

Generational Differences in Perceived Value in Showrooming: Examining Offline Search, Online Purchase Benefits, and Consumer Factors

Paramjit Singh^{1,2*}  and Pavleen Soni¹ 

¹University Business School, Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, Punjab, India.

²Department of Business Administration, Guru Nanak Dev Engineering College, Ludhiana, Punjab, India.

*param1994aug@gmail.com (corresponding author)

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ABSTRACT

Purpose: Technology advancement has made customers practice a new habit where they inspect products in physical stores, i.e., through an offline channel, before purchasing the same product through online channels (i.e., through websites or apps), and this is known as showrooming. This research paper focuses on generational differences, particularly Gen Z and Gen Y.

Methods: Data were collected from 1,000 female respondents in India belonging to the Gen Y and Gen Z age groups who were involved in the purchase of makeup and colour cosmetics products, with 804 valid responses retained after excluding incomplete questionnaires. Judgmental sampling was adopted because of the nature of the study, as this research needed participants who had prior showrooming experience. For analysis purposes, MICOM and MGA techniques were used.

Findings: The findings reveal generational differences in perceived value: price consciousness significantly influences Gen Y consumers, whereas the need for touch and social interaction exerts stronger effects among Gen Z shoppers. Both generations, however, demonstrate similar preferences toward technology-based features such as AI-based chatbot problem solving and entertainment through smart shopping carts.

Implications: This study contributes to the literature of retail management by examining a new type of buying behaviour known as showrooming. The findings indicate that Gen Z and Gen Y behave differently in some aspects but similarly when it comes to technology. Retailers, entrepreneurs, and managers can develop strategies based on these findings in order to attract more customers and satisfy their needs.

Originality: This research makes use of MICOM and MGA techniques to study the behaviour of different generations while practicing the showrooming phenomenon, which is one of its kind.



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1. Introduction

Advancements in technology have brought about major shifts in the way customers interact with retailers and make purchase decisions. Businesses have adopted multichannel marketing, which involves providing information about their products and services along with support to customers through two or more channels, such as physical stores, online platforms, and mobile applications (Arora *et al.*, 2017). According to Lee and Kim (2010), when retailers try to maintain integration between different channels, this makes it very easy for customers to switch from one channel to the other, and this enhances customer loyalty to multichannel retailers. This integration of different channels has resulted in

the adoption of a new shopping practice known as showrooming (Arora *et al.*, 2017).

In showrooming, customers try to learn and understand a product in a brick and mortar store (offline channel), clarify their doubts, and then make the final purchase through an online retailer either by a website or via a mobile application (Schneider & Zielke, 2020). Engaging in the showrooming practice allows customers to find the product that best fits their needs, and they also get the advantage of purchasing it at a more affordable price, resulting in a more satisfying shopping experience (Burns *et al.*, 2018). Showrooming not only provides low priced products but also offers customers several advantages, including better decision making, variety, and increased empowerment (De Mesquita *et al.*,

2024). According to a Shopify commissioned study by Forrester Consulting, 54% of U.S. shoppers tend to examine a product in an offline store and then purchase it through an online channel, which is known as the showrooming practice (De Mesquita *et al.*, 2024).

To identify the research gap, an extensive literature review was carried out, revealing a lack of studies on generational understanding of showrooming. Showrooming has been examined from various perspectives by different researchers. For example, Arora *et al.* (2020) studied perceived value and prior shopping experience as factors influencing showrooming intention. Burns *et al.* (2018) carried out research to know the effect of different shopping orientations on showrooming, while Schneider and Zielke (2020) categorized showroomers into four groups based on psychological and demographic traits. Some studies have focused on the factors that drive showrooming behaviour (Arora *et al.*, 2022; Sahu *et al.*, 2021), and some prior research studies have focused on retail strategies to address showrooming behaviour for the benefit of offline retailers (Cron *et al.*, 2021; Fassnacht *et al.*, 2019).

