

Influence of Korean Culture on Millennial and Gen Z: Purchase Intentions on Beauty Industry

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Abstract:

The global rise of Korean culture including K-beauty, K-pop, K-dramas, and other lifestyle trends has had a significant impact on how younger consumers think and make purchasing decisions. The objective of this study to know the demographic characteristics of consumers and their sources of awareness regarding the Korean beauty industry and to examine the influence of the Korean beauty industry on the purchasing behaviour of Millennial and Gen Z consumers as well as to assess the role of social media platforms in influencing the purchase of Korean beauty products among Millennial and Gen Z consumers. Millennials and Gen Z, in particular, represent highly responsive consumer segments whose purchase behaviours are increasingly shaped by celebrity influence and digital media exposure. This study employed an online questionnaire to collect data on respondents' purchase intentions toward the Korean beauty industry. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed through email, whatsapp, internet groups, and social media platforms by the researchers. The study captured first-hand consumer experiences, opinions, and behaviours related to influencer marketing.

Keywords: Korean beauty standards, Millennials and Gen Z, Korean culture, Buying behaviour.

Introduction:

Korean culture has developed from a local presence to sweeping global influence, with influences on trends in entertainment, lifestyle and consumer markets. The Korean wave or Hallyu is a cultural movement that encompasses K-pop music, Korean dramas, fashion and food trends, and the well-known national beauty industry. Korean cultural content has become more accessible to young viewers worldwide with the increasing popularity of digital media and streaming services. This has led to a growing interest in Korean aesthetics and beauty practices among the younger generation, specifically millennials who are constantly exploring new opportunities and using their digital platforms for communication.

K-beauty, a term used to describe Korean beauty products, is known for their innovative formulas, unique ingredients, and attractive packaging. Besides the products on offer, the way beauty is presented in Korean media has significant influence on consumer attitudes. The delicate makeup worn in

Korean shows, and influencers' skincare routines are all factors that make Korean beauty standards appealing. Young consumers' perceptions of beauty, self-care, and brand names are influenced by these cultural representations. In addition to cultural cues, peer pressure, and online content, Millennials and Gen Z also participate in major shifts in beauty consumption and purchase behaviour. These generations have a strong affinity for K-beauty, for its fresh products, unique skincare routines, and focus on looking natural and youthful. Through influencers, celebrities, and interactive digital platforms, Korean beauty marketing has gained global recognition due to its transparency & creativity and trend-driven approach. Additionally numerous young consumers develop favourable opinions about Korean products and are motivated to explore beauty products endorsed by Korean celebrities or showcased in popular Korean films and television. International brands have begun to adapt their marketing messages to match Korean aesthetics, storytelling styles and product

characteristics. The change accentuates the increasing influence of culture on purchase intentions. Marketing, retail, and research professionals must comprehend the motivations of beauty related consumers from Millennials and Gen Z in relation to Korean culture. The emotional and behavioural ties that exist between Generation Z and Millennials over time have played a significant role in shaping their preferences, identities, and consumption habits.

Review of Literature:

Ajay Kumar (2025)¹ Researched that the impact of social media influencer marketing on purchase decisions: A study of Gen Z consumers in the beauty products market in India. The objective of the study is the marketing environment has shifted with the increased influence of social media particularly within the beauty industry where purchasing behaviour among consumers driven by influencers Korean beauty products are being demanded by the urban population and are very much available on e-commerce platforms like Amazon, Myntra and Nykaa, as well as in malls. Finally, methods for improving the efficacy of influencer partnerships may be found by investigating the Future studies that focus on these topics may yield more complex and useful information, allowing companies.

Liza Narisha Buhphang (2024)² This research study explores the influence of K-pop beauty standards on body image among adolescents in Shillong. The Objectives of the research study: (1) To examine the extent of exposure to K-pop beauty standards and its association with body image among adolescents. (2) To identify the impact of K-pop beauty standards on body image in adolescents. The findings reveal that exposure to K-pop beauty standards has a significant influence on the body image of adolescents in Shillong, with many participants expressing feelings of inadequacy and pressure to conform to these ideals, disliking their bodies, feeling low and unworthy and having low self-esteem. Overall, this research contributes to the understanding of the impact of global cultural influences, such as K-pop, on body image among

adolescents in Shilling. The findings highlight the importance of promoting body positivity and self-acceptance.

