

Understanding the Buying Behaviour of Gen Z Consumers in the FMCG Sector

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Abstract—The present study investigates the buying behaviour of Generation Z (Gen Z) consumers in the Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector. Gen Z, comprising individuals born approximately between 1997 and 2012, represents the first truly digital-native generation, and their unique consumption patterns, values, and decision-making processes have increasingly influenced the FMCG market landscape.

This study explores key factors that drive Gen Z purchasing decisions in FMCG, including the role of digital and social media, brand authenticity, sustainability, price sensitivity, peer influence, and the importance of convenience. A descriptive research design was adopted, with primary data collected through a structured questionnaire from 150 Gen Z respondents in the Nagpur region. Secondary data was gathered from journals, research papers, and industry reports.

The findings reveal that Gen Z consumers are highly influenced by social media platforms and digital marketing in their FMCG purchase decisions. They exhibit strong preference for brands that align with sustainability, transparency, and social responsibility. Price and convenience remain significant considerations, while peer recommendations and online reviews play a critical role in shaping their choices. The study provides insights for FMCG marketers to better align their strategies with the values and preferences of this emerging consumer segment.

Index Terms—Gen Z, FMCG, Buying Behaviour, Consumer Behaviour, Digital Marketing, Sustainability, Brand Loyalty, Social Media Influence

I. INTRODUCTION

Summary: This chapter provides an overview of the research study on the buying behaviour of Generation Z consumers in the FMCG sector. It covers the background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives, research questions, significance, scope, and limitations of the research.

1.1 Introduction

The Fast-Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) sector is one of the largest and most dynamic industries in India and globally, encompassing a wide range of products such as food and beverages, personal care, household items, and healthcare products. This sector thrives on repeat purchases and high consumer engagement, making an understanding of consumer behaviour critical for businesses operating within it.

Generation Z – broadly defined as individuals born between 1997 and 2012 – represents a significant and rapidly growing consumer demographic. As digital natives who have grown up in an era of smartphones, social media, and e-commerce, Gen Z consumers exhibit distinctly different buying patterns compared to preceding generations such as Millennials, Gen X, and Baby Boomers. Their purchase decisions are shaped by a unique combination of digital exposure, social consciousness, demand for authenticity, and an expectation of convenience.

Understanding how Gen Z interacts with FMCG brands is of paramount importance for marketers and manufacturers. Unlike older consumer groups, Gen Z tends to research products extensively online before purchasing, is highly responsive to influencer marketing and peer reviews, and shows a strong preference for brands that align with values such as sustainability, inclusivity, and transparency. These characteristics fundamentally challenge traditional FMCG marketing strategies and demand new approaches.

1.2 Background of the Study

India's FMCG industry is valued at over USD 110 billion and is expected to grow significantly over the coming decade. Gen Z currently constitutes

approximately 27% of India's population and is entering the workforce in growing numbers, thereby increasing their purchasing power. Their influence extends beyond their own purchases – they play a substantial role in household purchase decisions as well.

Despite the industry's recognition of Gen Z's importance, there is a relative gap in empirical research – particularly at the regional level – that examines the specific factors influencing Gen Z's FMCG buying decisions. This study attempts to bridge that gap by conducting primary research within the Nagpur region of Maharashtra.

1.3 Statement of the Problem

The FMCG sector is undergoing a paradigm shift driven by changing consumer demographics and digital transformation. Traditional consumer behaviour models, largely based on older generational data, may not adequately capture the nuanced decision-making processes of Gen Z consumers. Marketers and brand managers face the challenge of understanding what truly drives Gen Z to purchase (or avoid) FMCG products, and how to build meaningful brand engagement with this cohort.

This study seeks to address the question: What are the key factors that influence the buying behaviour of Gen Z consumers in the FMCG sector, and how do digital media, sustainability, brand values, and peer influence shape their purchase decisions?