In the retail literature, some research has looked at omnichannel shopping with generational cohorts, but studies specifically on showrooming practices remain scarce. For instance, Sharma and Dutta (2025) examined how different generations approach omnichannel shopping and make online decisions, offering insights that help retailers better engage Generations X, Y, and Z. However, none of these studies provide an in-depth examination of showrooming among Gen Z and Gen Y. This research can serve as a milestone for future researchers and assist decision makers, policymakers, managers, and many retailers in making informed decisions based on the buying habits and showrooming practices of these generations.

2. Review of Literature

2.1. Showrooming

Marketing literature notes that the showrooming phenomenon has its roots in studies of free riding behaviour and customer switching behaviour (Van Baal & Dach, 2005). For this reason, most researchers consider showrooming as a form of free riding, where customers gather important information from one retailer but make their final purchase from another retailer. This is similar to showrooming, where information is collected in a physical brick and mortar store (offline channel), but the purchase is ultimately made through an online channel (Rapp *et al.*, 2015). Sit *et al.* (2017) examined the positive aspects of showrooming for multichannel retailers, while some examined this from the negative side for offline retailers. However, some researchers

argue that showrooming is not always negative. There is loyal showrooming, where customers purchase from the same retailer after experiencing the product in store and then placing the order online (Frasquet & Miquel Romero, 2021). For this study, however, the authors focus on competitive showrooming, which occurs when a customer experiences a product at retailer A but makes the purchase online through retailer B (Frasquet & Miquel Romero, 2021).

2.2. Gen Y and Gen Z

There are different definitions for Generation Y (Gen Y) and Generation Z (Gen Z). For example, people born between 1981 and 1995 are commonly referred to as Gen Y (Hall *et al.*, 2017), while those born between 1996 and 2005 are known as Gen Z (Hall *et al.*, 2017; Priporas *et al.*, 2017). However, Sharma and Dutta (2025) define Gen Y as those born between 1981 and 1994, and Gen Z as those born between 1997 and 2005. For this particular study, the authors have chosen the definition provided by Hall *et al.* (2017). This research does not want to debate which definition is more suitable or more accurate, but instead the focus here is on the core age segments.

There is a significant gap in research on the online shopping behaviours of Gen Z and Gen Y populations (Agrawal, 2022). According to Priporas *et al.* (2017), age plays a crucial role in today's technology driven world, leading to notable differences between Gen Z and Gen Y. Gen Y in India is known for its adaptability and significant workforce participation (P. Sharma, 2021). Gen Y is highly tech savvy (Thangavel *et al.*, 2021). On the other hand, Gen Z values convenience and shows a strong sense of social responsibility. Compared to older generations, Gen Z is less loyal to brands (Thangavel *et al.*, 2021).

2.3. Perceived Value in Showrooming

Past research has stated that perceived value plays a crucial role in the retailing sector, especially with the emergence of omnichannel shopping (Quach *et al.*, 2023), and it has a major impact on customer loyalty (Cotarelo *et al.*, 2021) and customer satisfaction (Hamouda, 2019). In general, utilitarian and hedonic values are considered the key motivators of shopping intention (Sharma & Fatima, 2023). Further, these intentions later frame behaviour (Pereira *et al.*, 2023). Ultimately, customer behaviour is shaped by the utilitarian and hedonic values they associate with using omnichannel services (Natarajan & Raghavan, 2023). Gaining deeper insight into showrooming behaviour requires examining its underlying factors. Research shows that showrooming is driven by perceived benefits (De Mesquita *et al.*, 2024).

2.4. Hypothesis

2.4.1. Perceived Offline Search Benefits

This research focuses on three offline benefits that customers derive while searching offline for a product, viz., need for touch, sales staff assistance, and social interaction. These factors attract customers to experience the product in an offline channel, i.e., through a brick and mortar store first before switching the channel.