Statement of the problem:

There is a noticeable gap in existing research on how Indian Millennials and Gen Z consumers are influenced by factors such as credibility, authenticity, trust, relatability, emotional connection, and visually engaging content. While influencer marketing is gaining popularity at a rapid pace, its actual impact on Gen Z's purchasing behaviour remains largely unexplored. At the same time, increased internet penetration in India has amplified exposure to Korean pop culture through social media platforms, YouTube, OTT services, and streaming platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video. The global rise of Korean culture has significantly influenced lifestyle preferences and beauty trends among young consumers; however, there is limited understanding of how this cultural exposure translates into purchasing decisions.

Objective of the study:

- To know the demographic characteristics of consumers and their sources of awareness regarding the Korean beauty industry.
- To examine the factors that influence the Korean beauty industry on the purchasing behaviour of Millennial and Gen Z consumers.
- To assess the role of social media platforms in influencing the purchase of Korean beauty products among Millennial and Gen Z consumers.

Research Methodology:

This study employed an online questionnaire to collect data on respondents' purchase intentions toward the Korean beauty industry. Convenience sampling and snowball sampling techniques were used for data collection. The questionnaire was distributed through email, WhatsApp, internet groups, and social media platforms by the researchers.

The survey included screening questions based on age to ensure that respondents belonged to the target groups: Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) and Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012), and that they used Korean beauty or makeup products. A total of 128 responses were received, out of which 100 responses met the filtering criteria and were selected for further analysis.

The study was conducted over a period from November 2025 to January 2026. Data analysis was carried out using the SPSS software package, and the statistical tools applied included simple percentage analysis, Friedman ranking analysis and chi-square analysis.

Data Analysis & Interpretation:

**TABLE NO: 1
 PERSONAL OUTLINE OF THE RESPONDENT**

Personal Profile	Particular	No of Respondent s	Percent
Gender	Male	20	20
	Female	80	80
Age	Gen Z		
	13 to 28	85	85
	Millennial		
Occupational Status	29 to 44	15	15
	Unemployeed	3	3
	Housewife	7	7
	Student	40	40
	Entrepreneur	24	24
	Private employee	15	15
How often do you shop for Korean products?	Government employee	11	11
	Depending on the season or specific events	35	35
	Only when there are new products or collections	29	29
	Once a month	20	20
	Twice a month	12	12
	Every weekend	4	4

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The above table reveals majority of the respondents are female (80%) and (85%) of the respondents are aged between 13-28, (40%) of the respondents occupational status was students and most of the respondents (35%) purchases Korean beauty products depending on the specific events. It can be concluded that most (35%) of respondents buy Korean products based on specific events and (29%) of respondents purchases only when new products are launched.

TABLE NO: 2
Sources of Awareness

S.No	Sources of awareness	Number	Percentage
1	Friends and peer groups	8	8.0
2	Korean dramas (K-dramas) and movies	29	29.0
3	K-pop celebrities and idols	47	47.0
4	Online advertisements	12	12.0
5	Beauty websites and online reviews	4	4.0
	Total	100	100.0

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The above table reveals that the (47%) of the respondents came to know through K-pop celebrities and idols. (29%) of the respondents have come to know through K-dramas and movies and (12%) of the respondents came to know through Online advertisements. (8%) of the respondents know by Friends and peer groups, (4%) of the respondents came to know through Beauty website and online reviews.

Most of the respondents (47.0) came to know about Korean beauty products through Korean celebrities and idols

TABLE NO: 3
FRIEDMAN RANKING ANALYSIS - Factors influence of the Korean beauty industry

S.No	Factors influence of the Korean beauty industry	Mean Rank	Rank
1	Product quality and effectiveness	4.20	2
2	Natural and skin-friendly ingredients	4.30	4
3	Credibility, Trust and authenticity of brands	4.40	6
4	Influence of K-pop idols and Korean celebrities	4.10	1
5	Social media influencers and beauty bloggers	4.25	3
6	Relatability and emotional connection with influencers	4.39	5
7	Pricing, Attractive, packaging and visual appeal	4.60	7
8	Positive reviews and word of mouth recommendations	4.77	8

Source: Primary Data

Interpretation

The above table reveals that the influence of K-pop idols and Korean celebrities receives the highest mean score(4.10) ,product quality and effectiveness with the rank(4.20) ,social media influencers and beauty bloggers with the rank of (4.25), Natural and skin-friendly ingredients with the rank of (4.30), Relatability and emotional connection with influencers(4.39), Credibility, trust, and authenticity of brands (4.40),Pricing ,Attractive package and visual appeal(4.60), Positive reviews and word of mouth recommendations (4.77).

