
Understanding Gen Z's Local Skincare Choices Through Reputation and Store Image: A Case Study in Greater Jakarta

Suresh Kumar ^{a*}

^aPresident University

* sureshkumar@president.ac.id

Abstract – This study examines how corporate reputation and store image influence Generation Z's choices of local skincare products in Greater Jakarta, with trust and perceived risk as central considerations. Using a qualitative case study design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 15 Gen Z consumers who had purchased local skincare products within the last six months. Thematic analysis revealed four major themes: reputation as a trust signal, store image and the retail experience, trust and risk in skincare choices, and Gen Z's hybrid decision-making process. Findings indicate that reputation, particularly when reinforced by halal certification and influencer visibility, enhances trust, while a positive store image—through clean layouts, organized displays, and social-media-friendly atmospheres—reduces perceived risk. Trust emerged as the mediator linking reputation and store image to purchase decisions, whereas perceived risk continued to function as a barrier when product authenticity was uncertain. Importantly, Gen Z consumers blended online validation (e.g., TikTok reviews, peer opinions) with offline store experiences, creating a unique hybrid pathway to decision-making. The study contributes to the literature by offering qualitative evidence on the interaction of intangible brand cues in the Indonesian skincare context and provides practical recommendations for local brands to strengthen reputation, curate credible store images, minimize perceived risk, and integrate online and offline strategies to appeal to Gen Z consumers.

Keywords: Corporate reputation, Store image, Trust, Perceived risk, Generation Z, Skincare, Indonesia.

Introduction

The global skincare market has witnessed remarkable growth, with its size valued at USD 115.65 billion in 2024 and projected to reach USD 122.11 billion by 2025, ultimately expanding to USD 194.05 billion by 2032 at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 6.84% (Skincare Market Size, Share, Trends | Growth Analysis, 2025). Another source estimates global skincare revenues at USD 155.67 billion in 2023, expected to increase to USD 186.16 billion by 2028 (Beauty Industry Statistics 2025, 2025). These figures underscore skincare's robust performance and its growing share within the broader beauty and personal care industry. Notably, Asia-Pacific dominated the global skincare market with a 51.58% share in 2024, driven by rising incomes, urbanization, and shifting consumer lifestyles across the region (Skincare Market Size, Share, Trends | Growth Analysis, 2025).

Indonesia mirrors this global momentum. The local skincare market is projected to reach USD 3.07 billion by 2025 and USD 4.64 billion by 2032, achieving a CAGR of 6.10% between 2025 and 2032 (Indonesia skin care market size and forecast 2025–2032, 2025). Broader beauty and personal care segments in Indonesia showed strong growth in 2024, characterized by halal-certified products, skincare-infused solutions, and the rising influence of younger consumers (Beauty and personal care in Indonesia, 2025). Skincare remains the largest category, valued at approximately USD 2 billion, and expected to grow at a CAGR of 9.4% through 2028 (Indonesia beauty market trends (2024–2025), 2025).

Despite impressive market performance, several challenges persist. First, local skincare brands continue to face steep competition from established international players with superior branding and resources. Second, consumer trust in local products—especially regarding product quality, halal certification, and reliable retail channels—remains inconsistent. Third, most existing research in the Indonesian context relies heavily on quantitative methodologies

(e.g., PLS-SEM, large-scale surveys), offering limited qualitative insights into how constructs like reputation and store image are perceived and interpreted by consumers. For example, Rialisnawati et al. (2024) highlight the “absence of qualitative or longitudinal studies” in Indonesian consumer behavior literature, while Irene (2024) uses only quantitative analysis to examine Gen Z satisfaction and local moisturizer purchases. This leaves an empirical and conceptual gap regarding the deep, subjective understanding of these intangible constructs—underscoring the need for a qualitative case study in the Greater Jakarta context..

To address these gaps, this study adopts a qualitative case study approach to explore how corporate reputation, store image, and related constructs such as trust and perceived risk influence Generation Z consumers’ choices of local skincare products in Greater Jakarta. Unlike previous studies that rely heavily on large-scale surveys and statistical modeling, this research emphasizes in-depth, contextual insights into consumer perceptions and decision-making processes. By focusing on the dynamic interplay between reputation and store image in shaping purchase intentions, this study aims to generate a richer understanding of Gen Z consumer behavior. Ultimately, the research contributes to both theory and practice by highlighting how local skincare brands can leverage intangible assets such as reputation and store positioning to build stronger trust and capture the rapidly expanding Gen Z market segment in Indonesia.