Researchers have suggested that when customers are able to physically touch and feel a product, it leads to improved product assessment (Peck & Childers, 2006). However, this touch and feel factor is not possible with online shopping (Hsiao *et al.*, 2012). The need for touch makes customers put in extra effort to evaluate the product so that they can reduce uncertainties related to buying and finalize better products (Gensler *et al.*, 2017). Similarly, customers enjoy shopping at physical stores because they can shop with their friends, family, and loved ones, which enhances the experience (Rohm & Swaminathan, 2003). This enjoyable experience of shopping with family and friends is possible because customers get an opportunity to interact with them, satisfying their urge for social interaction. Gensler *et al.* (2017) pointed out that sales staff support plays a major role in motivating customers to visit a brick and mortar store. Shankar and Jain (2022) noted in their research that many customers have a habit of buying products after consultation with sales staff because this assistance makes them feel more confident about their purchase. Based on the above arguments, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

- H1a. Need for touch positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Y consumers.
- H1b. Need for touch positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Z consumers.
- H2a. Sales staff assistance positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Y consumers.
- H2b. Sales staff assistance positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Z consumers.
- H3a. Social interaction positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Y consumers.
- H3b. Social interaction positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Z consumers.

2.4.2. Perceived Online Purchase Benefits

This research focuses on three online benefits that customers derive while purchasing a product online, viz., artificial intelligence based chatbot problem solving, virtual try on usefulness, and entertainment through shopping cart. These factors attract customers to purchase the product through an online channel after switching the channel.

Artificial intelligence based chatbot problem solving (AICPS) is now trending in the online shopping world (Tandon, 2023). Customers intend to use AI based chatbots because they are simple to use and capable of solving their queries (Kasilingam, 2020). Past research has also indicated that AICPS usage is linked with customer satisfaction (Chung *et al.*, 2020). Therefore, customers who practice showrooming may intend to use artificial intelligence based chatbots for problem solving and make their final decision confidently.

Virtual try on (VTO) is a component of virtual reality (VR) and is described as a computer-generated three-dimensional world that looks realistic but consists entirely of virtual objects (Pantano *et al.*, 2017). Previous research by Tandon (2023) has demonstrated the benefits of virtual try on in shopping because this feature helps customers overcome the absence of touch and feel in the online environment and smoothens their online shopping journey. Past research by Lee *et al.* (2021) has emphasized that virtual try on exerts a major impact on perceived value.

Research by Close and Kukar Kinney (2009) stated that many customers find pleasure in surfing the web and some find entertainment by placing products in the online cart. It is not necessary that customers who seek entertainment benefits from the shopping cart will buy at the same time (Wolfenbarger & Gilly, 2001). There is a possibility that they may use the shopping cart for research as well as for entertainment and may place the final order after gaining full confidence in the product. Based on the above arguments, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

- H4a. Artificial Intelligence based chatbot problem solving positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Y consumers.
- H4b. Artificial Intelligence based chatbot problem solving positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Z consumers.
- H5a. Virtual Try on usefulness positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Y consumers.
- H5b. Virtual Try on usefulness positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Z consumers.
- H6a. Entertainment through shopping cart positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Y consumers.
- H6b. Entertainment through shopping cart positively influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Z consumers.

2.4.3. Consumer Variables

These are consumer variables that have the potential to affect perceived value towards the showrooming practice.

This research considers two consumer variables, i.e., price consciousness and market mavenism.

Customers are attracted to online channels because they can offer products at lower costs, as online channel retailers do not have expenses such as showroom rent, sales staff salaries, and maintenance, which are necessary for offline retailers (Arora & Sahney, 2018). Additionally, online retailers are able to provide lower prices and customized deals, which further attract customers (Chen & Lu, 2011). Kim and Hahn (2015) stated that this online price difference benefits customers and motivates them to engage in showrooming practices. Therefore, it can be assumed that price conscious customers are more likely to adopt showrooming practices.

