

# To Study About Gen'z Preferences Regarding the Use of Skin Care Product and Its Importance in Ahmedabad City

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## ABSTRACT

*Understanding Generation Z's skincare product preferences and the variables affecting their shopping decisions in Ahmedabad is the main goal of the current study. Gen Z, a socially conscious and tech-savvy age, is a fast expanding market for skincare and cosmetics. The study intends to investigate how factors including package appeal, social media influence, sustainability, ethical practices, and promotional offers affect their skincare choices. A systematic questionnaire was used to gather information from 171 respondents, and statistical analyses were conducted to investigate the connection between age and important aspects of consumer preference. The results show that although age has a substantial impact on some factors, such as social media influence ( $p = 0.007$ ) and willingness to pay for cruelty-free and environmentally friendly items ( $p = 0.000$ ), the overall correlation values ( $R$ ) are still low, suggesting little practical influence. Though their price sensitivity and emotional buying habits vary, Gen Z customers across all age groups consistently demonstrate an understanding of sustainability and ingredient transparency. The study also shows that while this generation appreciates open and ethical firms, their allegiance is still erratic and frequently swayed by fads, peer pressure, and special deals. Overall, the study finds that Ahmedabad's Gen Z customers are pragmatic and value-driven, striking a balance between affordability, digital influence, and ethical considerations. In order to successfully appeal to this new customer category, marketers can use the study's insightful findings to create strategies that prioritise affordability, sustainability, and authenticity*

## KEYWORDS

*Generation Z, Skincare Preferences, Sustainability, Social Media Influence, Consumer Behaviour*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The changing tastes and habits of Generation Z (Gen Z) have been the main drivers of the skincare and beauty industry's dramatic transition in recent years (Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017). Gen Z, which is defined as people born between the middle of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2010s, is a significant and influential consumer demographic that is distinguished by its digital fluency, social consciousness, and strong preference for sustainability (Odedra, Rabadiya, & Vidani, 2018). Their buying patterns, which have been influenced by social media, technology, and globalisation, have changed the way skincare and cosmetics companies compete in the market today (Sachaniya, Vora, & Vidani, 2019). Skincare has emerged as the largest and fastest-growing segment of the cosmetics and toiletry industry, which has grown significantly on a global scale (Vidani, Jacob, & Patel, 2019). The worldwide cosmetics market brought in over USD 444 billion in 2016, of which

USD 120 billion came from skincare. By 2025, it is expected to have increased to around USD 189 billion (Vidani & Dholakia, 2020). The self-care movement, increased knowledge of skincare health, and social media's role in promoting beauty standards and product regimens are the main causes of this expansion. Gen Z has emerged as the most significant consumer group therefore firms and researchers must pay close attention to their preferences (Vidani & Das, 2021).

Environmental concern is one of Gen Z's defining traits. They actively seek out firms that embrace ethical and ecological principles, having grown up surrounded by conversations about sustainability and climate change (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023). According to research by Aman Sagar, Arul Jyothi, and P.V. Ranjith (2025), Gen Z buyers favour skincare companies that prioritise sustainability and open business practices. Peer reviews and real deeds have a greater influence on them than traditional advertising (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023). Their shopping decisions are influenced by community reviews and beauty influencers on platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok, which are important information sources. Beyond sustainability, aesthetics and emotions have a role in Gen Z (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023). According to research by Khansa Musyaffa Najla et al. (2025), marketing design, emotional appeal, and visual appeal are frequently the factors that cause Gen Z to make impulsive purchases (Patel, Chaudhary, & Vidani, 2023). Social media trends, influencer marketing, and attractive packaging all promote impulsive yet worthwhile purchases, underscoring the harmony between emotional appeal and logical awareness in Gen Z consumers' purchasing decisions.

The increasing demand for natural and "green" skincare products is another new trend. Young consumers now prefer eco-friendly and health-conscious options due to worries about chemical substances (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). Green skincare products reduce pollution and save energy and resources (Y. Lim, Phing Cai, & A. Hong, 2021). This change is a reflection of Gen Z's connection of environmental and wellness beliefs with personal care practices. Additionally, social media has a big influence on Gen Z's skincare choices (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). Research highlights the significance of influencer marketing and electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in influencing purchase intentions, as demonstrated by the study conducted by Marsach Adelia et al. (2025). In a similar vein, brand perception is greatly impacted by celebrity endorsements, particularly when the endorsers are seen as genuine and reliable (Bansal, 2023) (Patel, Chaudhary, & Vidani, 2023). Purchase decisions are directly impacted by influencer credibility, which is based on trust, expertise, and attractiveness, according to research by Santi Duwi Putri Nugroho et al. (2022).

