

Evolution of Kids Cosmetics in the Indian Market

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Abstract: *This research explores how cosmetic brands craft, use and execute marketing strategies to target children, focusing on the crossover of brand appeal, safety concerns, and ethical considerations. The study aims to identify strategies to attract young consumers while addressing parental expectations for non-toxic and child-appropriate products. The most critical strategies studied in the research are colourful and playful packaging, age-restricted branding, and social media influencer influence to gain confidence and interest. Furthermore, the study also considered how digital platforms like YouTube and Instagram contribute to children's consumer behaviour. This analysis of the two cases of successful child-centric cosmetic brands illustrates their effectiveness in developing brand loyalty and furthering sales. The conclusion is viewed from the standpoints of consumer psychology, marketing ethics, and societal movements, including increased sustainability concerns and safe cosmetics. The work outlines areas for concern, including the commercialisation of childhood and the consequences of selling to a vulnerable population. This research will, therefore, contribute to a further understanding of how businesses balance profit with a sense of responsibility in the cosmetics industry by providing recommendations for more ethical and practical marketing practices.*

Keywords: Children's Cosmetics, Marketing Strategies, Consumer Behaviour, Marketing Ethics, Brand Loyalty

1. Introduction

Increasing the target population to include young children, the cosmetics market has seen an untapped potential in the younger demographic (Hardcastle, 2024). From skincare to makeup, the companies have had to customise their products per the taste of young children while still keeping all the apprehensions of their parents at bay. Coloured packaging, funny nomenclature, and celebrity-helmed advertisement campaigns all have added to this younger demographic that faces criticism on issues of commercialising childhood. The latest research suggests that the global children's cosmetics market is valued in billions and is expected to grow much more in the coming years (Verifiedmarketreports, 2024). However, the marketing methods used for these products raise questions about ethics, consumer psychology, and brand responsibility.

Digital platforms like YouTube and Instagram have become vital hubs for accessing the younger masses. Inflated marketing, family-oriented branding, and fun content have blurred the lines between playful and consumerist. Some hail these approaches for encouraging imagination and creativity, whereas others see them as detrimental to childhood and parental perception.

The main objective of this study is to examine which of the marketing strategies utilised by cosmetic brands are explicitly designed to attract children's attention. This includes exploring how packaging, influencer partnerships, and digital content attract young consumers. At the same time, it attempts to examine the ethics surrounding these strategies and their reflection on parental concerns and societal trends.

Understanding these dynamics helps draw attention to the subtle interplay businesses constantly try to maintain between profitability and corporate social responsibility. In light of these needs, this paper aims to make a meaningful

contribution to the discussion of marketing ethics and encourage integrating CSR within child-oriented campaigns. At the same time, the study intends to inform and orient policymakers, educators, and parents about a deeper comprehension of how child-focused marketing affects cosmetics firms.

2. Literature Review

A marketing strategy is a business's comprehensive plan to identify target audiences, develop brand positioning, and utilise resources effectively to promote products or services, achieve competitive advantage, and build customer loyalty (The Investopedia Team, 2024). In the past, Eleanor A Medley 2023 surveyed parents and guardians of children aged 12 and under about the prevalence and reason for using Children's makeup and body products. It was shown that 70% of these children had ever used such a product, including those considered traditional make-ups like eyeshadow and lipstick and body products such as face paint, body glitter, nail polish, hair gel, and perfume. These come in bright colours and characters that appeal to children. (Medley EA et. al, 2023).

Another study by Connie Engel et al. 2016 analysed toxic chemicals in kids' makeup. The study reveals that most products contain harmful chemicals, including lead, cadmium, styrene, ethylbenzene, and vinyl acetate. Such chemicals are highly hazardous to human health and may cause endocrine disruption as well as may be carcinogenic (Engel, 2016).

Thus, widespread usage, along with the presence of harmful chemical compounds, questions the safety status of children through such exposure and related health disturbances such as hormone disruption and enhancement of the danger of cancer occurrence. Therefore, a very significant number of CMBPs products in the present times with growing awareness

regarding increased danger through contamination also warrants additional regulations for greater public protection and awareness.

Furthermore, marketing strategies of companies targeted at children have become a burgeoning focus within the cosmetics industry. In this paper, the authors understand the strategy of child-focused cosmetic brands, with a particular emphasis on Whimsy and Princess by Renee. These brands have achieved public awareness due to their bright branding, commitment to sustainability, and corporate social responsibility (CSR). This research outlines their strategies, compares effectiveness to industry standards, and articulates future research potential.

