NATRUE’s consumer study on consumer perception about brands and seals in regard to cosmetics in Germany and France

February, 2021
Across the EU, there is a need for better regulation of natural and organic claims in order to support and empower consumers as part of the green transition, as well as mitigating the risk of greenwashing from manufacturers. With transparency and clarity in mind, NATRUE commissioned in January 2021 a quantitative consumer-centric study carried out through an online survey in Germany and France to evaluate three pillars:

- Consumer attitudes
- Brand perception
- Seal performance
Consumers
“Naturalness” as one of the keys aspects defining personal care & beauty products.

Brands
Consumer perception about “naturalness” regarding cosmetic brands and their products.

Seals
Are seals sufficient to regulate the natural & organic care market? Evaluation of clarity of labels and seals.
**Research design: study specifications**

### Methodology
- Quantitative, online survey using access panels: 20-minute questionnaire

### Target group and sample size
- Representative mix: 70% female an 30% male
- Ages: 18-65 years old
- National representative quotation regarding region
- Participants: buyers or users of personal care products in mass market channels. 25% are users of natural brands.
- Number of participants: 1014 (Germany) and 1022 (France)

### Countries
- Germany
- France

### Survey period
January and February 2021
Consumers
Consumers in Germany and France are very open to the use of natural/organic personal care and products. In Germany, 37% of consumers indicates that they have used a NOC brand among others within the past six months, as opposed to 27% in France.

### Brand usage among others – German sample in %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional brands</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature-inspired brands</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural brands</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Brand usage among others – French sample in %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand Type</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conventional brands</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature-inspired brands</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural brands</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
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“Naturalness” is an important aspect for consumers when considering the purchase of personal care and beauty products. In Germany, its amount to 20%, while in France it represents 24%. Other aspects that come close in importance are skin compatibility, performance and application.

**Importance of naturalness - German sample in %**

- Naturalness: 20%
- Appearance: 11%
- Convenience: 12%
- Application: 13%
- Performance: 17%
- Skin compatibility: 19%
- Value for money: 8%

Naturalness shows an importance of 20%
The remaining 80% is related to other product features (see graphic above).

**Importance of naturalness - French sample in %**

- Naturalness: 24%
- Appearance: 8%
- Convenience: 12%
- Application: 13%
- Performance: 16%
- Skin compatibility: 19%
- Value for money: 8%

Naturalness shows an importance of 24%
The remaining 76% is related to other product features (see graphic above).
Data shows that the most relevant aspect that define “naturalness” for consumers in both countries is “100% natural” (referring to its ingredients). Furthermore, “animal welfare” has a comparatively high relevance. In the French market, the absence of ingredients from animal origin (i.e. vegan) is also perceived as a key aspect of “naturalness”.

### Naturalness - German sample in %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Natural/Organic ingredients</th>
<th>Free from...</th>
<th>Climate/Biodegradable/Biodiversity</th>
<th>Fair trade</th>
<th>Pack/Waste</th>
<th>Animal protection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural/Organic ingredients</td>
<td>be 100% natural.</td>
<td>not contain synthetic/artificial ingredients,</td>
<td>containing biodegradable ingredients,</td>
<td>be produced with respect to people,</td>
<td>produce zero waste (e.g. non-polluting),</td>
<td>protect animal welfare,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>be an organic product,</td>
<td>reduced environmental impact,</td>
<td>be fair trade,</td>
<td>come in a recyclable packaging,</td>
<td>contain no ingredients from animal origin,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not contain microplastics,</td>
<td>contain sustainably sourced ingredients,</td>
<td></td>
<td>packaging with reduced amount of plastic,</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not contain GMOs,</td>
<td>provide protection of biodiversity,</td>
<td></td>
<td>packaging without plastic,</td>
<td>5.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>not contain nanoparticles,</td>
<td>be climate neutral,</td>
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<td>protect animal welfare,</td>
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### Naturalness - French sample in %

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<td>9.6</td>
<td>5.8</td>
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### Naturalness: 20% vs 24%

Based on 95% significance level

Certification Survey
02/03/2021 Page 8

Base: German sample (n=1010), French sample (n=1022)
Question: When thinking about "naturalness" of personal care and beauty products, which statement is most important to you? And which statement is least important to you?
Brands
In Germany, natural brands are strongly associated with all aspects of “naturalness”, particularly to aspects related to the product’s ingredients. Nature-inspired brands are perceived very similarly to conventional brands, which indicates that German consumers are overall aware of the risk of "greenwashing" and can more easily differentiate between natural products and nature-inspired ones.