Market mavenism describes a person’s ability to influence the marketplace. Market mavens can act as

opinion leaders and tend to influence other customers by giving them guidance for making purchases, but this does not necessarily mean they are experts. Rather, they tend to seek knowledge about new ideas and products launched in the market (Slaton & Testa, 2023).

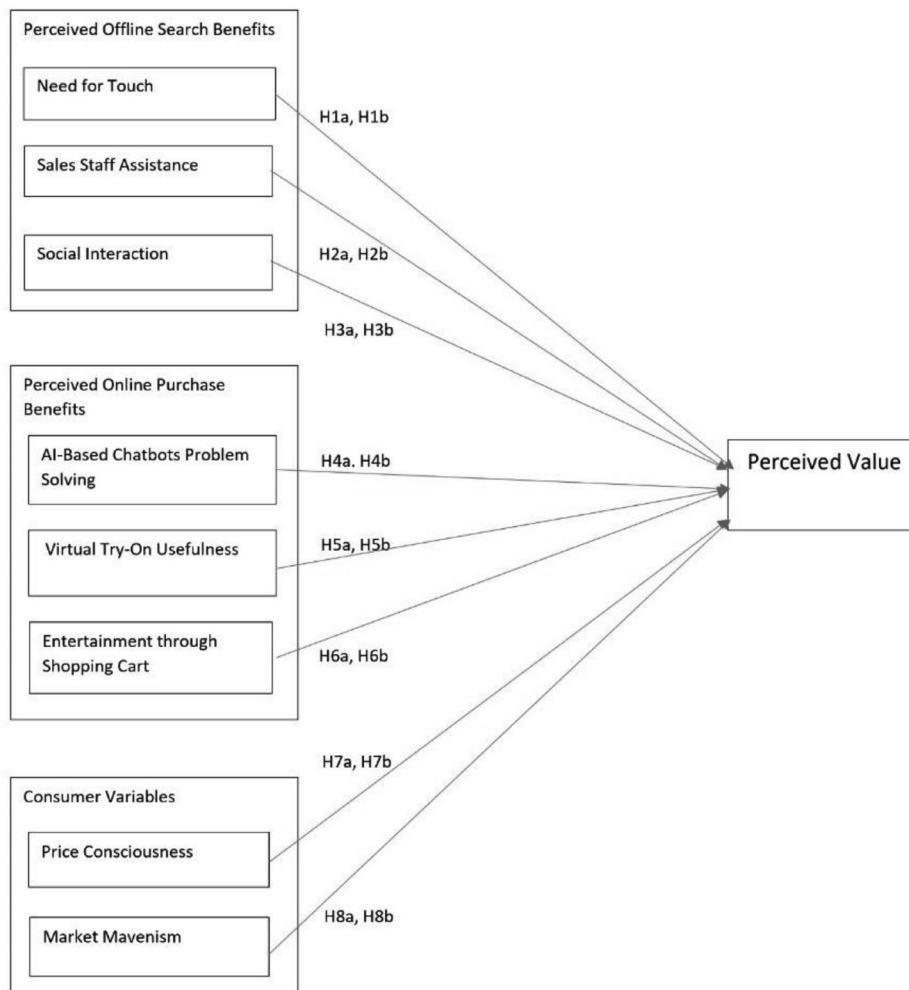
Based on the above arguments, the following hypotheses have been proposed:

H7a. Price consciousness influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Y consumers.

H7b. Price consciousness influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Z consumers.

H8a. Market mavenism influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Y consumers.

H8b. Market mavenism influences perceived value towards showrooming among Gen Z consumers.



(Please Note: Hypotheses labelled “a” represent “Gen Y” whereas hypotheses labelled “b” represent “Gen Z”)

Figure 1: Conceptual Model

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This research is based on a quantitative method. Quantitative research suits best when the research wants to decode the facts for a wider set of audience. This research makes use of numerical data and tries to generalise the results for the large base of customers belonging to Indian origin (Abdullahi, 2025).

