

ANALYSIS OF FACTORS INFLUENCING SKINCARE PURCHASE DECISIONS THROUGH E-COMMERCE AMONG GENERATION Z IN PURWOKERTO

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Abstract

This study aims to identify and analyze the factors influencing skincare purchase decisions through e-commerce among Generation Z in Purwokerto. With the rapid development of digital technology, e-commerce platforms have become a primary medium for meeting consumer needs, particularly in the skincare product category. The research employs qualitative methods, utilizing in-depth interviews and literature studies for data collection. The findings indicate that the primary factors affecting purchase decisions are product quality and price. Product quality that meets the needs of customers' faces and skin with competitive pricing piqued Generation Z's interest in purchase decision. Moreover, these factors are also followed by self-motivation factors, testimonials, endorsement, word of mouth, and company image. This research is expected to provide insights for skincare business practitioners in formulating effective marketing strategies in the digital era, as well as understanding the behavior of Generation Z consumers, who increasingly prioritize quality and trust in selecting products.

Keywords: purchase decision, skincare, Generation Z, E-Commerce

Introduction

The development of digital technology has significantly changed the way people transact, especially through the E-Commerce platform. In Indonesia, E-Commerce is increasingly being used by the public and it has become one of the main media to satisfy consumer needs. All kinds of products are available on the E-Commerce platform, including fashion, skincare, food and beverages, and entertainment tickets such as movies or concerts. According to the Populix research institute quoted by Databoks Katadata (2024), in the first quarter of 2023, skincare products were ranked at first place as the most purchased items online by Generation Z Indonesia. As many as 73% of respondents who were included in Generation Z stated that they had purchased this product online and were dominated by women at 88%. This data shows that it is important to understand skincare purchasing behavior among Generation Z through the E-Commerce platform. The phenomenon of using skincare has become a significant highlight in the beauty industry and a cultural trend that dominates the lifestyles of many individuals from women to men around the world (Nurafridha & Listiana, 2023). The changing perspectives of consumers and increasingly developed technology encourage the importance of this research to find out more about the factors that influence consumer purchasing decisions.

According to Fauzi (2023), "E-Commerce is a form of trade that involves the use of communication and computer technology, especially the internet, to carry out transactions for buying and selling products and services" (p.3). The utilization of e-commerce can provide many benefits for consumers within making purchasing transactions. This innovative technology offers a more practical way and provides convenience for consumers and provides a new experience when making purchases online (Aeni et al. 2024). In Indonesia, there are many e-commerce platforms such as Tokopedia, Shopee, Lazada, Bukalapak, Blibli, Orami, Ralali, Zalora, Klik Indomaret, and JD.ID (quoted by Satudata Kemendag, 2023). The large number of e-commerce platform providers shows that Indonesia's digital technology is developing very rapidly, especially to satisfy consumers' needs in transactions.

According to Kotler & Armstrong (2022) in the research journal (Aprelyani et al. 2024) purchasing decisions are all buyer behaviors, whether individuals, groups, or organizations that include the selection, purchase, use, and what a commodity, idea or experience is like that aims to fulfill the needs and expectations of buyers. Based on the results of research conducted by Susanto & Pangesti (2021), the factors that influence consumers when making purchasing decisions through e-commerce are convenience factors, price factors, consumer trust factors and product factors, where convenience factors are the most dominant factors.

