Independent College

Applied Project Submission Form

LEARNER NUMBER	51757079
NAME	Karen Paes Bekman
COURSE	BA (Hons) in Marketing
REPORT TITLE	Factors Influencing Purchasing Intention Towards Korean Skincare Products Among Irish Consumers
SUPERVISOR NAME	Mark Banchansky
WORD COUNT	9,580
DUE DATE	07/06/2026
DATE SUBMITTED	07/06/2026

I certify that:

- This project report is all my own work, and no part of this report has been copied from another source: Yes ☒ No ☐
- I understand that this report may be checked by electronic or other means for plagiarism and/or content created by generative AI and may be transferred and stored in a database for the purposes of data-matching/data-analysis to help detect plagiarism and/or content created by generative AI: Yes ☒ No ☐
- This report has not previously been submitted in part or in full for assessment to any other institution: Yes ☒ No ☐
- I consent to the inclusion of my report in the publicly accessible (open access) electronic database maintained by the library:
  Yes ☒ No☐
- I have emailed a back-up copy of this report to locker@independentcollege.ie:
  Yes ☒ No ☐

(Note that if no check boxes are selected, this Project will be regarded as NOT properly submitted, and may be subject to a late submission penalty)

Name: Karen Paes Bekman

Date: 07/06/2026

For the report to count as a valid submission, the student must provide:

1 electronic copy via Moodle. There is no requirement for a hard copy .

Evidence of the Primary Research MUST be included in the appendix of the report. That includes a copy of questionnaires, interview schedules, or observation diaries. One interview transcript should be included as a full transcript and a summary of all other interviews must be kept as a backup by the student. See template on Moodle for what should be included in all aspects of the report. **All data must be anonymised.**

The text should be double-spaced throughout and single column format (A4) with 2cm for left and right-hand margins and 2.5cm at head and foot. Text should be justified, standard 12 point, footnotes 10 point, and in Calibri. Page numbers should be at the bottom-right. Do not use line and paragraph spacing. Keep formatting to a minimum and avoid underlining.

Harvard Referencing shall apply.



Factors Influencing Purchase Intention Towards Korean Skincare Products Among Irish Consumers

Karen Paes Bekman

Applied Project

Bachelor of Arts (Hons) in Marketing

Supervisor: Mark Banchansky

Independent College

07 June 2026

Acknowledgement

I would like to express my gratitude to my family for supporting me and the lectures for their teaching and support through my college years. I would like to give a special thanks to my supervisor, Mark Banchansky, and to Dr Bill Mallon for their guidance and support throughout this applied project.

Abstract

This study examines the factors influencing purchasing intention towards Korean skincare products among Irish consumers. Despite the growing popularity of K-beauty globally, limited research has explored this topic in the Irish context. A quantitative survey was conducted, collecting 107 valid responses from consumers residents in Ireland, and structured around the four themes: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews; Brand Trust; Perceived Product Quality; and Price Sensitivity and Value for Money.

The findings indicate that social media, online reviews, brand trust and perceived product quality are the strongest factors influencing purchasing intention among respondents, while price sensitivity had a moderate influence. The study contributes to the existing literature by providing evidence of Korean skincare consumer behaviour in the Irish context, offering practical implications for brands seeking to enter or expand into the Irish market.

Table of Contents

Acknowledgement I
Abstract II
Table of Contents III
List of Figures V
List of Tables VI
Chapter 1: Introduction 7
1.1 Background to the Study 7
1.2 Research Question 7
1.3 Research Objectives 8
1.4 Research Themes 8
1.5 Relevance and Importance of the Research 9
Chapter 2: Literature Review 10
2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review 10
2.2 Conceptual Foundations and Key Definitions 10
2.3 Thematic Review of the Literature 11
2.3.1 Theme 1: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews 11
2.3.2 Theme 2: Brand Trust 13
2.3.3 Theme 3: Perceived Product Quality 14
2.3.4 Theme 4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money 15
2.4 Synthesis of the Literature 16
2.5 Identification of the Research Gap 17
Chapter 3: Research Methodology 18
3.1 Introduction 18
3.2 Research Philosophy 18
3.3 Research Approach 19
3.4 Research Design and Methodological Strategy 19
3.5 Data Collection Methods 20
3.6 Sampling Strategy 21
3.7 Data Analysis Methods 21
3.8 Ethical Considerations 22
3.9 Reliability and Validity 22
3.10 Limitations of the Methodology 23
3.11 Chapter Summary 23
Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings 25

4.1 Introduction....25
4.2 Respondent Profile....25
4.3 Findings Organised by Research Theme....27
4.3.1 Theme 1: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews....27
4.3.2 Theme 2: Brand Trust....29
4.3.3 Theme 3: Perceived Product Quality....31
4.3.4 Theme 4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money....33
4.3.5 Purchase Intention and Recommendations....35
4.4 Summary of Key Findings....37
Chapter 5: Discussion....38
5.1 Introduction....38
5.2 Discussion of Findings by Research Objective or Theme....38
5.2.1 Discussion of Theme 1: Social Media, Influencer and Online Reviews....38
5.2.2 Discussion of Theme 2: Brand Trust....40
5.2.3 Discussion of Theme 3: Perceived Product Quality....42
5.2.4 Discussion of Theme 4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money....44
5.3 Integration of Findings....45
5.4 Implications of the Findings....45
5.5 Link to Research Gap....46
5.6 Chapter Summary....47
Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations....48
6.1 Introduction....48
6.2 Summary of the Research....48
6.3 Summary of Key Findings....48
6.4 Contribution of the Study....49
6.5 Practical Recommendations....50
6.6 Limitations of the Research....51
6.7 Recommendations for Future Research....51
6.8 Final Conclusion....52
References....53
Appendix A – Survey Questionnaire....56
Appendix B – Survey Results....61
Appendix C – Ethical Approval Form....67
Appendix D – Raw Data....71

List of Figures

Figure 4.1: Social Media, Influencer and Online Reviews 28

Figure 4.2: Brand Trust 30

Figure 4.3: Perceived Product Quality 32

Figure 4.4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money 34

Figure 4.5: Purchase Intention and Recommendation 36

List of Tables

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile 25

Table 4.2: Skincare Habits 26

Table 4.3: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews 28

Table 4.4: Brand Trust 30

Table 4.5: Perceived Product Quality 32

Table 4.6: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money 34

Table 4.7: Purchase Intention and Recommendation 36

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Background to the Study

In recent years, Korean skincare, also known as K-beauty, has become popular in the global beauty industry, driven by aesthetic packaging, product innovation and bioactive ingredients considered highly effective by consumers worldwide (Nguyen, et al., 2020). The spread of Korean culture, known as K-wave or Hallyu, has supported this global expansion, facilitating entry into top importing countries such as France in 2017, causing an expansion into the European market (Baek & Lee, 2019).Industry reports highlight that product innovation, quality and affordability are key factors for the popularity of Korean skincare products (McKinsey & Company, 2025; MSLab, 2025; Landing International, 2024)

In Ireland, the interest for Korean skincare products can be noted by the increased availability of Korean skincare products through retailers such as Boots and Arnotts, as well as the opening of a dedicated Korean skincare store in Dublin, translating the online popularity to in-person purchases. (Evoke, 2025; Irish Examiner, 2025).

Despite the growing popularity of Korean skincare products in Ireland, limited research has investigated the purchase intention towards Korean skincare products in the Irish context. The following sections presents the research question, objectives and relevance of the study.

1.2 Research Question

The main research question (MRQ) of this study is:

What factors influence purchase intention for Korean skincare products among Irish consumers?

This research question allows for analysis of multiple factors, such as social media influence, product quality, effectiveness, brand trust, and price, for example.

1.3 Research Objectives

For the research objectives, the study has the following objectives:

- To identify the key factors that influence purchase intention for Korean skincare products among Irish consumers.
- To examine how social media, influencers and online reviews influence consumer purchase intention.
- To analyse how perceived product quality and effectiveness influences purchase intention.
- To evaluate how brand trust and credibility influence purchase intention.
- To examine how price sensitivity and value for money influence purchase intention.

1.4 Research Themes

The research investigates four themes.

Theme 1: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews: This theme examines how digital platforms influence consumer awareness towards Korean skincare products and purchase intention.

Theme 2: Brand Trust: This theme focuses on how brand trust influence consumer purchase intention of Korean skincare products.

Theme 3: Perceived Product Quality: This theme explores how consumers evaluate Korean skincare products based on its quality, ingredients and effectiveness.

Theme 4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money: This theme examines how price, affordability and perceived value for money influence consumer purchase intention.

1.5 Relevance and Importance of the Research

This research aims to find insights that influence purchase intention for Korean skincare products among Irish consumers. While there are previous studies examining Korean skincare in global or Asian markets, limited research about this topic exists in the Irish context. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing academic literature by examining how factors such as social media, product quality, brand trust and price sensitivity affect customer behaviour in Ireland.

