

Analyzing the Differences in Consumer Satisfaction Between Millennials and Generation Z Regarding Local and Korean Beauty Products in East Java

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Consumer Satisfaction, Beauty Products, Millennial, Generation Z, Brand Image

Received : 09, May

Revised : 28, May

Accepted: 21, June

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ABSTRACT

This study examines consumer satisfaction towards local and Korean beauty products among Millennial and Generation Z consumers in East Java. Findings show no significant difference in satisfaction levels between the two generations, with satisfaction influenced more by product quality, brand image, and personal experience than generational identity. Brand reputation and emotional connection play key roles in shaping consumer loyalty. The study also finds no interaction effect between generation and brand on satisfaction, suggesting marketing strategies should focus on product value rather than generational segmentation. Limitations include a narrow sample scope and the quantitative approach, inviting future research to explore broader generational groups and incorporate qualitative insights.

INTRODUCTION

The beauty industry has shown significant development in recent years, both in Indonesia and globally. According to Waluyo (2024), BPOM data recorded an increase in the number of cosmetic companies in Indonesia from 819 in 2021 to 1,010 in 2023, with an annual growth rate above 20%. Exports of Indonesian beauty products also increased rapidly, reaching USD 770.8 million from January to November 2023 (Coordinating Ministry for Economic Affairs, 2024). Additionally, the sector employs around 59,886 workers, dominated by small and medium industries (SMEs). In 2022, personal care products dominated the beauty industry market with a value of USD 3.18 billion, followed by skincare products at USD 2.05 billion, cosmetics at USD 1.61 billion, and fragrances at USD 39 million (Statista).

This rapid growth is also driven by significant expansion in e-commerce, where cosmetics top marketplace transactions valued at IDR 13,287.4 trillion between 2018 and 2022. Globally, the cosmetic industry is projected to reach USD 473.21 billion by 2028 with an annual growth rate of 5.5%. One phenomenon driving this growth is the presence of Korean beauty products or K-beauty, which is part of the Korean Wave (Hallyu). The Korean Wave broadly introduces Korean culture to the world, including K-pop music, dramas, and beauty products.

In Indonesia, the influence of the Korean Wave is very evident, reflected in the increasing number of concerts and events featuring Korean artists in major cities. The Korean beauty industry is a key pillar of Hallyu, supported by product innovation, cutting-edge technology, and effective marketing strategies (Lee & Lee, 2018). The K-beauty concept, emphasizing natural, clean, and radiant skin, has become an ideal beauty standard. Some Korean brands like Hera and Sulwhasoo collaborate with K-pop celebrities, such as BLACKPINK members, as Brand Ambassadors; local companies also engage Korean celebrities to strengthen their product image.

According to Lidwina (2021), a Databoks survey showed that 53% of respondents in Indonesia are interested in using Korean beauty products due to the Korean Wave's influence. Although local product sales are still larger, Korean products pose a serious challenge to local brands in maintaining relevance and competitiveness. Consumers choose local products for their affordability and suitability for tropical skin, while Korean products excel in appeal and innovation. This opens opportunities for collaboration between local brands and Korean celebrities/influencers to shape new perceptions of beauty in Indonesia.

The main consumer segments in the beauty industry today are Millennials and Generation Z, contributing 26% and 28% of the population respectively. Both generations grew up in the digital era and are heavily influenced by social media, especially in adopting beauty standards from South Korea (Andaresta, 2024). Generation Z increasingly dominates the market with a 54% share of buyers on the Sociolla platform, while Millennials contribute 41%. However, their shopping behaviors differ; Generation Z places more emphasis on price and environmental sustainability, whereas Millennials allocate more budget to quality and eco-friendly products (Insight Factory by SOCO).

This difference is also seen in purchasing budgets, where Millennials tend to spend more per transaction compared to Generation Z, who prioritize trends and innovation. Both generations are increasingly literate in product selection, with 77% of consumers reading reviews before buying. Generation Z is particularly selective about active ingredients in products, such as centella and salicylic acid, influenced by information from social media and digital platforms.

Consumer satisfaction in the beauty industry is influenced not only by product quality but also by price, ease of access, brand trust, and overall usage experience (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The challenge for brands is to maintain customer satisfaction and loyalty while expanding market share. Generation Z tends to purchase products for personal enjoyment and is more open to global brands, whereas Millennials prioritize local products with strong brand values (Sutarno & Purwanto, 2022; Izaak et al., 2023). Local products face challenges in innovation compared to international ones (Euromonitor, 2021).