Majority of the respondents have ranked Influence of K-pop idols and Korean Celebrities performance are the factors influencing the purchasing decisions in the Korean beauty industry

Chi – square analysis

Null hypothesis

Ho: “There is a no significant relationship between personal factors and role of Korean beauty industry “

TABLE NO: 4
Chi-square values - Different between Personal factor and role of Korean beauty products

S.No	Personal factors	Chi-square value	Significant value	S/NS
1	Gender	9.497	0.050	S
2	Age	26.578	0.009	S
3	Occupational status	17.797	0.122	NS
4	Marital status	3.396	0.494	NS

Note: s-significant @ 5% level (p-value < 0.05), NS- No significant @ 5% level (p-value >0.05)

The table 4.21 represents the result of chi square analysis in terms of personal factor, chi-square value, p values and their significant on role of Korean beauty industry.

Interpretation

It is evidence from the above table that the hypothesis is rejected (significant) in 3 cases and accepted (not significant) in 4 cases. The result of chi square shows that the gender and age have a significant association with the role of Korean beauty products and occupational status and marital status do not show any significant relationship. It indicates the influence of Korean beauty products varies mainly based on gender and age but not by occupational or marital status. It can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between the three cases of personal factors like gender, age and occupational status, and awareness of Korean beauty products.

Suggestion:

The research shows that Korean culture greatly affects whether younger adults from the Millennial and Gen Z generations want to buy beauty products. Most of the people who answered are from Gen Z and younger Millennials, which means that younger people are very interested. Knowing about Korean beauty items mainly comes from K-pop stars and famous people, then from friends, groups of similar people, and Korean TV shows. Credibility, trust and brand authenticity of Korean beauty brands are the most important factors influencing purchase decisions, according to Friedman ranking analysis, followed by product efficacy and quality. While direct celebrity influence is ranked relatively lower,

social media influencers and beauty bloggers are also important, indicating that consumers place a higher value on perceived relatability and honesty than on fame. The chi-square analysis shows a strong correlation between the influence of social media platforms on consumer behaviour and a few personal characteristics, including age, gender, and level of education. This demonstrates how consumers’ reactions to prioritize using social media challenges, as well as K–drama-inspired campaigns to engage with Millennial and Gen Z audiences. To maintain their relevance in purchasing decisions, Korean lifestyle elements like glass skin minimal routines of natural beauty, and safety-focused marketing strategies should be emphasized for brands. Young consumers are environmentally conscious about feature. Introducing recyclable, refillable, or minimal packaging can increase brand loyalty. Brands should create online communities or skincare clubs where users can share experiences, tips, and reviews to increase engagement. Brands should regularly collect feedback about product performance, irritation issues, and packaging to continuously refine their offerings. Creating budget-friendly versions of popular products like serums and essences can increase accessibility for students and young adults. Growing interest in Korean culture suggests opportunities to expand retail presence in emerging markets beyond major metropolitan areas.

Conclusion:

In conclusion the Korean culture has a significant and quantifiable effect on the beauty decision-making process of Millennials and Gen Z. Exposure to Korean celebrities, and social media trends has a clear impact on how young consumers perceive beauty, skincare routines, product effectiveness. Using aesthetics, culture and innovative ingredients to power consumer minds with cultural influence, Korean beauty brands make great strides in this area. Among the products that were identified as highly satisfied by consumers in the satisfaction analysis are COSRX Advanced Snail Essence, Beauty of Joseon Eye Serum, and I'm From Rice Toner. The results showed that they are effective, natural, or gentle formulations. Consumer mind set, product satisfaction and purchase intention are further supported by the ANOVA and chi-square results. Korean beauty products not only look good, but they also bring about significant behavioural changes in skincare habits and purchasing behaviour. Overall conclusion is that Korean culture has a significant impact on beauty standards, consumer emotions, and intention to buy. As global popularity and digital presence continue to grow, Korean beauty products are expected to continue influencing skincare choices and buying habits of younger consumer. Millennial and Gen Z beauty consumption behaviour is believed to have been

heavily influenced by the global dissemination of Korean culture, as per the study. Korean beauty products have been impacted by exposure through digital media, social networking platforms, and entertainment content.

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