

# CONSUMERS ATTITUDES WITH RESPECT TO ECOLOGICAL COSMETIC PRODUCTS

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## ABSTRACT

Cosmetics market is one of the fastest growing consumer markets, where client gets newer and newer products for body care. Purpose of the studies was to investigate the consumers' opinion about innovations in cosmetics products. Survey was carried out in the group of 185 women residents of Pomerania province. Questionnaire of survey included closed questions with single or multiple choice. Results were presented as the percentage of responses. Respondents demonstrated interest in new types of cosmetics, especially ecological ones. Encouraging the purchase of a new kinds of cosmetics were factors like gentleness to the skin, a smaller amount of preservatives, better quality. There are also barriers for using such cosmetics like poor accessibility on market and too high price. Consumers choosing cosmetics are often guided by the opinion of other persons.

**Key words:** ecological products, eco cosmetics.

## INTRODUCTION

Cosmetics market is one of the most growing consumer markets, where client gets newer and newer products for body care. In the research 2011 it is expected that global sales of natural and organic cosmetics will achieve amount of 14 billion US\$ in 2015 (9). Sales reports from the United States show grow up to 3,8 billion US\$ in 2011 and it is expected that market will increase up to 6,6 billion US\$. Everlasting vogue for young and cared body causes that consumers are seeking more and more perfect cosmetics and with new opportunities for body caring. In cosmetology arisen many innovative products, merchandises and services in the last years. SPA & Wellness, nutricosmetics, nanocosmetics, natural cosmetics acquired large popularity. Especially the latter ones enjoy concern of consumers. More and more aware consumer is looking for cosmetics helping of which will not injure, that means ecological cosmetics. The Act about cosmetics dated April 30th 2001 states that every substance or preparation designed for external contact with human body in order to maintain cleanness, care, scent or change of look of

particular body parts is named cosmetic (1,2). Ecological cosmetics called also organic cosmetics, eco or bio are prepared of natural substances mostly galenic but also of animal or mineral origin and mixtures thereof. All components should originate from organic farming without direct contact with fertilizers and pesticides (5). European standards for ecological products were defined in Standard COSMOS (Cosmetics Organic and Natura Standard) published in 2010 (3). There was pointed that cosmetic can be treated as ecological when 20% of its ingredients have documented ecological origin. Material used in production of ecological cosmetics must be obtained in process without changing of its structure. It could be squeezing steam distillation, dissolution. The best method is cold pressing, thanks to it materials are low- processed and devoid of unnecessary additional (4). Material from roots or stems is extracted. All ingredients are analyzed *in vitro* and *in vivo*. No preservatives are used and when it is necessary just natural preservatives in low concentration are added, like bio essential oils. Such cosmetics cannot be tested on animals. Production process must be maintained in accordance with the principles of ecology, as well. It concerns also eco product packing which should be done of biodegradable materials, economic and suitable for recycling. Ecological cosmetic product should have appropriate certificates and symbols. Eco cosmetics are perceived as luxury product. It is because many reasons starting material obtaining process and perception and valuation at the end. Natural and non-mechanized cultivation requires a lot of time and effort what affects the uniqueness of product. Next factor is using unique plants as a material and unique recipes (15). Consumers also perceive eco cosmetic products as luxury because they are hardly available and expensive in their opinion. Nonetheless cosmetics are bought by people who practice environmentally friendly lifestyle, give care about their health and beauty, wish to be distinguished (6). Organic cosmetics can be considered innovative products due to their manufacturing process and the use of the indication in the case of increasingly common allergies.

Purpose of the studies was to investigate the consumers' opinion about innovative eco cosmetics. The study is important for marketing and for producers to understand the behavior of consumers about eco cosmetic products. Information obtained can be used as advertising and promotion of product, its positioning on market and targeting to the particular group of consumers.

## **METHODOLOGY OF RESEARCH**

Survey was carried out in group of 185 women, beauty salons clients in Pomerania province. Due to the large span of age of the respondents they were divided into four groups 18–30 y/o – 29%, 31–45 y/o – 42%, 46–60 y/o – 26% and above 60 y/o – 49% of respondents finished college, 38% finished high school or had lower education (Table 1).