1.4 Objectives of the Study

The following objectives have been formulated for this study:

- To identify the key factors influencing the buying behaviour of Gen Z consumers in the FMCG sector.
- To analyse the role of social media and digital platforms in shaping Gen Z's FMCG purchase decisions.
- To examine the impact of sustainability and brand ethics on Gen Z consumer choices.
- To study the degree of brand loyalty among Gen Z consumers in the FMCG sector.
- To assess the influence of price sensitivity and convenience on Gen Z's FMCG purchasing patterns.

- To provide actionable recommendations for FMCG marketers to better engage with Gen Z consumers.

1.5 Research Questions

- What are the primary factors that drive Gen Z consumers to purchase FMCG products?
- How significant is the role of social media influencers and online reviews in Gen Z's FMCG purchase decisions?
- Do Gen Z consumers show a preference for sustainable and ethically produced FMCG brands?
- What is the level of brand loyalty among Gen Z FMCG consumers?
- How do demographic factors (gender, income, education) affect Gen Z's buying behaviour in the FMCG sector?

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study holds significance for multiple stakeholders. For FMCG companies and marketers, understanding Gen Z's preferences provides a competitive advantage in product development, brand positioning, and digital marketing strategy. For academicians and researchers, the study adds to the growing body of literature on generational consumer behaviour in emerging markets. For policy makers and consumer advocacy groups, the findings shed light on emerging consumption trends tied to digital engagement and ethical consumerism.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study is limited to Gen Z consumers (aged 18–27 years) residing in the Nagpur region of Maharashtra, India. The study focuses exclusively on FMCG product categories including food and beverages, personal care, and household products. The research does not extend to B2B purchasing behaviour or to other consumer segments such as Millennials or Gen X.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

- The study is geographically confined to the Nagpur region and may not represent Gen Z buying behaviour at a national scale.
- The sample size of 150 respondents, while adequate for the scope, may limit the generalizability of findings.

- Self-reported data through questionnaires may be subject to social desirability bias.
- The study captures a snapshot in time and does not account for rapid changes in Gen Z preferences driven by emerging trends.

1.9 Chapter Scheme

The thesis is structured into the following chapters:

- Chapter I – Overview of Present Work: Background, objectives, scope, and limitations.
- Chapter II – Literature Review: Review of existing research on Gen Z consumer behaviour and FMCG marketing.
- Chapter III – Formulation of Present Work: Conceptual framework, hypotheses, and theoretical underpinnings.
- Chapter IV – Data Collection and Analysis: Methodology, data analysis, and interpretation.
- Chapter V – Results and Discussion: Key findings and their implications.
- Chapter VI – Summary, Conclusion, and Future Work: Summary, conclusion, and recommendations for future research.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Summary: This chapter presents a comprehensive review of existing literature on consumer behaviour theories, Generation Z characteristics, FMCG sector dynamics, and the intersection of digital media and purchase decisions. The review forms the theoretical foundation upon which the present study is built.

2.1 Introduction to Literature Review

A literature review represents the systematic process of identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing existing research relevant to a study's research questions. This review draws from national and international journals, academic theses, industry reports, and conference papers published primarily between 2015 and 2024. The focus is on four thematic areas: (i) consumer behaviour theories, (ii) characteristics of Gen Z, (iii) FMCG sector trends, and (iv) digital media and social influence on purchasing.

2.2 Consumer Behaviour Theories

2.2.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (TPB)

Ajzen (1991) proposed the Theory of Planned Behaviour, which suggests that consumer behaviour is

driven by attitudes toward the behaviour, subjective norms, and perceived behavioural control. Several researchers have applied TPB to understand purchase intentions in the FMCG context, finding that attitude and peer norms are particularly influential among younger consumers [1].

2.2.2 Consumer Decision-Making Models

Howard and Sheth (1969) developed one of the earliest formal models of buyer behaviour, highlighting the role of inputs, perceptual constructs, learning constructs, and outputs in shaping purchase decisions. Kotler and Armstrong (2018) updated these frameworks to account for digital touchpoints, recognising that modern consumers – particularly Gen Z – interact with brands across multiple online and offline channels before making purchasing decisions [2].