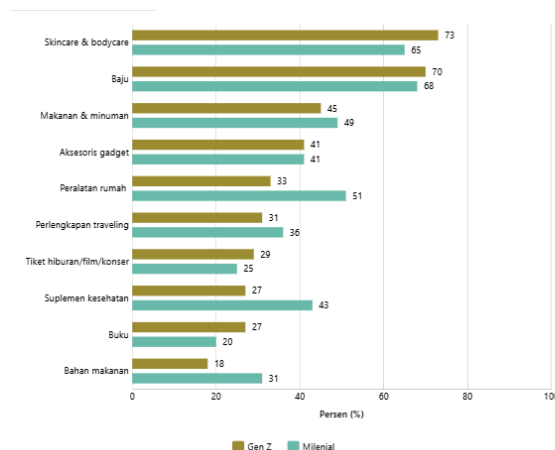


Figure 1 :
Purchased data product by e-commerce
Source: databoks.katadata.co.id

According to Aprelyani et al. (2024), the variables of price and product quality have a positive effect on skincare purchasing decisions in e-commerce. Consumers choose products by prioritizing price and quality factors. A quality product is a product that can provide superior value to consumers and create satisfaction in consumers for the benefits received. Nurafridha & Listiana (2023) also added several factors, such as testimonials, and word of mouth. Testimonials refer to review of information obtained from previous buyers. In e-commerce, testimonials can provide an overview between product photos in online stores and real product conditions or commonly referred to as real picture. The second factor is using a third part, namely influencers, to market their products that are oriented towards the influencer's image among the public. Influencers who have a good image can have a positive impact on consumer assessments of their products. The last factor is Word of mouth. Word of mouth or commonly famous as WOM is a direct review given by consumers by word of mouth which can increase consumer trust in a product. These reviews can be obtained from family, friends, or close relatives.

The formulation of the problem in this study includes: what are the factors in the decision to purchase skincare products through e-commerce carried out by Generation Z in Purwokerto City? and how do price, product quality, testimonials, endorsements, and Word of Mouth influence Generation Z in making decisions to purchase skincare products?

This study aims to identify and analyze the factors that influence the decision to purchase skincare products through e-commerce among Generation Z in Purwokerto. With this study, the author expected that this research can provide insight for skincare business practitioners to make effective marketing strategies in the digital era, as well as understanding the behavior of Generation Z consumers who increasingly prioritize quality and trust in choosing products. The author realizes that this study has limitations and focuses only on the Generation Z in the Purwokerto city area because this area reflects the dynamics of e-commerce consumers in small cities, which are often different from metropolitan cities and this study may not necessarily be generalized in all regions.

Method

This study is using a qualitative research method. According to Aeni et al. (2024) qualitative methods are research approaches that aim to understand phenomena from a deep and detailed perspective. Data in this approach generally uses non-numerical data, such as text, images, or sound, to explore the meaning, perceptions, and experiences of individuals or groups. The data collection technique in this study uses primary data from in-depth interviews with several informants and uses secondary data from previous research studies. In-depth interviews are used as practical data in obtaining valid data according to the experiences of the informants. Secondary data from previous research studies are used to strengthen the theory from the data obtained. The informants in this study were selected based on the following criteria: female; aged in the Generation Z range (1997-2012); have purchased skincare products through an e-commerce platform at least once in the last 6 months; residing in Purwokerto City.

The informants come from various backgrounds, such as students or workers. This variety of backgrounds aims to obtain diverse perspectives regarding their purchasing decisions. The data obtained were then analyzed thematically to identify patterns and key factors that influence skincare product purchasing decisions. Then the data was categorized into several theme groups such as price, product quality, testimonials, and word of mouth. The data were then analyzed and interpreted.

Results and Discussions

The results of in-depth interviews and previous research studies show that in a purchase transaction, consumers consider several things before making a decision. In accordance with the topic of this research, the factors considered by consumers are taken from the perspective of Generation Z in Purwokerto City.

Factors in Skincare Product Purchase Decisions through E-Commerce carried out by Generation Z in Purwokerto City.

Based on the results of the research conducted, there are several factors that influence the decision to purchase skincare products through e-commerce. These factors include self-motivation, price, quality, testimonials, endorsement, word of mouth, and company image. Product quality is the most dominant factor in purchasing decisions. This factor was mentioned by 5 out of 6 informants and emphasized that the quality factor is the most important thing to consider before buying skincare. One of the informants noted, "From all the factors such as price, quality, testimonials, word of mouth. The most influential factor in my decision to purchase skincare products is quality, including the use of quality ingredients, the content in the skincare, then in terms of packaging, labeling, and product safety", (Informants 5, personal communication, 2024). In addition, the price factor is also a factor that is considered next after the quality factor. 2 out of 6 informants also stated that price is the second factor that consumers consider before making a purchase. One of the informants explained that the most important thing in their opinion is quality. Price does affect it, but there are quite a few good skincare products that are expensive, there are also quite good skincare products that are affordable. In addition to product quality and price, other supporting factors are self-motivation, testimonials, endorsement, word of mouth, and company image.