Base: German sample: Conventional brands, Nature-inspired brands, Natural brands.

Question: Which brand fits the following statement?
In France, the results show a different trend. Although natural brands are strongly associated with most attributes associated to “naturalness”, nature-inspired brands are almost as positively perceived as natural brands for aspects such as “fair trade” or “animal protection”. Nature-inspired brands are more positively rated than conventional brands, particularly regarding their natural/organic ingredients.

**Brand evaluation - French boost sample in index to total**

- **Natural/Organic ingredients**: Natural brands > Nature-inspired brands > Conventional brands
- **Free from**: Nature-inspired brands > Natural brands > Conventional brands
- **Climate/Biodegradable/Biodiversity**: Natural brands > Nature-inspired brands > Conventional brands
- **Fair trade**: Nature-inspired brands > Natural brands > Conventional brands
- **Pack/Waste**: Nature-inspired brands > Natural brands > Conventional brands
- **Animal protection**: Nature-inspired brands > Natural brands > Conventional brands
To illustrate the threat of “greenwashing” in France, the evaluation of a popular nature-inspired brand in France (“Brand X”) has been included in the diagram below. This nature-inspired brand is perceived similarly or even more positively by consumers in terms of “naturalness” than natural/organic brands, also regarding the natural/organic ingredients present in the products.

Brand evaluation - French sample in index to total

Certification Survey  
02/03/2021 Page 12
To illustrate the threat of greenwashing in Germany, a popular nature-inspired brand in Germany has been evaluated in the diagram below. As in the previous example with Brand X in France, this nature-inspired brand (“Brand Y”) is perceived similarly or even more positively by German consumers when comparing certain aspects also present in products from natural/organic brands.

Brand evaluation - German sample in index to total
Consumers can also be confused about sub-brands from conventional brands specifically developing a line of products certified as natural or organic. The evaluated brand in the diagram below ("Brand Z") is a sub-brand of a known conventional one. While it scores similarly regarding the "animal protection" factor, it remains far from being considered similarly to natural brands when it comes to its ingredients.

**Brand evaluation - German sample in index to total**

Base: German sample: Conventional brands, Nature-inspired brands, Natural brands

Question: Which brand fits the following statement?
“Brand Z” was also presented to French participants. While there are certain similarities between France and Germany in terms of patterns, the differences between the perception about “Brand Z” and natural brands are less remarkable in the French results.

Brand evaluation – French boost sample in index to total
In Germany, the Fairtrade seal, animal welfare/protection seals and other seals related to environmental protection are those most positively rated in connection to “naturalness”. More complex and multifactorial seals (such as NATRUE’s one) that certify origin, formulation, ingredients, etc. score particularly high in regard to natural/organic ingredients and “free from” claims.

Seal evaluation - German sample in index to total
The French data shows a similar pattern regarding the importance of the Fairtrade seal and seals guaranteeing animal protection or the absence of ingredients of animal origin (vegan). However, the results of multifactorial seals (such as NATRUE’s one) show a more diffused picture, which indicates that participants have experienced difficulties when assigning a clear purpose to these seals.

**Seal evaluation - France boost sample in index to total**

- **Natural/Organic ingredients**
- **Free from**
- **Climate/Biodegradable/Biodiversity**
- **Fair trade**
- **Pack/Waste**
- **Animal protection**

- **Others labels certifying NOCs** (7)

Base: German sample: Origin + formulation + product, Environmental impact, Animal protection, Sustainability, Ingredients

**Question:** Which seal fits the following statement?
In my opinion, manufacturers are trying to 'greenwash' their products rather than truly offering products made from natural ingredients.