For business operating in the skincare and beauty industry, these findings may provide useful insights. Understanding what influences consumer purchase intention can help brands, retailers and marketing professionals to develop effective marketing strategies, improve product positioning in the Irish market and better meet Irish consumers need.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction to the Literature Review

This chapter reviews and evaluate existing academic literature related to factors that influence consumer purchase intention for Korean skincare products. The research problem focuses on understanding what factors influence Irish consumers when purchasing these products. The review focus on social media, influencers and online reviews, brand trust, perceived product quality, and price sensitivity and value for money.

2.2 Conceptual Foundations and Key Definitions

Consumer behaviour: Refers to the process through which individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires and to define and express their identities (Solomon and Russell, 2024). Similarly, Kotler and Keller (2014) highlight that consumer's behaviour is influenced by cultural, social, and personal factors, noting that cultural factors exert the strongest influence.

Purchase Intention: Refers to a person's activity or behaviour that reflects the consumer's desire to buy a product (Then & Johan, 2020, cited in Hindarwati et al., 2025). It can be influenced by a series of factors, including brand trust, perceived product quality and price. Purchase intention is particularly relevant for the skincare industry, because consumers often evaluate such factors before purchasing.

Korean Skincare (K-Beauty): Refers to skincare products and multi-layer routine originated from South Korea, which is known for their innovative formulations, use of bioactive

ingredients and focus on skin health (Nguyen, et al., 2020). K-beauty has gained global popularity, becoming a growing segment in the skincare industry.

eWOM: Electronic word-of-mouth, also known as eWOM, refers to the informal reviews made through online platforms regarding products and services or the sellers (Huete-Alcocer, 2017).

Influencer Marketing: Refers to a type of social media marketing that includes partnership of brand with people that have a significant online following, which is used to promote products or services (Lou & Yuan, 2019). Consumers tend to trust influencers recommendations (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017).

Brand Trust: Can be defined as the consumers' confidence in a brand reliability in situations that involve risks (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). It can help brands' purchase intention and brand loyalty, as the average consumers rely on the brands claim to perform what they state (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001).

Perceived Product Quality: Refers to the subjective assessment of a product overall superiority, having a significant impact on consumer behaviour (Madhavedi, et al., 2025).

Price Sensitivity and Value for Money: Refers to the extent which consumers' purchase intention are influenced by the price of a product and is considered one of the most important attributes in consumers' choice (Levrini & Santos, 2021).

2.3 Thematic Review of the Literature

2.3.1 Theme 1: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews

The growth of social media has significantly changed the way consumers discover products. Online platforms, such as Instagram, TikTok and YouTube allow customers to become aware

of new brands with and increasingly use of these social medias to share their opinions about products (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). Ismagilova et al. (2020) defines eWOM as the online exchange of information between consumers regarding a product, service, brand, or company via the Internet. Unlike the traditional advertising, eWOM is often perceived as more trustworthy because it is about the experiences shared by other consumers and not by brands (Huete-Alcocer, 2017;Ismagilova, et al., 2020), making it relevant for the skincare industry because consumers can search for reviews and feedback to reduce the perceived risk before purchasing products. Additionally, Macheka et al. (2024) found that online consumer reviews had a strong positive influence on purchase intention. Overall, the literature suggests that consumers are increasingly relying on influencers and online reviews to evaluate beauty and skincare products.

Research shows that social media can affect consumers purchase intention trough their content and who they are. Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) found that non-traditional influencers such as bloggers, youtubers and 'instafamous' profiles were regarded as more powerful, as users felt they are more credible and could relate to them rather than to traditional celebrities. Further research by Lou and Yuan (2019) similarly found that influencers' informative value influences followers' trust and purchase intention. However, Lou and Yuan's (2019) study found that when followers are aware of an influencer's financial motivation to promote products, this negatively affects brand awareness and purchase intention. This is a counterpoint to Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) study, where participants' awareness of influencers financial gain to endorse brands did not affect their desire to purchase.

Focusing on Korean skincare products, Santoso et al. (2024) found that social media had a significant influence on consumers' purchase intention for Korean skincare products. Overall, the literature suggests that social media, influencers and online reviews are important factors influencing purchasing intention of Korean skincare products, although the influence of influencers appears to depend on their credibility and relatability.

2.3.2 Theme 2: Brand Trust

Brand trust is recognised as an important factor influencing consumer purchase intention. Delgado-Ballester (2004) defines brand trust as consumers' confidence that a brand will deliver its promised performance and act on consumers' best interests. For skincare products, these risks can be related to ingredients, effectiveness and skin reactions. Similarly, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) found that higher levels of brand trust can strengthen consumer loyalty and positively influence purchasing behaviour. Overall, brand trust can be an important factor for the skincare industry, because it may lead to consumer loyalty and repeated purchases.

Studies have found brand trust to positively influence consumers' purchase intention in the skincare industry. Hindarwati et al. (2022) found that brand trust had a positive effect in purchase intention through online channels in Indonesia, noting that the higher the brand trust and stronger eWOM, higher the purchase intention. Furthermore, Ekklesia and Kesumahati (2023) study in Indonesia found that brand image had a positive effect on purchase intention for Korean skincare products and that brand awareness positively influences brand image, meaning that when consumers know more about a brand, the stronger the brand image is. These findings suggest that brand awareness and brand image contributes to purchase intention and consumer trust.

Particularly in recent years, digital platforms and social media have become important for building brand trust for skincare products. Fitriyana et al. (2025) found that social media marketing and online reviews significantly increased brand trust, which later may turn into brand loyalty. However, social media marketing alone is not enough to build brand loyalty. This is aligned with Delgado-Ballester (2004) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) findings, that identified that brand trust is more important factor to build consumer loyalty. Overall, the literature suggests a positive influence of brand trust in purchase intention.

2.3.3 Theme 3: Perceived Product Quality

Perceived product quality refers to the subjective assessment of a product's overall superiority and has a significant impact on consumer behaviour (Madhavedi, et al., 2025). Madhavedi et al. (2025), found a positive correlation between perceived quality and purchase intention, with a strong influence on consumer buying intentions. Additionally, factor such as price, performance, value, brand, and service design are key factors of consumer purchasing decisions. This suggests that consumers of skincare products evaluate quality across multiple factors. Similarly, Pribadi et al. (2024) found that product quality was the dominant factor affecting skincare purchasing decisions, as consumers generally prefer products that are safe, effective, and meet their needs.

Focusing on Korean skincare, Nguyen et al. (2020), highlights that Korean skincare companies heavily invest in research and development, "unconventional" natural ingredients, placing heavy marketing emphasis on ingredients such as snail mucin, starfish powder, bee venom in addition to botanical ingredients as well as capitalise on the sensory experiences and tactiles aspects of products, which can positively influence perceptions of product quality for

consumers. These quality perceptions contribute to the popularity of Korean skincare products.

Oktavia and Mariam (2024) found that social media marketing had a significant and positive influence in perceived quality among skincare users in Indonesia, which suggests that optimising social media marketing can strengthen perceived quality and create consumer desire to buy products. That aligns with Le et al. (2020), who studied factors affecting the choice of buying Korean skincare products, where product characteristics, such as variety, design, natural ingredients, safe for use and good quality, were among the factors influencing purchasing decisions. Overall, the literature suggests that perceived product quality is an important factor influencing purchasing intention of Korean skincare products.

2.3.4 Theme 4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money

Price can be an important factor influencing purchasing intention towards Korean skincare products. Studies have found that price is a significant and strong influence for purchase intention towards skincare products. (Mud et al., 2020; Wei Kang et al., 2024). However, Othman et al. (2022) found that consciousness had no significant effect on the purchase intention of Korean skincare products among Gen-Y females. Futhermore, Foo et al. (2025), found that price had no significant influence on purchase intention for skincare products online, suggesting that the purchase intention can vary between online and in-store environments. These contrasting findings suggest that beside price, there are other factors that infuence purchase intention for Korean Skincare products.

Price sensitiviy refers to the extent to which consumers' purchase intention are influenced by the price of a product. Levrini and Santos (2021) offer two concepts related to price sensitivity:

value consciousness, meaning the evaluation of benefits received compared to the price paid, and price consciousness, meaning the focus on seeking lower prices or saving money. This suggests that consumers may not only care about the price of a skincare product but also if it offers good value for money.

Overall, the literature presents mixed findings regarding the inflouence of price sensitivity towards skincare products. The findins suggests that consumers are more likely to evaluate the value they receive for a product rather than price alone when evaluating skincare products.

2.4 Synthesis of the Literature

The four themes reviewed on this chapter, there are consistent findings surging: consumers' purchase intention for Korean skincare products are shaped by a combination of digital platforms, trust, quality perception and price, where these factors do not influence consumers separately, but interacting and strengthening each other. Social media and eWOM creates awareness and help reduce perceived risks, while brand trust and perceived product quality strengthen consumers' confidence in products. Price appears to be evaluated together with perceived quality and not an isolated factor.

However, most studies were based on Asian countries where exposure to Korean skincare culture and products is higher. Therefore, the applicability of these findings to Irish consumers are limited, highlighting the need for research within the Irish context.