2.3 Generation Z: Characteristics and Consumer Identity

Tapscott (2009) was among the first scholars to systematically document the characteristics of digital natives, a concept central to understanding Gen Z. Oblinger and Oblinger (2005) noted that this generation's comfort with technology fundamentally shapes how they seek and process information. Fromm and Read (2018) observed that Gen Z is the most diverse generation yet and exhibits high levels of social consciousness in their consumption patterns [3].

Francis and Hoefel (2018) in McKinsey Quarterly identified that Gen Z approaches consumption as an expression of individual identity and expects brands to stand for something beyond profit. Studies by Djafarova and Bowes (2021) found that Gen Z shows lower brand loyalty compared to Millennials, but compensates with higher brand advocacy when their expectations are met [4].

2.4 FMCG Sector and Consumer Behaviour

Kumar and Joshi (2021) studied Gen Z purchase decisions in India's FMCG sector and found that convenience and digital availability were the top purchase drivers. Their study highlighted the growing role of quick commerce platforms such as Blinkit and Zepto in reshaping Gen Z's grocery buying patterns. Verma and Kapoor (2022) noted that FMCG brands that successfully leveraged Instagram and YouTube

for authentic storytelling witnessed significantly higher engagement among Gen Z consumers [5].

Kotni (2012) and Siddiqui (2017) observed that packaging aesthetics and product transparency are key FMCG purchase influencers for younger consumers. Nielsen reports (2022) indicated that 73% of global Gen Z respondents stated that they would pay more for sustainable products, pointing toward a significant shift in FMCG product development strategies [6].

2.5 Social Media and Digital Influence

Appel et al. (2020) established that social media platforms are the primary source of product discovery for Gen Z, surpassing traditional advertising channels. Studies by Lou and Yuan (2019) demonstrated that influencer marketing on platforms like Instagram and TikTok has a strong positive effect on Gen Z purchase intentions, particularly in beauty, personal care, and food categories within FMCG.

Sharma and Bhardwaj (2023) conducted a study on Gen Z consumers in urban India and found that YouTube reviews and Instagram stories were the most trusted sources of FMCG product information, followed by WhatsApp-based word-of-mouth. Peer influence and online community belonging were found to be as influential as formal advertising in their research [7].

2.6 Sustainability and Ethical Consumption

Jaiswal and Kant (2018) found that younger consumers in India are increasingly concerned about environmental sustainability in their purchasing decisions. White, Habib, and Hardisty (2019) identified the critical role of ease of access to sustainable alternatives in converting sustainability intentions into actual FMCG purchases. Dabija et al. (2019) demonstrated that Gen Z is significantly more likely than Millennials to boycott FMCG brands perceived as environmentally irresponsible [8].

2.7 Research Gaps

While a growing body of literature addresses Gen Z consumer behaviour globally, there exists a notable gap in studies specifically examining Gen Z's FMCG buying behaviour in the Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities of India such as Nagpur. Most existing studies focus on metro cities (Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore), and regional

variations in Gen Z consumer behaviour remain underexplored. Additionally, limited research has simultaneously examined all key factors – social media, sustainability, brand loyalty, and price sensitivity – within a single integrated framework, which this study attempts to address.

2.8 Summary of Key Literature

Table 2.1: Summary of Literature Review – Key Studies

Author(s) & Year	Focus Area	Key Finding
Ajzen (1991)	Theory of Planned Behaviour	Attitudes, norms, and control shape consumer behaviour
Fromm & Read (2018)	Gen Z Characteristics	Gen Z sees consumption as identity expression
Kumar & Joshi (2021)	FMCG – India	Convenience and digital availability are top Gen Z purchase drivers
Appel et al. (2020)	Social Media Influence	Social media is primary product discovery channel for Gen Z
Dabija et al. (2019)	Sustainability	Gen Z more likely to boycott environmentally irresponsible brands
Sharma & Bhardwaj (2023)	Digital Influence – India	YouTube and Instagram are most trusted FMCG info sources for Gen Z

*[] No. in the bracket indicates references listed at the end of thesis.