In East Java, beauty product consumption trends show strong support for local products despite the rising popularity of K-beauty, supported by the "Love Local Products" campaign and various events such as Surabaya X Beauty and Malang City Expo that increase young generations' awareness of domestic products. This phenomenon reflects a balance of preferences between local and imported products.

Previous studies have discussed consumer satisfaction in the beauty industry, including comparisons of preferences between local and Korean products, as well as differences in consumer behavior between Millennials and Generation Z. However, most of these studies have been conducted separately and few have specifically examined the interaction between generation and brand in relation to consumer satisfaction levels. In fact, generation and brand are two important factors that can influence each other in shaping consumer perceptions and experiences of beauty products. Moreover, statistical approaches such as two-way ANOVA, which allow for interaction analysis between two independent variables on a dependent variable, are still rarely used in this context. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by analyzing how generational differences and brand preferences, as well as their interaction, affect consumer satisfaction with beauty products.

The research questions include whether there is a difference in satisfaction levels based on generation, whether there is a difference based on brand, and whether there is an interaction between generation and brand on consumer satisfaction levels.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory

Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory (EDT) states that customer satisfaction depends on the comparison between initial expectations and the actual performance of a product or service. If the performance meets or exceeds expectations, customers feel satisfied; if not, dissatisfaction arises. This theory was first introduced by Richard L. Oliver in 1980 and has continued to develop,

especially with the influence of digital technology and multichannel experiences in the modern era.

EDT explains two main elements: customer expectations formed from various sources, and the perception of actual performance after usage. The result of this comparison, called disconfirmation, can be positive disconfirmation, confirmation, negative disconfirmation, or delight. The EDT process includes expectation formation, usage experience, performance evaluation, disconfirmation, and finally, determining the level of satisfaction.

Understanding this theory helps companies design appropriate marketing strategies, manage customer expectations, and enhance loyalty and competitive advantage through improved customer satisfaction

Generation

The Millennial group (born 1981–1996) and Gen Z (born 1997–2012) have distinct characteristics that are important for marketing strategies (Pew Research Center, 2019). Gen Z grew up with digital technology and social media, tends to be more individualistic, pragmatic, and prone to FoMO (fear of missing out) (Twenge, 2017).

Millennials are digital pioneers who are idealistic and optimistic, enjoy collaborative work, and often change jobs for career development. Meanwhile, Gen Z is more pragmatic and realistic (Seemiller & Grace, 2016), independent and competitive (Twenge, 2017), skilled at multitasking with technology (Turner, 2015), and prioritizes financial stability (Francis & Hoefel, 2018).

These differences affect purchasing decisions and satisfaction with beauty products: Millennials seek value and are loyal to brands, while Gen Z focuses on practicality and innovation. Therefore, marketing should be personalized and sustainable for Millennials, and dynamic and technology-based for Gen Z.

H1: There are differences in levels of satisfaction with beauty products based on generation

Beauty Product Brand

Beauty products are substances applied to the surface of the body to cleanse, enhance appearance, and care for the body without altering its biological structure (BPOM, 2019). According to Kotler and Keller (2016), these products provide both functional and emotional benefits, such as increased self-confidence, while Milady states that beauty products contain a combination of chemical and natural ingredients that are safe to use.

Indonesian local beauty products utilize natural ingredients such as aloe vera, coconut oil, green tea, and turmeric, which benefit skin health while supporting environmental sustainability. Local products are also beginning to adopt eco-friendly packaging and popular active ingredients like centella asiatica and ceramide. Affordable prices and cultural relevance make local products favored by Indonesian consumers and more suitable for their skin conditions.

In contrast, K-Beauty products are known for advanced technological innovation, a focus on skincare-first treatment, and innovative, aesthetically pleasing packaging. The layered skincare approach and eco-friendly packaging add to the appeal of Korean products in the global market, including Indonesia.

A comparison between local and Korean products shows that consumers choose based on brand, benefits, packaging, price, and brand ambassadors (Andriani & Setiawan, 2020). Local products excel in price, natural ingredients, and cultural aspects, while Korean products excel in technological innovation, skincare treatments, and marketing strategies leveraging the Korean Wave and celebrities. Both have opportunities to grow alongside increasing consumer awareness of sustainability and innovation in Indonesia's beauty market.

H2: There are differences in levels of satisfaction with beauty products based on brand.