2.5 Identification of the Research Gap

While the existing literature provides valuable insights regarding factors influencing Korean skincare purchase intention, most studies found have been conducted in Asian markets, such as Indonesia, Malaysia and Vietnam, where consumers have more exposure to Korean popular culture due to its geographical proximity. These insights may not fully be applied to the Irish market, as K-Beauty is a more recent phenomenon and consumer familiarity with Korean skincare formulations and routines maybe slightly lower. Limited research examines the purchase intention for Korean skincare products among Irish consumers. Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by exploring factors such as social media and eWOM, brand trust, perceived product quality, and price sensitivity and value for money on purchase intention among consumers in Ireland.

2.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter reviewed the literature related to purchasing intention towards Korean skincare products. Social media, brand trust, perceived product quality and price sensitivity were identified as potential factors influencing purchase intention. The chapter also highlighted the gap in the literature regarding Irish consumers, which is the gap this study seeks to address. The following chapter presents the research methodology applied in the study.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the methodological approach used to investigate the factors influencing purchase intention of Korean skincare products among Irish consumers. The main research question of this study is: “What factors influence purchase intention of Korean skincare products among Irish consumers?”. To address this question, the study focuses on four themes: social media, influencers and online reviews; brand trust and credibility, perceived product quality; and price sensitivity and value for money.

A quantitative survey approach was used for this study. This is appropriate for the research because it aims to measure to what extent each of these factors influence purchase intention. The survey uses Likert-scale rating questions that allows asks respondents how strongly they agree or disagree with a series of statements (Sanders, et al., 2023). For this study, a five-point scale was used.

This chapter presents the research methodology adopted in the study, including the research philosophy, research design, data collection methods, sampling strategy and ethical considerations.

3.2 Research Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge (Sanders, et al., 2023). A research philosophy will guide how the research is conducted, how data is collected, analysed and interpreted.

This research adopts the philosophy of positivism. The nature of reality is real, external and independent. Epistemologically, positivism is derived scientific method from observable and measurable facts to identify generalisations and causal explanations (Sanders, et al., 2023). Typically, methods are deductive, structured and quantitative.

This philosophy is appropriate for the study because it seeks to measure and quantify factors influencing purchase intention of Korean skincare products among Irish consumers. Positivism is useful to this study as limited research explored this question in the Irish context. Producing measurable, generalised findings would provide a foundation for future in-depth qualitative research. The survey used a structured Likert-scale that allows for measurable data to be collected and analysed statistically, which will lead to a causal explanation.

3.3 Research Approach

This study uses a deductive research approach. It started with ideas and themes taken from existing literature review and then moved to collect data to compare the results. The themes found on literature review were, social media and influencers, brand trust, product quality, and price sensitivity. Considering these themes, the survey was build trying to test whether these themes affect purchase intention among Irish consumers. This approach aligns with the positivist philosophy.

3.4 Research Design and Methodological Strategy

This research uses a quantitative research design, focusing on collecting numerical data. An online survey using structured questionnaires was used as the method for data collection. As the research aims to identify factor that influence purchase intention towards skincare

products among Irish consumers, this method is more appropriate as it allows for the numerical data to be analysed later and to identify patterns.

The survey consisted of 21 questions which were divided into sections. The first section had five questions aiming to collect demographic information about age, gender, and general skincare habits, such as purchasing frequency. The remaining sections were organised around the research themes using a five-point Likert-scale, where respondents were asked to rate their level of agreement from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). Questions 6 to 9 measured social media, influencer and online reviews. Questions 10 to 12 referred to brand trust. Questions 13 to 15 referred to perceived product quality. Questions 16 to 19 were about price sensitivity and value for money. Finally, the survey ended with questions 20 and 21 about purchase intention and recommendation.

3.5 Data Collection Methods

The data collection method used was a survey created on Microsoft Forms and distributed online and in person. It was shared through social media groups, mainly on Facebook, targeting groups of residents in Ireland. It was also distributed in person to colleagues at work, particularly targeting those under the age of 30, to gather more data within this target group. The survey was open to answer for a period of 14 days, from 16th of April to 30th of April 2026, collected 107 valid responses. All respondents were informed about the purpose of the survey and were asked for consent and to confirm that they were at least 18 years old and resident in Ireland, they were also informed that participation is anonymous and voluntary. The online survey was chosen because it was easier to share and to collect a variety of answers.

3.6 Sampling Strategy

The target population for this study was Irish consumers who know or use Korean skincare products. Initially, the target was 18-30 years, but due to difficulties to reach younger respondents and with supervisor approval, it was changed to allow older respondents answers to be considered for the study. A non-probability convenience sampling method was used. This is due to the respondents being selected from specific Facebook groups and from colleagues at work and college selected on relevance or accessibility to the research (Sanders, et al., 2023).

A total of 107 valid responses were collected. Regarding demographics, the age group were the following: 13 respondents (12%) were aged 18-21, 23 respondents (21%) were aged 22-25, 30 respondents (28%) were aged 26-30 and, 41 respondents (38%) were over 30. In terms of gender, 92 respondents (86%) identified as women, 14 respondents (13%) identified as men, and 1 respondent preferred not to say.

3.7 Data Analysis Methods

The data collected through the survey was analysed using descriptive analysis with the aim to identify trends, patterns and level of agreement in respondents' answers. The responses were exported from Microsoft Forms to Microsoft Excel. For analysis of the survey, Likert-scale answers were converted into numerical values, where Strongly Disagree=1, Disagree=2, Neither agree nor disagree=3, Agree=4, Strongly Agree=5. Stacked bar charts were created to visually present the distribution of the responses, while tables and percentages were used to summarise responses. In addition, mean scores were calculated for each statement to identify levels of agreements among respondents.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical research standards for data collection. Ethical approval was granted by the supervisor before the collection of data started. Before the start of the survey, respondents were presented with a description of the purpose of the survey, that participation was voluntary and anonymous, and that the responses would be used for academic purposes only. Additionally, to proceed with the survey, respondents were required to confirm that they were at least 18 years old, currently resident in Ireland, and that they agree to participate voluntarily. All 107 respondents confirmed to this. The survey was fully anonymous, meaning no identifiable information was collected. Respondents were also informed that they could withdraw from the survey at any time. The data is stored digitally and secured, only accessible by the research and will only be used for this Applied Project.

3.9 Reliability and Validity

Reliability for the research means that the data collection and analysis return consistent results, while validity means that the results concerns that the findings are measuring what it is intended to measure (Sanders, et al., 2023).

To support reliability, the survey used the 5-point Likert-scale, all respondents were asked the same questions to indicate how strongly they agree or disagree with a statement, ensuring consistency across responses. For validity, the survey questions were aligned with the four themes of the literature review, divided into four different sections in the survey, to ensure that the data collected was relevant to the research.

3.10 Limitations of the Methodology

There were a few limitations to the research methodology. First, the convenience sampling, which happened due to the survey being shared on Facebook group of residents in Ireland, and with colleagues at work and college, although the survey tried to reach a variety of respondents from different background and ages, the results may not represent in full the Irish consumers. Second, the Likert-scale statements in the survey were all positive, whereas Sanders et al. (2023) recommends including both positive and negative statements, so respondents read it more carefully and think before choosing their answer. Finally, the survey distributed on Facebook attracted older respondents, 38% of respondents were over 30 years old, but there was not an age bracket as it does with the younger age groups: 18-21, 22-25, 26-30. This means that it is not possible to know the exact age distribution from the older respondents.

3.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the research methodology used in this study. A positivist philosophy and deductive research approach was applied, which resulted in a quantitative survey design. An online survey with 21 questions was designed, including five demographic questions and sixteen 5-point Likert-scale statements, which was distributed to Irish consumers for a period of 14 days, resulting in 107 valid responses collected. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics with charts and tables. Furthermore, ethical approval was granted before the distribution of the survey and ethical considerations included consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation. The reliability and validity of the study were supported by the structured survey aligned with the four research themes. However, the study presented some limitations, which includes the convenience sampling, absence of negative

Likert-scale statements and limitation regarding the distribution of older respondents. The next chapter will present the data analysis and findings.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the primary research conducted for this Applied Project. Data collected through the online survey is analysed using descriptive statistics and presented according to each theme. Charts and tables are used to support the presentation of the findings.

4.2 Respondent Profile

A total of 107 valid responses were collected from the quantitative survey. All respondents confirmed that they were at least 18 years old, currently living in Ireland and agreed to participate voluntarily to the research. Table 1 below present the respondents demographics and Table 2 presents respondents skincare habits

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile

Category	Total	Percentage
Age		
18-21	13	12%
22-25	23	21%
26-30	30	28%
Over 30	41	38%
Gender		
Woman	92	86%
Man	14	13%
Prefer not to say	1	1%
Total	**107**	**100%**

Table 4.1: Demographic Profile

As shown on Table 4.1, the largest group of respondents were above 30 years old, representing 38% of the sample, followed by respondents ages 26-30 with 28%. The majority of respondents identified as female, accounting for 86% of the sample. This is consistent with skincare market trends, where women are primarily consumers of skincare products. However, due to the predominance of female respondents, the findings may be more representative of female skincare consumers than male skincare consumers.

