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A STUDY OF RURAL GENZ'S BUYING BEHAVIOR FOR ORGANIC & NON ORGANIC COSMETICS PRODUCTS: ANALYZING THE IMPACT OF SOCIALMEDIA

Dr. Nimish Mishra

Assistant Professor, Dr. Rammanohar Lohia Avadh University, Ayodhya, India.

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Keywords	Abstract
<i>Rural marketing, consumer behaviour, Purchase decisions, organic cosmetics, social media, Generation Z.</i>	India is mainly an agricultural and rural nation, with approximately 65%-70% of its population living in rural areas. This research investigates how social media influences Generation Z's purchasing decisions for organic cosmetic products in these rural regions. As a digitally native and socially aware group, Gen Z relies heavily on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook to access beauty content, discover new products, and confirm their purchase decisions through reviews and influencer endorsements. The study employs a quantitative approach, gathering primary data from around 400 Gen Z individuals across various rural areas through a structured questionnaire with multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and correlation analysis. Influencer posts emerged as the most impactful type of content, with detailed product reviews also highly effective, whereas traditional commercials and lectures were less persuasive. The findings highlight the significance of authentic, relatable, and trustworthy online content in influencing Gen Z consumers. These



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	insights offer valuable guidance for brands aiming to engage this environmentally conscious and media-savvy generation.
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1. INTRODUCTION

Generation Z, the youngest adult cohort, is often mistaken for millennials. Both groups grew up with digital technology and share similarities, but Generation Z—also known as Zoomers—differs from millennials. It's important for companies to recognize these differences. This diverse group of young consumers resists easy labels, posing unique challenges because of their behaviors and subtle preferences. Despite not being the largest or wealthiest, Gen Z holds considerable influence. Understanding them is key not only for current trends but also for future directions they set trends, shape cultural movements, and determine what's considered innovative and fashionable. Their choices in beauty and grooming are driven by factors like affordability and personal expression. They demand diversity and favor clean-label ingredients, reshaping beauty standards and the industry with purpose. Over half (53.9%) of Gen Z actively engage with beauty content on social media platforms like Instagram, highlighting social media's critical role in connecting brands with younger audiences. Gender differences influence how they interact with content on platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook where tutorials, reviews, unboxings, and product hauls foster engagement. These visual and interactive channels help brands build emotional bonds with Generation Z, enabling discovery of organic products, peer validation, and brand loyalty. This study explores social media's influence on Gen Z's purchasing of organic cosmetics. It focuses on elements such as influencer credibility, content interaction, brand visibility, and peer impact, offering insights for marketers aiming to connect with this socially aware and digitally savvy generation.

2. LITERATUREREVIEW

Mohammad Osman Gani (2023) investigates how social media impacts consumers' intentions to purchase organic beauty products, emphasizing the roles of customer engagement and generativity. The results indicate that social media influence significantly boosts purchase intentions. Moreover, customer engagement and generativity partially mediate this relationship, with customer engagement exerting a stronger mediating effect.

Brown, A.M. (2023) observed that social media notably influences consumer behavior, especially for organic cosmetics. Instagram influencers, by sharing visually appealing content, motivate millennial consumers to buy organic beauty products.

Johnson, P., and Kim, S. (2022) found that Facebook and YouTube are key channels for engaging consumers with organic skincare brands, enhancing brand awareness and loyalty.

Zaleski (2020) notes that Gen Z consumers are more diverse and socially conscious than previous generations, prioritizing inclusivity, authenticity, and transparency. Retailers are adjusting their



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marketing strategies accordingly, featuring diverse models and promoting sustainable, ethical practices.

Nadarajan & Rangith (2018) studied SWOT in Rural Marketing, highlighting recent market growth. Rural areas, once overlooked, now show faster consumption growth than urban centers, especially in southern Tamil Nadu. The analysis identified varied strengths and challenges among traders and farmers, with proactive marketing efforts being a strength and certain limitations posing challenges.

Seemiller and Grace (2016) examined Generation Z students (born 1995-2010), noting their upbringing in a global, diverse, and tech-driven environment. This background shapes their unique expectations and engagement preferences.

Philip Kotler (1965) argued that understanding consumer behavior requires an integrated approach, combining various models. He observed that purchase decisions are influenced by factors such as price, quality, availability, style, options, and image, with the importance of each varying depending on the product and context.

3. OBJECTIVES

1. To understand the motivation and buying behavior of Consumers towards organic versus non-organic products in rural areas.
2. To analyze the celebrity influence and the buying behavior of Consumers towards organic versus non-organic products in rural areas.

4. HYPOTHESES

H₀₁: There is no significant difference between the motivation and buying behavior of consumers towards organic versus non-organic products in rural areas.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between celebrity influence and the buying behavior of Consumers towards organic versus non-organic products in rural areas.

5. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study will adopt a quantitative research approach to collect and analyze numerical data on Gen Z customers social media and purchasing habits. The method will allow the researcher to assess the correlations between variables such as social media engagement, trust in influencer material, and purchasing decisions.

5.1 SOURCES OF DATA

Primary data for this study will be gathered directly from rural Gen Z consumers using a standardized questionnaire. It will include questions on demographics, social media usage, attitudes towards influencer content, and purchase habits regarding organic cosmetics. To reach a wide



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audience within the target group, the survey will be distributed through social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, as well as via email. Secondary data is sourced from published research, industry reports, and reliable web sources related to social media marketing, consumer behavior, and the organic cosmetics industry. This information will support the literature review, help develop a conceptual framework, and offer context for assessing primary data.

5.2 Structure of Questionnaire

The questionnaire was thoughtfully designed and distributed to collect primary data. It features multiple-choice and Likert-scale questions that record respondents' demographics, social media habits, and shopping behaviors related to organic cosmetics.

5.3 Sample Size

The research involved roughly 400 rural Gen Z customers who filled out the questionnaire and supplied the main data for analysis.

6. DATA ANALYSIS

H_{01} : There is no significant difference between the motivation and buying behavior of Consumers towards organic versus non-organic products.

Group Statistics					
	Which type of cosmetic products do you prefer?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Motivational Factors	Organic	314	32.1265	6.755442	.38143
	Non-organic	86	28.1876	7.53455	.81275
Buying Behaviour	Organic	314	29.7634	8.34556	.47434
	Non-organic	86	25.8861	5.34555	.58343

Table 6.1

This hypothesis aimed to assess whether significant differences exist between motivational factors and consumer purchasing behavior for organic versus non-organic cosmetic products. The group statistics reveal that consumers favoring organic products have higher average motivation scores (Mean = 32.13) than those preferring non-organic options (Mean = 28.19). Additionally, the average buying behavior score is also greater among organic product consumers (Mean = 29.76) compared to non-organic consumers (Mean = 25.89). These findings suggest that consumers of organic cosmetics are more motivated and exhibit more robust purchasing behavior.



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Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Motivational Factors	Equal variances assumed	23.054	.000	4.432	398	.001	2.93865	.84378	1.27965	4.56537
	Equal variances not assumed			4.432	124.915	.001	2.93876	.89787	1.16163	4.71654
Buying Behaviour	Equal variances assumed	29.432	.000	5.054	398	.000	3.88387	.95776	2.00087	5.76767
	Equal variances not assumed			6.163	210.019	.000	3.88387	.75276	2.40176	5.36543

Table 6.2

An independent samples t-test was conducted to assess the significance of this difference. The p-value for motivational factors is 0.001, which is below the 0.05 threshold. Similarly, the p-value for buying behavior is 0.000, also under 0.05. Because both p-values are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H08)—that there is no significant difference between consumer motivation and buying behavior for organic versus non-organic products—is rejected. This indicates that motivational factors have a significant impact on consumers' purchasing behavior, especially among those who prefer organic cosmetic products.



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Correlations			
		Motivational Factors	Buying Behaviour
Motivational Factors	Pearson Correlation	1	.789**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Buying Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.789**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Table 6.3

The analysis of correlation shows a strong positive link between motivational factors and purchasing behavior. The Pearson correlation coefficient is 0.789, indicating a high positive relationship. This suggests that when motivational factors rise, consumer buying behavior also tends to increase. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this correlation is statistically significant and unlikely due to random chance. The findings highlight the significant impact of motivational factors on consumer purchasing decisions in the cosmetic industry. Consumers driven by factors such as product quality, personal preferences, health concerns, social influence, and promotional efforts are more likely to engage in positive buying behavior, especially towards organic cosmetic products.

H₀₂: There is no significant difference between celebrity influence and the buying behavior of Consumers towards organic versus non-organic products.

Group Statistics					
	Which type of cosmetic products do you prefer?	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Celebrity Influence	Organic	314	32.1242	6.75877	.38142
	Non-organic	86	26.1860	7.53738	.81278
Buying Behaviour	Organic	314	29.7675	8.41610	.47495
	Non-organic	86	25.8837	5.40897	.58326

Table 6.4

This hypothesis aimed to explore whether celebrity influence significantly affects consumer purchasing behavior toward organic and non-organic cosmetic products. The data reveal that



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consumers who favour organic products score higher on celebrity influence (Mean = 32.12) than those who favour non-organic options (Mean = 26.19). Similarly, organic product users show a higher mean score for buying behavior (Mean = 29.77) than non-organic users (Mean = 25.88). These results suggest that consumers of organic cosmetics are more influenced by celebrity endorsements and tend to exhibit stronger purchase intentions.