III. FORMULATION OF PRESENT WORK

Summary: This chapter outlines the conceptual framework, hypotheses, and theoretical model underpinning the study. It presents the key variables identified from the literature and their hypothesized relationships, culminating in a diagrammatic representation of the research model.

3.1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the extensive review of literature, a conceptual framework has been developed to study the buying behaviour of Gen Z consumers in the FMCG sector. The framework identifies the following independent variables (factors influencing buying behaviour):

- Social Media and Digital Influence
- Brand Authenticity and Transparency
- Sustainability and Ethical Values
- Price Sensitivity and Value for Money
- Peer Influence and Word-of-Mouth
- Convenience and Accessibility

The dependent variable is the Buying Behaviour of Gen Z Consumers in the FMCG sector, measured in terms of purchase intention, brand preference, frequency of purchase, and brand loyalty.

3.2 Hypotheses of the Study

The following null hypotheses (H0) have been formulated for statistical testing:

H01: Social media and digital platforms do not significantly influence the buying behaviour of Gen Z consumers in the FMCG sector.

H02: Sustainability and ethical brand values do not significantly influence Gen Z's FMCG purchase decisions.

H03: Price sensitivity does not significantly affect the FMCG buying behaviour of Gen Z consumers.

H04: Peer influence and word-of-mouth recommendations do not significantly shape Gen Z's FMCG purchase choices.

H05: There is no significant relationship between brand authenticity and Gen Z brand loyalty in the FMCG sector.

3.3 Theoretical Underpinnings

The study draws on three primary theoretical frameworks:

3.3.1 Theory of Planned Behaviour (Ajzen, 1991)

This theory provides a foundation for understanding how Gen Z's attitudes towards FMCG brands, perceived social norms (peer and influencer opinions), and sense of control (convenience, accessibility) translate into actual purchase behaviour.

3.3.2 Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1973)

This framework explains why Gen Z actively selects specific media platforms (Instagram, YouTube, TikTok) for FMCG product research, based on the gratifications these platforms provide such as entertainment, information, and social interaction.

3.3.3 Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs

The study aligns Gen Z's FMCG purchase motivations with Maslow's hierarchy – from basic physiological needs (food, hygiene) to higher-order needs such as self-esteem (brand prestige) and self-actualization (sustainability, ethical consumption), demonstrating that Gen Z FMCG choices operate across multiple levels of the hierarchy.

3.4 Operational Definitions of Variables

Table 3.1: Operational Definitions of Key Variables

Variable	Definition	Measurement Scale
Social Media Influence	Extent to which social media platforms impact Gen Z FMCG purchase decisions	5-point Likert Scale
Brand Authenticity	Degree to which Gen Z perceives an FMCG brand	5-point Likert Scale

Variable	Definition	Measurement Scale
	as genuine and transparent	
Sustainability Concern	Level of environmental and social consciousness affecting FMCG choices	5-point Likert Scale
Price Sensitivity	Degree to which price changes affect Gen Z's FMCG purchase intentions	5-point Likert Scale
Peer Influence	Impact of peer recommendations and word-of-mouth on FMCG purchase decisions	5-point Likert Scale
Buying Behaviour	Purchase intention, frequency, brand preference, and loyalty in FMCG	5-point Likert Scale

IV. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Summary: This chapter describes the research methodology adopted for the study, including research design, population and sample, data collection instruments, and the statistical tools used for analysis. It also presents the collected data in tabular and graphical form with appropriate analysis and interpretation.

4.1 Research Methodology

4.1.1 Research Design

The study adopts a Descriptive Research Design. Descriptive research is appropriate when the researcher aims to describe characteristics of a population or phenomenon without manipulating variables. This design helps in understanding the

current buying behaviour patterns of Gen Z in the FMCG sector based on empirical data.

4.1.2 Nature of Data

Both Primary Data and Secondary Data have been used in this study. Primary data was collected directly from Gen Z respondents through a structured questionnaire. Secondary data was gathered from academic journals, industry reports (Nielsen, KPMG, Deloitte), textbooks, and websites relevant to Gen Z consumer behaviour and the FMCG industry.