Table 4.2: Skincare Habits

Category	Total	Percentage
Purchase Frequency		
Weekly	12	11%
Monthly	26	24%
Every few months	55	51%
Rarely	11	10%
Never	3	3%
Used Korean Skincare		
Yes	77	72%
No	30	28%
Total	**107**	**100%**

Table 4.2: Skincare Habits

As shown on Table 4.2, most respondents purchases skincare products every few months (51%), indicating consistent use and regular buying habits of skincare products. Outstandingly, 72% of respondents had used skincare products previously. This suggests that the collected sample is familiar with this product category, meaning that their responses are relevant to the research. This familiarity with Korean skincare products can strengthen the reliability of the findings.

4.3 Findings Organised by Research Theme

The following sections present the findings from the survey, arranged according to the four themes: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews; Brand Trust; Perceived Product Quality and Price Sensitivity and Value for Money, and additionally the results of Purchase Intention and Recommendations. For each theme, the responses are presented with a stacked bar chart and a table with the distribution of answers as percentages and the mean result. As the survey used a five-point Likert-scale, a mean score above 4.0 indicates strong agreement with the statement, while scores between 3.5 and 4.0 suggests positive moderate agreement with the statement among respondents.

4.3.1 Theme 1: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews

This section presents the survey findings related to the first research theme. The following statements were presented to respondents to measure the influence of social media, influencers and online reviews on purchase intention:

Q6: *Social media helps me discover Korean skincare products.*

Q7: *Recommendations from beauty influencers increase my interest in Korean skincare products.*

Q8: *I usually search for Korean skincare content online before purchasing a product.*

Q9: *Online reviews influence my decision to buy Korean skincare products.*

Figure 4.1: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews

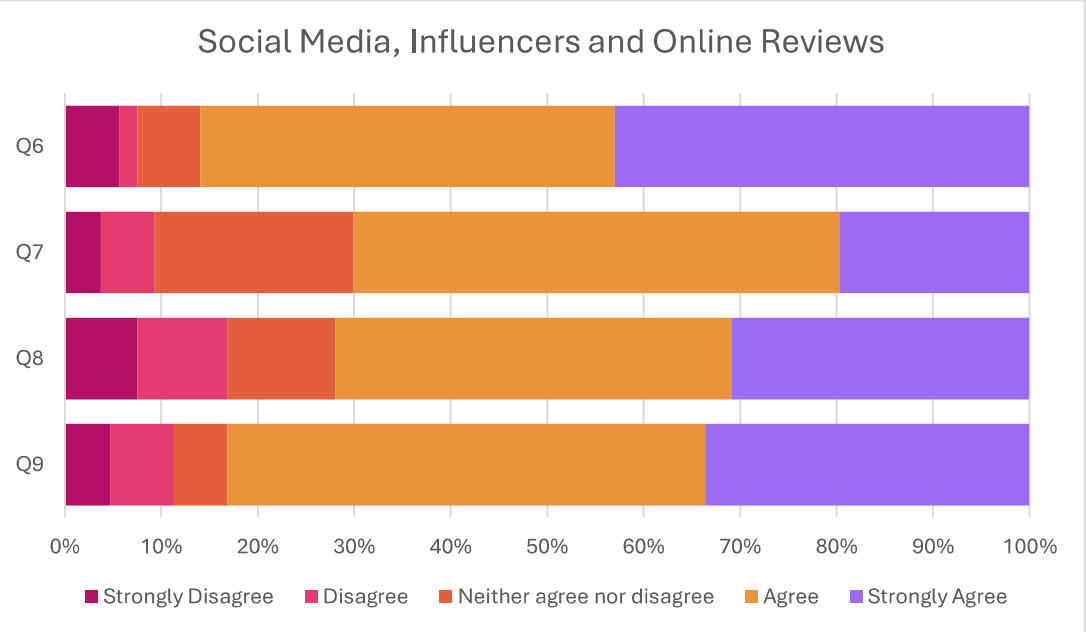


Figure 4.1: Social Media, Influencer and Online Reviews

Table 4.3: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
Q6: Social media	5.6%	1.9%	6.5%	43%	43%	4.16
Q7: Influencers	3.7%	5.6%	20.6%	50.5%	19.6%	3.77
Q8: Online search	7.5%	9.3%	11.2%	41.1%	30.8%	3.79
Q9: Online reviews	4.7%	6.5%	5.6%	49.5%	33.6%	4.01

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither agree nor disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 4.3: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews

The findings presented in Figure 4.1 and Table 4.3 suggests that social media has a significant impact on influencing Irish consumers' purchase intention of Korean skincare products. Q6 had the highest mean (4.16), with 86% of respondents agreeing that social media helps them discover Korean skincare products, which suggests that social media platforms are a primary

channel for consumers to discover Korean skincare products. Furthermore, online reviews (Q9), also had a high mean (4.01), with 83.1% of respondents agreeing that online reviews influence their decision to buy a Korean skincare product, suggesting that electronic word-of-mouth is an important factor for consumers in their purchase decision process. Online search (Q8) had a mean of 3.79 with 71.9% of respondents agreeing that they research about Korean skincare content before purchasing. However, influencers recommendations (Q7), had the lowest mean (3.79), with 70.1% of respondents agreeing that influencers increase their interest in Korean skincare products, suggesting that while respondents use social media to discover Korean skincare products, they are more likely to be influenced by content that they search and online reviews, rather than recommendations from beauty influencers.

4.3.2 Theme 2: Brand Trust

This section presents the survey findings related to the second research theme. The following statements were presented to respondents to measure the influence of brand trust on purchase intention:

Q10: *I trust Korean skincare brands have a good reputation.*

Q11: *I am more likely to buy Korean skincare products from brands I consider reliable.*

Q12: *I trust Korean skincare brands that provide clear product information.*

Figure 4.2: Brand Trust

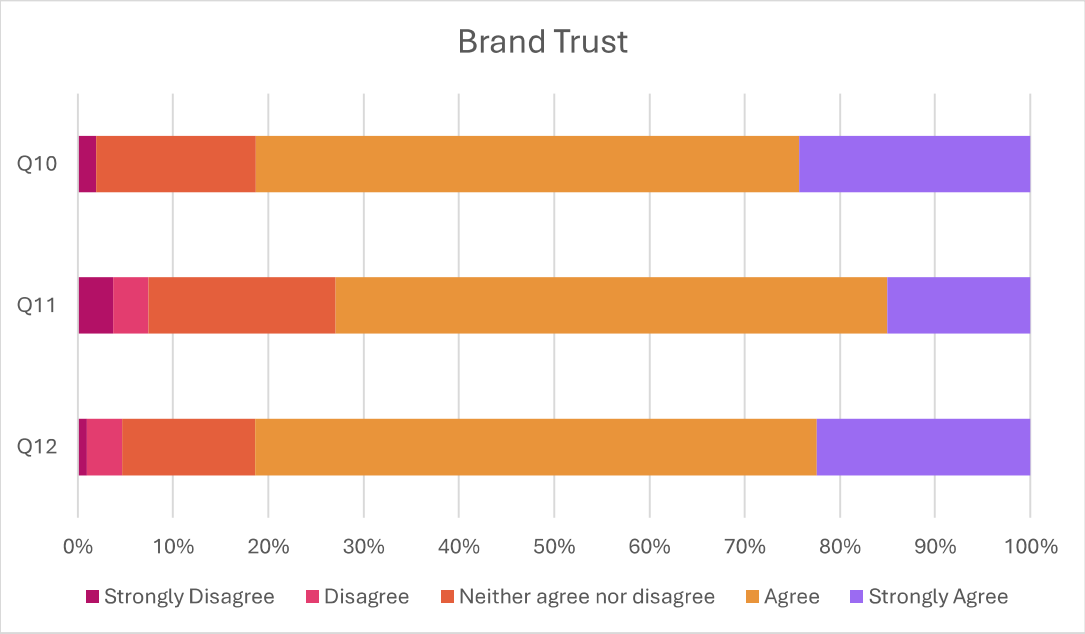


Figure 4.2: Brand Trust

Table 4.4: Brand Trust

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
Q10: Reputation	1.9%	-	16.8%	57%	24.3%	4.02
Q11: Reliability	3.7%	3.7%	19.6%	57.9%	15%	3.77
Q12: Information	0.9%	3.7%	14%	58.9%	22.4%	3.98

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither agree nor disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 4.4: Brand Trust

The findings presented in Figure 4.2 and Table 4.4 suggest that brand trust is an important role in influencing Irish consumers' purchase intention of Korean skincare products. Q10 had the highest mean (4.02), with 81.3% of respondents agreeing that they trust Korean skincare to have a good reputation, which suggests that Korean skincare brands have a positive

reputation among Irish consumers. Q12 also had a high mean score (3.98), with 81.3% of respondents agreeing that they trust Korean skincare brands that provide clear product information, suggesting that brands that provide clear information about products help build consumer trust. Q11 recorded a mean of 3.77, with 72.9% of respondents agreeing they are more likely to buy from brands they consider reliable, which highlights that reliability can be an important factor for purchase intention. Together, Q10 and Q11 suggest that perceived reputation has a stronger role in influencing purchase intention than reliability.