Generation and Brand Interaction on Consumer Satisfaction

The interaction between generation and brand is crucial in determining consumer satisfaction levels with products or services. Millennials tend to be more satisfied with local products that emphasize natural ingredients, affordable prices, and cultural values, whereas Generation Z is more attracted to Korean products that offer technological innovation, appealing packaging design, and pop culture popularity (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Additionally, Generation Z is more responsive to promotions through visual social media platforms such as TikTok and Instagram (Andriani & Setiawan, 2020).

The study uses a two-way ANOVA method to analyze the interaction between generation and brand variables on consumer satisfaction. Significant results indicate that the influence of the brand on satisfaction varies depending on the generation; for example, Millennials are more satisfied with local brands, while Generation Z prefers Korean brands. This analysis helps to better understand how the combination of generation and brand influences consumer satisfaction in greater depth.

H3: There is an interaction between generation and beauty product brand on satisfaction levels.

Research Model

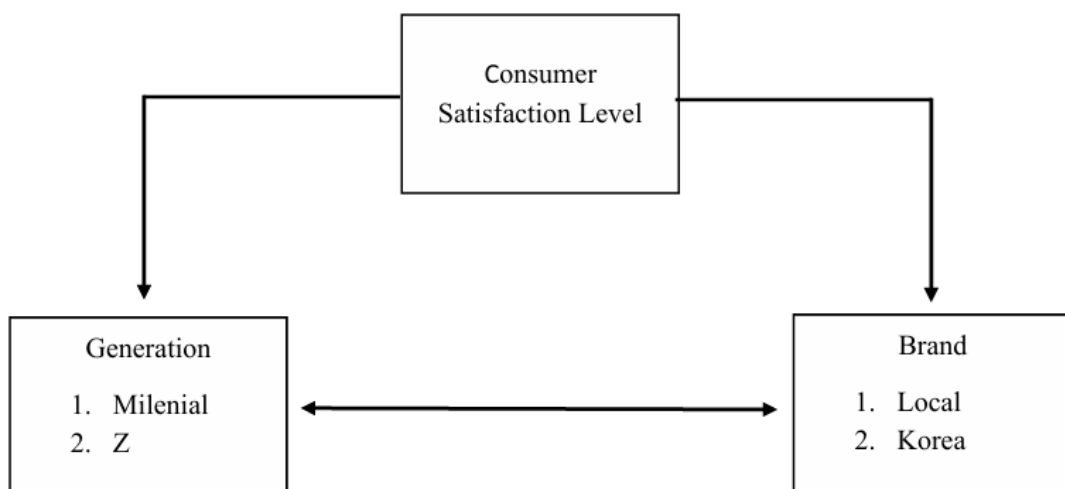


Figure 1. Research Model

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a quantitative method with numerical data collection that is analyzed statistically. Variables are measured using a five-point Likert scale to determine respondents' level of agreement with the research statements (Sugiyono, 2018; Sekaran & Bougie, 2017).

The population of the study consists of consumers of local and Korean beauty products from the Millennial generation (born 1981–1996) and Generation Z (born 1997–2012) residing in East Java (Sugiyono, 2018). Samples are selected using purposive sampling, which involves choosing respondents based on specific criteria to ensure relevance to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2018).

Since the study involves two categorical variables—generation and type of beauty product brand—four groups are formed (2×2). Based on recommendations from Hair et al. (2019) and Field (2013), each group requires a minimum of 15–30 respondents, so the total sample needed is 120 respondents, evenly divided between Millennials and Gen Z (60 respondents per group).

Data collection is conducted by distributing online questionnaires via Google Forms to the respondents (Sugiyono, 2018). The questionnaire contains written questions that must be answered objectively by the respondents

RESULTS

Prerequisite Test

Table 1. Prerequisite Test

	Sig.
Normality Test	0.125
Homogeneity Test	0.417

Source: Data Processed by the Author, 2025

The normality test aims to ensure that respondents' data follow a normal distribution, which is a crucial assumption in parametric analyses like ANOVA. Data are considered normal if the significance value is greater than 0.05, and not normal if it is less than 0.05 (Ghozali, 2018). In this study, the normality test yielded a significance value of 0.125, indicating that the data are normally distributed, thus strengthening the validity of the analysis since ANOVA requires normal data for accurate results (Widarso, 2019). Additionally, the homogeneity test ensures that the variances among research groups are equal, another fundamental ANOVA assumption. Levene's test was used for this purpose; a significance value greater than 0.05 indicates homogeneous variances, while a value less than 0.05 indicates heterogeneity (Ghozali, 2018). The homogeneity test in this study showed a significance value of 0.417, confirming that variances among groups are homogeneous and meet ANOVA assumptions.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing

Variabel	Sig	Cut Off		Information
Generation	0.331	>	0.05	H1 Rejected
Brand	0.044	<	0.05	H2 Accepted
Generation*Brand	0.964	>	0.05	H3 Rejected

Source: Data Processed by the Author, 2025

This Hypothesis testing is an important stage in statistical analysis to verify the validity of research claims. In this study, hypothesis testing was used to determine whether there is a significant difference in consumer satisfaction levels between the Millennial and Generation Z cohorts regarding local and Korean beauty products in East Java. The method employed was Two-Way ANOVA, which evaluates the effects of two factor variables generation and beauty product brand on consumer satisfaction levels as well as their interaction (Ghozali, 2018).

The results of the hypothesis test showed that the generation variable had a significance value of 0.331, which is greater than 0.05, indicating no significant difference in satisfaction levels based on generation. Meanwhile, the brand variable had a significance value of 0.044, below 0.05, meaning there is a significant difference in consumer satisfaction based on the beauty product brand. The analysis also showed the interaction between generation and brand had a significance value of 0.964, indicating no significant interaction between these two factors on consumer satisfaction levels.

DISCUSSION

Differences in Satisfaction Levels Based on Generation

This study found that the level of consumer satisfaction with local and Korean beauty products in East Java does not significantly differ between Millennials and Generation Z. Although their consumption characteristics vary, satisfaction perceptions are more influenced by product quality, effectiveness, and comfort of use rather than generational differences. This aligns with Howell et al. (2017), who stated that generations close in age tend to have similar satisfaction patterns.

Purchasing decisions and consumer satisfaction from both generations are more influenced by actual product experiences, such as usage results, packaging, and price, rather than generational identity. The globalization of information and digital interaction has blurred generational preferences, consistent with studies by Leslie-Piper and Senior (2018) and Sutarno & Purwanto (2022), which emphasize the importance of experience and emotional value in customer satisfaction.

In the competitive beauty industry, adaptive marketing strategies that unify cross-generational needs can create consistent consumer experiences, reducing satisfaction disparities, as supported by research from Chelangat et al. (2017). Consumer satisfaction influences loyalty and repurchase intention (Kotler & Keller, 2016; Tjiptono, 2015).

The expectations of both generations are now relatively similar due to education through social media and beauty influencers, making product quality parameters more homogeneous. Lu's (2022) study also showed that generational differences do not affect the relationship between service quality and customer satisfaction.

High digital penetration is also a unifying factor, as both Millennials and Gen Z are digital natives who prioritize convenience, speed, and tangible results in online shopping experiences, aligning with Sammasut's (2021) findings that online satisfaction is high across all generations despite differing initial expectations.

Differences in Satisfaction Levels Based on Brand

This study shows that beauty product brands significantly influence consumer satisfaction levels. A brand is not just a product identity, but also a symbol of value, quality, and image that shapes the consumer's emotional experience. Brands with a premium image and consistent quality create high expectations, which—if fulfilled enhance satisfaction; however, disappointment arises when expectations are unmet, even if the functional quality is good. A positive brand image can increase consumer loyalty and influence purchasing decisions (Soebiantoro et al., 2022).

Consumer trust in well-known and reputable brands also strengthens satisfaction by providing a sense of security and a satisfying shopping experience. Brand reputation is the collective perception of a company's credibility, reliability, and social responsibility—not just product exclusivity. This reputation is reflected in trust, loyalty, and perceived quality, which drive product recommendations.

The emotional bond between consumers and brands also affects satisfaction, especially among women, where emotional experiences with a brand enhance trust and satisfaction (Badgujar & Sinha, 2025). Other factors shaping brand perception include price, packaging design, promotion, and loyalty programs. Brands with a strong image and consistent quality tend to generate higher satisfaction, while local brands excel in affordability and cultural relevance, despite facing challenges in quality and international image (Parihar, 2018).

Overall, the brand plays a vital role in determining consumer satisfaction with beauty products, with both local and Korean brands having their respective strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, companies in the beauty industry need to focus on building brand image to enhance consumer experience and satisfaction.