Self-motivation

A strong desire from within can encourage someone to fulfill their needs. Generation Z has a strong motivation to care for and maintain healthy skin, especially facial skin. The treatments carried out can help increase self-confidence to appear better in public. The treatments they do are expected to be able to maintain skin cleanliness, moisturize the skin, protect the skin from UV rays and even prevent premature aging. According to Maslow's Theory of Needs, this reflects the need for self-esteem (Sumarwan, 2022). Generation Z is a generation that prioritizes self-esteem and chooses to use skincare to increase their self-confidence in public. A more attractive appearance helps them build personal branding.

Testimonials, endorsement and word of mouth

One informant explained that testimonials have a major influence on their purchasing decisions. Besides that, endorsements and word of mouth are external factors that can indirectly influence purchasing decisions.

Company image

Another factor that consumers consider is the company's image. According to Jefkins (2003), quoted in (Sultoni, 2020), the company's image is related to the company's figure as its main goal, how to create a positive company image, better known and accepted by the public, both in terms of its history, quality of excellent service, success in the field of marketing, to social responsibility. One source said that "The company that produces skincare is a consideration in my purchase, especially now that there is an appeal to boycott". This is related to the boycott of a product, as quoted by Antaranews, (2024) "Never stop the boycott movement. Because, the genocide there has not stopped either. Therefore, our task is to continue to echo the movement to boycott Israeli products and all affiliated products," said the Head of the MUI for Da'wah and Ukhuwah MUI M Cholil Nafis through his official statement, Monday. The company's social responsibility regarding the ongoing conflict creates a sense of distrust and a bad image from the public. The informant felt that the government's appeal made him reluctant to buy related products. This appeal clearly made the company's image bad among the public. Skincare, which was initially a mainstay because of its quality and price, after this appeal made the product have a bad image because it was considered not in accordance with government regulations. Although not all informants mentioned this factor, it is a separate consideration for some consumers and again depends on their characteristics and personalities.

The influence of price, product quality, testimonials, endorsements, and word of mouth can influence Generation Z in making decisions to purchase skincare products.

Influence of price

Price is an important point that is often considered by consumers before making a purchase of a product. Consumers will visit several stores just to compare product prices (Aprelyani et al. 2024). However, the results of the interview showed that price is the second factor considered when purchasing skincare products. Informants 6 explained "I prefer products with higher prices but good quality because I am very careful in choosing which skincare products are safe for my skin" (personal communication, 2024). Generation Z currently tends to be insensitive to price, if the product is of good quality. They assume that products with higher prices have better quality. However, some informants said that they also consider financial capabilities with product purchasing decisions. They prioritize high quality but still pay attention to financial capabilities. This shows that product quality and suitability are indeed the main factors but this is also adjusted to their financial capabilities.

Through e-commerce, consumers are also often faced with promos and discounts. Products offered in online stores tend to be cheaper than offline stores. All informants explained that price is not always a determining factor, but the use of technology can provide a different perspective. The existence of promos and discounts can have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. "Prices on e-commerce are more attractive to me because usually there are lots of discounts/price cuts on e-commerce, especially on certain dates such as Shopee 11.11, so the prices you get can be cheaper with good product quality." (Informants 6, personal communication, 2024). Discounts and promos are a significant attraction for consumers and increase consumer motivation when making purchases.