Overall, the findings from these statements indicate a consistently positive level of brand trust towards Korean skincare products among Irish consumers. This can be due to the global popularity and brand visibility of Korean skincare brands.

4.3.3 Theme 3: Perceived Product Quality

This section presents the survey findings related to the third research theme. The following statements were presented to respondents to measure the influence of perceived product quality on purchase intention:

Q13: *I believe Korean skincare products are high quality.*

Q14: *I believe Korean skincare products are effective.*

Q15: *I believe Korean skincare products have better formulations.*

Figure 4.3: Perceived Product Quality

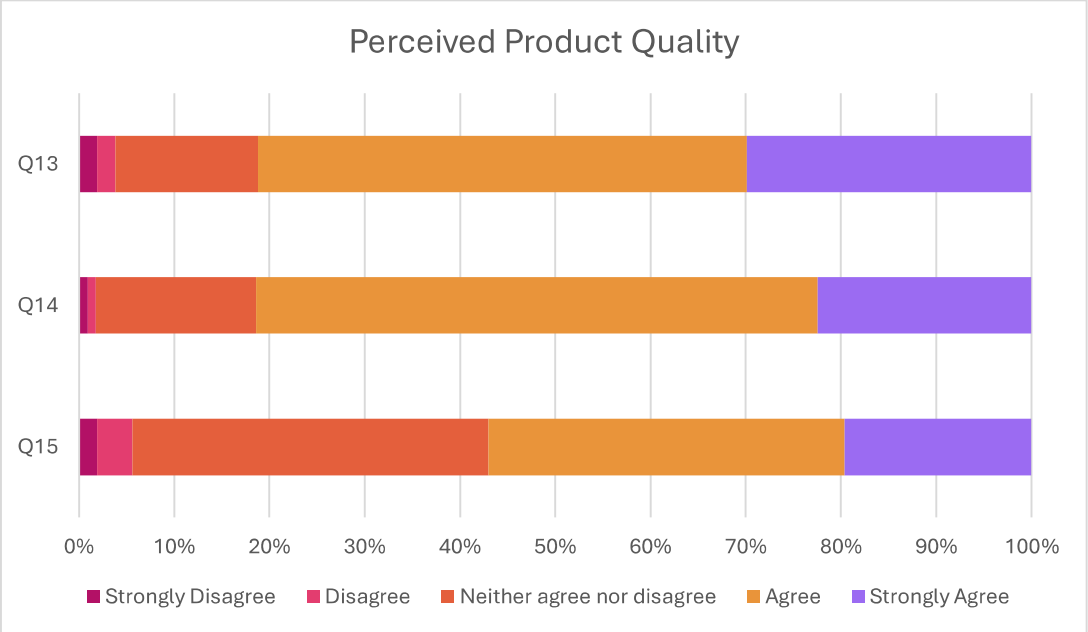


Figure 4.3: Perceived Product Quality

Table 4.5: Perceived Product Quality

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
Q13: High quality	1.9%	1.9%	15%	51.4%	29.9%	4.06
Q14: Effective	0.9%	0.9%	16.8%	58.9%	22.4%	4.01
Q15: Formulations	1.9%	3.7%	37.4%	37.4%	19.6%	3.69

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither agree nor disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 4.5: Perceived Product Quality

The findings presented in Figure 4.3 and Table 4.5 suggest that perceived product quality positively influences Irish consumers' purchase intention of Korean skincare products. Q13 had the highest mean (4.06), with 81.3% of respondents agreeing that they believe Korean skincare products are high quality, indicating that Irish consumers have a positive perception of K-beauty products. Q14 also had a high mean (4.01), with 81.3% of respondents agreeing

that Korean products are effective, suggesting that Korean skincare products offer good results. Q15 asked respondents about whether Korean skincare products offer better formulations, to which only 57% of respondents agreed and a mean of 3.69. The high neutral response rate (37.4%) may suggest that while respondents perceive Korean skincare as high quality and effective, they are less certain regarding product formulations, possibly due to the "unconventional" skincare ingredients.

Overall, the findings indicate a consistent positive perception of Korean skincare products quality among Irish consumers, which is supported by the literature suggesting that perceived quality is a significant factor of purchase intention.

4.3.4 Theme 4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money

This section presents the survey findings related to the fourth research theme. The following statements were presented to respondents to measure the influence of price sensitivity and value for money on purchase intention:

Q16: *Price affects my decision to buy Korean skincare products.*

Q17: *I believe Korean skincare products offer good value for money.*

Q18: *I compare prices before buying Korean skincare products.*

Q19: *I am willing to pay more for Korean skincare products if I believe they are worth the price.*

Figure 4.4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money

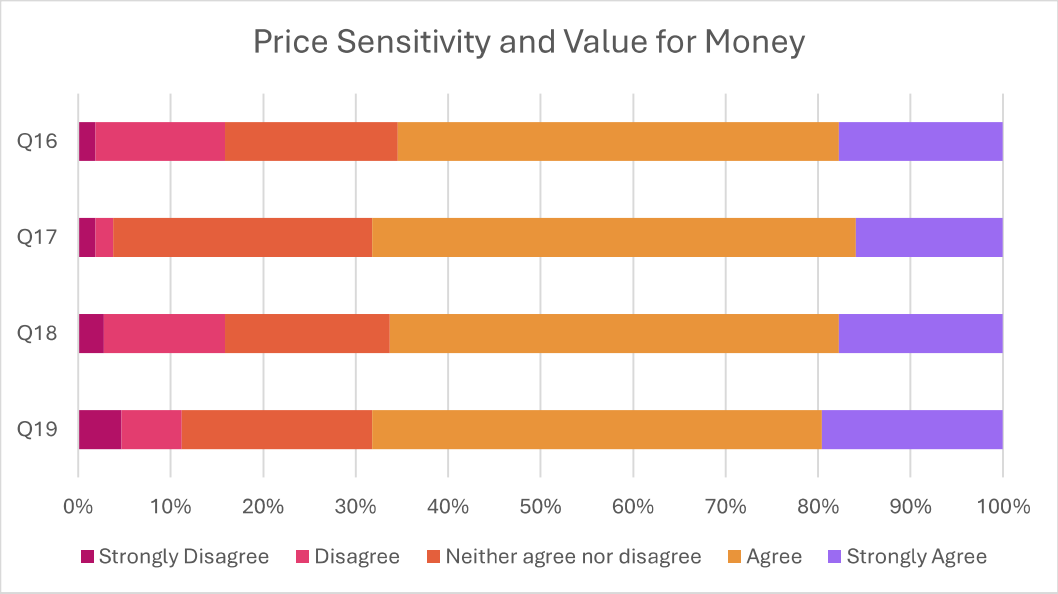


Figure 4.4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money

Table 4.6: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
Q16: Price affect	1.9%	14%	18.7%	47.7%	17.8%	3.65
Q17: Good value	1.9%	1.9%	28%	52.3%	15.9%	3.79
Q18: Compare price	2.8%	13.1%	17.8%	48.6%	17.8%	3.65
Q19: Willingness	4.7%	6.5%	20.6%	48.6%	19.6%	3.72

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither agree nor disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 4.6: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money

The findings from Figure 4.4 and Table 4.6 suggest that price sensitivity and value for money have a moderate influence on Irish consumers' purchase intention. The means ranged from 3.65 to 3.79. Q17 had the highest mean (3.79), with 68.2% of respondents agreeing that Korean skincare products offer good value for money, suggesting that Irish

consumers perceive Koreans skincare products as priced reasonably compared to its quality. Q16 and Q18, recorded a mean of 3.65, indicating that these factors are less influential for consumer behaviour for Korean skincare consumers. Q19 recorded a mean of 3.72, with 68.2% of respondents being willing to pay more if they believe a product is worth the price, suggesting that the price alone is not important for purchase decisions of Korean skincare products.

Overall, the findings suggests that price is not a dominant factor for Irish consumers when purchasing Korean skincare products. The low mean scores compared to the previous themes suggests that Irish consumers are more influenced by social media, brand trust and product quality rather than price sensitivity.

4.3.5 Purchase Intention and Recommendations

This section presents the survey findings related to the purchase intention and recommendations. The following statements were presented to respondents to measure their intention to buy Korean skincare products and to recommend it to others.

