influenced by health and environmental concerns, demographic factors, and market dynamics. However, there remains a gap in localized studies that specifically assess awareness regarding availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products in emerging markets. This research seeks to address this gap by examining awareness across demographic groups in Himachal Pradesh, offering empirical insights that contribute to the broader understanding of organic consumption behaviour.

### Need and Scope of the Study

Existing literature on organic products has largely concentrated on consumer behaviour in relation to organic food items, with relatively limited empirical attention given to organic cosmetic and personal care products, particularly in the Indian context. Studies that do examine organic cosmetics predominantly focus on purchase intention, attitudes, or willingness to pay, while consumer awareness especially regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products remains insufficiently explored. This indicates a clear research gap, as awareness represents a critical antecedent to consumer decision-making.

Further, the majority of prior studies are urban-centric or based in developed markets, resulting in a lack of empirical evidence from predominantly rural regions. This gap is significant in states such as Himachal Pradesh, where the population is largely rural and the region has a strong association with organic agriculture. Despite this contextual relevance, limited research has systematically examined consumer awareness of organic cosmetic and personal care products in such settings.

Moreover, although demographic variables are widely acknowledged as influential in shaping consumer behaviour, existing studies have primarily examined their impact on purchase behaviour rather than on awareness as an independent construct. Empirical investigations that specifically analyze variations in awareness levels based on age, education, and gender particularly with respect to the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products remain scarce.

Addressing these gaps, the present study focuses on consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products in Himachal Pradesh. The scope of the study is limited to three districts Bilaspur, Kullu, and Shimla; and examines differences in awareness across three demographic variables: age, education, and gender. By adopting a quantitative approach and employing statistical analysis, the study seeks to generate localized empirical evidence and extend existing literature beyond purchase-centric perspectives.

### Research Objectives

The objective of this study is to assess the level of awareness about availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products among different demographic groups.

### Research Hypothesis

In line with the objectives of the study, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference in consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products based on the demographic factors.

**Methodology**

The study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to systematically examine consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products. Both primary and secondary data has been used. Primary data was obtained through a structured questionnaire consisted of two sections. Section-A included demographic information of the respondents such as Gender, Age, Education, etc. Section-B gathered information measuring consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products. Further, the responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale, with response options ranging from Not at All (1) to Very High Extent (5). The Likert-scale responses were treated as interval-level data for analytical purposes. Further, secondary data from the existing literature has been used to support the theoretical framework of the study and to identify research gaps.

**Sampling Method**

The target population for the study comprised consumers who have used organic products, as the research specifically focuses on awareness related to availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products rather than general cosmetic usage. To identify suitable respondents, a multistage sampling is used followed by snowball sampling technique to select respondents at final stage of data collection, wherein initial participants meeting the eligibility criteria were requested to refer other users of organic cosmetic and personal care products within their social networks. This approach was considered appropriate due to the relatively niche nature of organic product users and the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame. Using this method, data were collected from a total of 450 respondents, a sample size deemed sufficient for conducting both descriptive and inferential statistical analyses.

**Tools and techniques**

The collected data were coded, tabulated, and analyzed using SPSS software. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were employed for data analysis. Descriptive statistics, including mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, were used to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics and levels of awareness. To examine gender-wise differences in consumer awareness, an independent samples t-test was applied. Further, one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to analyze variations in awareness across different age groups and education levels. Where the ANOVA results indicated statistically significant differences, the post-hoc test was conducted to identify specific group-level differences.

**Results and Discussion**

This section presents the empirical findings derived from the statistical analysis of the data collected for the study. The results highlight variations in consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal

care products across selected demographic groups. *Table 1* presents the descriptive statistics for consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products across gender. The results indicate that female respondents (Mean = 3.3239, SD = 1.16280) exhibit a higher level of awareness compared to male respondents (Mean = 2.8692, SD = 1.12549).

**Table 1:** Descriptive Statistical Analysis for Consumer Awareness Regarding Organic Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Availability: Gender Wise Distribution

Gender	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Males	2.8692	1.12549	-.135	-.675
Females	3.3239	1.16280	-.457	-.565

Data collected through questionnaire.

The skewness values for both male (-0.135) and female (-0.457) respondents are negative and close to zero, indicating a slight negative skewness in the data distribution. This suggests a marginal concentration of responses toward the higher end of the awareness scale, implying relatively higher awareness levels, particularly among female respondents. The kurtosis values for both groups are also negative (males = -0.675; females = -0.565), indicating moderately platykurtic distribution. This suggests that the response distribution is relatively flatter than a normal distribution, with fewer extreme values.