Literature Review

2.1 Corporate Reputation

Corporate reputation is defined as a collective assumption of an organization's past actions and future prospects that represent its overall appeal to stakeholders (Fombrun & Van Riel, 2004, as cited in Balmer, 2012). It serves as a powerful intangible asset—shaping customer perceptions of product quality, signaling reliability, and mitigating perceived risks (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). Reputation operates as a heuristic: when consumers encounter brands or products—especially in crowded and competitive markets—they rely on signals such as reputation to make quick, trustworthy decisions (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). In retail contexts, especially for personal care or skincare, a strong corporate reputation can reduce uncertainty and elevate perceived product credibility. In East Java, a recent comparative study between Millennials and Generation Z purchasing local versus Korean beauty products finds that brand reputation and emotional connection significantly shape consumer loyalty—more so than generational identity alone (Adesyafira & Ariescy, 2025). This underscores the power of a positive reputation in aligning consumer satisfaction, regardless of age cohort. Generation Z in Indonesia has shown heightened sensitivity to brand identity and storytelling. While quantitative findings reveal loyalty driven by brand love and social media engagement (Suwandi & Balqiah, 2023), qualitative evidence suggests that Gen Z also values authenticity and alignment with personal values when forming impressions of brands. By influencing trust, minimizing perceived risk, and reinforcing perceptions of store image, corporate reputation likely plays a foundational role in shaping local skincare choices among Gen Z. It provides both the confidence to purchase and the emotional underpinning of brand attachment, especially in the competitive retail environment of Greater Jakarta.

2.2 Store image

Store image is the way a shopper “defines” a store in their mind, shaped by both

functional cues and psychological attributes—the store’s “personality” (Martineau, 1958). This construct remains central in modern retail research, where image is built through layout, atmospherics, merchandise presentation, and service encounters that together influence consumer attitudes and purchase behaviors. Recent studies confirm that store image is not static but is actively shaped by store atmosphere and visual merchandising, which strongly influence perceived value and purchase intentions (Basu, Paul, & Singh, 2022). In the Indonesian context, store image has been empirically linked to consumer decisions across different retail settings. For example, at Gramedia, a national bookstore chain, store image significantly increased purchase decisions alongside servicescape and atmospherics (Abaharis & Afifa, 2022). Similarly, in minimarkets such as Alfamart and Indomaret, store layout—a critical dimension of store image—was shown to directly shape shopping flow and purchase intention (Timotius & Putra, 2023). Structural modeling with Surakarta retail shoppers also revealed that store image not only directly raised purchase intention but also operated indirectly via perceived value and brand awareness (Rizal et al., 2022). In cosmetics retail, evidence aligns even more closely with the present study. Research at Sociolla (Jambi) demonstrated that store atmosphere and brand image synergistically enhanced purchase decisions, highlighting the importance of curated in-store cues in driving consumer trust for beauty products (Pangestu, Fahdillah, & Sabrina, 2024). These findings underscore how store image serves as a tangible manifestation of brand credibility in categories—like skincare—that require high consumer confidence. Importantly, store image also appears to be influenced by broader perceptions of corporate reputation. For instance, Kumar (2024) found that corporate reputation can enhance both customer trust and store image in the Indonesian supermarket sector, suggesting an interdependent relationship between organizational-level perceptions and retail-level cues. This positions store image not merely as an outcome of in-store factors but also as a bridge that transmits reputation into consumer trust. Taken together, these insights show that store image is a pivotal construct connecting reputation, trust, and purchase intentions. It provides consumers with concrete signals that reduce uncertainty in skincare purchases, thereby preparing the ground for examining how trust and perceived risk mediate the relationship between reputation, store image, and Gen Z’s skincare choices in Greater Jakarta.

