

Exploring different aspects of emotional branding in the beauty and skincare industry through critical analysis of Mama Earth and Wow Skin Science

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ABSTRACT

With growing awareness and concerns for sustainability, the clean beauty and skincare industry has itself become a vertical today. Consumers have also started prioritizing natural and safe skincare brands over the ones which use chemicals and aren't environmentally friendly. Following this trend, two of the biggest giants in the Indian beauty and skincare industry are Mamaearth and WOW Skin Science. Their rapid success and fame is the result of their respective marketing strategies and wanting to know more about the same, the aim of this research paper is to compare the marketing strategies of Mamaearth and WOW Skin Science while emphasizing on emotional marketing. This particular research is of secondary nature and has been written with the help of articles, case studies, magazine and newspaper editorials, etc. While the two brands are known for their similarity to one another, both the brands have their own marketing strategies in terms of their story, their campaigns, their message, etc. The findings of this paper also suggest that Mamaearth has an upper hand on WOW Skin Science when it comes to communicating with its audience and sending their message across. All these findings can help clear the often confusion of the consumers between these brands and also help startups in terms of marketing and brand management.

Keywords

Mamaearth, WOW Skin Science, marketing, emotional marketing, cause branding, storytelling, empowerment, skincare, clean beauty

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I. INTRODUCTION

Our skin reflects our origin, lifestyle, and state of health. Be it your grandmother or your 1-year old baby, each one of us has our favorites when it comes to shampoos, conditioners, moisturizer and shower gels. Just like every disease can't be cured with the same medicine, every skin is different and has a different need when it comes to skin health and skincare. In recent times, upcoming brands are focusing more on diversity and accessibility to fulfill the unwanted gap in the market. A state of consciousness among people and the urgent requirement to reduce this gap is what has made skincare a billion-dollar industry today. In fact, the market for skincare products is expanding more quickly than any other area of the cosmetics business. With 42% of the global market share in 2020, skincare was the market leader, followed by make-up with 16%. The global skincare market was anticipated to increase from \$100.13 billion in 2021 to \$145.82 billion in 2028 at a CAGR(Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 5.52% over the forecast period, 2021-2028. Out of which, the Clean Beauty Market was valued at \$ 5.44 billion in 2020 and is anticipated to reach \$ 11.56 billion in 2027, is likely to develop at a CAGR of 12.07% between 2020 and 2027, outpacing the CAGR for the main market. Clean beauty primarily means never compromising health for results. The Clean Beauty Market is dedicated to creating safe, effective products that are free of substances that have negative environmental and health effects. This can be linked to consumers realizing that skincare is more about feeling confident and powerful in your own skin than it is about meeting immaculate beauty standards. This is when the niche demand for "clean" and "toxin-free" skincare and beauty products became a trend. What was first just a trend is slowly evolving into a way of life for customers. It's amazing to observe how this small specialized sector entirely dominated a large industry and evolved into its own vertical.

Consumers are more health and wellness-conscious than ever before. One of the factors influencing the market expansion for natural skincare products is skin sensitivity. According to a recent brand survey, sulphate and paraben-free products are preferred by approximately 75% of the consumers. Another element fueling the growth of this market is awareness of the harmful effects of chemicals and synthetic products. Additionally, customers are more likely to use ecologically friendly products. Innovative, environmentally friendly,

recyclable, and refillable product packaging is therefore much sought after. A major brand like L'Oreal has publicly promised to use 100% eco-friendly packaging by 2025. In addition, consumers now prefer vegan and cruelty-free products as a result of growing awareness of animal rights. Customers claim that 92% of them have a stronger commitment to skincare brands that support these environmental and social goals.

But as the skincare industry becomes more and more cluttered due to high numbers of new product launches and other challenges, such as the decreasing effectiveness of traditional advertising methods, there has been a transition in business, and particularly in marketing and branding from rational strategies to emotion driven strategies which put the consumers and their demands at the forefront. For instance, purchase intentions from television advertising are three times as likely to result from emotional responses as advertisement content. Today, the emphasis is primarily on developing a personal and unique client experience that is catered to each individual's needs. Beauty and personal care themes, in particular, can be emotionally charged and brands such as Nivea and Dove do not just sell creams, but also dreams and aspirations of looking and feeling more confident in one's own skin. Understanding and embracing the emotional connections between the consumer and brand has become vitally important. These bonds form every move the consumer makes within the beauty spectrum from sampling, to purchasing and re-purchasing. Thus, creating emotional brand attachment is a crucial branding strategy in marketing today which is used to boost brand loyalty and a company's financial performance. These emotional branding strategies that are applicable to this industry include empowerment, cause branding, and storytelling. To increase brand loyalty, retailers can apply any one of these tactics alone or in combination.