1) CSR and Sustainable Strategies of Cosmetic Companies

The cosmetic industry's integration of CSR and sustainability has evolved from an ethical responsibility to a marketing advantage. Efforts to use recyclable packaging and cruelty-free practices simultaneously consider ethical responsibility and consumer demand. Still, while many businesses highlight sustainability, there is often a need for deeper inquiry into the validity and transparency of their claims.

2) Whimsy

Whimsy is a recognisable brand in children's makeup and is famous for its playful and creative strategy. Brand messages are centred around creativity and self-expression with product lines conceptualised specifically for younger consumers. Whimsy applies bright colours, whimsical art, and characters on its packages (offline and online) to establish playful aesthetics that appeal to kids. Whimsy also leverages online channels such as YouTube and Instagram to appeal to audiences with child-friendly content creators (Whimsy website).

3) Market strategy

Whimsy's strategy is heavily based on non-toxic and dermatologically tested products, directly addressing parents' concerns. The brand engages in corporate social responsibility activities among NGOs that support children's education and eco-friendly production processes. Critics have noted that even with good intentions, Whimsy's excessive digital advertising blurs ethical lines, especially in targeting a young audience through influencers, who may not be equipped to distinguish between organic posts and monetised content.

4) Princess by Renee

Another major player in the children's cosmetics market is Princess by Renee. As a sub-brand of Renee, it enjoys the advantages of its parent brand's more developed market presence and brand credibility. Princess by Renee offers high-end products in whimsical packaging influenced by fairy tales, emphasising the experience of luxury while remaining reasonably priced. Its campaigns often include a range of celebrity endorsements, specifically through children's influencers and popular social media sensations, positioning the brand as aspirational (Shastri, 2024).

Although Princess by Renee has made progress in various sustainable initiatives, such as biodegradable packaging,

cruelty-free processes, and corporate social responsibility (CSR) around environmentally friendly initiatives and educating young consumers, similar to Whimsy, the ethical implications of its various digital marketing strategies are concerning. The use of influencers and targeted ads raises issues with the issue of commercialization of childhood as well as the potential long-term psychological implications on young consumers (Whimsy India).

3. Methodology

In the present research paper, we adopted secondary research to collect more information about the two famous brands. Secondary research involves gathering and analysing data that has already been published and generally consists of an overview of previous research studies available from different sources, including books, journals, articles, websites, social media platforms, and other reliable sources (Snyder, 2019). Secondary research is particularly suitable when studying marketing strategies in the children's cosmetics sector because it is easily suited to accessing available data and reports, expert views, case studies, and statistics without having to gather direct data from children, which is an ethical concern.

Secondary research is best for this study for several significant reasons. First of all, ethical issues make primary research among children problematic because it would necessitate parental permission and create an issue of engaging minors in the process of data collection. Hence, secondary research presents itself as a safer and more responsible option. In addition, plenty of information exists- everything from industry reports and scholarly research to market research and social media postings- that provides rich insight into how cosmetic companies target children. This approach is also cost-effective and efficient in terms of time since researchers can gain access to large amounts of data without the financial and logistical burdens of primary research. Additionally, it allows for a well-rounded and in-depth analysis through reference to varied sources like academic papers, corporate websites, press releases, and weblogs, thereby improving the overall quality and depth of research.

We gathered secondary data from various reliable and diverse sources to provide a broad understanding of marketing strategies for children in the cosmetics sector. Sources were research articles and surveys found in academic journals, providing theoretical and empirical data. Market reports and company case studies- particularly of brands such as Whimsy and Princess by Renee- offered in-depth analysis of trends and brand-specific strategies. News stories accessed real-time insights and public responses to child-oriented cosmetics advertising. Official websites of cosmetic companies also provided immediate information on product lines, promotion strategies, and sustainability efforts. For further insight into consumer sentiment, customer reviews and testimonials on e-commerce websites were examined, revealing how parents and young consumers receive these advertising strategies.

By conducting secondary research, the authors critically analyse how cosmetic brands in India, specifically Whimsy and Princess by Renee, employ marketing strategies to attract

children and how these strategies align with or challenge ethical marketing practices.

4. Analysis

1) Strategies Employed by Whimsy and Princess by Renee

Renee's Whimsy and Princess use a number of strategies to appeal to their young consumer market.