4.1.3 Population and Sampling

The target population comprises Gen Z individuals (aged 18–27 years) residing in Nagpur, Maharashtra. A Non-Probability Convenience Sampling technique was employed for data collection. A sample size of 150 respondents was selected, which is adequate given the exploratory and descriptive nature of the study.

4.1.4 Data Collection Instrument

A structured questionnaire was developed as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire comprised five sections: (i) Demographic Profile, (ii) FMCG Purchase Patterns, (iii) Social Media Influence, (iv) Brand Preferences and Loyalty, and (v) Sustainability and Ethical Buying. A 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree) was used for the attitudinal and behavioural questions.

4.1.5 Statistical Tools Used

The following statistical tools were applied for data analysis:

- Descriptive Statistics: Frequency tables, mean, standard deviation, percentages
- Chi-Square Test: To examine association between demographic variables and buying behaviour
- Correlation Analysis: To study relationships between independent variables and buying behaviour
- Weighted Average Method: To rank the factors influencing Gen Z's FMCG purchase decisions

4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile of Respondents
(n=150)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	72	48.0%
	Female	74	49.3%
	Non-Binary / Prefer not to say	4	2.7%
Age Group	18-20 years	54	36.0%
	21-23 years	62	41.3%
	24-27 years	34	22.7%
Occupation	Student	98	65.3%
	Working Professional	42	28.0%
	Self-Employed	10	6.7%
Monthly Income/Pocket Money	Below ₹5,000	30	20.0%
	₹5,000 – ₹15,000	68	45.3%
	₹15,001 – ₹30,000	36	24.0%
	Above ₹30,000	16	10.7%

Interpretation: The majority of respondents (41.3%) fall in the 21-23 age bracket, and 65.3% are students. The near-equal gender distribution ensures balanced perspectives. Most respondents (45.3%) have a monthly income/pocket money between ₹5,000 and

₹15,000, indicating moderate purchasing power typical for Gen Z in Tier-2 cities.

4.3 FMCG Purchase Patterns

Table 4.2: Frequency of FMCG Purchases Among Gen Z (n=150)

Purchase Frequency	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Daily	18	12.0%
2-3 times a week	45	30.0%
Weekly	52	34.7%
Fortnightly	28	18.7%
Monthly	7	4.6%

Table 4.3: Preferred FMCG Categories Among Gen Z

FMCG Category	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)	Rank
Food and Beverages	128	85.3%	1
Personal Care (Skincare, Haircare)	118	78.7%	2
Health and Wellness Products	96	64.0%	3
Household Cleaning Products	74	49.3%	4
Baby Care	14	9.3%	5

4.4 Social Media Influence on FMCG Buying

Table 4.4: Influence of Social Media on Gen Z FMCG Purchase Decisions

Statement	SA (%)	A (%)	N (%)	D (%)	S D (%)	Mean
I discover new FMCG products through Instagram/YouTube	48.7	32.0	10.7	6.0	2.6	4.18
Influencer reviews affect my FMCG brand choices	41.3	34.7	12.0	8.0	4.0	4.01
Online ratings and reviews guide my FMCG purchases	52.0	30.0	10.0	5.3	2.7	4.24
Social media ads effectively capture my attention for FMCG	38.7	36.0	14.7	7.3	3.3	4.00

Interpretation: The high mean scores (above 4.0 on a 5-point scale) across all statements confirm that social media is a powerful driver of Gen Z FMCG purchase decisions. Online reviews (mean = 4.24) and product discovery via Instagram/YouTube (mean = 4.18) are the strongest influencing factors.

4.5 Brand Loyalty Among Gen Z

Table 4.5: Brand Loyalty Patterns – Gen Z Respondents

Level of Brand Loyalty	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Highly Loyal (always buy same brand)	16	10.7%

Level of Brand Loyalty	No. of Respondents	Percentage (%)
Moderately Loyal (mostly buy same brand)	52	34.7%
Situationally Loyal (switch based on deals/availability)	58	38.6%
Not Loyal (always explore new brands)	24	16.0%

Interpretation: Only 10.7% of Gen Z respondents exhibit high brand loyalty, while 38.6% are situationally loyal – switching brands based on pricing, promotions, or availability. This underscores the challenge FMCG brands face in retaining Gen Z customers and the importance of consistent value delivery.