The purpose of this study is to investigate the skincare preferences of Gen Z and the significance of skincare in Ahmedabad (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023). As a fast-developing metropolitan area, Ahmedabad offers a unique context to analyze how global skincare trends manifest locally (Bansal, Pophalkar, & Vidani, 2023). The study looks at how marketing affects consumer behaviour, social media influence, impulse buying, and sustainability awareness. This study is important from an academic and practical standpoint. Academically, it advances knowledge of Gen Z's internet participation, sustainability attitudes, and consumer psychology (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023). Practically speaking, it offers insightful information that helps marketers and skincare firms create strategies that align with the values of this generation, encouraging ethical consumption, devoted customers, and sustained success in the rapidly changing skincare sector.

## II. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

1. To investigate Gen Z consumers' inclination for sustainable and eco-friendly skincare brands. [Goal accomplished in Question 5 of the questionnaire]
2. To examine how Gen Z's skincare buying decisions are affected by natural versus chemical ingredients. [Achieved goal in Question 6 of the survey]
3. To find out if Gen Z buyers are prepared to spend more for skincare products that are cruelty-free and eco-friendly. [Achieved goal in Question 7 of the survey]
4. To evaluate how social media sites (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.) affect Gen Z's preferences for skincare products. [Achieved goal in Question 8 of the survey]
5. To investigate the degree to which Gen Z skincare product preferences are influenced by beauty influencers and celebrities [goal accomplished in Question 9 of the questionnaire]
6. To assess how community feedback and internet reviews influence Gen Z's skincare purchase choices. [Achieved goal in Question 10 of the survey]
7. To determine how Gen Z's purchasing habits for skincare products are influenced by appealing packaging and product design. [Achieved the goal in Question 11 of the survey]
8. To investigate how Gen Z skincare consumers' emotional or trend-based elements relate to their impulsive purchasing behaviour. [Achieved the goal in Question 12 of the survey]
9. To evaluate the impact of sales and discounts on Gen Z consumers' skincare purchasing decisions. [Goal accomplished in Question 13 of the survey]
10. To research how Gen Z's trust in skincare products is increased by being transparent about ingredient disclosure and sourcing methods. [Achieved the goal in Question 14 of the survey]
11. To examine how Gen Z's allegiance to certain skincare products is impacted by shared ethical principles. [Achieved the goal in Question 15 of the survey]
12. To investigate the relationship between Gen Z customers' skincare preferences and age across a variety of behavioural variables. [Chi-Square analysis utilising Questions 5 to 15 achieved the goal]

## III. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. *Generation Z as Emerging Skincare Consumers*

Gen Z is a distinct and potent consumer group that is well-informed, socially concerned, and technologically native (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023). Gen Z is one of the biggest consumer groups in the world, with around two billion members as of right now (Nugroho et al., 2022). This generation has been exposed to global environmental and social challenges, has grown up surrounded by cutting-edge technology, and is constantly connected. Their strong beliefs in sustainability, ethical production, and inclusivity frequently impact their purchase selections (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). According to Lim, Cai, and Hong

(2021), the growing tendencies in self-care have made the skincare and cosmetics sector a crucial market (Vidani J. N., 2022). With skincare goods accounting for around USD 120 billion, the worldwide cosmetics business generated USD 444 billion in revenue in 2016. By 2025, this amount is anticipated to have increased to USD 189 billion (Vidani & Das, 2021). Understanding the demands and preferences of Gen Z customers is crucial because the skincare industry continues to play a major role in personal care regimens, according to the report. According to Ahmed et al. (2020), Gen Z buyers favour openness and genuineness. They are more inclined to base their purchasing decisions on influencers, internet reviews, and peer recommendations than on conventional advertising (Vidani, Meghrajani, & Siddarth, 2023) (Rathod, Meghrajani, & Vidani, 2022). Since this behaviour differs from that of earlier generations, creative marketing techniques catered to their digital habits are required.

#### *B. Sustainability and Environmental Awareness*

Sustainability is one of the key elements affecting Gen Z's skincare preferences (Vidani & Dholakia, 2020). According to Sagar, Jyothi, and Ranjith (2025), Gen Z customers actively seek out brands that are dedicated to sustainable practices and show a heightened understanding of environmental issues. They favour businesses who utilise recyclable packaging, minimise their carbon footprint, and steer clear of dangerous chemicals during manufacture (Vidani J. N., 2018). Their exposure to international discussions about pollution, climate change, and ecological preservation is the cause of their ecologically concerned actions. According to the report, Gen Z customers want actionable transparency in addition to brands that support sustainability (Vidani J. N., 2020). Companies that make sustainability claims need to support them with tangible measures like waste reduction programs, eco-friendly production methods, and certifications. For example, according to Lim et al. (2021), green skincare products are becoming more and more popular (Pathak & Vidani, 2016). Using skincare products that minimise toxic substances, save natural resources, and support environmental health is known as "green skincare." Since Gen Zers are very worried about how chemical-based goods affect their skin and the environment, this is in line with their ideals.