Q20: *I intend to purchase Korean skincare products in the future.*

Q21: *I would recommend Korean skincare products to others.*

Figure 4.5 Purchase Intention and Recommendation

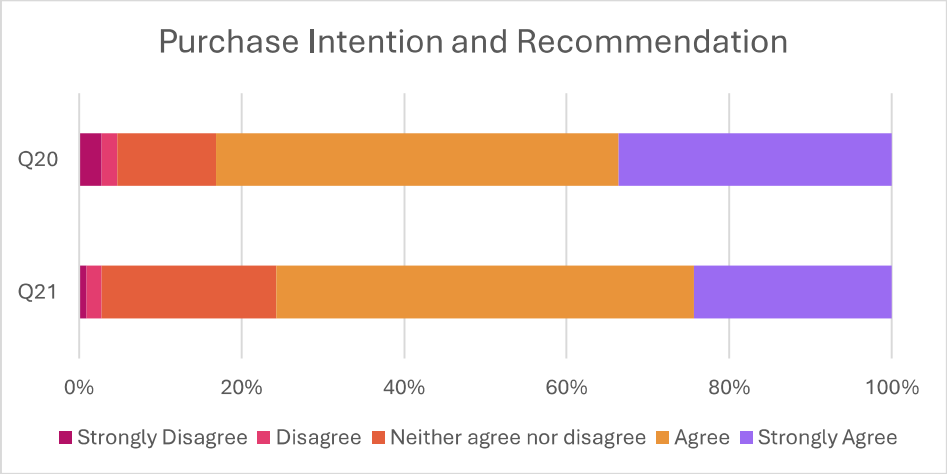


Figure 4.5: Purchase Intention and Recommendation

Table 4.7: Purchase Intention and Recommendation

Statement	SD (%)	D (%)	N (%)	A (%)	SA (%)	Mean
Q20: Intention	2.8%	1.9%	12.1%	49.5%	33.6%	4.09
Q21: Recommend	0.9%	1.9%	21.5%	51.4%	24.3%	3.96

SD = Strongly Disagree, D = Disagree, N = Neither agree nor disagree, A = Agree, SA = Strongly Agree

Table 4.7: Purchase Intention and Recommendation

The findings from Figure 4.5 and Table 4.7 indicate a strong positive purchase intention of Korean skincare products by respondents. Q20 recorded a mean of 4.09, with 83.1% or respondents agreeing they intend to purchase Korean skincare products in the future. Q21 recorded a mean of 3.96, with 75.7% of respondents agreeing they would recommend Korean skincare products to others.

Overall, the findings suggest that Irish consumers have a strong purchase intention towards Korean skincare products and would recommend products to others.

4.4 Summary of Key Findings

Overall, the findings suggest that social media, brand trust and perceived product quality are stronger influences for respondents' purchase intention towards Korean skincare products, while price sensitivity is less influential.

The findings also suggest a strong intention among respondents to purchase and recommend Korean skincare products. The following chapter will discuss the results in relation to the literature review.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The aim is to interpret the primary research findings in relation to the research question and examine the factors influencing purchase intention towards Korean skincare products among respondents.

5.2 Discussion of Findings by Research Objective or Theme

5.2.1 Discussion of Theme 1: Social Media, Influencer and Online Reviews

The findings from this study suggests that social media is an important factor influencing how respondents discover and evaluate Korean skincare products. Social media helps respondents discover Korean skincare products (Q6=4.16). This result is consistent with Santoso et al. (2024) study, that found that social media had a significant influence on consumers' purchase intention for Korean skincare products among Indonesian university students. This may be explained by the implications of electronic word-of-mouth on consumer behaviour identified by Huete-Alcocer (2017). Huete-Alcocer (2017) notes that eWOM has become one of the most influential informal media among consumers. Despite the negative impact on credibility, due to the anonymity between communicator and receiver, the diffusion speed and accessibility of online messages means that consumers have easy access to reviews quickly and at any time. Furthermore, consumers ultimately turn to online media to corroborate information they have received previously (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). For the Irish context, the limited presence of Korean skincare means that social media may be the primary point of exposure

of Irish consumers to Korean skincare products. This is an important implication for Korean skincare brands entering the Irish market: a strong social media presence may be fundamental to build brand awareness and create purchase intention among Irish consumers.

Despite the strong influence of social media, influencers recommendations had a lower mean score (Q7=3.77). This finding is important, as it shows that while respondents are actively using social media and searching Korean skincare content, they are less likely to be influenced by influencers recommendations in their purchase intention. This partially contradicts the findings from Djafarova and Rushworth (2017) and Macheka et al. (2024), where influencer positively influenced purchase intention for beauty and skincare products. However, a possible explanation for the lower score can be hypothesized from Lou and Yuan (2019) findings, the study found that when followers are aware of an influencers' financial motivation to promote products, this can negatively affect purchase intention. This suggests that organic content and online reviews are more effective to Irish consumers than influencers recommendations. Additionally, the findings from the previous studies suggest that credibility and authenticity of influencers may be more important than the recommendations alone, the studies found that non-traditional influencers are regarded as more credible and relatable, while informative content was more influential (Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Lou & Yuan, 2019). This suggests that Korean skincare brands may achieve better results by selecting with credible and informative content creators, rather than high follower count creators.

Online reviews appeared as a strong influence, with Q9 recording a mean of 4.01 and 83% agreement that online reviews influence purchase decision. This suggests respondents are heavily influenced by online reviews, which is consistent with Macheka et al. (2024) and

Komara and Edward (2023), both found that online reviews had a positive influence on purchase intention for beauty and skincare products. Ismagilova et al. (2020) identified that eWOM credibility and emotional trust are more likely to qualify as best predictors on intention to buy. This is relevant for the Irish context, as consumers have limited experience with Korean skincare products, routine and philosophy, so credible reviews help reduce the perceived risk before purchasing. Furthermore, Fitriyana et al. (2025) found that online reviews had a direct and significant impact on brand loyalty suggesting that their influence is crucial for brands to foster long-term consumer relationships.

Overall, the findings suggest that social media, influencers and online reviews contribute to purchase intention of Korean skincare products, but in different ways. Social media and online reviews appeared as strong factors influencing purchase intention of Korean skincare products, while influencers recommendations appeared as less important to respondents. This indicates that consumers may place more importance to the credibility and authenticity of the information than on promotional endorsements. The findings support that social media primarily influences purchasing intention of Korean skincare products by creating awareness, spreading information and providing evaluation of consumers reviews. For Korean skincare brands entering the Irish market, investing in building trust through informative content and positive online reviews may be more effective than relying only on influencers.

5.2.2 Discussion of Theme 2: Brand Trust

The findings indicate that brand trust is a significant factor influencing respondents purchase intention towards Korean skincare products. Q10 recorded a high mean of 4.02 and 83%

agreement that Korean skincare brands have good reputation. This is consistent with Delgado-Ballester's (2004) concept of brand reliability, suggesting that consumers are more likely to trust brands that accomplished its value promise. These results suggests that respondents perceive brands are reliable and credible, which can increase their confidence in Korean products.

Similarly, Q12 recorded a mean of 3.98, and 81.3% of respondents agreeing they trust brand that provide clear information. This is supported by Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) findings that brand trust strengthens consumer loyalty and positively influence purchase intention. The implications for the skincare industry are that when consumers have concerns regarding ingredients, effectiveness and skin reactions, clear and transparent product information can help building consumer trust and reduce perceived risks related to allergies and product safety. Q11 recorded a mean of 3.77, with 72.9% of respondents agreeing they are more likely to purchase from brands they consider reliable, further contributing to brand trust. Good reputation, transparency and reliability are all factors that positively contribute to brand trust (Delgado-Ballester, 2004; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). However, the slightly lower mean for reliability may suggests that respondents put more importance on brands reputation and transparency than on reliability when evaluating Korean skincare brands. This could be explained because reliability is assessed after a purchase and direct use of a product, while reputation and transparency can be evaluated through social media and online reviews.

The findings are also consistent with Hindawarti et al. (2022), brand trust had positive effect on purchase intention in online skincare channels, and higher levels of brand trust and stronger eWOM contributed to increased purchase intention. This relationship can be observed in the presented research, where respondents reported high levels of agreement

with the influence of social media (Q6=4.16) and online reviews (Q9=4.01). This suggests that brand trust and eWOM can work together to strengthen Irish consumers' confidence in Korean skincare products.

Furthermore, Ekklesia and Kesumahati (2023) found that brand image positively influences purchase intention and brand awareness contributes to stronger brand image. This could explain why respondents had higher level of trust towards Korean skincare brands despite the relatively recent presence in the Irish market. As discussed in Theme 1, social media and online reviews help with awareness of Korean skincare products. Fitriyana et al. (2025) found that social media marketing and online reviews both influences brand trust. However, the relationship between social media and brand loyalty was not significant, which suggests that social media is not sufficient to build long-term loyalty and trust can be supported by consistent performance (reliability) and transparency. This is aligned with Delgado-Ballester (2004) and Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001), which identified that trust is a key factor for consumer loyalty and repeat purchasing behaviour. Overall, the findings suggest that a strong brand image, clear product information and consistent performance contribute to respondents' trust, which can contribute to their confidence in purchasing intention towards Korean skincare products.

