A Study on Green Marketing and Its Competitive Advantage for Brands

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Abstract:
This study investigates consumer perception towards green marketing strategies employed by selected skincare brands Mamaearth, Plum, Deyga, and Vilvah with a focus on youth consumers (aged 18–25) in Salem district, Tamil Nadu. In an era of increasing environmental awareness, green marketing has become a vital strategy for brands to communicate sustainability and ethical practices. However, consumer perception of these strategies varies, influenced by factors such as transparency, certifications, digital influence, and authenticity. The research adopts a quantitative, descriptive, and comparative approach, utilizing primary data collected from 150 respondents through a structured online questionnaire. Statistical tools including percentage analysis, Chi-square test, Average were applied to analyze the data. Findings reveal that social media and certifications significantly influence purchase decisions, while demographic factors like age and education show no significant association with green marketing awareness. The study concludes that consumers value genuine sustainability efforts and transparent communication, offering strategic insights for brands to enhance trust, loyalty, and market positioning in the green skincare segment.

Keywords: Green Marketing, Consumer Perception, Skincare Brands, Sustainability, Greenwashing, Salem District, Youth Consumers

Introduction:

Green marketing refers to the promotion of products by highlighting their environmental benefits, such as reduced carbon impact, use of natural or organic ingredients, eco-friendly packaging, and ethical sourcing practices. Through these efforts, brands aim to appeal to environmentally aware consumers by demonstrating their commitment to sustainability. This approach has become especially significant in the personal care and skincare sector, where buyers are highly attentive to ingredient safety, ethical claims, and environmental responsibility.India's skincare industry is witnessing rapid growth, driven by a young, digitally active, and environmentally conscious population. Brands such as Mamaearth, Plum, Deyga, and Vilvah have gained strong visibility by positioning themselves as sustainable and nature-oriented. However, the rise of greenwashing—where companies overstate or falsely present their environmental credentials—has made consumers more cautious. Today, merely labeling a product as "natural" or "eco-friendly" is insufficient; consumers increasingly expect transparency, proof, and consistency in sustainability claims. This study examines how green marketing strategies are perceived by young adults aged 18–25 in Salem district, a key consumer segment for skincare brands. Using a comparative approach, the research evaluates consumer responses to the selected brands, identifies valued sustainability factors, and analyzes their influence on purchase decisions and brand loyalty. The findings aim to support both academic understanding and practical improvements in authentic green marketing practices.

Review of Literature:

Recent literature highlights several trends and gaps in green marketing research within the skincare industry:

1. **Srivastava et al. (2025)** emphasize the evolution of customization in the skincare industry, noting that personalized and sustainable marketing strategies are becoming central to consumer engagement. Their study suggests that

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brands that integrate customization with green positioning are more likely to build loyalty.

2. **Amelia (2024)** investigates the impact of green marketing on green consumption, environmental knowledge, brand coolness, and purchase intention. The study finds that green marketing positively influences consumer attitudes and intentions toward eco-friendly skincare products, especially among environmentally aware segments.

3. **Al Mamun et al. (2024)** examine determinants affecting green skincare purchase intentions in Bangladesh. Their results show that attitude toward green products and product availability are significant predictors, while other factors like social influence are less impactful.

4. **Zhao et al. (2024)** explore the role of social media influencers in shaping green consumption. The study identifies that consumers prefer "informers" over "entertainers" for green product endorsements, and trust mediates the relationship between influencer type and purchase intention.

5. **Testa et al. (2024)** analyze drivers and barriers to green skincare purchases in Italy. They find that environmental concern and health consciousness are key motivators, while value barriers (e.g., higher price) are the strongest inhibitors.

Research Gap:

There is still a glaring lack of research on comparative, multi-brand studies in the Indian context, despite the fact that past studies have provided insightful information about green skincare and consumer behavior. Very few empirical studies focus specifically on the Indian green skincare market, particularly among young consumers in Tier-2 cities such as Salem. Most existing research is either theoretical in nature, limited to a single brand, or concentrated on Western markets. This study addresses this gap by offering a comparative analysis of four leading Indian green skincare brands and by examining differences in consumer perceptions across key demographic and psychographic variables.

Statement of the Problem:

While brands like Mamaearth, Plum, Deyga, and Vilvah promote green marketing strategies, consumer perception of these efforts varies significantly. The effectiveness of such strategies is often undermined by skepticism, greenwashing, and inconsistent communication. Existing research lacks a comparative analysis of how consumers perceive and differentiate between multiple brands using similar green claims. Although brands like Mamaearth, Plum, Deyga, and Vilvah all promote themselves as eco-friendly, it is not clear how customers compare these brands based on their green marketing. Most existing studies focus on just one brand or discuss green marketing in general terms. There is a lack of research that looks at how customers view and compare multiple brands that use similar green strategies.