Independent Samples Test										
		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Celebrity Influence	Equal variances assumed	21.004	.000	3.482	398	.001	2.93816	.84372	1.27945	4.59687
	Equal variances not assumed			3.273	124.915	.001	2.93816	.89782	1.16124	4.71507
Buying Behavior	Equal variances assumed	37.511	.000	4.054	398	.000	3.88379	.95795	2.00052	5.76707
	Equal variances not assumed			5.163	210.019	.000	3.88379	.75218	2.40101	5.36658



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Table 6.5

To test the significance of this difference, an independent-samples t-test was conducted. The significance value for celebrity influence is 0.001, which is less than the standard level of 0.05. Similarly, the significance value for buying behavior is 0.000, which is also below 0.05. Since both significance values are less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H09) that there is no significant difference between celebrity influence and consumers' buying behaviour towards organic versus non-organic products is rejected. Hence, it can be concluded that celebrity influence significantly affects consumers' buying behavior, particularly among those who prefer organic cosmetic products.

Correlations			
		Celebrity Influence	Buying Behaviour
Celebrity Influence	Pearson Correlation	1	.705**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	400	400
Buying Behaviour	Pearson Correlation	.705**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	400	400
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).			

Table 6.6

The correlation analysis shows a strong positive link between celebrity influence and buying behavior, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.705, signifying a notable association. This indicates that as celebrity influence rises, consumer purchasing behavior also tends to increase. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that this relationship is statistically significant and unlikely to be due to chance. These findings imply that celebrity influence plays a crucial role in shaping consumer decisions in the cosmetic industry. Consumers drawn to celebrities, brand ambassadors, and promotional campaigns are more inclined to exhibit positive buying behaviors, particularly toward organic cosmetic products.

FINDINGS

The study found that gender significantly influences consumer buying behaviour towards cosmetic products. Male respondents showed higher buying behaviour scores than female respondents, indicating differing preferences. Age played an important role, with 18–22-year-olds showing the highest buying behaviour, influenced by trends, social media, and grooming awareness. Educational qualification affected behaviour; educated consumers knew more about product ingredients and were



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more cautious. Consumers from urban and developed cities preferred branded and organic products due to greater awareness and market exposure. Income level impacted decisions; moderate and high-income consumers favoured organic and branded products for their quality and safety. Most purchased cosmetics weekly or monthly, signalling their role in daily routine. A majority preferred organic products, reflecting their rising popularity. Price influenced decisions; consumers balanced quality with affordability, often willing to pay more for safer, long-term benefits. Many switched from non-organic to organic brands, mainly to avoid harmful chemicals and seek natural ingredients. Health consciousness was a key factor, with organic products seen as beneficial for physical and mental health, skin, confidence, and happiness. Concerns over synthetic ingredients' harmful effects and environmental impact also influenced buying. Brand trust and reputation greatly affected choices; consumers favoured trusted, reputable brands associated with quality and safety. They often checked ingredients and trusted organic labels and certifications. Motivational factors like advertisements, social influence, and self-image also played a significant role in buying behavior.

SUGGESTION

The study reveals that social media greatly influences how Generation Z in rural areas chooses organic cosmetics. With their strong social and environmental consciousness, Gen Z consumers are mainly swayed by credible, engaging online content. Influencer endorsements and authentic product reviews are the most impactful, while traditional marketing has less effect. Trust in online reviews links closely with purchase intentions, highlighting the need for transparency and credibility in digital marketing. To connect effectively with this demographic, marketers should focus on clear communication, eco-friendly messaging, and a strategic use of social media platforms and influencers.

CONCLUSION

Rural India has become an important market for businesses due to its expanding consumer base, improved infrastructure, and increasing disposable incomes. Government initiatives aimed at improving transportation, banking, communication, electricity, and livelihoods have further enhanced market opportunities across villages nationwide. Rural marketing not only helps extend business activities but also promotes regional growth and economic development. This study highlights the significant role of social media in shaping rural Generation Z's purchasing decisions for organic cosmetics. Results indicate that Gen Z consumers consider environmental and health impacts of their cosmetic choices by region and are highly engaged with social media content that aligns with their values. Influencer posts and genuine product reviews greatly influence their choices, with trust in online reviews closely linked to purchase intentions. The research underscores that digital platforms featuring credible, relatable, and value-driven content are vital tools for marketers seeking to connect with this aware and trendsetting generation.

AUTHOR(S) CONTRIBUTION

The writers affirm that they have no connections to, or engagement with, any group or body that provides financial or non-financial assistance for the topics or resources covered in this manuscript.



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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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