5.2.3 Discussion of Theme 3: Perceived Product Quality

The findings suggest that perceived product quality is a strong influence on respondents' purchase intention towards Korean skincare products. Q13 (mean 4.06) and Q14 (mean 4.01) both recorded an agreement of 83.1%, indicating that respondents believe Korean skincare products are high quality and effective. This is consistent with Madhavedi et al. (2025), who found that perceived product quality to be positive on purchase intention for cosmetic

skincare products. It also supports that high perceived quality reduces financial and performance risks. For Korean skincare products, this perception is beneficial because consumers can only fully evaluate a product after use. Pribadi et al. (2024) also identified product quality to be a dominant factor affecting purchasing decisions. Together, these findings support the view that perceived product quality is an important factor influencing Irish consumers' purchasing intention towards Korean skincare products.

However, Q15, had a high neutral response 37.4% and a lower mean of 3.69. This suggests that while respondents perceive Korean skincare positively, they are less confident about product formulation. This can be explained by the "unconventional" ingredients highlighted by Nguyen et al. (2020), that are heavily market in Asian markets but are relatively new to Western consumers. Moreover, Le et al. (2020) suggests that consumers require sufficient information about product specifications, features and origin before making purchasing decision. This supports that Irish consumers may need clear and more accessible information about Korean skincare formulations to strengthen their confidence with the category.

Furthermore, Oktavia and Mariam (2024) findings that social media marketing had a significant positive influence on perceived quality among skincare users, suggests that by optimising digital content can strengthen quality perception. This is important for the Irish context: social media create awareness of Korean skincare products, consumers actively search for skincare content and read online reviews, so targeting content explaining Korean skincare product formulations and its effectiveness can reduce the uncertainty regarding formulations. This connection between Theme 1 and Theme 3 highlights that these factors interact to influence purchase intention towards Korean skincare among Irish consumers.

5.2.4 Discussion of Theme 4: Price Sensitivity and Value for Money

The findings indicate that price sensitivity has a moderate influence on respondents purchase intention towards Korean skincare products, with all statements recording means between 3.65 and 3.79. Levrini and Santos (2021) distinguishes between value consciousness and price consciousness. These findings suggests that respondents are more value conscious than price conscious, as Q17 recorded the highest mean (3.79), indicating that respondents perceive Korean skincare products to offer good value for money. This is supported by Q19 (3.79) where respondents indicated they are willing to pay more if they believe the product is worth the price, which aligns with Levrini and Santos's (2021) concept of value consciousness. It can also be suggested that the strong quality perception and brand trust found int Themes 2 and 3 help reduce the influence of price in purchase intention of respondents.

The moderate influence of price in this study is similarly with other studies, Othman et al. (2022) found that price consciousness had no significant effect in purchase intention of Korean skincare products. Similarly, Foo et al. (2025) found that price had no significance on online skincare purchase intention, which could suggest that the easily and accessible online reviews help reducing risk for consumers' decision-making (Huete-Alcocer, 2017). However, these findings contrast with Mud et al. (2020) and Wei Kang et al. (2024) who identified price as a significant factor influencing purchase intention. These differences across studies suggest that price sensitivity may depend on other factors, such as consumer familiarity, information, purchasing power, for example. Overall, the findings suggest that price is not a major consideration for respondents. Positive perceptions of product quality, brand trust and online

reviews may contribute to reduce price sensitivity, leaving respondents to focus more on the value for money than the price.

5.3 Integration of Findings

Together, the findings suggests that purchase intention towards Korean skincare products among Irish consumers is driven by a combination of multiple interacting factors rather than a single influence. The findings all work together, social media and online reviews create awareness and reduce perceived risks, while brand trust provides customers with confidence to purchase, especially in a market where Korean skincare exposure is recent. Perceived product quality supports the decision, while price is not an important factor, this suggests that respondents are willing to pay more for products that they perceive as high quality and effective. This is consistent with the literature but also reflect some peculiarities at a market where exposure to Korean skincare products is more recent. On one hand, the uncertainty about products formulations can present a barrier. On the other hand, the global popularity and the reputation built along the years in product innovation helps reduce this barrier and maintain a strong purchase intention overall.

5.4 Implications of the Findings

Academic Implications

Academically, this study has contributed to the existing literature by providing evidence of the factors that influence purchasing intention towards Korean skincare among Irish consumers. It broadly supports the relevance of social media, brand trust and perceived quality in the Irish

context, while identifying formulation uncertainty and reduced role of influencers recommendations for purchase intention.

Marketing Strategy Implications

The findings suggest that Korean skincare brands entering the Irish market should prioritise an authentic social media presence and encourage organic reviews, as these are strongest factors influencing purchase intention. In terms of digital marketing, brands may have better results partnering with smaller but credible creators, rather than high-follower influencers. The informative content regarding formulations and ingredients from credible influencers may give consumers more confidence when searching for Korean skincare products.

For product positioning, brands should focus on quality and effectiveness, rather than price, as perceived product quality and brand trust were stronger factors influencing purchase intention, while price sensitivity had a moderate influence. Regarding branding strategies, transparency is essential, being transparent about ingredients and product safety may strengthen Irish consumers' trust in Korean skincare products.

5.5 Link to Research Gap

The study addressed the research gap presented in the literature: the limited research regarding purchasing intention towards Korean skincare in the Irish context. The findings support what has been identified in Asian market studies, such as social media, brand trust and perceived product quality, are also relevant to Irish consumers. However, the lower influence from influencers recommendations and confidence regarding formulations provides a distinct insight for the Korean skincare literature.

5.6 Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the findings from Chapter 4 related to the literature review presented in Chapter 2. Social media and online reviews appeared as strong factors influencing purchase intention, with influencer recommendations having less impact. Brand trust and perceived product quality also appeared as significant factors influencing purchasing intention. Price sensitivity had a moderate influence, while respondents demonstrate they are more value conscious. Overall, the findings address the research gap and can offer academic and marketing implications. The following chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations of the study. The conclusions are taken from the primary research presented in Chapter 4 and the discussion in Chapter 5, to address the main research question of this study: what factor influence purchase intention towards Korean skincare products among Irish consumers?

6.2 Summary of the Research

The study investigated the factors influencing purchase intention towards Korean skincare products among Irish consumers. Despite the global expansion and popularity of K-beauty industry, limited research had explored the Irish market context, representing a clear gap in the literature. To address this gap, a quantitative survey was used and collected 107 valid responses from consumers resident in Ireland. The survey was structured around the four themes: Social Media, Influencers and Online Reviews; Brand Trust; Perceived Product Quality; and Price Sensitivity and Value for Money. Data was analysed using descriptive statistics, including charts, tables and mean scores to analyse the data and identify levels of agreement of respondents.

6.3 Summary of Key Findings

Social media and online reviews appeared as strong factors influencing respondents' purchase intention towards Korean skincare products, suggesting that digital content and peer-reviewed information are primary drivers for awareness and purchase intention. Influencer

recommendations, while presented a positive influence, was less influential, indicating that respondents may value credibility and authenticity than promotional endorsements.

Perceived product quality and brand trust were strong factors among respondents, presenting positive perceptions regarding Korean skincare quality, effectiveness and brand reputation. However, there is a clear uncertainty regarding Korean skincare formulations among respondents, suggesting a knowledge barrier regarding Korean skincare products that may limit purchase intention.

Price sensitivity was the weakest factor, suggesting respondents are more value-conscious than price-conscious, evaluating the price of a product relative to the quality received. Purchase intention and willingness to recommend had strong results, confirming positive consumer attitude towards Korean skincare products among the respondents.

6.4 Contribution of the Study

Academic Contribution

The study contributes to the Korean skincare literature by examining the factors influencing purchase intention towards Korean skincare products in the Irish context, an area that has limited research available. Most existing studies have been conducted in Asian markets, where geographic and cultural proximity to South Korea allows for a better familiarity with Korean skincare products and brands. The findings support existing research regarding social media, eWOM and brand trust as strong factors influencing purchase intention, while also identifying that formulation may be a barrier for purchase intention among Irish consumers as they had lower exposure to “unconventional” ingredients. This highlights a distinct positioning of the Irish market in the Korean skincare literature.

Practical Contribution

The findings of this study can provide useful insights for Korean skincare brands entering the Irish market. By identifying social media and online reviews as important factors influencing purchase intention, brands have a better direction to where marketing expenditure should be directed. The findings also highlight that brand trust and product quality are important factors for Irish consumers, while price is less important. Considering this, brands can focus on communicating quality to build credibility, rather than focus on competing on price.

6.5 Practical Recommendations

Recommendation 1: Prioritise social media content and encourage online reviews

Social media and online reviews were identified as strong factors influencing purchase intention. Korean skincare brands should invest on engaging content and encourage organic consumer reviews on social media platform, such as Instagram, TikTok and Snapchat. This can help increase brand awareness and encourage purchase intention among Irish consumers.

Recommendation 2: Build brand trust

Brands should communicate clearly their values, mission, ingredients and quality procedures clearly to Irish consumers, as brand trust was identified as an important factor influencing purchase decision among Irish consumers. This could be achieved by highlighting product certifications, such as safety testing, cruelty-free and vegan certifications.

Recommendation 3: Educate consumers about Korean skincare formulations

Consumers are uncertain about Korean skincare formulations. Brands could invest in content explaining the variety of ingredients available in Korean skincare products and their safety. This could lead consumers to search for specific products that contain actives that they know and are willing to try.

