

Impact of Social Media Marketing on Buying Decisions and Career Choices of Generation Z in the Cosmetic Industry

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ABSTRACT

Introduction:

Generation Z is rapidly emerging as an influential segment of today's global workforce. Across industries, including the cosmetic sector, this generation brings new perspectives, innovation, strong digital capabilities and digital awareness. The cosmetic industry, which is highly driven by trends, innovation and consumer engagement, increasingly seeks young talent who can understand the dynamic digital marketplace and evolving customer preferences.

Objectives:

This study explores the impact of social media marketing on the buying decisions and career perceptions of Generation Z in the cosmetic industry and highlights how Gen Z employees contribute to innovation, trend awareness and better understanding of younger consumer markets. It also examines digital marketing strategies such as influencer promotions and online brand campaigns used by cosmetic companies.

Methods:

The study is based on a review of existing academic literature related to Generation Z consumer behaviour, social media marketing, and digital engagement in the cosmetic industry.

Results:

The findings indicate that Generation Z contributes to innovation, trend awareness and better understanding of younger consumer markets. Social media platforms and influencer marketing significantly influence their purchasing decisions and career interests.

Conclusions:

While Generation Z offers advantages such as creativity and digital proficiency, organizations must address the growing role of digital platforms in shaping both consumer behaviour and career perceptions.

Keywords: Generation Z, Social Media Marketing, Cosmetic Industry, Buying Behaviour, Career Choices

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, Generation Z has emerged as a key force influencing trends in various industries, including the cosmetic sector. This generation is increasingly driving demand for authentic and innovative cosmetic brands rather than only relying on well-established traditional companies. Generation Z generally refers to individuals born between 1995 and 2010 and is often described as "digital natives" because they have grown up in a world deeply integrated with technology and the internet. As a result, they rely heavily on online platforms to evaluate the

authenticity and reliability of products and brands. Social media platforms, influencers, and opinion leaders play an important role in shaping their perceptions, as Gen Z frequently engages in reviewing products, sharing opinions, exchanging information, and participating in online discussions about brands.

Cosmetics are products used to enhance or improve the appearance of the body and are commonly formulated using a mixture of chemical and natural ingredients. The cosmetic industry itself has evolved significantly over time, moving from basic beauty and hygiene products to a global industry characterized by innovation, advanced formulations, and strategic marketing practices. Today, the industry continues to grow rapidly with increasing emphasis on sustainability, product safety, and consumer engagement.

Generation Z possesses several characteristics that make them particularly valuable for the cosmetic industry. Their familiarity with digital technologies, social media platforms and emerging beauty trends allows them to contribute effectively to marketing strategies and brand development. In addition, Gen Z employees often bring creativity, fresh perspectives, and a strong awareness of emerging consumer preferences, which can help organizations better understand and connect with younger target markets.

This study aims to examine the influence of social media marketing on Generation Z, particularly in relation to their cosmetic purchasing decisions and their career interests in the cosmetic industry. By reviewing existing academic literature on Generation Z workplace behaviour and recruitment practices, the study seeks to understand how organizations attract Gen Z talent and the value they bring to the industry. The research also highlights potential challenges organizations may face when recruiting and managing this emerging workforce.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Sharma (2021), in the research paper “*Workplace Expectations of Gen Z Towards Factors of Motivation*,” explains that openness, autonomy, flexibility, and self-determination motivate Generation Z employees. Ignoring these factors may cause disappointment, low efficiency and withdrawal behaviour amongst employees; they may quit easily. They expect their supervisor to be trustworthy and straightforward and would like them to be open to all information and not hiding any organizational secrets from them just because they are fresher’s and have newly entered the corporate world. They would rather go for speed than accuracy. On the contrary, Professors **Deci (1971) and Ryan** suggest that intrinsic motivation is more effective. They suggested that earlier, managers frequently used extrinsic motivation and penalty structure as the key motivational factors. It was assumed that more compensation will lead to more motivation and greater commitment. According to Deci, extrinsic rewards are less convincing and half-hearted compared to intrinsic motivation. Deci suggested that intrinsic motivation based on independence, autonomy and self-rule is more effective.