2.3 Trust and Perceived Risk

Trust and perceived risk are central constructs in consumer decision-making, particularly for skincare products where safety, authenticity, and efficacy are critical concerns. Trust is commonly defined as the willingness of consumers to rely on a brand or retailer based on perceptions of credibility and reliability, while perceived risk reflects consumers’ expectations of possible negative outcomes, such as wasted money, product ineffectiveness, or health hazards (Putra, 2024). A systematic review by the International Journal of Consumer Studies (2024) found that perceived risk consistently reduces purchase intention across e-commerce settings, underscoring the importance of trust as a counterbalancing factor. In Indonesia, empirical evidence highlights how these constructs influence beauty and skincare purchases. Pratiwi, Rizki, and Asrol (2024) demonstrated that trust, convenience, and perceived risk all significantly shape purchase decisions for beauty products purchased online by Indonesian university students, with trust exerting the strongest positive effect. Similarly, Putra

(2024) found that in the sustainable skincare context, sustainable perceived risk negatively affected trust, while trust significantly enhanced customer loyalty, confirming the mediating role of trust between risk and loyalty. In broader online shopping behavior, studies have shown that perceived corporate reputation strengthens trust, which in turn reduces perceived risk and increases purchase intention (International Review of Management and Marketing, 2024). The halal skincare segment further illustrates the dual role of trust and risk. Kurniastuti and Wahyudi (2025) found that perceived risk and halal certification cues jointly influenced men's purchase intentions for halal skincare products, showing how trust and risk interplay with cultural and religious assurances in the Indonesian market. Collectively, these findings indicate that trust serves as a mediator and perceived risk as an inhibitor between antecedents such as corporate reputation and store image, and Gen Z's skincare purchase decisions. For local skincare brands targeting Gen Z in Greater Jakarta, strengthening trust signals and minimizing perceived risk through credible reputation and reliable store environments are therefore critical strategies for shaping consumer behavior.

2.4 Gen Z and Local Skincare in Indonesia

Generation Z (born between 1995–2010) represents a unique consumer cohort characterized by digital nativity, social media reliance, and strong preference for authenticity (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). Unlike millennials, Gen Z demonstrates higher sensitivity to peer recommendations, online reviews, and values such as sustainability and halal assurance in their purchase behavior (Naderi & van Steenburg, 2018). In emerging markets, Gen Z also shows greater price consciousness but balances this with the desire for quality and brand alignment with personal identity (Djafarova & Trofimenko, 2019). Indonesia is home to the largest Gen Z population in Southeast Asia, making up more than 27% of its total population (Statistics Indonesia [BPS], 2023). This demographic has emerged as the primary driver of the country's beauty and skincare boom, where spending is increasingly directed toward local brands offering halal certification, natural ingredients, and affordable price points (Euromonitor International, 2024). The Indonesian skincare market is forecasted to surpass USD 3 billion by 2025, with Gen Z accounting for the largest share of online and offline purchases (Inkwood Research, 2025). Recent studies confirm Gen Z's role in shaping local skincare demand. Suwandi and Balqiah (2023) found that brand authenticity and brand love significantly drive Gen Z loyalty toward local cosmetic brands, mediated by social media engagement. Similarly, Adesyafira and Ariescy (2025) showed that both emotional connection and brand reputation outweigh generational differences in determining loyalty to local versus Korean beauty products in East Java. These findings emphasize Gen Z's nuanced evaluation process, where emotional, social, and reputational factors converge in skincare choices. In Indonesia, Gen Z consumers are highly responsive to cues of corporate reputation (e.g., ethical practices, halal certification) and store image (e.g., clean displays, modern atmospherics, authenticity guarantees). For this demographic, reputation and store image are not separate variables but intertwined markers of credibility that guide purchase decisions. Given their dual reliance on online reviews and offline store experiences, Gen Z presents a compelling case for studying the interaction of intangible constructs (reputation, trust, store image) in shaping local skincare choices. While existing studies on Gen Z consumer behavior in Indonesia are expanding, the majority employ quantitative methods such as SEM and regression modeling (Suwandi & Balqiah, 2023;

Adesyafira & Ariescy, 2025). Few have qualitatively explored how Gen Z perceives reputation and store image in their skincare decision-making. This presents a clear research gap: the need for in-depth, case-based insights into the mechanisms through which intangible constructs shape consumer trust and purchase intentions in the local skincare market.

Prior studies highlight the significance of corporate reputation, store image, trust, and perceived risk in shaping consumer purchase decisions across retail and beauty sectors. However, most of this research has relied on quantitative approaches, focusing on statistical modeling rather than capturing the nuanced, lived experiences of consumers. In addition, Generation Z—despite representing the largest consumer cohort in Indonesia and the primary driver of the skincare market—remains underexplored, particularly in the context of local skincare brands. These gaps underscore the need for a qualitative case study to examine how reputation and store image influence Gen Z's trust and perceived risk in their skincare choices within the Greater Jakarta area.