Among younger populations, the surge in consumption motivated by sustainability has been especially noteworthy (Vidani & Pathak, 2016). According to Boon et al. (2020), young customers are choosing products with natural or organic ingredients over those that are loaded with chemicals. The green skincare market has grown quickly as a result of this change. The need for sustainable alternatives is clearly on the rise, as seen by the 45% growth in sales of green products between 1998 and 2010 (Vidani & Singh, 2017). Concerns about the environment among Generation Z go beyond personal product preferences. They frequently interact with companies that exhibit more extensive corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs (Vidani J. N., 2016). Through community involvement, fair labour policies, or ethical sourcing, businesses are expected to improve society. Espitia (2020) claims that this generation views skincare as a component of a holistic way of living that supports social justice, environmental health, and individual well-being.

#### *C. Skincare and Impulse Buying Behavior*

Although Gen Z is renowned for its thoughtful purchasing, studies also show that they have a significant propensity for impulsive purchases, particularly when it comes to skincare (Vidani, Jacob, & Patel, 2019). In their study of Gen Z consumers' impulsive buying behaviour, Najla, Hardi, and Hidayat (2025) found that product aesthetics and emotional

elements play a major role in impulsive purchases. Hedonistic consumption patterns, in which people shop for pleasure and emotional fulfilment, are intimately associated with this behaviour (Vidani, 2019). According to the survey, Gen Z customers are greatly influenced by elements including visual appeal, product design, and advertising (Sachaniya, Vora, & Vidani, 2019). Because social media platforms continuously expose consumers to new products and trends, they exacerbate impulse purchase inclinations (Vasveliyya & Vidani, 2019). Skincare companies frequently use eye-catching content to pique clients' interest and give them a sense of urgency. Positive feelings related to self-care and personal improvement can contribute to impulsive skincare purchases (Odedra, Rabadiyya, & Vidani, 2018). Customers are more inclined to make impulsive purchases when they believe skincare can boost their confidence and looks (Vidani, 2018). According to Najla et al. (2025), brands that successfully appeal to these psychological triggers see a rise in sales as emotional attachments between customers and products might take precedence over logical judgement.

#### *D. Celebrity Endorsements and Aspirational Marketing*

Celebrity endorsements are still a potent weapon in the skincare sector, even though social media influencers now dominate marketing tactics (Vidani, 2018). Bansal (2023) looked on how Gen Z girls' buying habits were affected by celebrity endorsements. According to the study, celebrities' perceived knowledge, good looks, and aspirational appeal have a big impact on consumer preferences for products (Biharani & Vidani, 2018). Celebrities frequently act as trend-setters and role models for Generation Z, influencing their standards of beauty and way of life (Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017). Customers are inspired to imitate their skincare regimens by their testimonials, which foster a sense of trustworthiness and desirability. Like influencer marketing, though, honesty is essential (Vidani, 2016). Customers are more inclined to interact with brands that celebrities recommend if they actually use and support the products. The popularity of international celebrities and K-pop culture has increased the market for skincare products (Solanki & Vidani, 2016). For example, Korean beauty (K-beauty) products have become well-known throughout the world because to cultural influence and celebrity endorsements. According to Nugroho et al. (2022), Korean celebrities and influencers play a significant role in promoting cosmetic companies in other markets, such as Indonesia and India (Vidani & Plaha, 2016).

#### *E. Green Skincare Movement and Health Consciousness*

Gen Z customers are prioritising skincare products with natural components as a result of their increased awareness of health and safety issues (Singh & Vidani, 2016). According to Lim et al. (2021), customers are generally concerned about the uncontrolled use of dangerous chemicals, such as parabens that have been connected to breast cancer (Mala, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). Consequently, there has been a discernible trend towards products that support long-term skin health and are devoid of dangerous ingredients. In addition to addressing environmental issues, green skincare products complement Gen Z's emphasis on individual well-being (Dhere, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). This generation prioritises both physical and emotional well-being and sees skincare as a component of a larger self-care regimen (Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016). Espitia (2020) defined this trend as a "holistic approach" to beauty, in which buyers look for goods that benefit the environment as well as their skin. Ethical buying has also grown in prominence as a result of green skincare (Sukhanandi, Tank, & Vidani, 2018). Transparency in labour practices, production methods, and ingredient sourcing is now demanded of brands. Certification labels like "organic,"

"cruelty-free," and "vegan" are essential for gaining the trust of customers (Vidani, 2016). According to Lim et al. (2021), there is a high market demand for sustainable alternatives, as seen by the notable increase in sales of green skincare products.