**Table 1(a):** Independent Samples t- Test Results for Gender Differences in Consumers' Awareness Regarding Availability of Organic Cosmetic and Personal Care Products

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig.
Equal variances assumed	1.859	.173	-4.213	448	.000
Equal variances not assumed			-4.205	439.440	.000

Further, *table 1(a)* reports the results of the independent samples t-test conducted to examine gender-based differences in awareness. Levene's test for equality of variances was found to be non-significant (F = 1.859, p = 0.173), indicating that the assumption of equal variances was met. Accordingly, the t-test results under the equal variances assumed condition were considered. The t-test revealed a statistically significant difference in awareness levels between male and female respondents (t = -4.213, df = 448, p < 0.001), rejecting the null hypotheses. This result confirms that gender has a significant influence on consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products, with females demonstrating significantly higher awareness levels than males. This finding aligns with prior research suggesting that women tend to be more actively involved in personal care product selection and are generally more attentive to product-related information, including ingredients, health implications, and the availability of alternative products (Matic & Puh, 2016; Oberoi & Oberoi, 2018) <sup>[31, 32]</sup>. Higher awareness among female consumers may also be attributed to their greater engagement with the beauty and personal care market, increased exposure to product-related

information through social networks, and a more prominent role in household purchasing decisions.

However, some studies report contrasting results. For instance, Tengli & Srinivasan, (2022) [33] and Malik & Sharma, (2020) [34] found no significant gender differences in purchase intention toward organic cosmetic products. Importantly, this does not imply that gender has no influence; rather, it indicates that both male and female consumers are equally aware of and influenced by organic cosmetic products. Thus, gender appears to play a meaningful role in shaping awareness regarding organic cosmetic and personal care products.

After examining gender-based variations in consumer awareness, the descriptive analysis was extended to evaluate differences across various age groups as shown in *table 2*. The results show that respondents in the 18–30 years age group reported the highest mean awareness score (Mean = 3.2750, SD = 1.01222), followed by those in the 30–50 years age group (Mean = 3.0259, SD = 1.24346). The 50–70 years age group exhibited the lowest mean awareness score (Mean = 3.0000, SD = 1.16316).

The skewness values across the three age categories range from -0.484 to 0.025, indicating only mild asymmetry in the distribution of awareness scores. The negative skewness observed for the 18–30 and 50–70 age groups suggests a slight concentration of responses toward the higher end of the awareness scale, while the near-zero skewness for the 30–50 age group reflects an approximately symmetric distribution. Similarly, the kurtosis values for all age groups are negative indicating a platykurtic distribution. This suggests that the distributions are relatively flatter, with fewer extreme values, and do not exhibit excessive peakedness.

**Table 2:** Descriptive Statistical Analysis for Consumer Awareness Regarding Organic Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Availability: Age Wise Distribution

Age (yrs)	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	F	Sig.
18-30	3.2750	1.01222	-.429	-.246	2.223	.109
30-50	3.0259	1.24346	.025	-.953		
50-70	3.0000	1.16316	-.484	-.632		

Data collected through questionnaire.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to examine whether statistically significant differences existed in awareness levels across age groups. The results reveal that the differences in mean awareness scores among the three age groups were not statistically significant (F = 2.223, p = 0.109). Hence, the null hypothesis is not rejected, which indicates that although minor variations in mean awareness levels are observed across different age groups, but does not significantly influence consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products in the present study area. However, this finding contrasts with previous studies by Ahmed *et al.*, (2020) [35], Oberoi & Oberoi, (2018) [36] and Gazzola *et al.*, (2020) [37], which reported that younger consumers tend to be more aware of sustainability issues and more inclined toward eco-conscious consumption. The divergence in findings may

suggest that awareness of organic cosmetic products has expanded beyond younger cohorts, reducing generational gaps observed in earlier research possibly due to the growing availability of information through digital media, retail environments, and word-of-mouth communication.

Subsequently, education-wise differences in consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products were examined as presented in *table 3*. The results indicate a clear increasing trend in awareness with higher educational attainment. Respondents with post-graduation reported the highest mean awareness score (Mean = 3.2752, SD = 1.10196), followed by those with graduation (Mean = 3.1444, SD = 1.13906). The under-graduate group exhibited the lowest mean awareness score (Mean = 2.7603, SD = 1.21809).

The skewness values for all education groups are negative and relatively close to zero (Under-graduate = -0.006, Graduation = -0.356, Post-Graduation = -0.289), indicating only mild asymmetry in the distribution of awareness scores. The near-zero skewness observed for the under-graduate group suggests an approximately symmetric distribution, while the slight negative skewness for graduates and post-graduates indicates a modest concentration of responses toward the higher end of the awareness scale. Overall, the skewness values do not suggest any substantial distortion in the distribution of responses across education levels. The kurtosis values for all three education categories are negative (Under-graduate = -0.920, Graduation = -0.550, Post-Graduation = -0.587), indicating a platykurtic distribution. This reflects relatively flatter distributions with fewer extreme values and no evidence of excessive peakedness.

**Table 3:** Descriptive Statistical Analysis for Consumer Awareness Regarding Organic Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Availability: Education Wise Distribution

Education	Mean	Standard Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis	F	Sig.
Under-graduate	2.7603	1.21809	-.006	-.920	7.114	.001
Graduation	3.1444	1.13906	-.356	-.550		
Post-Graduation	3.2752	1.10196	-.289	-.587		

Data collected through questionnaire.