Method

This study uses a qualitative case study design to explore how corporate reputation and store image shape Gen Z's local skincare choices in Greater Jakarta. Case study research is well suited for examining complex and context-specific phenomena in depth (Yin, 2018). Greater Jakarta was selected as the research setting because it is a metropolitan hub with high retail activity and the largest Gen Z population in Indonesia. The region provides an information-rich context for exploring how intangible constructs such as reputation and store image are linked to consumer trust and perceived risk. The participants were Generation Z consumers (18–27 years old) who had purchased local skincare products in the last six months. Purposive sampling was used to recruit participants who could provide rich, relevant information (Palinkas et al., 2015). Sample adequacy was guided by the principle of saturation. According to Hennink, Kaiser, and Marconi (2017), code saturation can be reached relatively quickly, while meaning saturation requires more interviews to capture depth. Hennink and Kaiser (2022) also argue that 12–18 interviews are often sufficient in homogeneous groups. In this study, 15 participants were recruited through university networks, social media, and referrals until no new insights were emerging. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews lasting 45–60 minutes. An interview guide covered perceptions of local skincare brands, corporate reputation (e.g., halal certification, brand credibility), and store image (e.g., layout, atmosphere, product display). Probing questions encouraged participants to provide detailed responses. All interviews were audio-recorded with consent and transcribed verbatim. The approach followed contemporary guidance for qualitative interviewing (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2018). Data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis following the six phases outlined by Braun and Clarke (2022, 2024): familiarization, coding, theme generation, theme review, theme definition, and reporting. The researcher actively interpreted meaning throughout the process, consistent with reflexive TA principles. NVivo software supported data organization and coding. Trustworthiness in thematic analysis was maintained by following guidelines on credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Nowell et al., 2017). Rigor was ensured through multiple strategies. Credibility was strengthened by member checking of interview summaries (Birt et

al., 2016) and peer debriefing. Transferability was supported with thick contextual descriptions. Dependability was addressed through maintaining an audit trail, while confirmability was ensured through reflexive journaling. These practices align with contemporary guidance on trustworthiness and qualitative publishing (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Ethical approval was obtained from the researcher's institution. Participants provided informed consent before participation. Confidentiality was maintained by using pseudonyms, and all data were securely stored and accessible only to the researcher.

Results and Discussions

Fifteen Generation Z consumers (ages 18–27) from Greater Jakarta participated in this study. Participants were diverse in gender and study background, but all had purchased local skincare products within the last six months. Using thematic analysis, four major themes were identified: (1) Reputation as a Trust Signal, (2) Store Image and the Retail Experience, (3) Trust and Risk in Skincare Choices, and (4) Gen Z's Skincare Decision-Making. These themes are discussed below with supporting interview excerpts and connections to prior studies.

4.1 Theme 1: Reputation as a Trust Signal

Participants consistently emphasized corporate reputation as a key factor shaping their willingness to try and continue using local skincare brands. Reputation was often associated with halal certification, visibility in media, and brand credibility. One participant noted:

Kalau brand lokal sudah punya sertifikat halal dan sering muncul di review influencer, saya lebih percaya untuk coba produknya (P7).

This suggests that reputation functions as a shortcut for reducing uncertainty, echoing earlier findings that corporate reputation serves as a trust-building mechanism (Adesyafira & Ariescy, 2025). The role of reputation in signaling credibility is especially relevant in the Indonesian context, where religious and cultural values intertwine with consumption choices.

4.2 Theme 2: Store Image and the Retail Experience

The store environment emerged as an important dimension of how Gen Z evaluates local skincare products. Participants valued cleanliness, modern layouts, organized displays, and trial testers. One remarked:

Kalau tokonya terang, rapi, ada tester, rasanya lebih aman buat beli, walaupun itu brand lokal (P11).

This aligns with Indonesian studies showing that store atmosphere and layout influence purchase decisions (Rizal et al., 2022; Pangestu et al., 2024). For Gen Z, store image was not only about the physical environment but also about whether the store provided an Instagrammable experience, reinforcing the blend between retail space and social identity.