Baltacioglu (2012), in the study “*Consumer Awareness in the Cosmetic Industry*,” highlighted that consumers are becoming increasingly conscious about skin care and product safety. Cosmetic companies and manufacturers will need to embrace more sustainable production techniques and components to grow further while establishing a good perception in user’s mind by eliminating the concept of skin hazards, racism and advertisement. However, there are a lot of products causing various kinds of skin diseases like blemishes, dark patches, double skin-tone, pigmentations etc. Makeup can also be used to express oneself and everyone is free to have their own self-expressions as they wish in their life. The cosmetic and beauty sector creates products that have a combination of chemical ingredients. As a result, demand for organic, sustainable and environmentally friendly cosmetic products has been increasing.

Kotler (2013), in his work on “*Green Marketing*,” explains that environmental awareness among consumers has significantly influenced purchasing behaviour. Consumers increasingly prefer products that are environmentally friendly, recyclable and derived from natural ingredients. Environmental deterioration has surely made the consumers understand the importance and essentiality of buying green products. Many identical expressions are used alternatively for green marketing such as Environmental Marketing and Ecological Marketing. "Green Marketing" is a holistic marketing concept wherein the production, marketing, consumption and disposal of products happen in a manner which least hampers the environment. Words such as recyclable, derived from nature, ozone friendly, paraben free and phosphate free all points to green marketing.

Amberg and Fogarassy (2019), in their study on sustainable cosmetics, highlight that the cosmetic industry is rapidly evolving with a growing focus on sustainability and natural ingredients. Increasingly, consumers are paying more attention to their impact on environmental and earth well-being. As shoppers delve into what goes into makeup items, they lean toward those that are pure and do no harm since it aligns with customers' value of being environmentally responsible. The main subjects employed to construct packs for beauty goods comprise plastic, glass and metal, while foil and acrylic are employed most of the time as extra substances. Nowadays beauty brands are opting for eco-friendly products. This is not only environmentally-friendly but also cuts time wastage, money in production and customer-friendly too. These products can be refilled easily without throwing the product container and let the customer save money. The company also saves money by reusing the container after use, getting refilled and selling again. This new idea of eco-friendly and refilling product making has made a significant change in the beauty industry.

Aulia (2024) explains that Gen Z is interested in anti-aging and strongly uses cosmetics for preventative purposes. The most used skincare brands for face are from lower price points like CeraVe, Dove and Nivea to mention some. The product most used by the demographic is moisturizer, the second is SPF and third are face masks. Only 21 % of the generation use fragrance daily. However, 60 % of the respondents claimed to own between three to five fragrances. The buying process is divided into five stages, starting from need recognition and ending to post purchase behaviour. The first stage, need recognition, defines the stage where the consumer realizes their need or problem that requires a solution. After the recognition, information search begins which is followed by the evaluation of alternatives. Then the final buying decision is made, which can be influenced by alternative factors like discounts or brand perception. After purchasing the consumer evaluates their satisfaction with the purchase, which can lead to recommendation or public review.

Studies further highlight that employer branding plays a crucial role in influencing the career choices of Generation Z job seekers. Factors such as organizational culture, opportunities for growth, work-life balance, and meaningful work significantly affect their decision to join an organization. Companies that promote innovation, flexibility, and open communication are more likely to attract Gen Z employees. As a result, organizations across industries, including the cosmetic sector, are increasingly adopting digital recruitment strategies and value-driven employer branding to engage this emerging workforce, (**Khokhar et al., 2022**)

Although previous studies have examined consumer behaviour and sustainability trends in the cosmetic industry, limited research focuses on the impact of social media marketing on both the buying decisions and career perceptions of Generation Z in this sector. Therefore, further research is required to understand how social media marketing influences both the purchasing behaviour and career perceptions of Generation Z in the cosmetic industry.