3.2. Sampling Design

Data collection employed a hybrid approach, with half of the responses gathered through an online channel and the other half through an offline channel via questionnaire. In the present study, the hybrid approach refers to a mixed mode data collection strategy combining online and offline survey data collection that was done to enhance sample diversity. This hybrid approach allows respondents to answer the questionnaire through their preferred mode, either through pen and paper or through digital devices, as this comfort allows a better response rate and reduces inconvenience for the respondents.

The target population included individuals from Gen Z and Gen Y belonging to Indian origin. The judgmental sampling method was used to select 1,000 participants who had engaged in showrooming for makeup and colour cosmetic products. There were strong justifications for choosing a non-probability sampling technique like judgmental sampling, which include the demand and context of the study. Since this study came with a condition that only those customers could qualify who are using makeup and cosmetics and also practicing showrooming, the researchers had to apply their judgment in order to shortlist those customers who are actually practicing this type of behaviour.

Incomplete questionnaires were excluded from the dataset. Additionally, attention check questions were included to ensure respondent engagement; those who failed these checks were also removed. After these exclusions, the final sample consisted of 804 respondents.

3.3. Instrument Design

The questionnaire items were adapted from established, validated scales and were slightly adjusted to fit the specific context of this study. Table 1 shows various constructs and their sources with the number of items opted.

Table 1: Constructs, Items, and Source

Construct	Number of Items	Source
Need for Touch (NFT)	5	Santos & Gonçalves (2019)
Sales Staff Assistance (SSA)	4	Shankar & Jain (2022)

Social Interaction (SOI)	3	Arora & Sahney (2019)
Virtual Try-On Usefulness (VTOU)	5	Pantano <i>et al.</i> (2017)
AI-Based Chatbot Problem Solving (AICPS)	5	Chen <i>et al.</i> (2021)
Entertainment Through Shopping Cart (ESC)	4	Close & Kukar-Kinney (2009)
Market Mavenism (MM)	5	Yang (2013)
Price Consciousness (PC)	4	Lichtenstein <i>et al.</i> (1993)
Perceived Value (PV)	3	Shankar <i>et al.</i> (2021)

3.4. Data Analysis Tools

Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used to test the proposed research model, while Bootstrap Multigroup Analysis (MGA) was applied to examine generational differences. The Measurement Invariance of Composite Models (MICOM) procedure established partial measurement invariance, enabling meaningful comparisons between the two groups. Many researchers have studied results derived from different groups. For example, the antecedents of market orientation from three countries were studied (Brettel *et al.*, 2008), and another study examined international consumer acceptance of website design across different countries (Singh *et al.*, 2006). These kinds of studies highlight the importance of multigroup comparisons that require establishing measurement invariance so that researchers can ensure the validity of outcomes and conclusions (Henseler *et al.*, 2016). In the same study, Henseler *et al.* (2016) pointed out that MGA (i.e., multi group analysis) will only be fruitful when the researcher has established the invariance of the composites across different groups.

4. Results

4.1. Measurement Model

For the measurement model, the PLS-SEM algorithm was applied. The model was refined by excluding variables in line with the recommendations of Hair *et al.* (2022). NFT3 was removed due to its low outer loading, while ESC2 was excluded owing to collinearity concerns.

Table 2: Reliability and Convergent Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
AICPS	0.885	0.885	0.929	0.813
ESC	0.839	0.842	0.903	0.756
MM	0.862	0.882	0.899	0.641
NFT	0.773	0.789	0.853	0.591
PC	0.748	0.797	0.837	0.568
PV	0.840	0.868	0.903	0.756
SOI	0.762	0.773	0.862	0.676
SSA	0.777	0.826	0.851	0.592
VTOU	0.820	0.828	0.874	0.581

The internal consistency and convergent validity of the constructs were assessed using Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (rho_a and rho_c), and average variance extracted (AVE). As presented in Table 2, all constructs demonstrated satisfactory reliability and convergent validity.