Influence of Quality

Before making a purchasing decision, consumers will first pay attention to the product to be purchased, such as: product type, product specifications, product quality, and product availability (Susanto & Pangesti, 2021). According to the interview results, product quality indicators consist of ingredient content, suitability for skin type, safety (including BPOM certification, non-mercury, UV protect, and Halal label) and product brand. These indicators have a significant influence on purchasing decisions. This finding is in line with rational motivation in Zusrony, (2021), purchases based on the realities shown by the product become a separate motivation for consumers. The content and benefits received according to skin needs and recognition from authorized institutions are important aspects in building consumer trust. "For the quality indicators that I pay attention to in skincare products, of course, are quality ingredients, so the content in the skincare. not only provides benefits but also provides consistent results. Then there is also a safety factor such as a guarantee of halal product certification " (informants 5, personal communication, 2024).

In addition, the importance of brands in purchasing decisions also shows that consumer loyalty to them can be formed through consistent quality and transparent communication about the product. Informants 6 explained that the quality of a brand can provide trust to consumers, because brands that are already widely known to the public are certainly of high quality. Therefore, the beauty industry needs to ensure that they not only offer high-quality products, but also need to maintain the brand image of the product through a commitment to safety, transparency and sustainability. Advanced technology also encourages Generation Z to prefer e-commerce in purchasing skincare products. From the interview results, 5 out of 6 resource persons chose this technology because of the many benefits obtained. The stock in online stores is more complete than the stock in offline stores. They also feel more practical, both in terms of time, cost, energy and ease of transactions. Informants 1 explained, "Then the reason I chose to buy skincare products through e-commerce is because the product stock in offline stores is not yet complete, so it is difficult to find skincare products in the nearest store. Even supermarkets or malls that provide it sometimes don't have the product in stock or the product I want to buy is out of stock, so I feel like I've wasted time and transportation money because I didn't get the product I wanted." (personal communication, 2024). There are many benefits for consumers in using e-commerce for their life, and practice is a more important benefit for them.

Influence of Testimonials

According to Awallia (2018), testimonials are statements made by customers about goods, services, or offers made by online retailers and displayed on websites or social media (quoted by Nurafridha & Listiana, 2023). Interview results show that testimonials have a significant influence on some consumers' decisions to purchase skincare products. As many as 4 out of 6 informants stated that they tend to read product testimonials first before making a decision to buy. Testimonials given by previous buyers can provide a clearer and more realistic picture of their experience using the product. Informant 2 stated, "Testimonials from other buyers are very important for me to determine the next steps, whether I will buy the product or not. These testimonials influence my trust in the product and I also see how many people have given testimonials." In addition, informant 5 also stated that the testimonials from other buyers,

personally, greatly influence their level of trust in the quality of the product. Especially buyers who have the same skin type and facial problems as they do. This statement shows that testimonials from people with similar skin conditions give consumers more confidence in choosing the right product for their needs. Testimonials not only serve to provide additional information, but also play an important role in increasing consumer loyalty to the products they will buy. Testimonials help consumers understand more about how the product works for their skin type.