OBJECTIVES

1. To evaluate the impact of social media marketing on the buying decisions of Generation Z in the cosmetic industry: Since Gen Z spends most of their time on social media, it is more likely that they get influenced by the online sellers and various cosmetic product promotions. This exposure can urge them to try new products. They go through ratings, reviews and comment sections of the page and make their final decision based on other's experience. These online opinions and feedback often play an important role in shaping their final buying decision.
2. To evaluate the impact of social media marketing on the career choices of Generation Z in the cosmetic industry: Generation Z frequently uses search engines and social media platforms to explore current trends and potential career opportunities. Through social media content such as influencer promotions, brand promotions, ad opportunities, brand campaigns and digital marketing activities, they become more aware of industries like cosmetics and fashion. Exposure to such content can inspire them to develop interest in these industries. As a result, some individuals may consider pursuing careers in the cosmetic industry either as a profession or as a side business.

METHODS

The study is based on both primary as well as secondary data. Primary data was collected by conducting a survey through a Google Form. The questionnaire consisted of 12 questions and was designed to analyse how the target audience is influenced by current trends and online platforms in their cosmetic buying decisions. It also aimed to

understand how social media marketing may impact the career choices of Generation Z and their interest in the cosmetic industry. The survey also highlighted that cosmetic products are increasingly being used by both men and women, and explored the sources from which they receive such inspiration.

Secondary data was collected through existing research papers and academic studies that discuss the growing importance of Gen Z in modern industries. These studies explain the behaviour of Gen Z in adapting to new trends and even creating them. Research also shows that Generation Z increasingly prefers sustainable products after learning about them online and observing other customer's experiences. The study used a convenience sampling method. The target respondents belonged to Generation Z (aged approximately 18–25 years). The data was collected from respondents across India.

The survey and the reviewed research papers mainly targeted Gen Z who are often considered tech savvy due to their strong engagement with digital platforms. The study helps in understanding how this generation is influenced by online trends and how they develop interests in industries such as cosmetics and fashion now. It also reflects how Generation Z is exploring diverse career paths beyond traditionally popular professions such as medicine and engineering. Because social media exposes them to a wider range of career options.

RESULTS

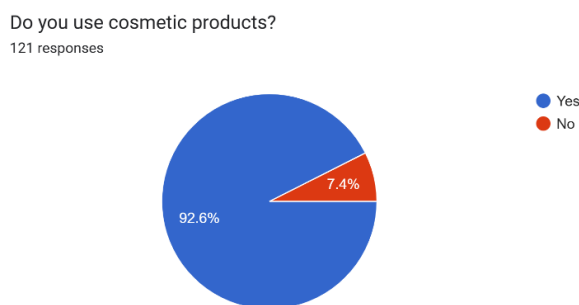
A survey was conducted through a Google Form to collect primary data for the study. The target audience consisted of individuals belonging to Generation Z, who are active users of social media platforms and are often influenced by online trends, influencers and are seeking career options. The purpose of this analysis is to understand the behaviour of the respondents in relation to current social media trends and how these trends influence their buying decisions regarding cosmetic products.

The survey also aims to examine whether exposure to social media marketing and online content inspires Generation Z to develop interest in the cosmetic industry and consider it as a potential career option. A total of **121 responses** were successfully collected through the questionnaire and were used for further analysis and interpretation of the study.

Question 1: Do you use cosmetic products?

Figure 1: Use of Cosmetic Products

Source: Primary Data (2026)

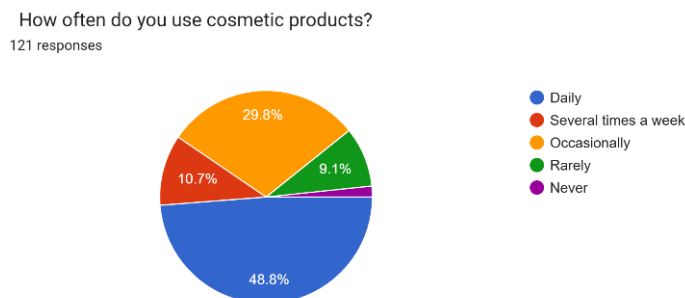


Result: The chart indicates that a large majority of respondents use cosmetic products. Out of 121 respondents, 92.6% reported that they use cosmetic products, while only 7.4% indicated that they do not use them. This shows that cosmetic products are widely used among Generation Z. It also reflects that in the modern market both men and women actively purchase cosmetic products and participate in the cosmetic industry and indicates that cosmetic products are highly integrated into the daily lifestyle of Generation Z.