- **Discriminant Validity:** Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio, as suggested by Henseler *et al.* (2014). As shown in Table 3, all HTMT values among the constructs were well below the conservative threshold of 0.85, indicating satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 3: HTMT Table

	AICPS	ESC	MM	NFT	PC	PV	SOI	SSA	VTOU
AICPS									
ESC	0.153								
MM	0.198	0.225							
NFT	0.198	0.145	0.157						
PC	0.157	0.270	0.357	0.104					
PV	0.253	0.355	0.172	0.258	0.211				
SOI	0.149	0.218	0.162	0.218	0.124	0.238			
SSA	0.190	0.198	0.157	0.510	0.063	0.231	0.466		
VTOU	0.397	0.081	0.214	0.321	0.147	0.214	0.092	0.297	

- **Collinearity Issues:** To examine potential collinearity issues among the indicators, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values were assessed. All VIF values ranged between 1.221 and 3.805. These values are well below the commonly accepted threshold of 5.0 (Hair *et al.*, 2021), indicating the absence of multicollinearity concerns.
- **MGA - Multigroup Analysis:** The Permutation Multigroup Analysis (MGA) was configured to assess whether significant statistical differences exist between Gen Y and Gen Z in their structural model relationships. In the MGA set up Gen Y was taken as Group A and Gen Z was taken as Group B.

4.2. MICOM

Table 4: MICOM – Step 2: Compositional Invariance

	Original Correlation	Correlation Permutation Mean	5.0%	Permutation p-value
AICPS	1.000	0.998	0.994	0.669
ESC	0.999	0.998	0.995	0.702
MM	0.976	0.984	0.957	0.171
NFT	0.994	0.986	0.963	0.710
PC	0.992	0.979	0.943	0.753
PV	0.998	0.999	0.998	0.143
SOI	0.988	0.990	0.969	0.302
SSA	0.987	0.986	0.961	0.402
VTOU	0.976	0.983	0.955	0.217

The MICOM is performed in three steps according to Henseler *et al.* (2016).

In Step 1 involves assessing configural invariance that was ensured, and configural invariance was achieved.

In Step 2 of the Measurement Invariance of Composite Models (MICOM) procedure, compositional invariance was

assessed. As shown in Table 4, all constructs demonstrated original correlations that were very close to or equal to 1.000, with values ranging from 0.976 (MM and VTOU) to 1.000 (AICPS). This implies that compositional invariance is achieved.

Table 5: MICOM 3a (mean)

	Original Difference	Permutation Mean Difference	2.5%	97.5%	Permutation p-value
AICPS	-0.103	0.001	-0.136	0.138	0.141
ESC	0.120	0.001	-0.139	0.136	0.087
MM	-0.014	0.001	-0.137	0.136	0.859
NFT	0.322	0.000	-0.140	0.137	0.000
PC	0.006	-0.001	-0.138	0.138	0.930
PV	0.094	0.001	-0.140	0.140	0.188
SOI	0.091	-0.001	-0.140	0.140	0.197
SSA	0.289	0.002	-0.136	0.140	0.000
VTOU	0.081	0.001	-0.138	0.142	0.252

Table 6: MICOM 3b (variance)

	Original Difference	Permutation Mean Difference	2.5%	97.5%	Permutation p-value
AICPS	0.185	-0.001	-0.227	0.225	0.112

ESC	0.055	0.000	-0.158	0.158	0.499
MM	0.037	-0.001	-0.206	0.204	0.727
NFT	-0.325	-0.001	-0.286	0.283	0.026
PC	-0.280	0.000	-0.226	0.226	0.015
PV	-0.042	-0.002	-0.222	0.220	0.703
SOI	-0.019	-0.001	-0.192	0.189	0.848
SSA	0.137	-0.003	-0.202	0.193	0.174
VTOU	0.201	-0.001	-0.276	0.271	0.160

MICOM – Step 3: Equality of Composite Mean Values and Variances

The third step of the MICOM procedure assesses the equality of composite mean values and variances between groups.

