

**DOES PRODUCT TYPE AFFECT BRAND LOYALTY AMONG DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS AND GENDER IDENTITIES?****ABSTRACT**

Brand loyalty is a crucial tool when it comes to the survival of a company, as most sales from businesses come from those who are repeat customers. Among current adult generations, the youngest, Millennials and Generation Z, have been identified in the existing literature as the least brand-loyal, and Baby Boomers and Generation X as the most. However, such descriptions could be misleading since different generations could prefer brands among some specific product categories but not others. Similar conclusions could be drawn for those of different gender identities since gender stereotypes could influence the types of products people with different gender identities prefer. The total sample size of this study consisted of 421 participants, with the median age being 52, and the gender identity breakdown being 52.7% male and 47.3% female. After analyzing the data from a 42-question survey asking participants about their brand loyalty for various product categories, results indicated that beauty products, such as makeup foundation and makeup concealer, and writing utensil products, such as pens and mechanical pencils, had the lowest overall means for brand preferences, and products such as cola, toothpaste, laundry detergent, deodorant, and mobile phone had the highest overall means. Concerning age, Generation Z and Millennials were almost perfectly in sync with brand product preferences. Baby Boomers appeared to have many significant differences from other generations in terms of brand preferences for certain products. These differences were often seen when comparing their responses with Millennials and Generation Z. Females preferred beauty and hygiene products, and males preferred technological products. Further research is needed to explore these results and answer future questions.

**Keywords:** *Brand Loyalty, Brand Preference, Product Preference, Gender Identity, Generation, Age Groups*

**INTRODUCTION**

The purchasing power of consumers can be viewed as one of the most important characteristics of a commercial company's survival. Both consumers and companies understand this very well. As a result, many marketing tactics are implemented and used by companies, of any size and niche, to attract and retain customers. Understanding the consumer base, what they want, and what they view as desirable is also important. Yet, marketing becomes more challenging as new generations become adults. As each new generation gets old enough to make its own financial decisions, members of older generations begin to die off. This indisputable dynamic introduces a completely new demographic that expresses new outlooks on life and ways of viewing the world, politics, and each other. As such, companies must know how to gain and retain new consumers. Overall, the goal is to ensure that the brand stays desirable enough so that consumers keep purchasing it. The way this is done is through the concepts of brand loyalty and product preferences. However, with the current diversity of age groups in the United States, it could be the case that each generation has different preferences regarding product categories and brands since individuals who grew up during different periods may focus on prioritizing different things. The same could be assumed for those of different gender identities as well since gender stereotypes could influence the types of products and brands men and women tend to prefer.

**WHAT IS BRAND LOYALTY?**

Even though attracting new customers is necessary, it is arguably more important for a company to retain its current customers since making consumers loyal to a brand ensures the survival of the company that owns said brand (Mellens et al., 1996). This concept is aptly known as brand loyalty. There are many ways to define and interpret the concept of brand loyalty. The definition that will be used here is from a 1996 article by Mellens, Dekimpe, and Steenkamp called "A Review of Brand-Loyalty Measures." The authors credit the formation of

this definition to authors Jacoby and Chestnut, who coined the definition in 1978. This definition states that brand loyalty is “the biased behavioral response expressed over time by some decision-making unit concerning one or more alternative brands” (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978, as cited in Mellens et al., 1996, p. 509).

### *Exhibiting Bias*

What this parameter of the Jacoby and Chestnut (1978) definition of brand loyalty entails is that there must be a systematic tendency to buy from a certain brand or certain group of brands. A decision-making unit’s (discussed in more detail below) choice should also follow a specific process (Mellens et al., 1996). A zero-order process means that each brand choice by a consumer is carried out within a certain probability “which is independent of the consumer’s past purchasing decisions” (Mellens et al., 1996, p. 509). Zero-order behavior is not part of the construct of brand loyalty, and

nothing that the consumer does or is exposed to alters the probability in any way (Massy et al., 1970). Zero-order behavior should not be considered a part of the construct of brand loyalty because doing so would imply that brand loyalty is not influenced by marketing of any kind, which is rarely accurate in the real world. It would also imply that a verbal statement of a preference towards a brand is enough to indicate brand loyalty when that is not true either. In reality, brand loyalty only entails the purchase of a brand (Mellens et al., 1996).

### *Having a Behavioral Response Rather Than an Attitudinal Response*

Behavioral responses refer to the consistent, physical actions of consumers, such as repeatedly buying the same brand of the same product. Attitudinal responses refer to the emotional connection to the brand’s product, such as trust in the quality of services. Most operational measures of brand loyalty can be



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classified as either behavioral or attitudinal (Mellens et al, 1996). Behavioral responses define brand loyalty in terms of the actual purchases of a brand that are observed over different periods. Attitudinal responses define brand loyalty by making brand loyalty distinguishable from repeat buying. Although both are important, the disadvantages of attitudinal responses involve them "not being a valid representation of reality, incidental, and more difficult to collect" than behavioral responses (Mellens et al., 1996, p. 512).