#### **IV. STUDIES AND METHODS**

##### *A. Research Design*

In order to capture the attitudes and behaviours of Generation Z consumers in Ahmedabad with regard to skincare goods, the study used a descriptive research design. A descriptive methodology allowed the researchers to methodically record how elements like sustainability, packaging appeal, and social media influence Gen Z's skincare selections because the goal was to understand preferences rather than modify variables. Without changing the natural context of their purchase decisions, this design offered an organised framework for examining trends and connections between age groups and consumer behaviour.

##### *B. Sampling Method*

To contact respondents who were easily available in Ahmedabad, a non-probability convenient sampling technique was used. This represented a variety of Gen Z consumer sectors, including professionals, businesses, homemakers, and students. The approach was useful for obtaining insights from a sizable and diverse group in a metropolitan setting, even though it does not ensure complete representativeness. The study was able to effectively gather the opinions of 171 respondents by concentrating on convenience sampling, providing an overview of how young consumers in the city approach skincare purchases.

##### *C. Data collection Method*

In order to ensure that the results accurately represented the beliefs and actions of Gen Z participants rather than relying on secondary interpretations, the study used a primary data gathering method. To gauge certain factors like awareness of sustainability, propensity for impulsive purchases, and the impact of social media platforms, a structured questionnaire with closed-ended questions was created. This method improved the validity and dependability of the conclusions reached by producing quantitative results that could be statistically examined using programs like Excel and SPSS.

##### *D. Data Collection Mode*

The data gathering method was online using Google Forms in order to maximise reach and efficiency, which was ideal for Generation Z's digital proficiency. In addition to lowering logistical obstacles, conducting the survey online appealed to the target group's tech-savvy character and familiarity with digital platforms. This mode ensured that the study could get genuine insights from a generation firmly rooted in online ecosystems by facilitating rapid distribution, easy accessibility, and quicker answer gathering.

##### *E. Cronbach's Alpha*

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistic for the scale is 0.918, indicating excellent internal consistency among the 11 items. This high alpha value suggests that the items are highly

correlated and reliably measure the same underlying construct, making the scale a dependable tool for assessment.

Table 1: Validation of Questionnaire

Statements
I prefer skincare brands that use eco-friendly and sustainable practices.
The ingredients used in skincare products (natural vs. chemical) strongly influence my purchase decisions.
I am willing to pay a higher price for skincare products that are cruelty-free and environmentally friendly.
Social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.) influence my skincare product choices.
I often rely on beauty influencers or celebrities for product recommendations.
Reviews and feedback from online communities help me decide which skincare products to purchase.
Attractive packaging and product design encourage me to purchase skincare products.
I sometimes make impulse purchases of skincare products due to emotional factors or trends.
Promotional offers and discounts strongly influence my buying decisions.
I trust skincare brands that are transparent about their ingredients and sourcing practices.

## V. FINDINGS AND RESULTS

### A. Demographic Summary

The demographic summary of the sample (N=171) reveals that the majority of respondents were female (56.1%), followed by males (34.5%), with 9.4% preferring not to disclose their gender. In terms of age, most participants were between 18-21 years old (46.2%), followed by the 22-25 age group (28.1%), below 18 years (11.1%), and 26-30 years (14.6%). Regarding educational qualifications, nearly half of the respondents were postgraduates (46.8%), while 36.3% were undergraduates, 15.2% had completed high school, and a small fraction identified as employed or businesswomen. When looking at the monthly personal skincare budget, the participants were fairly evenly distributed, with approximately 29.8% spending less than ₹500, 29.2% spending between ₹500 and ₹1000, 19.9% spending ₹1000-₹2000, and 21.1% spending above ₹2000.