These strategies are also being uptaken by various Indian skincare brands. The Indian skincare market, the fifth largest in the world, is projected to grow at a CAGR of 9.5%, from 2021 to 2027. India, known for its diversity and love, extensively uses emotional branding in order to connect and communicate to such a large audience. For instance, a digital movie celebrating RakshaBandhan was released by Nykaa, India's top online retailer of beauty and cosmetic products. The theme of the three-minute film, which was posted on the brand's page, emphasized the fact that this festival is about honouring everyone who defends us, whether they are our brothers, sisters, friends, or coworkers. The clip was promoted using the hashtag #Bondedbylove and received more than 28,000 views on YouTube in one day. Similarly, some other skincare brands are Nivea, Forest Essentials, Mamaearth and WOW Skin Science. Nowadays the limelight is on the two brands, WOW and Mamaearth, which are no doubt amongst the giants in the Indian beauty and skincare world. They are brands offering almost the same products along with other similar factors like using natural and toxin free raw materials and being environmentally conscious and responsible. The present research work is a comparative analysis between these two rival brands while discussing each of the brands under different themes of emotional marketing.

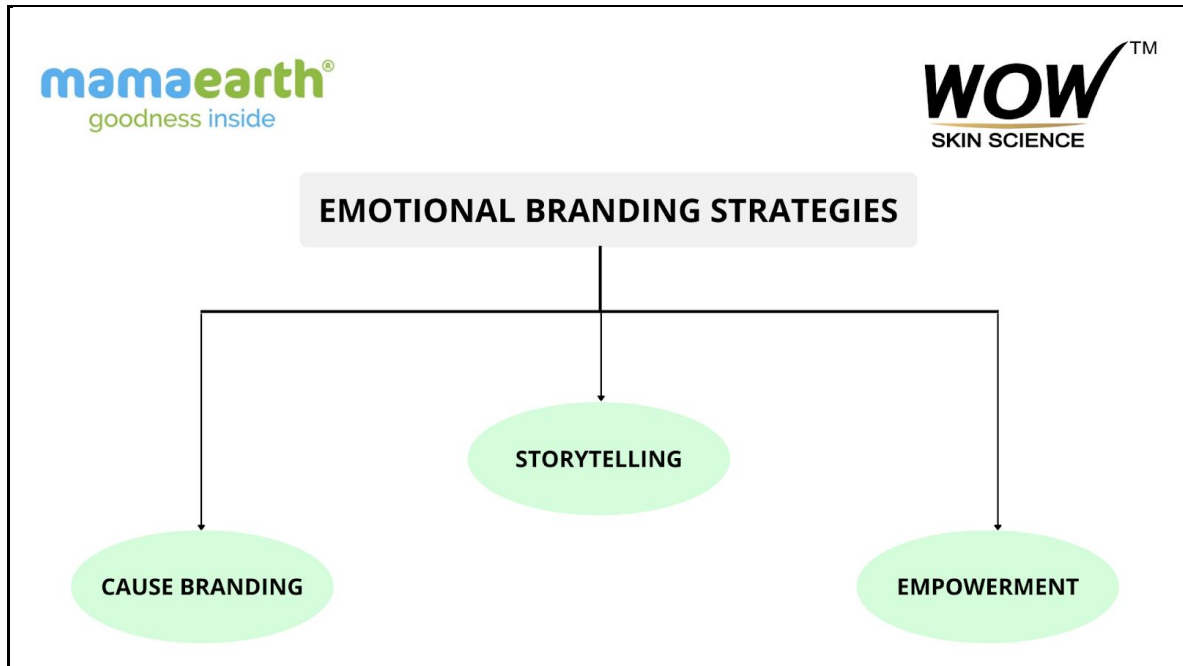
II. METHODOLOGY

Research Aim

The aim of this research paper is to gain an understanding of the marketing strategies of WOW Skin Science and Mamaearth while especially comparing the emotional branding factor between the two successful brands in terms of storytelling, cause branding, and empowerment.

Themes

Figure 1: *Different components of emotional branding strategies discussed in the present study*



Different types of Emotional Marketing have been used. These are as follows:

Cause Branding- Cause branding/marketing both are a potential profit-making initiative by a for-profit company or brand to raise awareness, money or consumer engagement in a social or environmental issue. Some brands which have grown using cause branding are Lifebuoy, Tata tea, Nestle, etc.

Storytelling- Storytelling marketing means using a narrative to communicate a message. Its aim is to make the audience feel something-enough that it will inspire them to take action. Storytelling has been used by brands like Nykaa, Maggi, Burberry, etc. to grow significantly.