Recommendation 4: Create pop-up shop experiences for education and trial

To increase awareness and engagement with Korean skincare products, brands could create pop-up shop experiences in stores. Irish consumers would have the opportunity to test products and learn about ingredients and formulations direct from the brand. Additionally, a pop-up store would encourage consumers to share content on social media, increasing eWOM. Furthermore, it would allow for a unique experience, distribution of free samples and conversion.

6.6 Limitations of the Research

The research had some limitations. First, the sample of 107 respondents was obtained through convenience, which limits the applicability of the research to the whole Irish population. The Likert-scale statements from the survey were all positively worded, where some questions such as "Q16: *Price affects my decision to buy Korean skincare products.",* would have benefited more from a negative statement as it would allow respondents to think more carefully about their answer.

6.7 Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could use a mixed-methods approach utilising structured surveys and in-depth interviews or focus group to provide deeper insights into Irish consumers' purchase

intentions towards Korean skincare products. It could include a better segmented age range and include more younger consumers in the research. Additionally, future research could explore specific platforms such as TikTok or Instagram to explore how they influence purchase intention of Irish consumers.

6.8 Final Conclusion

The study objective was to identify the key factors that influence purchase intention for Korean skincare products among Irish consumers, addressing the research gap found in the literature. The findings confirm that social media, online reviews, brand trust and perceived product quality all positively influenced respondents' purchase intention, while price sensitivity is more moderate. The findings were consistent with evidence from Asian market studies but showed that influencers recommendations were less influential and that uncertainty about product formulations can be a potential barrier among Irish consumers.

Overall, the findings suggest that Irish consumers are receptive towards Korean skincare products and give more importance to information, trust and value than price. The study contributes to the literature about purchase intention towards Korean skincare products in Ireland and provide evidence that may support the growth or the category in the Irish market.

References

Baek, K. j. & Lee, H.-J., 2019. *K-beauty's Status through Trade Network Analysis.* Las Vegas, ITAA.

Chaudhuri, A. & Holbrook, M. B., 2001. The Chain of Effects from Brand Trust and Brand Affect to Brand Performance: The Role of Brand Loyalty. *Journal of Marketing,* 65(2), pp. 81-93.

Delgado-Ballester, E., 2004. Applicability of a brand trust scale across product categories: A multigroup invariance analysis. *European Journal of Marketing,* 38(5-6), pp. 573-592.

Djafarova, E. & Rushworth, C., 2017. Exploring the credibility of online celebrities' Instagram profiles in influencing the purchase decisions of young female users. *Computers in Human Behavior,* Volume 68, pp. 1-7.

Ekklesia, E. & Kesumahati, E., 2023. Factors Influencing Purchase Intention of South Korean Cosmetics and Skincare. *Jurnal Administrasi dan Manajemen,* 13(1), pp. 17-28.

Evoke, 2025. *Dublin gets its first dedicated Korean Beauty skincare store in the city centre.* [Online]
Available at: https://evoke.ie/2025/07/15/style/beauty/korean-beauty-store-dublin-2
[Accessed 19 December 2025].

Fitriyana, N. A., Suryadi, N. & Hapsari, R. D., 2025. The Role of Social Media and Online Reviews in Building Brand Loyalty Through Trust. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Kesatuan,* 13(5), pp. 3324-3336.

Foo, W. H., Hasan, N. H. M. & Ibrahim, N. F., 2025. Beauty In The Digital Age: What Influences Women To Buy Skincare Online?. *International Journal of Entrepreneurship and Management Practices,* 8(31), pp. 237-256.

Goss.ie, 2025. *Glass Skin Goals: How K-Beauty is transforming Ireland's skincare scene.* [Online]
Available at: https://goss.ie/gossbeauty/glass-skin-goals-how-k-beauty-is-transforming-irelands-skincare-scene-441811
[Accessed 2026].

Hindarwati, E. N. et al., 2022. *Brand Trust and Electronic Word of Mouth in Skincare Product Online Channel.* Johor Bahru, Malaysia , IEOM Society International.

Huete-Alcocer, N., 2017. A Literature Review of Word of Mouth and Electronic Word of Mouth: Implications for Consumer Behavior. *Frontiers in Psychology,* Volume 8.

Irish Examiner, 2025. *Korean beauty brands go mainstream as TikTok trends fuel skincare sales surge.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.irishexaminer.com/business/companies/arid-41629555.html
[Accessed 20 April 2025].

Ismagilova, E., Slade, E. L., Rana, N. P. & Dwivedi, Y. K., 2020. The Effect of Electronic Word of Mouth Communications on Intention to Buy: A Meta-Analysis. *Information Systems Frontiers,* Volume 22, pp. 1203-1226.

Komara, E. & Erwand, D. N., 2023. The Effect of Online Consumer Review, Social Media Advertisement, and Influencer Endorsement on Purchase Intention. *Research of Economics and Business,* 1(2), pp. 76-85.

Landing International, 2024. *The Second Wave of K-Beauty THE COMPLETE PRIMER FOR K-BEAUTY IN RETAIL.* [Online]
Available at: https://welcome.landinginternational.com/second-wave-of-k-beauty-report-1
[Accessed 27 April 2026].

Le, T. A. et al., 2020. Factors affecting the choice of buying Korean cosmetics. *Management Science Letters,* 10(13), pp. 3097-3106.

Levrini, G. R. D. & Santos, M. J. d., 2021. The Influence of Price on Purchase Intentions: Comparative Study between Cognitive, Sensory, and Neurophysiological Experiments. *Behavioral Sciences,* 11(2).

Litvin, S. W., Goldsmith, R. E. & Pan, B., 2008. Electronic word-of-mouth in hospitality and tourism management. *Tourism Management,* 29(3), pp. 458-468.

Lou, C. & Yuan, S., 2019. Influencer Marketing: How Message Value and Credibility Affect Consumer Trust of Branded Content on Social Media. *Journal of Interactive Advertising,* 19(1), pp. 58-73.

Macheka, T., Quaye, E. S. & Ligaraba, N., 2024. The effect of online customer reviews and celebrity endorsement on young female consumers' purchase intentions. *Young Consumers: Insight and Ideas for Responsible Marketers,* 25(4), p. 462–482.

Madhavedi, S. et al., 2025. Assessing the role of perceived quality and brand elements in shaping Indian consumers' purchase intentions for cosmetic skincare products. *International Journal of Innovative Research and Scientific Studies,* 8(1), pp. 2634-2645.

McKinsey & Company, 2025. *The State of Fashion: Beauty, Volume 2.* [Online]
Available at: https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/state-of-beauty#/
[Accessed 19 December 2025].

MSLab, 2025. *K-Beauty: Why It Continues to Set the Course for Innovation.* [Online]
Available at: https://mscosmeticslab.com/kbeauty-technology-innovation/
[Accessed 19 December 2025].

Mud, N. N. N., Hairani, F., Ibrahim, A. N. & Kamaruddin, M., 2020. Factor Influencing Youn Female Purchase Intention Towards Local Cosmetics Product in Malaysia. *International Journal of Modern Trends in Social Sciences,* 3(11), pp. 01-12.

Nguyen, J. K., Masub, N. & Jagdeo, J., 2020. Bioactive ingredients in Korean cosmeceuticals: Trends and research evidence. *Journal of Cosmetic Dermatology,* 19(7), pp. 1555-1569.

Oktavia, K. N. & Mariam, S., 2024. Social Media Marketing, Brand Image, Brand Awareness, Perceived Quality And Purchase Intention In Skincare Product Users. *Jurnal Ilmiah Manajemen Kesatuan,* 12(5), pp. 1595-1612.

Othman, N. H. B., Hoo, W. C. & Cheng, A. Y., 2022. Factors Influencing Purchase Intention of Korean Skincare Products: Malaysian Gen-Y Females. *Wseas Transactions on Business and Economics,* Volume 19.

Pop, R.-A., Săplăcan, Z. & Alt, M.-A., 2020. Social Media Goes Green—The Impact of Social Media on Green Cosmetics Purchase Motivation and Intention. *Information,* 11(9).

Pribadi, A. A., H. & Rindha, K. P., 2024. Analisis Viral Marketing, Harga, dan Kualitas Produk Terhadap Keputusan Pembelian Skincare. *Jurnal Pendidikan Ekonomi dan Ilmu Ekonomi,* 1(2), pp. 85-91.

Sanders, M. N. K., Lewis, P. & Thornhill, A., 2023. *Research Methods for Business Students.* Ninth edition ed. Harlow, England: Pearson.

Santoso, A., Yuliarta, R. D., Safitri, U. R. & Anggorowati, L. S., 2024. Understanding the purchasing intentions of Korean skincare products among university students in Indonesia. *Jurnal Ekonomi dan Bisnis,* 27(2), pp. 51-80.

Wei Kang, Y. et al., 2024. Factors Influencing Purchase Intention of Facial Skincare amongst Malaysian Consumers. *Transnational Marketing Journal Transnational Marketing Journal,* 12(1), pp. 106-117.