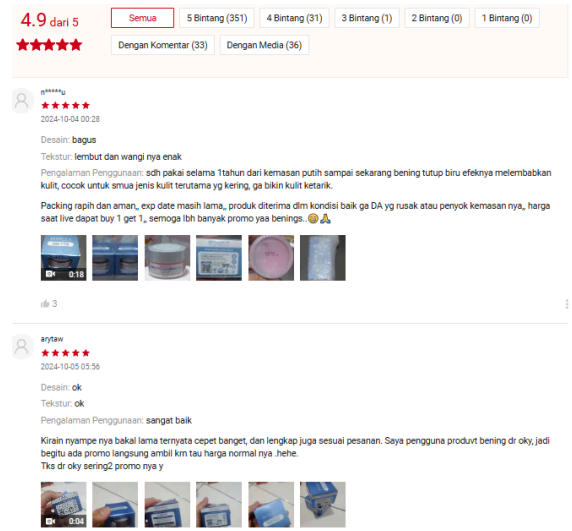


Figure 2 :
testimonials data from Shopee
Source: Shopee, 2024

Influence of Endorsement

According to Shimp (2010), it is a form of promotion where companies use people or characters to support product advertisements through advertising media. (quoted by Nurafridha & Listiana, 2023). by influencers or public figures is not one of the factors that influences consumer purchasing decisions. Based on the results of the interview, many informants admitted that they had often seen skincare products through social media. However, even though they often see them, several interviewees said that it was not enough to influence their decisions. Several informants stated that they were not too influenced by endorsements if the product quality and suitability for facial skin type were not appropriate. Informants 1 said, "I quite often see products endorsed by influencers, either through Instagram, TikTok and other social media. However, it does not have enough influence on me to buy the product. especially when I know that the influencer does not have the same skin type and facial problems as me" (personal communication, 2024). This is reinforced by previous research conducted by Medinna & Hasbi (2020); Megayani & Marlina (2019); Sarah et al. (2019) quoted in Wardhana et al (2021) These writers explained in their research findings that it did not affect consumer purchasing interest. proven to be unable to have a direct influence on purchasing decisions, and the main factors considered were still quality and suitability for facial skin.

However, there are also informants who revealed that it has a significant influence on their purchasing decisions, especially if the influencer who recommends has the same skin type. They will be more confident before making a purchase because influencers usually share their personal experiences with the product so that they can provide a more real picture of the effectiveness of the skincare. This phenomenon shows that what is done by influencers who have credibility and experience with certain products can strengthen consumer purchasing decisions. Thus, although it can be influential, the credibility of the influencer and suitability to skin conditions are determining factors for consumers in following the recommendations of the influencer.

Influence of Word of Mouth

According to Adinda and Azira (2024), "word of mouth can be interpreted in general as an activity of providing information, assessments or views on a product, goods and services to people closest to them, whether the product or service is suitable for consumption or not for other potential consumers" (p. 8). Word of mouth (WOM) can be in the form of recommendations from people closest to them. Based on the results of the interview, most of the informants said they had bought skincare products based on

recommendations from people closest to them, be it family, friends or close relatives. This shows that WOM has a significant influence on purchasing decisions, because consumers tend to trust the experiences given by those closest to them directly. This is also reinforced by research conducted by Nurafridha & Listiana (2023), recommendations from word of mouth, especially from family and friends, can influence purchasing decisions. Even these factors can influence consumers in purchasing products repeatedly.

Several informants stated that they chose the product because of the quality that has been proven through the experiences of people close to them. Recommendations from people who have used the product provide a greater sense of trust and confidence for consumers, because they feel they are getting more honest and valid information according to the results of using the product. However, there are also those who said that WOM cannot influence their decision to purchase a product due to differences in skin type with the person who gave the recommendation.

Overall, WOM is one of the strongest factors in influencing the decision to purchase skincare products, especially if the recommendation comes from someone close to them who has experienced the benefits of the product directly. However, differences in skin type remain the main consideration for consumers in accepting or rejecting the recommendation.

Conclusion

Generation Z in Purwokerto City in making decisions to purchase skincare products through e-commerce are influenced by factors of self-motivation, price, quality, testimonials, word of mouth, and company image. Of these factors, product quality and price are the most dominant factors. Products with quality that suits the needs of consumer facial skin, plus competitive prices, are more attractive to consumers. The availability of more complete products, cheaper prices, and promotions and discounts are also important aspects that influence the decision to purchase skincare products through e-commerce. Self-motivation factors, testimonials, word of mouth and company image provide additional influence on consumer purchasing decisions, especially in building consumer trust in certain products. However, the suitability of the product to the facial skin is the main consideration that underlies all these factors, thus influencing the final decision in purchasing the product.

Suggestions

Based on the results of in-depth interviews, Generation Z consumers prioritize product suitability with their skin type. Therefore, e-commerce platforms are advised to provide educational content related to skincare selection guides by providing a search feature based on skin type, making it easier for consumers to choose the right product. In addition, it is recommended to provide various more attractive discounts and promos while still considering product quality and facial skin type as the main priority.

To anticipate consumer dissatisfaction, skincare manufacturers are advised to convey product advantages according to clinical trial results and ingredients clearly on product packaging. In addition, in implementing strategies, it is recommended to be more selective in selecting influencers. Influencers who already have credibility and relevant experience can increase consumer trust in the product.

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