Empowerment-This type of marketing is designed to create a sense that the consumer, by buying the product that is being advertised, is creating a positive change in either his or her own life or in the world. Nivea, Dove, Gillette, etc. are brands that have empowered their huge audiences through this strategy.

1. **WOW Skin Science**

Founded in 2014 by four friends Manish Chowdhary, AshwinSokke, Arvind Sokke and Karan Chowdhary, WOW (Wealth of Wellness) Skin Science is a popular brand dedicated to producing pure and natural, beauty and health products. Based in Bangalore, India, the brand sells a wide range of products including haircare, skincare, healthcare, supplements, minerals, teas, and herbs.

2. **Mamaearth**

While founded in 2016 by the couple Varun and Ghazal Alagh, Mamaearth's popularity spread due to their natural plant-based and non-toxin products. Starting with the objective to make 100% safe and chemical free baby care and pregnancy care products, Mamaearth has expanded to a variety of products today including skincare, haircare and cosmetics.

III. **DISCUSSION**

The following section talks about the two rival brands- Mamaearth and WOW Skin Science and discusses each under the three themes that are cause branding, storytelling, and empowerment. First theme, is cause branding,

• **Cause Branding**

Making an emotional connection with customers through cause branding is one way to combat dwindling consumer interest and loyalty. Additionally, customers demand social responsibility from brands. For example, 70% of customers are interested in learning how firms are addressing social and environmental challenges. Cause branding or cause marketing, is a strategy that gives consumers the chance to make cause-based purchases for purposes other than their own personal gain. Consumers prioritize companies that care about

ethics and sustainability, and cause branding can assist consumers become aware of a company's social responsibilities. As a result, cause branding has been utilized as a powerful marketing technique to improve consumer perceptions of the brand's long-term image while simultaneously generating profit for the company.

Mamaearth

Mamaearth, a company founded on the promise of providing care that is honest, natural, and safe, is a firm believer that goodness begins with the day-to-day decisions that each of us makes. Mamaearth unveiled its #PlantGoodness initiative in October 2020 and promised to plant saplings for each order placed. Further solidifying their brand objective of "Goodness Inside," they now intend to grow and sustain more than a million plants that will improve air quality, soil quality and also the groundwater levels and hence setting a new benchmark in transparency. Through its partner SankalpTaru, the brand starts the process of linking an online order to a new plant as soon as it is placed. After the plant is linked to the order, the brand shares with the customers a picture of the plant, its species, and its geo-tag so that they can easily track their plant. The brand will further nurture the tree with the assistance of its partner for the first three years, after which the tree will be able to support itself.

WOW Skin Science

On the World Environment day in 2020, WOW Skin Science launched a campaign #TrashYourSpam in a bid to fight digital pollution. One of the main forms of digital pollution is called 'dormant pollution' – created due to storage of emails. A mailbox full of emails causes numerous servers to run continuously in data centers, adding an extra 2% to the planet's already rising carbon dioxide emissions. Email spam is the most well-known example of this. #TrashYourSpam urges the audience to adopt a cleanliness movement to combat environmental degradation by tackling digital pollution while keeping with the United Nations theme of "For Nature." The initiative got its start on WOW's social media pages, where it urged Indian millennials to help the environment by deleting their spam mails. By doing this, they could contribute to the environment while staying inside during the current lockdown. The campaign not only educated millennials about spam emails but also about measures to stop digital pollution. WOW also kept a live count ticker of the number of emails erased on its website and mobile app to encourage customers to delete their junk emails. They have also started #WOWGreenHands under which they launched their first paper tube in order to take a step closer to going green and being sustainable.

- **Story telling**

Humans have been telling stories forever and our brains have evolved to love them. Entrepreneurs discovered that only 5% of people could recall statistics from pitches that included facts and figures while a whopping 63% could recall those that included tales. Given that well-told stories are better remembered and more convincing than facts, narratives enhance the consumption experience in a way that affects consumers' feelings, beliefs, or lifestyle. In marketing, stories are used to humanize your brand and assist customers understand why they should care about it. Marketers can hence succeed in the industry by using stories to create advertising that connects with consumers and sticks.

Mamaearth

Mamaearth's story began in 2016 when the co-founders, Ghazal and Varun, were anticipating their first baby. Their child, Agastya, was born with a rare skin condition due to which he became irritated when Ghazal used to put anything on his skin. They understood that the kids care items in the Indian market contained destructive chemicals and more secure choices weren't accessible. Therefore, they decided to order baby care products from overseas. Inevitably, they had to pay an extra amount while ordering from overseas and the order would also take a longer time to get delivered. They soon realized that it wasn't only them; there were a number of guardians in India struggling with a similar issue. The husband-wife pair observed this problem and used this problem to convert it into an opportunity. After understanding the needs and concerns of the consumers, they launched their own concept with Mamaearth and earned the title-Asia's first brand to offer "MADE SAFE" certified products that are toxin-free, have no side effects, and are packed with the natural goodness babies deserve.