Demographic Variables	Category	Frequency (%)	Demographic Variables
Gender	Female	56.1	Gender
	Male	34.5	
	Prefer not to disclose	9.4	
Age Group	Below 18	11.1	Age Group
	18–21 years	46.2	
	22–25 years	28.1	
	26–30 years	14.6	
Educational Qualification	High School	15.2	Educational Qualification
	Undergraduate	36.3	

### B. Hypothesis

1. Age \* I prefer skincare brands that use eco-friendly and sustainable practices
2. Age \* The ingredients used in skincare products (natural vs. chemical) strongly influence my purchase decisions
3. Age \* I am willing to pay a higher price for skincare products that are cruelty-free and environmentally friendly
4. Age \* Social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.) influence my skincare product choices
5. Age \* I often rely on beauty influencers or celebrities for product recommendations
6. Age \* Reviews and feedback from online communities help me decide which skincare products to purchase
7. Age \* Attractive packaging and product design encourage me to purchase skincare products
8. Age \* I sometimes make impulse purchases of skincare products due to emotional factors or trends
9. Age \* Promotional offers and discounts strongly influence my buying decisions
10. Age \* I trust skincare brands that are transparent about their ingredients and sourcing practices
11. Age \* I am more likely to stay loyal to a brand that shares my values (e.g., sustainability, ethical practices)

### C. Results Of Hypothesis Testing

Sr. No	Alternate Hypothesis	p-value	Accept /Reject Null Hypothesis	R Value	Relationship
1	Age * I prefer skincare brands that use eco-friendly and sustainable practices	0.008	Reject	-0.016	No significant relationship
2	Age * The ingredients used in skincare products (natural vs. chemical) strongly influence my purchase decisions	0.020	Reject	-0.005	No significant relationship
3	Age * I am willing to pay a higher price for skincare products that are cruelty-free and environmentally friendly	0.000	Reject	0.093	Weak positive relationship
4	Age * Social media platforms (Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, etc.) influence my skincare product choices	0.007	Reject	0.039	No significant relationship
5	Age * I often rely on beauty influencers or celebrities for product recommendations	0.208	Accept	0.117	No significant relationship
6	Age * Reviews and feedback from online communities help me decide which skincare products to purchase	0.020	Reject	-0.022	No significant relationship
7	Age * Attractive packaging and product design encourage me to purchase skincare products	0.069	Accept	0.152	Weak positive relationship
8	Age * I sometimes make impulse purchases of skincare products due to emotional factors or trends	0.068	Accept	-0.108	No significant relationship

9	Age * Promotional offers and discounts strongly influence my buying decisions	0.026	Reject	0.060	No significant relationship
10	Age * I trust skincare brands that are transparent about their ingredients and sourcing practices	0.002	Reject	0.043	No significant relationship
11	Age * I am more likely to stay loyal to a brand that shares my values (e.g., sustainability, ethical practices)	0.317	Accept	0.130	No significant relationship

## VI. DISCUSSION

The goal of the current study was to examine Ahmedabad City's Generation Z's views and preferences about skincare products, with an emphasis on the connection between age and other factors that affect skincare choices. The statistical findings offer important new information on Gen Z customers' purchasing patterns, including how they see sustainability, the impact of social media, ethical consciousness, and the emotional factors that influence skincare purchases. The results of the research showed that the null hypothesis was rejected for the majority of hypotheses, suggesting that age had some bearing on a number of factors pertaining to skincare preferences. Nevertheless, the R values were generally low, indicating that although there are discernible patterns, the correlations are not statistically significant. According to this, Gen Z consumers' skincare habits are influenced by a variety of psychological, social, and cultural aspects rather than being primarily determined by age.

For example, there was a significant but modest association between age and preference for sustainable and eco-friendly behaviours ( $p = 0.008$ ,  $R = -0.016$ ). This suggests that although respondents care about sustainability, the link between the two variables is weak, suggesting that environmental concern is largely constant across Gen Z age groups. Similar to this, ingredients (natural vs. chemical) had a significant impact on purchase decisions ( $p = 0.020$ ), but the correlation was insignificant ( $R = -0.005$ ), indicating that young customers' preferences are more universal than age-specific. It's interesting to note that there was a weak positive correlation between desire to pay extra for cruelty-free and environmentally friendly items ( $p = 0.000$ ,  $R = 0.093$ ). This suggests that Gen Zers who are a little older may be more prepared to spend money on products that are produced ethically. This result is consistent with worldwide patterns showing that mature Gen Z individuals are becoming more ethically conscious.