- **Vibrant and Playful Packaging:** Bright colours, engaging characters, and interactive designs make the products attractive to children.
- **Digital Marketing and Influencer Collaborations:** Utilizing platforms like Instagram and YouTube, the brands create content that resonates with children and their families.
- **Safety and Non-Toxic Claims:** Opportunities to respond to parents' safety concerns (through dermatological testing) build trust.
- **Storytelling and Thematic Campaigns:** Utilization of themes related to fantasy and creativity assists in eliciting emotion towards a brand.
- **Sustainability and CSR Initiatives:** Green practices and social responsibility promotion align with larger societal values.

Both brands have successfully established themselves in the market for children's cosmetics, but their approaches offer essential ethical and psychological issues for reflection. The behaviour of using influencer marketing and digital platforms has successfully increased brand visibility, but some will rightfully argue that this marketing strategy takes advantage of a vulnerable demographic. The brands' claims of corporate social responsibility (CSR) and sustainability are also noteworthy, but the veracity and transparency of these practices are questionable.

2) Difference between Whimsy vs Renee

Although these two brands are quite famous among the Indian kid's population, there are still points of difference between the brands.

Whimsy	Renee (Princess)
A wider range of products (nail products such as buffer and nail polish)	A smaller range of products (nail press ons)
Attractive packaging to attract kids and make them feel grown up (modernised packaging)	Uses Disney cartoon/animations (frozen) to attract kids (different packaging)
Website, Instagram, Youtube ads	Amazon Shop, Renee website, Nykaa
Testimonials	Some reviews
Moderate pricing and availability of premade and customisable bundles and kits	Singular product line
Takes feedback into consideration while conducting market research (primary)	Secondary Research

Whimsy and Renee (Princess) are two children's beauty product brands, but they take very different approaches. Whimsy carries a broader selection of nail products, such as nail buffers and polishes, whereas Renee has its sights set on a single product—nail press-on. Whimsy packages its products in a way that makes children feel mature, whereas

Renee employs Disney characters such as Frozen to appeal to children. Marketing-wise, Whimsy uses social media channels like Instagram and YouTube for promotions, while Renee sells mainly on Amazon and its website. Whimsy also uses testimonials for endorsement, while Nykaa has a few product reviews. Pricing-wise, Whimsy offers moderate pricing and customisation kits to make it more affordable, while Renee has only one line of products. Additionally, Whimsy proactively undertakes primary research by integrating customer feedback, while Renee accomplishes its research through secondary research. Finally, Whimsy was established by a two-time mother who experienced the market need firsthand, further building its brand's authenticity.

5. Discussion

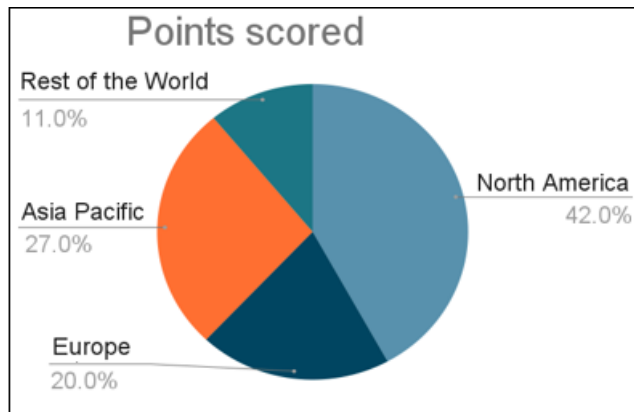
This study highlights similarities and differences in the marketing strategies of two well-known children's cosmetic brands. As businesses increasingly want to engage younger, aspirational consumers, the report emphasises the growing market potential in the children's cosmetics industry. Despite differences in product categories, market positioning, and strategic approaches, both firms have a critical responsibility to understand tweens' needs and preferences while considering parental concerns. Also, before promoting the products online, all the essential product specifications, details and chemicals used should be informed. These insights must be incorporated for the company to succeed financially and maintain ethical and socially conscious brand identities.

6. Conclusion

Our research covers the changing trends in marketing children's makeup products, but some crucial gaps exist. One of the gaps is the long-term psychological effect of exposure to advertising beauty products at an early age, with little research on how it affects consumer behaviour and self-concept. Another gap is parental awareness because parents play a crucial role in buying decisions. Future research should explore how they see such promotional strategies and how they affect purchase behaviour.

Finally, the regulatory restrictions require further investigation. Despite regulations being in place, there is no definitive answer regarding whether they could help protect young consumers, raising questions about ethical marketing. Moreover, these measures fuel business advancement, and filling in the gaps to reconcile commercial success with ethical conduct is necessary. Future studies should address these matters to ensure responsible and consumer-oriented marketing of cosmetics in children.

1) Global Children's Cosmetics Market Share, by Region, 2021 (%)



Source: Singh, 2021

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