WOW Skin Science

Success is not final, failure is not fatal; it is the courage to continue that counts"
– Winston Churchill.

This famous saying fits aptly on the quartet, which took their second plunge into entrepreneurship with the personal care brand WOW (Wealth of Wellness) Skin Science. Finding motivation after a start-up's failure is a

challenge, which the co-founders managed to overcome. During that time, there were barely any affordable organic personal care brands for the general public. Banking on their past lessons, the founders kept their focus intact on product quality and traveled around the globe to meet up with scientists and skincare experts to bring out a mix between traditional therapeutic formulations and scientific developments. The term ‘nature-powered formulations’ is used by the brand, which puts them neither in the traditional Ayurvedic category nor in the modern scientific formulas based ventures. It’s a blend of both, which brings in the exclusivity factor. The company has also paid attention to the look and feel of the brand to keep the aesthetics right. They feel that selling a product is like storytelling. You need to convey the message better to make the sale. Special attention has been paid to retain the texture and feel of natural ingredients to boost the overall user experience. WOW has created a brand exclusivity with its “nature-based scientific formulation” narrative besides its focus on quality and competitive pricing.

- **Empowerment**

Another type of marketing that has gained popularity these days is called “Empowerment Marketing”. Empowerment marketing is about expressing the truth, instilling positive messaging, and accepting responsibility for the product, as opposed to traditional and insufficient marketing, which delivers information that makes the audience feel as though they need the product to be adequate. In marketing, consumer empowerment also refers to giving customers choices, resources, and tools to aid in decision-making so they can tailor a product or brand experience to match their needs and preferences. In addition to this kind of empowerment, consumers today are discovering that in the age of Internet communication and social media their thoughts and opinions are being heard by businesses like never before. Additionally, by expressing their views on such engaging platforms, consumers have the chance to co-create value for themselves, other members, and the brand.

Mamaearth

Mamaearth started as a company that is by the moms, for the moms and through the moms. Initially the brand only dealt with baby care and pregnancy products and thus was positioned as a product series only mothers depended upon. Mamaearth wanting to align with with a more gender oriented or unisex approach took a major step to expand their catalogue towards skincare and derma care products. Today, they are no longer just a baby care brand. Today, they are a skincare brand that offers diversity of categories. According to a Forbes report, half of the brand’s consumers are males. Currently, Mamaearth offers a variety of inclusive products for all ages and genders while keeping their brand’s purpose and message the same- “Goodness Inside”

WOW Skin Science

WOW Skin Science from the beginning has believed that self care has no gender. They have always catered to all ages and genders with over 200 product variants with formulations, created specifically for different types of skin and people and hence further empowering the idea of skincare and self care. With an understanding of woke consumerism and correct implementation, WOW has established itself as the go-to brand for the modern-urban conscious consumers looking for a holistic solution to their beauty and wellness needs.

Mamaearth and WOW Skin Science have clearly understood the importance of providing the consumers with clean and quality products and have mastered the art of emotional marketing, which is one of the major reasons behind their respective successes today.

This research paper can be referred to by new upcoming brands, especially skin care startups in terms of dos and don’ts of marketing by taking inspiration from the two exceptionally well doing brands discussed in the case study. This particular paper also talks about emotional marketing, which is often overlooked by businesses, and discusses its subcategories in detail. Further, this paper can clear the confusion of the consumers between the two similar brands and also guide them regarding which is a better fit to cater to their needs.

IV. CONCLUSION

There is no doubt in the fact that Mamaearth and WOW Skin Science today have become the giants in the beauty and skincare world. Over the years, both brands have connected well with their audiences in order to achieve their respective places in the market, and it is also the reason for their fast growing success. While both these brands are known for their similar products, each has their own identity when it comes to marketing. Mamaearth and WOW, both being sustainable brands, have aced the concept of cause branding leading to enhancing consumer images in the long run. However, when it comes to empowerment and storytelling, Mamaearth is able to communicate and henceforth connect better with its audience. The reason behind the same is Mamaearth’s marketing strategy to communicate with a clearer story and better transparency in comparison to

WOW Skin Science. In a nutshell, when comparing Mamaearth and Wow, both brands have their strengths and weaknesses. But the one thing common is providing their consumers with natural, safe and quality products.

LIMITATIONS

This paper may have potential limitations due to the secondary nature of research. This particular paper and its estimates are based on the data collected from various other articles, case studies, reports, newspaper editorials, etc. Therefore, inevitably, it may be viewed as biased due to the absence of primary/first hand opinion.

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