As shown in Table 5, for mean differences, the original differences ranged from -0.103 (AICPS) to 0.322 (NFT), with permutation mean differences close to zero, indicating minimal deviation between the groups. For variance differences, as shown in table 6, the original values ranged from -0.325 (NFT) to 0.201 (VTOU). Following the MICOM decision rules, since Step 1 (configural invariance) and Step 2 (compositional invariance) were achieved, and only a few constructs (NFT, SSA, and PC) failed to establish

equality in means or variances, partial measurement invariance is confirmed.

4.3. Bootstrapping

The Bootstrap Multigroup Analysis (MGA) allows researchers to determine the significance of differences in group-specific parameter estimates. In this study, the MGA was set up to compare the structural relationships between Gen Y and Gen Z respondents. Groups A and B were defined accordingly, with Gen Y and Gen Z selected for comparison.

Table 7: Gen Y vs Gen Z Comparison

Path (\rightarrow PV)	Gen Y	Gen Y p-value	Sig. (Y)	Gen Z β	Gen Z p-value	Sig. (Z)	Stronger Influence
AICPS \rightarrow PV	0.142	0.014	Significant	0.111	0.041	Significant	Gen Y
ESC \rightarrow PV	0.171	0.002	Significant	0.276	0.000	Significant	Gen Z
MM \rightarrow PV	0.079	0.120	Not Sig.	-0.031	0.580	Not Sig.	–
NFT \rightarrow PV	0.096	0.132	Not Sig.	0.107	0.037	Significant	Gen Z
PC \rightarrow PV	0.103	0.044	Significant	0.070	0.132	Not Sig.	Gen Y
SOI \rightarrow PV	0.038	0.484	Not Sig.	0.128	0.009	Significant	Gen Z
SSA \rightarrow PV	0.107	0.055	Marginal	0.002	0.964	Not Sig.	Gen Y (weak)
VTOU \rightarrow PV	0.060	0.368	Not Sig.	0.100	0.081	Not Sig.	–

The results, summarized in Table 7, reveal both similarities and notable differences across the two generational cohorts.

Table 8: Hypothesis Testing Summary (Gen Y and Gen Z)

Hypothesis	Gen Y Result	Hypothesis	Gen Z Result
H1a	Rejected	H1b	Accepted
H2a	Rejected	H2b	Rejected

H3a	Rejected	H3b	Accepted
H4a	Accepted	H4b	Accepted
H5a	Rejected	H5b	Rejected
H6a	Accepted	H6b	Accepted
H7a	Accepted	H7b	Rejected
H8a	Rejected	H8b	Rejected

5. Discussion

The objective of this study is to find generational differences in perceived value in showrooming in which the researcher focuses on offline search benefits, online purchase benefits, and various consumer factors.

The study revealed that for Gen Y, some factors proved significant. These factors are artificial intelligence based chatbot problem solving, entertainment through shopping carts, and price consciousness. The significance of these factors showed the importance that Gen Y consumers are giving more stress on money savings, and this may be because they are in the age where they are starting family life or may have the responsibility of children and that is directly affecting their purchase behaviour. Gen Y is also adopting technology in their day to day life. They are open to using AI and derive entertainment while practicing showrooming. Among all these three variables significant for Gen Y, the usage of AI and economic benefits proved to be more dominant. The usage of AI enabled problem solving is in line with the previous study that was performed by Chen *et al.* (2021), who found that online chatbot usability has a positive impact on the customer experience.

This study showed some interesting differences between Gen Z and Gen Y. The Gen Z population is found behaving differently. For this generation, entertainment through shopping carts emerged as the strongest determinant of perceived value in showrooming, highlighting this generation's preference for enjoying digital experiences. Further, other constructs, i.e., need for touch and social interaction, are significant. This indicates that Gen Z consumers are giving much importance to the touch and feel factor and want to check the product physically before buying. This is evidence of the fact that the trend of showrooming is rising among Gen Z and this generation's customers want to be doubly sure before making a purchase. Therefore, they inspect the product through an offline channel and place the order through an online channel. Further, the significance of social interaction indicates that Gen Z consumers love to interact with their near and dear ones while shopping. This result aligns with the previous study by Kim *et al.* (2012), which showed that evaluation of

products offline by consumers makes their purchase decision much easier. One interesting observation is also noted that Gen Z consumers are becoming less sensitive to price.