In my opinion, politics (e.g. the EU) are too passive regarding the regulation of natural personal and beauty care.

Current labels do not sufficiently indicate which personal and beauty care products are really natural.

The more I learn about natural personal and beauty care products, the harder it seems to choose the best.

When I want to buy a natural personal and beauty care product I often feel confused, because there are so many of them.

I rely on certifications for natural personal and beauty care products.
When it comes to certification, consumers of nature-inspired and natural brands show a high rate of agreement with the statement “I rely on certifications for natural personal care and beauty products”. The percentage of agreement of France (72%) is higher than the one of Germany (62%) in regards to this statement.

Need for seals & regulation - German sample in %

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>L3B</th>
<th>center</th>
<th>T3B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total sample:</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I rely on certifications for natural personal and beauty care products.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nature-inspired brand user (among others):</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>60</td>
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<td>Natural brand user (among others):</td>
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Need for seals & regulation - French sample in %

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Even if multifactorial seals are not clearly understood by most consumers, about 90% of the German and French participants in this study are willing to pay more for a certified cosmetic product within the face care, body care, hair care and shower products categories.

**Willingness to pay more for certified product - German sample in %**

- **Face Care**
  - Mean: 93,7 cent
  - 50% willing to pay 0 cent
  - 24% willing to pay 1 cent to 99 cent
  - 15% willing to pay 1 € to 1,99 €

- **Body Care**
  - Mean: 85,8 cent
  - 53% willing to pay 0 cent
  - 24% willing to pay 1 cent to 99 cent
  - 12% willing to pay 1 € to 1,99 €

- **Hair Care**
  - Mean: 81,1 cent
  - 53% willing to pay 0 cent
  - 24% willing to pay 1 cent to 99 cent
  - 11% willing to pay 1 € to 1,99 €

- **Shower**
  - Mean: 77,2 cent
  - 55% willing to pay 0 cent
  - 25% willing to pay 1 cent to 99 cent
  - 10% willing to pay 1 € to 1,99 €

**Willingness to pay more for certified product - French sample in %**

- **Face Care**
  - Mean: 87,8 cent
  - 49% willing to pay 0 cent
  - 28% willing to pay 1 cent to 99 cent
  - 13% willing to pay 1 € to 1,99 €

- **Body Care**
  - Mean: 85,8 cent
  - 49% willing to pay 0 cent
  - 31% willing to pay 1 cent to 99 cent
  - 12% willing to pay 1 € to 1,99 €

- **Hair Care**
  - Mean: 76,2 cent
  - 53% willing to pay 0 cent
  - 27% willing to pay 1 cent to 99 cent
  - 10% willing to pay 1 € to 1,99 €

- **Shower**
  - Mean: 74,0 cent
  - 53% willing to pay 0 cent
  - 26% willing to pay 1 cent to 99 cent
  - 9% willing to pay 1 € to 1,99 €
Key learnings and perspectives

- “Naturalness” is a key factor which influences 20% (DE) and 24% (FR) of the decision-making of consumers when purchasing personal care and beauty products.
- From the consumer’s point of view, “animal protection” is an important topic, followed by “100% natural ingredients” and the absence of certain substances (e.g. no microplastics, no GMOs, etc.).

- Nature-inspired brands are particularly popular in France.
- French consumers seem to perceive nature-inspired brands as closer to natural and conventional brands, while German consumers them in a similar way to conventional brands.
- Besides “greenwashing”, there is increased confusion with “green” sub-brands of conventional market leaders whose products are certified as natural or organic. While German consumers believe that there are more guarantees at ingredient level by natural brands when compared to these sub-brands, the differences are more blurred for French consumers.

- Every second consumer agrees to the statement: “I rely on certification for natural personal care and beauty products”.
- Awareness and clarity of seals are lower for those seals that represent multifactorial criteria in comparison to one-factor seals.
- Consumers are willing to pay more for certified natural/organic products.