4.3 Theme 3: Trust and Risk in Skincare Choices

Trust and perceived risk were two sides of the same coin in participants' decision-making. Many expressed concerns about fake products, side effects, and inconsistent quality. As one participant explained:

Kadang takut produk palsu, apalagi kalau beli di toko kecil. Jadi saya lebih percaya kalau belinya di supermarket besar atau official store (P3).

These findings mirror recent research where trust positively shapes purchase decisions and risk acts as a barrier (Pratiwi et al., 2024; Putra, 2024). Interestingly, participants reported that transparent packaging, ingredient lists, and visible halal logos reduced their perception of risk. In this way, trust mediated between store/reputation cues and their final purchase choices.

4.4 Theme 4: Gen Z's Skincare Decision-Making

Finally, participants highlighted characteristics unique to Gen Z consumer culture. They

frequently relied on online reviews, TikTok recommendations, and peer opinions to validate offline purchase decisions. One participant shared:

Saya lihat review dulu di TikTok, terus kalau cocok baru beli di toko biar yakin barangnya asli (P9).

This hybrid reliance on online and offline cues reflects Gen Z's digital nativity and aligns with prior studies showing that authenticity and peer validation strongly influence their loyalty to local cosmetic brands (Suwandi & Balqiah, 2023). Price was also a recurring theme—participants balanced affordability with perceived quality, indicating that while price matters, trust and reputation were the deciding factors.

4.5 Integrated Discussion

Taken together, these themes demonstrate that reputation and store image are intertwined signals that shape Gen Z's perceptions of local skincare brands. A credible reputation (via halal certification, visibility, influencer reviews) strengthens trust, while a favorable store image (via layout, atmosphere, authenticity cues) reduces perceived risk. These findings confirm earlier research on the role of intangible cues in consumer decisions (Rizal et al., 2022; Pangestu et al., 2024) but extend it by showing how Gen Z uniquely combines digital validation with physical retail experiences.

This integration highlights two contributions:

- The study affirms that reputation and store image are critical antecedents of trust in skincare purchases.
- It reveals how Gen Z, as digital natives, merge online trust signals with offline retail environments, a pattern less explored in previous studies.

These insights offer both theoretical contributions—by illustrating how constructs interact qualitatively—and practical implications for local skincare brands in Indonesia, which should invest simultaneously in building strong reputations and curating credible store environments.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study set out to explore how corporate reputation and store image shape Generation Z's choices of local skincare products in Greater Jakarta, with particular attention to the mediating role of trust and perceived risk. Based on interviews with 15 Gen Z consumers, four key themes emerged: (1) reputation as a trust signal, (2) store image and the retail experience, (3) trust and risk in skincare choices, and (4) Gen Z's skincare decision-making. The findings show that reputation and store image are deeply interconnected. Reputation, particularly when supported by halal certification and visibility on digital platforms, strengthens consumer trust. Store image, including clean layouts, organized displays, and an engaging atmosphere, further reduces perceived risk. Trust emerges as the bridge between these antecedents and Gen Z's purchase decisions, while perceived risk remains a significant barrier when authenticity is uncertain. Finally, Gen Z's behavior highlights the blending of online validation (reviews, TikTok) with offline retail experiences, creating a hybrid decision-making process unique to this cohort.

The study contributes to consumer behavior research by demonstrating how intangible

signals (reputation, store image) interact with trust and risk in shaping Gen Z purchase decisions in the Indonesian skincare context. It also extends the literature by showing how digital–offline hybridity characterizes Gen Z’s decision-making, a nuance often missed in purely quantitative models.

To compete effectively, local skincare brands should prioritize strengthening corporate reputation by investing in halal certification, transparent ingredient labeling, and active influencer engagement, all of which help build and sustain consumer trust. Equally important is the enhancement of store image, where retail spaces should be not only clean and well organized but also designed to be social-media friendly, reflecting Gen Z’s lifestyle and identity needs. At the same time, brands need to focus on minimizing perceived risk by providing testers, authenticity guarantees, and visible quality assurances across both online and offline channels, thereby countering fears of counterfeit products. Finally, companies should aim to integrate online and offline strategies by aligning social media marketing with in-store experiences to ensure consistency across touchpoints and support Gen Z’s hybrid decision-making process.

Future studies could expand by including other consumer cohorts (e.g., millennials or older adults) for comparison, or by exploring different product categories beyond skincare. A longitudinal approach may also provide insights into how trust and reputation evolve over time as local brands mature.

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