6. Implications of the Study

6.1. Theoretical Implications

This study adds to the growing research literature on the showrooming topic as well as the consumer behaviour domain, and ultimately to marketing management, with a special focus on makeup and colour cosmetics in the retail sector. As stated by prominent researchers Shankar *et al.* (2021) and Li *et al.* (2020), the literature on showrooming is still very scarce as the phenomenon is still emerging and needs much attention because of its wide acceptance and adoption by consumers.

Focusing on the factors discussed in the study, artificial intelligence based chatbot problem solving is an important factor for both Gen Y and Gen Z. In the growing technology acceptance, both generational groups are adopting artificial intelligence that can be from different sources like ChatGPT, Alexa, etc. or AI based company retail applications. The reason may be because these generations are viewing artificial intelligence as alternatives to human help. Particularly for the Gen Z group, the need for touch is also seen as a very important factor. This aligns with the findings of Gensler *et al.* (2017), which stated that many customers prefer physical contact with the product. Further, some constructs in this study were used for the first time in the context of showrooming such as virtual try on usefulness, entertainment through shopping cart, and artificial intelligence based chatbot problem solving. The reason behind choosing these constructs is the advancements in technology and the adoption of the same by consumers for their shopping patterns.

From a methodological perspective, the study demonstrates that using the MICOM procedure and MGA can help identify group differences.

6.2. Practical Implications

These findings offer practical insights for managers and retailers aiming to improve consumer perceived value while

practicing showrooming. Understanding Gen Y and Gen Z consumers is essential for creating targeted omnichannel strategies. For Gen Y, managers should focus on cost effectiveness. Artificial intelligence based chatbot problem solving is important and entertainment through shopping carts further enhances Gen Y perceived value. Generation Z prefers technology use and social connection with their loved ones. Therefore, managers should focus on aspects such as entertainment, need for touch, and social interaction, which are especially important to Gen Z. Price consciousness is not significant for Gen Z, indicating that they value experience over saving money. All this means that managers need a tailored strategy for both generations.

7. Limitations and Future Scope

This study provides valuable findings but still has certain limitations. The sample was limited to Gen Y and Gen Z consumers in India. Future research could expand this framework across different cultures by comparing results from emerging markets like India with those from developed markets such as the USA, UK, or Australia and include other generations such as Gen X or Baby Boomers, as that could provide a broader perspective on how generations behave while practicing showrooming. Future studies could employ mixed method approaches. This research focused only on makeup and colour cosmetics. Future research could examine showrooming practice in clothing, fashion accessories, and footwear.

Abbreviations

Gen Y: Generation Y; **Gen Z:** Generation Z; **MGA:** Multigroup Analysis; **MICOM:** Measurement Invariance of Composite Models

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Authorship Contribution

The authors equally contributed to the conceptualization and design of the study, data collection, data analysis, interpretation of results, and preparation of the manuscript. The authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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Declarations

The authors confirm that this manuscript is original, has not been published previously, and is not under consideration for publication elsewhere. All sources of information have been properly acknowledged, and ethical research standards have been followed.

Ethical Approval

The authors declare that no ethical approvals were required for the study.

AI Declaration

For grammar check authors used “Grammarly.com” and for improving academic tone of text “ChatGPT 5.3”. Example of prompts that were used, “check grammar”, “improve academic tone of the sentence” etc.

Data Availability Statement

Authors declare that the data supporting the conclusions of this study can be obtained upon request from the corresponding author, Paramjit Singh. The data is not publicly accessible due to restrictions as it contains information that may compromise the privacy of research participants.

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