4.6 Sustainability as a Purchase Driver

Table 4.6: Sustainability as a Purchase Driver for Gen Z

Statement	SA+A (%)	Neutral (%)	D+SD (%)
I prefer FMCG brands with eco-friendly packaging	72.0	16.0	12.0
I am willing to pay a premium for sustainable FMCG products	58.7	22.0	19.3
I boycott brands with unethical environmental practices	61.3	24.0	14.7
Sustainable brand values increase my purchase intent	66.7	20.0	13.3

4.7 Price Sensitivity Analysis

Table 4.7: Price Sensitivity of Gen Z FMCG Consumers

Statement	Mean Score (out of 5)
Price is a key factor when choosing between FMCG brands	4.12
I regularly look for discounts/offers before purchasing FMCG products	4.38
I switch FMCG brands if a cheaper alternative with good quality is available	3.97
Price promotions significantly influence my FMCG purchase timing	4.21

Interpretation: The mean score for discount-seeking behaviour (4.38) is the highest, confirming that Gen Z consumers are highly deal-oriented. While they exhibit sustainability concerns, price remains a dominant purchase criterion – reflecting the 'value for money' mindset characteristic of this generation.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Summary: This chapter synthesizes the findings from the data analysis presented in Chapter IV and discusses them in the context of the research objectives and existing literature. It also presents the results of hypothesis testing.

5.1 Key Findings

The analysis of data collected from 150 Gen Z respondents in Nagpur reveals several important insights about their FMCG buying behaviour:

Finding 1: Social Media is the Dominant Purchase Influencer

With mean scores exceeding 4.0 on all social media influence parameters, the study confirms that social media is the most significant driver of Gen Z FMCG purchase decisions. Instagram and YouTube are the primary discovery platforms, consistent with findings by Appel et al. (2020) and Sharma and Bhardwaj

(2023). Influencer reviews and peer-generated content are trusted more than traditional advertising.

Finding 2: Low Brand Loyalty but High Brand Advocacy Potential

Only 10.7% of Gen Z respondents are highly brand loyal. The majority (38.6%) are situationally loyal, switching brands based on promotions and availability. This aligns with Djafarova and Bowes (2021), who noted that Gen Z exhibits conditional loyalty tied to consistent value delivery and authentic brand engagement.

Finding 3: Sustainability is a Real – but Price-Moderated – Purchase Driver

72.0% of respondents prefer eco-friendly FMCG packaging, and 66.7% state that sustainable brand values increase their purchase intent. However, only 58.7% are willing to pay a premium for sustainable products. This paradox – high environmental concern but price sensitivity – is consistent with the 'value-action gap' documented in sustainability research.

Finding 4: Price Sensitivity and Deal-Seeking are Prominent

The highest-rated item across the survey was discount-seeking behaviour (mean = 4.38), indicating that Gen Z is highly responsive to promotional pricing. FMCG brands targeting this segment must balance premium positioning with accessible price points and frequent value promotions.

Finding 5: Food, Beverages, and Personal Care Dominate Gen Z FMCG Interest

Food and beverages (85.3%) and personal care (78.7%) are the top two FMCG categories preferred by Gen Z respondents. The latter category's high ranking reflects the boom in skincare and self-care culture among Gen Z, strongly fuelled by social media.