Question 2: How often do you use cosmetic products?

Figure 2: Frequency of Cosmetic Products

Source: Primary Data (2026)

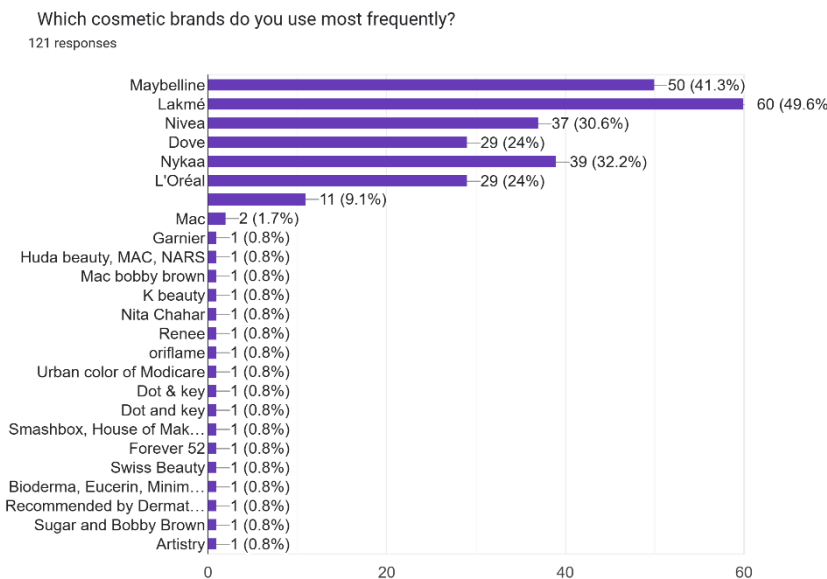


Result: The chart shows the frequency of cosmetic product usage among the respondents. A majority of 48.8% of respondents reported using cosmetic products daily, indicating that cosmetics form a regular part of their routine. Around 29.8% of respondents use cosmetic products occasionally, while 10.7% use them several times a week highlighting the adoption of various trends. A smaller proportion of 9.1% reported rarely using cosmetic products and only a very small percentage indicated that they never use them. This suggests that cosmetic products are commonly used among Generation Z and play a significant role in their daily lifestyle.

Question 3: Which cosmetic brands do you use most frequently?

Figure 3: Types of Cosmetic Brands

Source: Primary Data (2026)

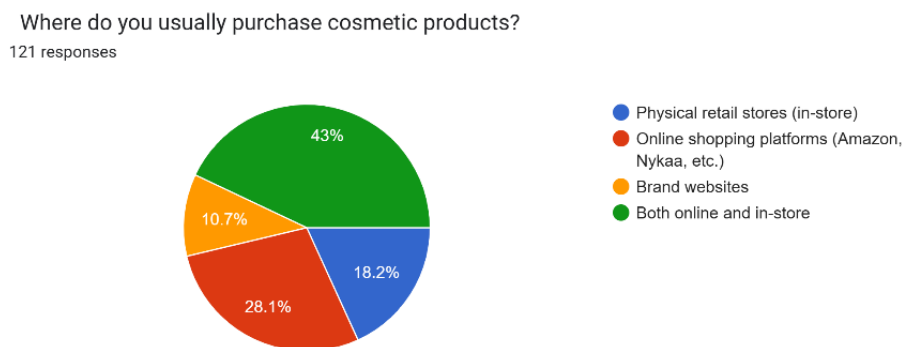


Result: The chart illustrates the kinds of cosmetic brands most frequently used by the respondents. The majority of respondents prefer Lakmé, with 49.6% (60 respondents) selecting it as their most frequently used and trusted brand. This is followed by Maybelline with 41.3% which is also a very affordable and trustworthy brand. Other popular brands among Generation Z include Nykaa (32.2%), Nivea (30.6%), Dove (24%) and L'Oréal (24%). A small number of respondents also reported using other brands such as MAC, Garnier and Swiss Beauty. This indicates that Generation Z prefers well known and widely marketed cosmetic brands that are commonly promoted through social media and online platforms.