Despite having very low correlation values, social media platforms ( $p = 0.007$ ) and online reviews ( $p = 0.020$ ) were also found to have a significant impact on skincare choices. This implies that although these digital platforms influence consumer choices, the influence is largely constant across Gen Z's various age groups. However, there was no significant correlation found between reliance on celebrities or beauty influencers ( $p = 0.208$ ), indicating that younger customers are growing more dubious of celebrity endorsements and favouring real feedback from peers or micro-influencers. Aesthetics and price incentives

have a small but discernible influence on consumer behaviour, as seen by the mildly positive associations found between variables such as packaging design ( $p = 0.069$ ,  $R = 0.12$ ) and promotional offers ( $p = 0.026$ ,  $R = 0.060$ ). Emotionally motivated impulse purchases ( $p = 0.068$ ) did not substantially correlate with age, indicating that Gen Zers generally engage in these kinds of behaviours. The lack of significance for brand loyalty based on shared values ( $p = 0.317$ ,  $R = 0.130$ ) suggests that loyalty in this generation is ephemeral and frequently influenced by experience and changes in trends rather than enduring attachment. Overall, the conversation shows that Ahmedabad's Gen Z customers are conscious, socially connected, and value-driven, but that a combination of social media trends, ethical awareness, and marketing tactics—rather than just age differences— influence their skincare preferences. Therefore, in order to effectively engage this diverse and dynamic customer group, brands targeting this category must implement integrated marketing strategies that combine affordability, sustainability, and digital authenticity.

#### A. Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.918	11

The Cronbach's Alpha reliability statistic for the scale is 0.918, indicating excellent internal consistency among the 11 items. This high alpha value suggests that the items are highly correlated and reliably measure the same underlying construct, making the scale a dependable tool for assessment.

#### B. Theoretical Implications

The present study explores Gen Z's preferences regarding skincare products, focusing on sustainability, social media influence, and ethical brand practices. The findings hold several theoretical implications for understanding consumer behavior, sustainability-driven marketing, and digital influence in the beauty industry. From a consumer behavior perspective, the frequency results indicate that purchasing decisions are shaped by multiple psychological and social factors. A considerable number of respondents "strongly disagreed" or "disagreed" with statements supporting eco-friendly and sustainable brands, indicating that while environmental consciousness is a recognized ideal, it has not yet become a dominant purchase driver among all consumers. This supports Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior (1991), suggesting that although attitudes toward sustainability may be positive, actual behavior is influenced by perceived convenience, affordability, and social norms. The neutral responses across several items further indicate ambivalence or lack of awareness, highlighting the attitude-behavior gap often discussed in sustainability research. The results also reinforce the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model, where external stimuli such as packaging, promotions, and influencer endorsements act as cues that trigger emotional or cognitive responses, influencing purchase intentions. The data reveals that attractive packaging, promotional offers, and emotional factors often lead to impulse buying behavior. This aligns with theories of hedonic consumption and impulse buying, emphasizing that aesthetic appeal and emotional engagement play a major role in decision-making, especially among young consumers.

The role of social media and digital influence emerges as another key theoretical dimension. Although many respondents disagreed that influencers and celebrities guide their skincare choices, a significant proportion acknowledged the impact of online reviews and social media platforms. This reflects the social proof theory, where peer opinions and online feedback contribute to trust formation and reduce perceived purchase risks. It also connects to Bandura's Social Learning Theory (1977), which posits that individuals learn behaviors and preferences through observation, imitation, and interaction—processes that are now digitally mediated.

The high Cronbach's Alpha value (0.918) demonstrates strong internal consistency among attitude-related items, confirming that the scale reliably measures a unified construct—consumer perceptions toward sustainable and ethical skincare branding. The consistent responses suggest that Gen Z consumers exhibit coherent attitudes across dimensions such as transparency, loyalty, and environmental responsibility, reinforcing brand value congruence theory, where shared values between consumers and brands lead to stronger emotional connections and loyalty. The cross-tabulation analysis by gender provides additional theoretical insight into demographic segmentation. Female respondents showed stronger agreement with statements supporting sustainability, ethical practices, and brand loyalty, implying a gender-based differentiation in value-driven consumption. This aligns with gender socialization theory, suggesting that females often demonstrate greater environmental and ethical sensitivity in purchasing behavior compared to males. Overall, the findings contribute to the theoretical understanding that Gen Z's skincare choices are shaped by a hybrid of rational, emotional, and social influences. While sustainability is valued, it competes with practical factors such as budget, aesthetics, and social validation. Theoretically, this study reinforces the evolving nature of consumer values in the beauty industry—where environmental consciousness and digital engagement co-exist as intertwined determinants of behavior. Future theoretical models can further integrate sustainability attitudes with digital influence frameworks to explain young consumers' decision-making in a hyper-connected, ethically aware marketplace.