**Table 1.** Characteristics of respondents

Age								Education					
18–30 y/o		31–45 y/o		46–60 y/o		>60 y/o		college		high school		lower education	
53	29%	78	42%	48	26%	6	3%	91	49%	70	38%	24	13%

All respondents were clients of randomly selected beauty salons: eight from Tri City, eight outside of it. Studies of female consumers on eco cosmetic products were made by direct survey. Questionnaire consisted of eight questions with single and multiple choice. Results were presented as the percentage of responses. With Chi<sup>2</sup> test (level  $\alpha = 0,05$ ) the significance of differences was determined between answers of women in different age and place of living. Respondents were asked about knowledge on eco cosmetics, factors determining and limiting their purchase, place where cosmetics were bought and knowledge about eco cosmetics marking. The study was conducted in April 2013.

## RESULTS OF RESEARCH

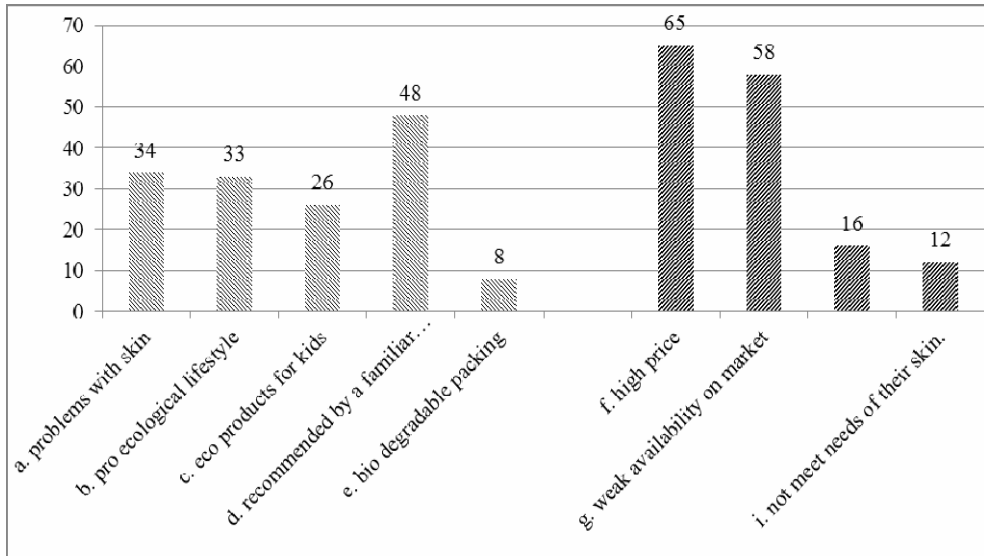
Surveyed women were led varied lifestyle. 15% of them define it as intensive where there is no time for thinking about feeding way, rest time or cosmetics used. In that group were young women mostly. 36% also conducting intensive life, but taking care about healthy lifestyle and good cosmetics, 28% led stable life but do not pay attention to its health benefits aspects. While the rest of the group declare stable lifestyle and take care of health and beauty, as well. Last two groups consist in majority of young women aged below 45, who are focused on work and family life. They often do not have too much time for themselves. Second group consists of older people who can devote all their time for satisfying own needs and taking care of themselves.

Surveyed women were asked whether they use or would benefit from innovative cosmetics. 22% of them are looking for and use such products, 45% would be willing to have benefited, and other not heard of such products. Responders were asked about knowledge of eco cosmetics. 94% of consumers stated that met concept of eco cosmetics. 68% of them defined such products as containing no fragrances, no preservatives. Such opinion was expressed by women after college. According to 14% of responders bio cosmetic consist of natural ingredients only, so do not meet the expected results. 18% say that this type of products are not distinguished by anything in particular and it is just marketing ploy. Rest of surveyed women associate these products as a free of irritating substances made for persons with sensitive skin. Statistically significant differences were not found in opinions of young and older people, although last ones were skeptical to these products ( $p = 0,0801$ ).