Question 4: Where do you usually purchase cosmetic products?

Figure 4: Sources of Cosmetic Product Purchase

Source: Primary Data (2026)

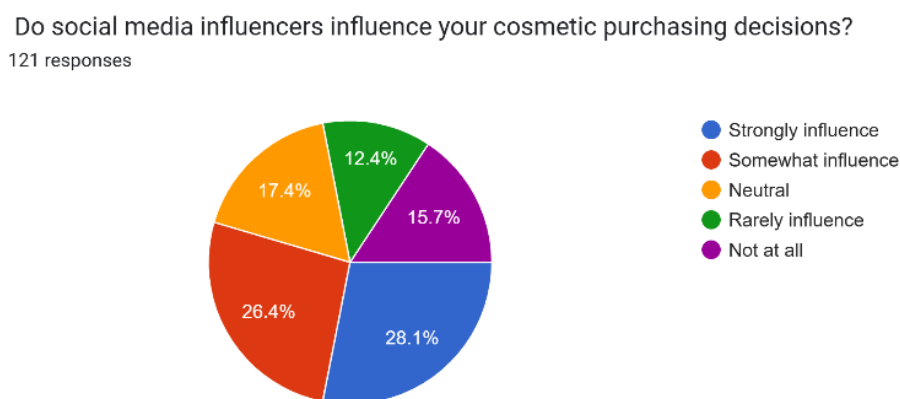


Result: The chart illustrates the preferred purchasing channels for cosmetic products among the respondents. The majority of respondents (43%) reported that they purchase cosmetic products through both online and in-store platforms. About 28.1% prefer buying cosmetics through online shopping platforms such as Amazon or Nykaa which indicates strong digital engagement among Gen Z, while 18.2% purchase them mainly from physical retail stores. A smaller proportion of respondents (10.7%) prefer purchasing directly from brand websites. This indicates that Generation Z consumers prefer a combination of online and offline shopping, with a strong inclination toward digital platforms for cosmetic purchases.

Question 5: Do social media influencers influence your cosmetic purchasing decisions?

Figure 5: Influence of Social-Media on Purchasing Decisions

Source: Primary Data (2026)



Result: The chart shows the extent to which social media influencers affect cosmetic purchasing decisions among the respondents. A significant portion of respondents (28.1%) stated that influencers strongly influence their purchasing decisions indicating urging Gen Z to buy and review their products, while 26.4% reported that they are somewhat influenced. Meanwhile, 17.4% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that influencer content may not always impact their choices and they go with their regular products. A smaller proportion of respondents stated that influencers rarely influence (12.4%) or do not influence them at all (15.7%). This suggests that social media influencers play a considerable role in shaping the cosmetic purchasing behaviour of Generation Z.

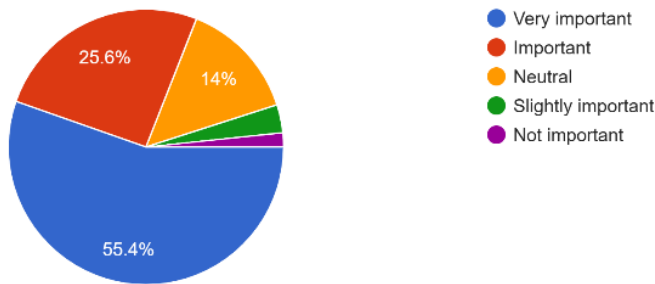
Question 6: How important is sustainability when choosing cosmetic products?

Figure 6: Importance of Sustainability

Source: Primary Data (2026)

How important is sustainability when choosing cosmetic products?