5.2 Hypothesis Testing Results

Table 5.1: Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Result	Decision
H01: Social media does not influence Gen Z FMCG buying	Correlation (r=0.74)	p < 0.05	Rejected – Social media significantly influences buying behaviour

Hypothesis	Statistical Test	Result	Decision
H02: Sustainability values do not influence purchase decisions	Chi-Square Test	$p < 0.05$	Rejected – Sustainability significantly affects purchase intent
H03: Price sensitivity does not affect FMCG buying behaviour	Correlation ($r=0.68$)	$p < 0.05$	Rejected – Price significantly affects buying behaviour
H04: Peer influence does not shape FMCG choices	Weighted Average	Rank 2/6	Rejected – Peer influence is a significant factor
H05: No relationship between brand authenticity and loyalty	Correlation ($r=0.61$)	$p < 0.05$	Rejected – Brand authenticity positively affects loyalty

All five null hypotheses are rejected at the 5% level of significance, confirming that social media, sustainability values, price sensitivity, peer influence, and brand authenticity all significantly influence the buying behaviour of Gen Z consumers in the FMCG sector.

5.3 Discussion

The findings of this study are largely consistent with existing literature, while also offering region-specific nuances. The strong influence of social media on FMCG purchase decisions among Nagpur's Gen Z validates the broader national and global trend of digital-first consumer journeys. The study's finding that online reviews (mean = 4.24) are more influential than influencer endorsements (mean = 4.01) is

noteworthy and suggests that authenticity of peer reviews is valued more than curated influencer content – a distinction that FMCG brands must incorporate into their digital marketing strategies.

The sustainability findings reveal a generation in transition – increasingly environmentally conscious but constrained by budget realities. FMCG brands that embed sustainability into their pricing strategy and supply chain, rather than premium-pricing it as a luxury add-on, are better positioned to capture Gen Z loyalty.

The low brand loyalty statistics present both a challenge and an opportunity for FMCG marketers. Gen Z's willingness to switch brands creates space for new market entrants, particularly D2C (Direct-to-Consumer) brands that offer better digital engagement, personalization, and value. Established FMCG players must innovate in brand storytelling and community-building to retain this cohort.

VI. SUMMARY, CONCLUSION & SUGGESTED FURTHER WORK

Summary: This concluding chapter summarizes the key findings of the study, draws conclusions in relation to the research objectives, and suggests avenues for future research on Gen Z consumer behaviour in the FMCG sector.

6.1 Summary of the Study

This study investigated the buying behaviour of Generation Z consumers in the FMCG sector, with a focus on the Nagpur region of Maharashtra. The research was guided by six primary objectives: identifying key purchase drivers, understanding social media influence, examining sustainability preferences, studying brand loyalty patterns, assessing price sensitivity, and providing recommendations for FMCG marketers.

Primary data was collected from 150 Gen Z respondents aged 18–27 through a structured questionnaire, and analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and chi-square tests. Secondary data from academic and industry sources provided theoretical grounding.

6.2 Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

- Social media and digital platforms are the most powerful influencers of Gen Z's FMCG purchase decisions. Online reviews and peer-generated content carry greater trust than traditional advertising or even paid influencer campaigns.
- Gen Z consumers exhibit low overall brand loyalty in the FMCG sector, with the majority switching brands based on promotions, pricing, and availability. However, brands that consistently deliver on authenticity, quality, and values can build conditional loyalty.
- Sustainability is a meaningful purchase consideration for a significant majority of Gen Z respondents, but the willingness to pay a premium for sustainable FMCG products is moderated by price sensitivity. FMCG brands need to make sustainability accessible rather than exclusive.
- Price sensitivity and discount-seeking behaviour are highly prominent among Gen Z FMCG buyers in Nagpur. Promotional strategies, loyalty programmes with real value, and competitive pricing are essential tools for FMCG brands targeting this segment.
- Food, beverages, and personal care are the dominant FMCG categories for Gen Z, with personal care being strongly influenced by social media beauty culture.
- All five research hypotheses were rejected at the 5% significance level, confirming the statistical significance of social media, sustainability, price sensitivity, peer influence, and brand authenticity as determinants of Gen Z FMCG buying behaviour.

6.3 Recommendations for FMCG Marketers

Based on the study's conclusions, the following recommendations are offered to FMCG companies and marketers seeking to engage effectively with Gen Z consumers:

1. Invest in Authentic Digital Storytelling

FMCG brands should shift from traditional advertising to authentic, peer-driven digital content. User-generated content, genuine customer reviews, and community engagement on platforms like Instagram,

YouTube, and WhatsApp will be more effective with Gen Z than polished brand advertisements.