Further, the one way ANOVA results indicate a statistically significant difference in awareness among the education groups (F = 7.114, p = 0.001), which rejects the null hypothesis ( $H_{03}$ ) at 1 percent level of significance.

Since ANOVA results indicated significant differences in awareness regarding organic cosmetics and personal care products availability, a post-hoc test was further conducted to identify specific education group that differences significantly. The *table 3(a)* presents the post-hoc analysis and shows that the awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetics and personal care products varies significantly between under-graduates and graduates (Mean Difference = -0.38411, p = 0.013); under-graduates and post-graduates (Mean Difference = -0.51484, p = 0.001). However, the difference between graduates and post-graduates is not statistically significant (Mean Difference = -0.13072, p = 0.560).



**Table 3 (a):** Post-Hoc Results for Consumer Awareness Regarding Organic Cosmetics and Personal Care Products Availability Based on Education

Education		Mean Difference	Standard Error	Sig.	95% Confidence Interval	
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Under-graduate	Graduation	-.38411*	.13506	.013	-.7017	-.0665
	Post-Graduation	-.51484*	.14060	.001	-.8455	-.1842
Graduation	Under-graduate	.38411*	.13506	.013	.0665	.7017
	Post-Graduation	-.13072	.12725	.560	-.4299	.1685
Post-Graduation	Under-graduate	.51484*	.14060	.001	.1842	.8455
	Graduation	.13072	.12725	.560	-.1685	.4299

These findings indicate that education emerged as a significant determinant of consumer awareness, with awareness levels increasing alongside higher educational attainment. Respondents holding graduate and post-graduate qualifications demonstrated significantly higher awareness compared to under-graduates. This finding is consistent with earlier studies by Tsakiridou *et al.* (2008) [38], Sharma *et al.* (2021) [39], Tanishka *et al.* (2021) [40], and Shweta and Abdin (2020) [41], which report that individuals with higher educational backgrounds tend to be more aware of organic products, show stronger preferences for organic alternatives, and are often willing to pay a price premium for such products. This pattern may be attributed to the fact that higher levels of education enhance individuals' ability to actively seek, comprehend, and critically evaluate product-related information, including organic certifications, the health implications of chemical ingredients, and environmental sustainability concerns. Consequently, educated consumers are better positioned to recognize the benefits and availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products. Furthermore, the lack of a significant difference between graduates and post-graduates further suggests that once a certain threshold of education is reached, incremental gains in awareness may stabilize. Overall, the findings suggest that education and gender play a more prominent role than age in influencing awareness of organic cosmetic and personal care product availability. The results highlight the importance of targeted awareness strategies, particularly for less-educated consumer segments and male consumers, who may have comparatively lower exposure to information related to organic personal care products. From a practical perspective, marketers and policymakers may benefit from designing educational and communication initiatives that simplify information about organic cosmetic and personal care products and emphasize their availability, especially in regions with a predominantly rural population.

**Implications of the study**

The findings of the present study contribute to the literature on organic consumption and green marketing by extending understanding of consumer awareness in the context of organic cosmetic and personal care products. Unlike prior research that primarily emphasizes purchase intention and buying behaviour, this study highlights awareness of product availability as a critical precursor to consumption decisions. The results demonstrate that gender and education significantly influence awareness, whereas age does not, thereby refining demographic-based perspectives on consumer awareness. The findings further provide empirical support for the role of education in enhancing

information processing and awareness in sustainability-oriented markets.

From a practical perspective, the results offer valuable insights for marketers, retailers, and policymakers in the organic cosmetic and personal care sector. Higher awareness among female consumers suggests their relevance as key target segments for awareness-building initiatives, while lower awareness among male consumers indicates the need for more gender-inclusive communication strategies. The significant influence of education underscores the importance of informative and accessible marketing approaches, such as simplified messaging, local-language campaigns, and improved product visibility in retail outlets, particularly in rural regions like Himachal Pradesh. For policymakers, the findings emphasize the need for awareness-focused interventions that promote informed consumer choices and support sustainable consumption practices.

**Conclusion**

The present study examined consumer awareness regarding the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products with specific reference to Himachal Pradesh. Using a descriptive and analytical research design, the study analyzed awareness levels across selected demographic variables, namely gender, age, and education. The findings provide meaningful insights into how awareness varies among different consumer groups in a predominantly rural context.

The results reveal that gender and education significantly influence consumer awareness, with female respondents and individuals possessing higher educational qualifications demonstrating greater awareness of the availability of organic cosmetic and personal care products. In contrast, age was not found to be a significant determinant, indicating that awareness of organic personal care products is relatively uniform across different age groups. These findings suggest that awareness is more strongly associated with socio-cognitive factors such as education and involvement in personal care decisions rather than biological age alone.

Overall, the study highlights the importance of awareness as a foundational element in promoting organic cosmetic and personal care products. Enhancing awareness particularly among less-educated consumers and male respondents can play a crucial role in supporting informed decision-making and encouraging sustainable consumption practices. By focusing on awareness in a rural-dominated region, the study contributes to the existing literature and offers valuable insights for marketers, policymakers, and researchers interested in expanding the reach of organic

personal care products.

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