121 responses



Result: The chart shows the importance of sustainability when choosing cosmetic products among the respondents. A majority of respondents (55.4%) consider sustainability to be very important for their health as cosmetics are full of chemicals and could affect their skin tones, while 25.6% believe it is important when selecting cosmetic products. Around 14% of respondents remained neutral, indicating that sustainability may not be a primary factor for everyone. A small proportion of respondents stated that sustainability is slightly important or not important. This indicates that most Generation Z consumers are environmentally conscious and prefer cosmetic products that support sustainable and eco-friendly practices. Sustainability has become a new trend where from Gen Z to celebrities all are promoting as well as opting for organic and green cosmetic products.

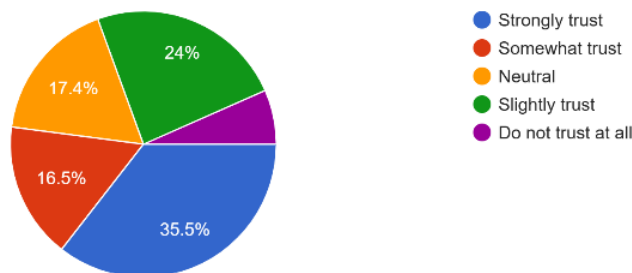
Question 7: To what extent do you trust social media platforms for information or reviews about cosmetic products?

Figure 7: Influence of social media and trustworthiness

Source: Primary Data (2026)

To what extent do you trust social media platforms for information or reviews about cosmetic products?

121 responses



Result: The chart illustrates the level of trust Generation Z places in social media platforms for information or reviews about cosmetic products. The largest proportion of respondents (35.5%) stated that they strongly trust social media platforms for cosmetic information via ratings, reviews and comment sections. Additionally, 16.5% somewhat trust these platforms, while 24% slightly trust them. Around 17.4% of respondents remained neutral, and only a small

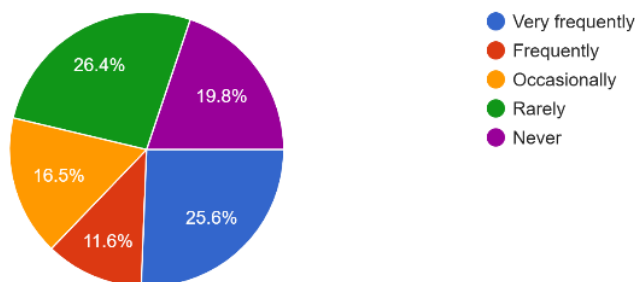
percentage indicated that they do not trust social media platforms at all. This suggests that social media plays a significant role as an information source for Generation Z when making cosmetic purchasing decisions.

Question 8: How often do you purchase cosmetic products through social media platforms?

Figure 8: Frequency of purchase of cosmetic products from social media

Source: Primary Data (2026)

How often do you purchase cosmetic products through social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Facebook)?
121 responses



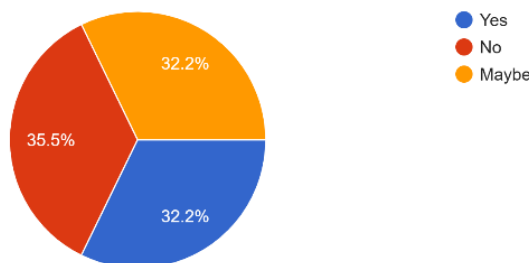
Result: The chart illustrates how frequently respondents purchase cosmetic products through social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook. About 26.4% of respondents reported that they rarely purchase cosmetics through social media, while 25.6% stated that they purchase them very frequently. Additionally, 19.8% of respondents indicated that they never purchase cosmetics through social media, while 16.5% purchase them occasionally and 11.6% purchase them frequently. This suggests that although some Generation Z consumers actively purchase cosmetics through social media platforms, a considerable number still prefer other purchasing channels.

Question 9: Would you be interested in working in the cosmetic or beauty industry?