This study aims to address this problem by exploring and comparing how customers perceive the green marketing efforts of Mamaearth, Plum, Deyga, and Vilvah. It will help identify which brand is most trusted by customers, which green features are most valued, and how these perceptions affect customer decisions. This comparison will also help brands understand where they stand in the minds of their customers and how they can improve their green marketing strategies.

Objectives of the Study:

o To study about the profile of the respondents.
o To analysis the brand used by the respondents based on their perceptions
o To assess consumer awareness and belief in each brand's green marketing efforts.

Research Methodology:

This study employed a quantitative, descriptive, and comparative research design. A self-administered online survey was distributed via Google Forms in order to collect data. A non-probability convenience sample approach was used, focusing on working professionals and college students in Tamil Nadu's Salem district .The sample size consists of 150 valid responses. The study's scope is restricted to the Salem district, and data collection took place over

a four-month period (October to November 2025). While secondary data came from journals, industry papers, and brand websites, primary data was gathered via the questionnaire. Data analysis was performed using IBM SPSS Statistics (Version 28) and Microsoft Excel

Table No.1
Profile of the respondents

Category	Sub-Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage
Age Distribution	Below 20	89	59.30%
	20–25	48	32.00%
	25–30	6	4.00%
	30 and Above	7	4.70%
Gender	Female	94	60.40%
	Male	56	39.60%
Educational Qualification	UG	131	85.20%
	PG	4	5.40%
	Others	15	9.40%
Occupation	Student	128	75.20%
	Working Professional	13	14.80%
	Own Business	4	4.70%
	Other Employed	5	3.00%
Monthly Income	Below ₹50,000	129	82.60%
	₹50,000–₹1,00,000	14	11.40%
	₹1,00,000–₹1,50,000	2	2.00%

Table No.2
Brand used by Respondents

S.No	Brands Used	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Mama Earth	71	47.30%
2	Plum	44	29.30%
3	Vilvah	17	11.30%
4	Deyga	18	12.00%
	Total	150	100%

Interpretation:
Among green product brands, Mama Earth is the most preferred brand (47.3%), followed by Plum (29.3%). Other brands like Vilvah (11.3%) and Deyga (12%) have a smaller but notable customer base. This shows that Mama Earth and Plum dominate the market, reflecting higher consumer trust and popularity, while smaller brands still have scope to expand their reach.

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Table No.3
Purchase Influence

No	Purchase Influence	No. of Respondents	Percentage
1	Social Media	96	25.70%
2	Advertisement	71	19.00%
3	Friends	65	17.40%
4	Family	33	8.80%
5	Others	10	2.70%
	Total	150	100%

Interpretation:
The analysis shows that social media (25.7%) is the strongest influence on purchase decisions, followed by advertisements (19%) and friends (17.4%). Family (8.8%) and others (2.7%) play a smaller role. This indicates that digital platforms and peer groups have a greater impact on consumer buying behavior compared to traditional family influence.

Suggestions

1. **Enhance Digital Engagement**: Leverage social media and influencers to communicate green values.
2. **Standardize Green Messaging**: Use consistent sustainability narratives across demographics.
3. **Build Trust through Certifications**: Obtain and display credible eco-labels.
4. **Focus on Psychographic Targeting**: Market based on values and lifestyle, not just demographics.
5. **Educate Consumers**: Use campaigns to highlight environmental and personal benefits.
6. **Innovate in Packaging**: Introduce refillable, biodegradable, or zero-waste options.

Conclusion

The study conclusively reveals that consumer perception towards green marketing strategies in the skincare industry is overwhelmingly positive and, importantly, transcends traditional demographic boundaries. The modern consumer's appreciation for sustainability is not confined by age, educational background, geographic location, or income level. This research underscores that factors such as eco-friendly packaging, transparent labelling, and credible certifications are universally valued as foundational elements for building consumer trust. The consistent failure to find significant statistical associations based on demographic variables powerfully indicates that the "green consumer" is defined not by who they are, but by what they *value*: a commitment to personal well-being, environmental sustainability, and corporate transparency. The results indicate that for brands in this industry, a cohesive, value-based marketing strategy is not only possible but also very successful. The ability to craft a consistent narrative around genuine green practices allows for efficient resource allocation in marketing. In summary, the green skincare market in India, particularly among the youth, presents a substantial growth opportunity. Brands that successfully integrate authenticity into their core operations, consistently communicate their commitment to genuine green practices backed by proof, and engage with consumers on the values they hold dear are most likely to succeed in building a strong, positive perception and fostering a base of loyal customers. This study advances knowledge of how green values are homogenized across demographic groups and offers a tactical guide for This study contributes to the understanding of the homogenization of green values across demographics, providing a strategic compass for brands aiming to thrive in the conscious consumerism era.

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