### *C. Practical Implications*

The findings of this study on Gen Z's skincare preferences offer several practical implications for marketers, skincare brands, and policy makers aiming to cater to the growing youth-driven beauty market. With 171 valid responses analyzed, the results provide actionable insights into how brands can align their marketing, product development, and communication strategies with consumer expectations and behaviors. First, the data reveals that a large segment of respondents prioritize affordability, with most reporting a monthly skincare budget below ₹1000. This indicates that price sensitivity remains a crucial factor, even among sustainability-conscious consumers. Hence, skincare brands should consider offering value-based product lines—eco-friendly and cruelty-free products at competitive prices. Introducing smaller packaging sizes or combo offers can make sustainable skincare more accessible to budget-conscious Gen Z buyers without compromising ethical production standards. Second, the findings show that while many respondents expressed interest in sustainable and cruelty-free practices, a significant proportion remained neutral or disagreed with paying higher prices for such products. This underscores the need for consumer education and transparent communication. Brands should engage in content marketing campaigns that explain the tangible benefits of eco-friendly ingredients, the ethical value of cruelty-free production, and how such choices contribute to long-term skin health. Storytelling through social media, highlighting brand transparency and authenticity,

can strengthen trust and bridge the attitude-behavior gap identified in the results. The influence of social media and digital engagement also presents strong practical implications. Although not all respondents are guided by influencers or celebrities, many rely on online reviews and social media platforms to make informed decisions. This suggests that brands must maintain an active digital presence, collaborating with micro-influencers and skincare communities who offer authentic, experience-based recommendations. Additionally, managing online reputation through timely responses to customer feedback, user-generated content, and testimonials can significantly enhance brand credibility and visibility among Gen Z consumers.

The results also emphasize the impact of promotional offers, packaging, and emotional appeal in purchasing decisions. Since many respondents admitted to making impulse purchases due to emotional factors, brands should leverage seasonal discounts, aesthetic packaging, and limited-edition collections to stimulate buying interest. However, packaging should align with the sustainability ethos—using recyclable or biodegradable materials—thereby combining emotional appeal with ethical responsibility. Gender-based differences observed in the crosstab analysis indicate that female consumers show stronger alignment with sustainable and ethical values, suggesting that marketing messages emphasizing eco-consciousness, transparency, and brand loyalty may resonate more with women. For male consumers, campaigns could focus on the functional benefits of products, such as effectiveness, simplicity, and long-term skin care value. Segmenting campaigns by gender preferences can improve targeting precision and brand resonance.

Finally, the high Cronbach's Alpha score (.918) indicates that consumers' attitudes toward sustainability, ethics, and transparency are strongly interconnected. Brands can capitalize on this by adopting a holistic brand strategy, integrating sustainability across product design, sourcing, manufacturing, and marketing. Policymakers and skincare associations can also use these insights to design awareness programs promoting sustainable beauty standards, encouraging responsible consumerism, and supporting eco-certification systems for skincare products. In summary, these findings imply that successful skincare branding for Gen Z requires balancing affordability, transparency, sustainability, and digital engagement. Brands that effectively combine ethical values with accessible, aesthetically appealing, and socially engaging marketing strategies are more likely to gain long-term loyalty from this value-driven yet price-sensitive generation.

## **VII. CONCLUSION**

The present study aimed to understand Gen Z's preferences and attitudes toward skincare products, focusing on sustainability, ethical practices, social media influence, and brand loyalty. Based on the responses from 171 participants, the findings provide a comprehensive understanding of how young consumers in today's beauty market perceive and engage with skincare brands. The analysis highlights that while Gen Z shows awareness and appreciation for sustainability and ethical consumption, practical considerations such as affordability, peer influence, and digital engagement continue to shape their purchasing decisions. The frequency results reveal that female respondents dominate the sample (56.1%), followed by males (34.5%), with the majority belonging to the 18–21 age group (46.2%). Most participants are undergraduate or postgraduate students, reflecting the youth-centric nature of skincare consumption. Their monthly skincare budget primarily falls below ₹1000, which

indicates that although this generation is interested in skincare, their purchasing capacity remains limited, making price an influential factor in decision-making. This aligns with global trends where Gen Z consumers seek affordable yet value-driven products that align with their ethical and aesthetic preferences.

The study found that while a portion of respondents strongly agreed with supporting eco-friendly and cruelty-free brands, many others remained neutral or disagreed, indicating an attitude-behavior gap. Although Gen Z expresses environmental concern, not all are willing to pay a premium for sustainable options. This suggests that sustainability alone may not drive purchasing decisions unless paired with affordability and quality assurance. It highlights the need for brands to create educational and awareness-based marketing strategies that connect ethical values with tangible product benefits, such as skin safety and long-term results. The results also emphasize the role of social media and online communities in influencing skincare choices. Platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and YouTube serve as powerful tools for shaping perceptions and guiding consumer choices through influencer marketing, user reviews, and peer recommendations. However, the responses show a mixed pattern—many participants value online reviews and social validation but remain skeptical of celebrity endorsements. This underscores a shift toward authentic and relatable marketing, where credibility and transparency are more persuasive than glamour-driven promotions.

The Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.918 indicates excellent internal consistency among the variables related to attitudes and perceptions, confirming that participants responded coherently across the sustainability, trust, and loyalty dimensions. This reliability strengthens the conclusion that Gen Z forms their brand preferences through an integrated evaluation of ethics, performance, and authenticity rather than superficial appeal alone. Gender-based crosstab analysis revealed that female consumers are more inclined toward sustainable, ethical, and loyalty-driven choices, while male respondents tend to focus more on practical or functional product aspects. These insights provide valuable direction for brands to adopt targeted marketing approaches that reflect gender-based behavioral nuances within the same generational segment. Overall, the study concludes that Gen Z represents a dynamic and evolving consumer group that values sustainability, transparency, and authenticity but remains influenced by affordability, social trends, and digital engagement. To capture this market effectively, skincare brands must combine ethical practices with emotional appeal and digital relevance. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of modern consumer psychology in the skincare industry, where environmental consciousness coexists with pragmatic purchasing behavior. In essence, the study reinforces that Gen Z's skincare choices reflect a balance between values and value for money, marking the emergence of a more informed yet experience-driven generation of consumers.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH/ FUTURE SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The results of this study on Gen Z's skincare preferences pave the way for a number of other studies and scholarly investigations. Although the study effectively identifies the major factors that influence skincare purchase behaviour, including price sensitivity, social media influence, sustainability awareness, and brand trust, it also identifies areas that require

more research to fully comprehend the changing dynamics of this market segment. First and foremost, future studies ought to concentrate on broadening the study's demographic and geographic reach. The current study focusses mostly on Gen Z customers in a particular area, which restricts how broadly the findings may be applied. Comparative insights into the ways that geographical, cultural, and economic variations impact sustainability attitudes and skincare preferences may be obtained by carrying out comparable studies in other cities or even nations. It would also be easier to spot generational changes in skincare habits and ethical purchase patterns if a variety of age groups were included, such as Gen Alpha and millennials.

Second, to acquire more profound psychological and emotional understanding of skincare buying behaviour, future study can use mixed-method research designs, which combine quantitative surveys with qualitative interviews or focus groups. Although quantitative data provides quantifiable trends, qualitative methods can highlight subjective motives, viewpoints, and emotional ties that are not readily apparent from numerical data. An approach like this could aid in investigating the fundamental causes of the attitude-behavior gap, which occurs when customers show care for the environment but do not act on it during the purchasing process. Thirdly, by investigating the long-term impacts of influencer culture and social media marketing on skincare usage, researchers can build on this work. Given how quickly digital trends are changing, organisations and marketers might benefit from monitoring how social media engagement and influencer reputation affect consumers' intents to buy over time. Future studies could also examine algorithmic exposure, or how Gen Z customers' skincare buying habits are influenced by tailored suggestions and targeted advertisements.

Furthermore, to comprehend the function of perceived control and self-image in sustainable purchasing, it would be advantageous to incorporate behavioural and psychological frameworks as the theory of planned behaviour, consumer identity theory, or self-concept theory. This could provide deeper theoretical insights into the relationship between psychology and consumer marketing by illuminating how Gen Z consumers relate skincare decisions to self-expression, confidence, and personal values. The effect of eco-certifications and product transparency on customer loyalty and trust is another intriguing topic for further study. According to the study, Gen Z's sense of credibility is greatly influenced by openness. Future studies can examine how ingredient disclosures, third-party certifications, and ethical labelling affect consumer choices, especially when it comes to telling the difference between "greenwashing" and truly sustainable companies.

Furthermore, as technology advances, the role of digital tools and artificial intelligence in skincare—such as virtual skin diagnostics, personalised skincare apps, and AI-based recommendations—can be investigated to learn more about how technology-driven personalisation impacts customer loyalty and satisfaction. Lastly, future research should look at brand advocacy and post-purchase behaviour, analysing how social sharing, experience, and satisfaction affect repeat business and word-of-mouth advertising. In conclusion, broadening the cultural, methodological, and technological aspects of this research is what will determine its future scope. Future researchers can develop a comprehensive understanding of Gen Z's skincare preferences by combining emotional, behavioural, and digital factors. This will help close the gap between sustainable intentions and real consumer behaviour and direct brands towards more ethical, consumer-centered, and successful marketing strategies.

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