Figure 9: Interest in Working in Cosmetic Industry

Source: Primary Data (2026)

Would you be interested in working in the cosmetic or beauty industry?
121 responses

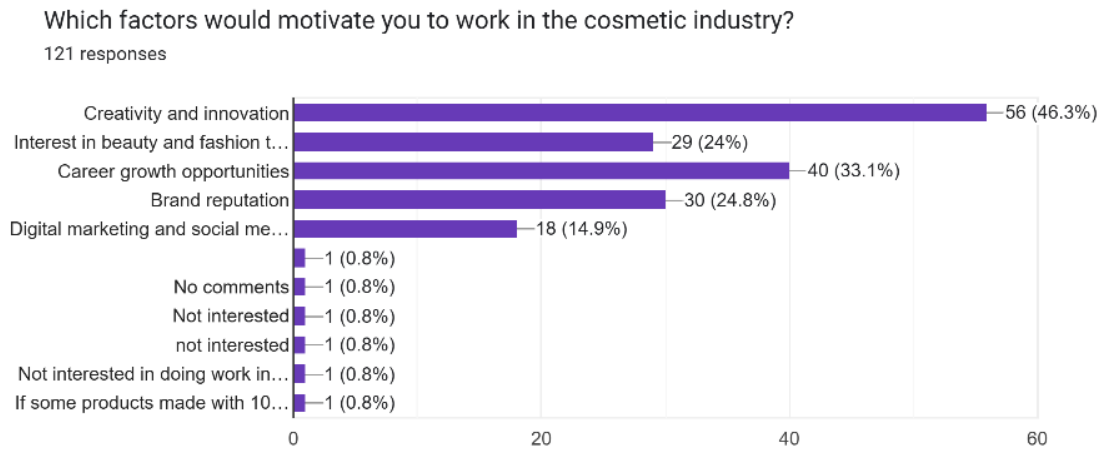


Result: The chart shows the level of interest among respondents in working in the cosmetic or beauty industry. The majority of respondents (35.5%) indicated that they are not interested in pursuing a career in the cosmetic industry. Meanwhile, 32.2% of respondents expressed interest, and another 32.2% stated that they might consider working in the beauty industry. This indicates that while a portion of Generation Z shows interest in the cosmetic sector as a career option, many remain uncertain or prefer exploring other career opportunities.

Question 10: Which factors would motivate you to work in the cosmetic industry?

Figure 10: Motivation for cosmetic industry

Source: Primary Data (2026)

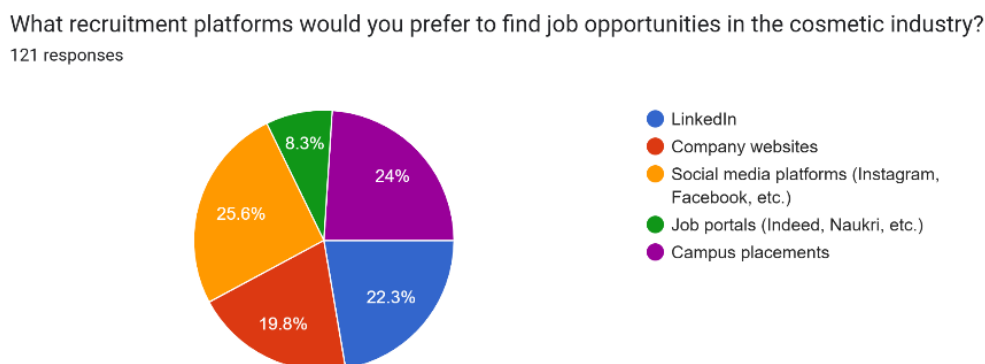


Result: The chart highlights the factors that would motivate respondents to work in the cosmetic industry. The most significant factor identified was creativity and innovation, chosen by 46.3% of respondents, indicating that many Generation Z individuals are attracted to industries that allow creative expression. This was followed by career growth opportunities (33.1%), suggesting that long-term professional development is an important consideration and how this factor influences them to opt for the cosmetic industry. Additionally, brand reputation (24.8%) and interest in beauty and fashion (24%) were also influential factors. A smaller proportion of respondents (14.9%) indicated digital marketing and social media exposure as a motivating factor. These results show that creativity, growth opportunities and brand image play a key role in attracting Gen Z to the cosmetic industry.

Question 11: What recruitment platforms would you prefer to find job opportunities in the cosmetic industry?