Generation and Brand Interaction on Satisfaction Level

The research results show no interaction between generation and beauty product brand on consumer satisfaction levels in East Java. This means that differences in satisfaction based on generation or brand stand independently and do not influence each other. Both Millennials and Gen Z can experience similar levels of satisfaction with either local or Korean products, regardless of generational identity or the brand used. This finding emphasizes that satisfaction is more influenced by personal experience and individual perception of the product, rather than by a specific generational identity (Kesumahati & Novianti, 2021).

Moreover, consumer preferences today are more personal and cannot be generalized solely based on age. Factors such as product quality, price, and promotional strategies play a more dominant role in influencing satisfaction than demographic factors (Abidin et al., 2021). Even within a single generation, preferences can vary greatly. Izaak et al. (2023) also found that Gen Z's purchase intention is more influenced by brand equity than by generational identity.

For younger consumers like Gen Z, emotional involvement and digital interaction with the brand play a significant role in shaping satisfaction, not merely age related factors. Suwandi and Balqiah (2023) found that brand love and brand activity on social media influence Gen Z's satisfaction, while generational factors are insignificant.

Ultimately, marketing strategies that overly focus on generational segmentation may not be effective. Factors such as consumer experience, perceived quality, and brand trust are more decisive in shaping satisfaction and loyalty (Djamaludin & Fahira, 2023). Therefore, the absence of interaction between generation and brand is understandable, as satisfaction is more influenced by brand strength and emotional connection with consumers, rather than by generational characteristics alone.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that there is no difference in satisfaction levels between Millennial and Generation Z consumers regarding beauty products. This finding indicates that generational characteristics do not influence satisfaction perception, and both generations share similar satisfaction patterns, with factors such as personal experience and perceived product quality playing a more dominant role in shaping consumer satisfaction. However, differences in satisfaction were found based on the brand of beauty products, where consumers showed varying preferences and evaluations between local and Korean products. Factors such as perceived quality, brand image, global appeal, and product effectiveness influence how consumers assess satisfaction with each brand, reflecting the strength of brand equity and diverse perceived value. Moreover, no interaction was found between generation and brand on satisfaction levels, meaning brand-based satisfaction differences are not dependent on generation, and vice versa. Millennials and Gen Z may share similar perceptions of the same brand, or individuals from the same generation may assess a brand differently. Overall, this study highlights that although satisfaction varies by brand, generation does not significantly influence consumer satisfaction either individually or through interaction with brand.

For local beauty product producers and marketers, it is recommended not to rely solely on generational segmentation when understanding consumer behavior, but also to improve product quality and strengthen brand image in order to compete with Korean beauty products, which already hold a positive perception. Differentiation strategies through innovations using natural ingredients, attractive packaging, and strong local storytelling can serve as unique selling points. In addition, marketing approaches should focus more on the product's value proposition – such as quality, effectiveness, and relevance to

consumer needs – rather than depending solely on generational stereotypes. For future researchers, it is advisable to expand the generational scope by including Generation Alpha or Generation X to gain a more representative understanding. Furthermore, the brand scope should also be broadened by including beauty products from other countries, such as China or countries with strong beauty trends, in order to gain a wider and more comprehensive perspective on the factors influencing consumer satisfaction toward various brands and countries of origin in the beauty industry.

FURTHER STUDY

This study has several limitations that present opportunities for future research development. First, the generational scope is limited to Millennials and Generation Z. Therefore, future studies are encouraged to include other generations such as Generation X or Generation Alpha to allow for a broader and more representative analysis of perceptual differences across age groups. Second, the brand focus in this study is limited to local and Korean beauty products. To gain a more comprehensive understanding of consumer preferences, future research could include brands from other countries such as China or Japan, which also have a strong influence in the beauty industry. Additionally, the quantitative method used in this study could be complemented with qualitative approaches such as in-depth interviews or case studies to explore more deeply the subjective factors that influence consumer satisfaction.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to express sincere gratitude to Mr. Reiga Ritomia Ariescy, SE., MM., as the supervising lecturer, who has patiently provided guidance, direction, and invaluable feedback throughout the process of preparing this thesis. Thanks are also extended to the author's parents for their continuous moral support, prayers, and unwavering encouragement that enabled the completion of this research. The author also wishes to thank Ipi and Ian for their extraordinary support, as well as fellow comrades and all those who cannot be mentioned individually, who have helped and supported the author throughout the thesis writing process. section gave you the opportunities to present gratitude to your colleagues

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