In the next question women clients of beauty salons were asked if they use ecological cosmetics. 28% do not pay attention to ecological aspect of cosmetics. Young women belong to that group with declared intensive lifestyle. As well as ladies aged below 45 who led stable life. Both groups do not pay attention to pro health aspects. Positive correlation was found between lifestyle and using eco cosmetics. 42% are buying bio cosmetics accidentally and 18% when problems with skin appear. Last group consists mostly of young persons who have problems with skin very often. The youth are searching information and alternative solutions in opposite to more careful older persons. Only 12% of respondents strive to buy eco cosmetics exclusively. Mainly young people after college belong to that group. Old people are definitely more skeptical to these products than younger respondents ( $p = 0,0221$  – statistically significant difference).

Women clients of beauty salons first of all would buy ecological products for facial care (66% regardless of age) and for body care. Cosmetics for hair and hands or feet care would buy 4% and 6% of respondents respectively. Hair cosmetics were important primarily for older people. This can be caused by weakness hair, frequent colorization or hormone-changing level of mature woman. Residents of the city reach such cosmetics more often. Level of education has no impact on differentiation of respondents answers and distinctions were statistically insignificant ( $p = 0,0834$ ).

Factors which influence purchasing decision of eco cosmetics were primarily problems with skin (34%) and pro ecological lifestyle (33%). Important determinant was buying eco products for kids (26%). For a small percentage of respondents bio degradable packing is important. 48% of surveyed stated that would buy recommended by a familiar person but not suggested by advertisement (31%). In the next question respondents were asked for reasons for not buying eco cosmetics. Most important were too high price (65%), weak availability on market (52%). In that case influence of age and place of living was observed. Statistically significant differences were noted in young and old women answers for whom price was not most important and for Tri City and Pomeranian towns residents where access to the product and its price significantly differentiated surveyed women ( $p = 0,0188$ ). Part of respondents stated that they were not buying such products because did not meet needs of their skin. 16% of respondents do not trust markings on the packaging and declarations of producers (Fig. 1). They do feel there are no genuine eco cosmetics. Respondents declared that greater availability and lower price of eco cosmetics would be motivator to make more frequent purchase of products. Studies of foreign researches show that those consumers are ready to pay more for products of that type. (7,8,10,11,12,13,14).



a-e – factors for buying eco cosmetics  
f-i – barrier factors when buying eco cosmetics

**Fig. 1.** Factors influencing the decision to buy organic cosmetics (%)

All surveys show necessity of profiling the natural cosmetics consumers. It is particularly important for business for understanding how to develop and expand existing client database. New look at marketing of natural cosmetics products use attributes of social benefits- for client and for natural environment (16,17).

Eco cosmetics are bought mostly in pharmacies (72%), drugstores (12%) and with help of beauticians and consultants (13%). The remaining percentage of respondents indicated other places e.g. hypermarkets. People living in small towns purchase in pharmacies and via consultants. Tri City residents have more options and their answers were strongly differentiated here but pharmacies were still most popular shopping place. Age did not differentiate replies of surveyed persons.

Drawing attention to shaping the consciousness of the modern consumer. Surveyed women were asked if they paid attention to the markings on the packing and certificates of eco products purchased. 22% of respondents never pay attention to it. 34% respondents sometimes accidentally notice the information and for 28% markings or certificates were never cosmetic selection criterion. In the group only 10% of women always try to select cosmetics with certificates. Size and characteristic of that group correspond with the group of eco cosmetics purchasers. Younger women from Tri City, often after college, pay more attention to cosmetics marking. People living outside the Tri City do not care about cosmetics purchase or product marking. It is likely because of weak access to bio cosmetics in small towns.

## CONCLUSIONS

Innovation of products are a great challenge and opportunity for the market, including the rapidly growing market of cosmetics. Market research allows to verify the opinion of consumers about the products and their adaptation to the expectations of consumers. Tested residents of Pomerania have divided opinions on innovation in cosmetics, including organic cosmetics. Female consumers perceive these products as expensive and less available. The tested do not trust the labeling on the package and do not believe in the effects of cosmetics. It is a different attitude than foreign consumers have who are willing to pay for such a product, the higher the price. Diversity of opinion has been shown to women of all ages and living in larger and smaller towns. The results indicate the need to popularize eco cosmetics and promote product innovation. It should increase the availability of cosmetics and properly expose them to the market. It is important to monitor the market and convince female consumers for environmentally conscious lifestyle.

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