Figure 11: Recruitment Platforms

Source: Primary Data (2026)



Result: The chart illustrates the preferred recruitment platforms among respondents for finding job opportunities in the cosmetic industry. The most preferred option was social media platforms (25.6%), indicating the strong influence of digital platforms among Generation Z. This was followed by campus placements (24%) and LinkedIn (22.3%), suggesting that professional networking and university recruitment channels remain important.

Additionally, company websites (19.8%) were also considered useful for job searches. A smaller proportion of respondents (8.3%) preferred job portals such as Indeed or Naukri. These findings suggest that Gen Z relies heavily on digital and social platforms when exploring career opportunities and selecting it as their profession. They also consider taking beauty courses and apply for campus placements and trustworthy platforms like LinkedIn

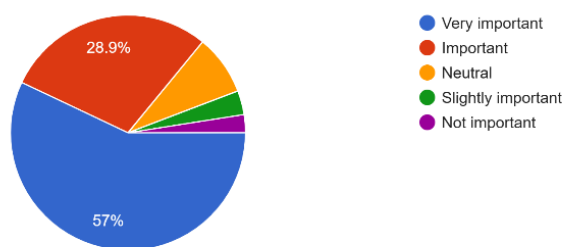
Question 12: How important is a company’s social media presence when considering a job opportunity?

Figure 12: Importance of social media in company’s presence

Source: Primary Data (2026)

How important is a company’s social media presence when considering a job opportunity?

121 responses



Result: The chart shows how important a company’s social media presence is when considering a job opportunity. A majority of respondents (57%) believe that a company’s social media presence is very important which highlights how that brand is performing and what career opportunities it could provide in the long term, while other 28.9% consider it important. Only a small proportion of respondents remained neutral or felt it was slightly or not important, showing that a company's physical stores can also influence and build trust among customers. This indicates that Generation Z pays significant attention to a company’s online presence and digital image when evaluating career opportunities in the long run.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that social media marketing plays a significant role in influencing the buying behaviour of Generation Z in the cosmetic industry. A large proportion of respondents actively use cosmetic products and rely on social media platforms for product information, reviews, and recommendations. This highlights the growing importance of digital platforms in shaping consumer preferences and decision-making processes.

The results also suggest that influencer marketing and online brand promotions have a considerable impact on purchasing decisions. Many respondents reported being influenced either strongly or moderately by social media influencers, which aligns with existing studies highlighting the effectiveness of influencer-driven marketing strategies.

In addition, the study reveals that social media exposure contributes to shaping career perceptions among Generation Z. The visibility of career opportunities, brand presence, and digital engagement encourages young individuals to explore career paths in the cosmetic industry. This indicates that organizations can leverage social media not only for marketing purposes but also for talent attraction and employer branding. Overall, the findings are consistent with previous research, emphasizing the growing role of digital platforms in influencing both consumer behaviour and career choices among Generation Z.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyse the impact of social media marketing on the buying decisions and career choices of Generation Z in the cosmetic industry. The findings reveal that social media platforms significantly influence the purchasing behaviour of young consumers. Generation Z actively engages with digital content such as influencer promotions, product reviews, advertisements and brand campaigns, which strongly shape their product preferences

and buying decisions. Many respondents indicated that they often rely on influencer recommendations and online reviews before purchasing cosmetic products.

The study also highlights that social media exposure influences the career perceptions of Generation Z. By observing successful influencers, beauty professionals and entrepreneurs in the cosmetic industry, many young individuals develop interest in pursuing careers within this sector. Well known entrepreneurs and brand founders have also inspired Generation Z to explore opportunities in the cosmetic industry and consider it as a viable career path. Entrepreneurs such as the founders of Sugar Cosmetics and Nykaa have become inspiring examples for young individuals.

Furthermore, the cosmetic industry offers diverse career opportunities including digital marketing, product development, brand management, content creation and research. These opportunities attract Generation Z as they align with their creativity, digital skills and interest in emerging trends.

In conclusion, social media plays a powerful role in shaping both the consumer behaviour and career aspirations of Generation Z. As digital platforms continue to evolve, their influence on purchasing decisions and professional interests within the cosmetic industry is expected to grow even further.

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