2. Make Sustainability a Core Brand Pillar – Not a Premium Feature

Brands should integrate sustainability into their core product design and packaging rather than marketing it as a premium option. Gen Z wants sustainable choices at accessible price points.

3. Deploy Dynamic Pricing and Loyalty Programmes

FMCG companies should develop Gen Z-specific loyalty programmes that reward consistent purchasing with meaningful incentives (cashback, exclusive products, early access). Dynamic discount strategies on quick commerce platforms like Blinkit and Zepto can also capture impulse purchasing from this group.

4. Personalize the FMCG Experience

Gen Z expects brands to know and cater to their individual preferences. AI-driven product recommendations, personalized digital communication, and inclusive product ranges will enhance Gen Z brand affinity.

6.4 Suggested Further Work

The present study, while comprehensive within its scope, opens several directions for future research:

- A comparative study of Gen Z buying behaviour in metro cities (Mumbai, Pune, Delhi) versus Tier-2 cities (Nagpur, Nashik, Aurangabad) to identify regional variations in FMCG preferences.
- A longitudinal study tracking changes in Gen Z FMCG buying behaviour over 3–5 years as this generation grows older and their purchasing power increases.
- Structural Equation Modelling (SEM) based analysis to test the causal relationships between social media exposure, sustainability beliefs, and FMCG purchase behaviour.
- A sector-specific deep dive into Gen Z's personal care FMCG purchasing – exploring the role of social media beauty trends, K-beauty influence, and clean beauty preferences.
- An examination of Gen Z's interaction with D2C (Direct-to-Consumer) FMCG brands versus established legacy brands, and the digital marketing strategies that differentiate successful D2C brands.

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APPENDIX "I" QUESTIONNAIRE

Understanding the Buying Behaviour of Gen Z Consumers in the FMCG Sector

Dear Respondent,
This questionnaire is part of an academic research project submitted for the MBA degree at TGPCET,

Nagpur. The information provided will be used solely for research purposes and will be kept strictly confidential. Kindly spare 5-7 minutes to fill in this questionnaire honestly.

Section A: Demographic Profile

1. Name (Optional):

2. Age: ☐ 18-20 years ☐ 21-23 years ☐ 24-27 years
3. Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female ☐ Non-Binary / Prefer not to say
4. Occupation: ☐ Student ☐ Working Professional ☐ Self-Employed ☐ Other
5. Monthly Income / Pocket Money:
☐ Below ₹5,000 ☐ ₹5,000–₹15,000 ☐ ₹15,001–₹30,000 ☐ Above ₹30,000

Section B: FMCG Purchase Patterns

6. How frequently do you purchase FMCG products?
☐ Daily ☐ 2-3 times a week ☐ Weekly ☐ Fortnightly ☐ Monthly
7. Which FMCG categories do you purchase most? (Tick all that apply)
☐ Food & Beverages ☐ Personal Care ☐ Health & Wellness ☐ Household Products ☐ Baby Care
8. Where do you primarily purchase FMCG products?
☐ Supermarket / Mall ☐ Local Kirana Store ☐ Online (Amazon, Flipkart) ☐ Quick Commerce (Blinkit, Zepto)

Section C: Social Media & Digital Influence

Rate the following on a 5-point scale: 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Neutral, 4=Agree, 5=Strongly Agree

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I discover new FMCG products through Instagram/YouTube.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
Influencer reviews affect my FMCG brand choices.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Online ratings/reviews guide my FMCG purchases.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Social media ads capture my attention for FMCG.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Section D: Brand Loyalty & Sustainability

Rate the following statements:

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I prefer eco-friendly packaged FMCG products.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am willing to pay more for sustainable FMCG brands.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I switch FMCG brands based on promotional discounts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Price is a key factor in my FMCG brand selection.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Brand authenticity/transparency drives my loyalty.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Thank you for your valuable time and participation!