### *Expressed Over Time*

An incidental bias is a kind of bias that develops unintentionally, as it is done without a decision-making unit realizing that they are biased toward one brand over another. Incidental bias toward a brand does not guarantee brand loyalty since the process is dynamic. For example, someone who walks into a laundry detergent aisle specifically looking for the brand Gain is exhibiting intentional bias. Someone who walks into a laundry detergent aisle and happens to pick up Gain simply because it is cheaper than the others that are available at that time is exhibiting incidental bias. Because of this, consistency over certain periods is needed to truly establish whether an individual is loyal to a brand (Mellens et al., 1996). This means that it is not ideal to consider only the number of times someone has purchased the brand, but also the purchasing pattern over successive purchasing occasions.

### *A Decision-Making Unit Makes the Choice*

Decision-making unit could be either a person, a household(s), or a firm (Mellens et al., 1996). The decision-making unit does not have to be an actual purchaser of the product or brand, either. For example, in a household containing a nuclear family, one or both parents may be making the purchases while the other members of the household request for the specific products or brands to be purchased for them.

### *One or More Brands Are Selected Out of Numerous Other Brands*

Consumers can be loyal to more than one brand; such findings have been demonstrated by many different researchers (Mellens et al., 1996). This is necessarily true for goods that are low-involvement. Low-involvement brands are products that are purchased frequently by a consumer without much thought or effort, as they do not have a great impact on the

consumer's lifestyle (Monash Business School, 2023). An example would be if Coca-Cola is not available to a consumer, purchasing Pepsi or Dr. Pepper in its place would not be a difficult decision for that consumer.

One issue is that it is difficult to distinguish between being loyal to multiple brands and simply switching brands. Differences between the two are evaluated through whether the brand purchased is the only brand available, or if multiple brands other than the one(s) being purchased exist in that specific location (Mellens et al., 1996). The latter indicates brand loyalty.

### *Result of Psychological Processes*

Although Jacoby and Chestnut did not include the element of psychological processes in their definition, Mellens (et al., 1996) believed it was important. This is because no decision can be made without the aid of some psychological process.

Consumers do not always seek information about brands or products they buy; more information is still available through avenues such as advertising campaigns. This allows consumers to form certain beliefs about the brand or product being advertised (Mellens et al., 1996). Based on the beliefs accumulated by the possible consumers, this could allow them to evaluate the brands for themselves and develop a commitment to them over time.

### **WHY IS BRAND LOYALTY IMPORTANT?**

Brand loyalty is important to businesses, as it helps to establish a consumer base for the products being sold and used (Mellens et al., 1996). It is critical for the survival of a company to retain its current customers, as it gives them a competitive edge over companies that do not retain their current customer base (Mellens et al., 1996). Brand-loyal consumers reduce the marketing costs of the firm as the costs of attracting new customers are about six times higher than the costs of retaining a current customer (Rosenberg & Czepiel, 1983). Brand-loyal consumers are also willing to pay higher prices for products and are also less price-sensitive than consumers who don't display brand loyalty (Krishnamurthi & Raj, 1991; Reichheld & Sasser, 1990). It was even found in an article by Kopp and Mansa (2023) that companies with high scores of brand loyalty grow revenues 2.5% faster than industry peers. Further, 65% of the revenue most companies acquire comes from repeat business (Kopp &

Mansa, 2023). As a result, brand loyalty has been observed as an asset for businesses everywhere, and it is a major source of these brands' equity (Mellens et al., 1996). Although brand loyalty is important, new consumers must be considered when marketing and advertising because current consumers will not be around forever. This, in turn, could lead to a push to attract new, loyal consumers to their brand.

## MEASURING BRAND LOYALTY

According to one model, brand loyalty can be measured through twelve metrics (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014). The twelve metrics are customer satisfaction, switching costs, brand trust, relationship proneness, involvement, perceived value, commitment, repeat purchase, brand affect, brand relevance, brand performance, and culture (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014). These metrics were discovered through a factor analysis that identified the most important elements of brand loyalty (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). Each of these elements is discussed in more detail below.

### *Customer Satisfaction*

Customer satisfaction connects consumers learning from prior experiences to their explanations of their after-purchase behaviors (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). The after-purchase behavior could be complaining, word of mouth, repurchase intention, and product usage. Customer satisfaction has a noteworthy influence on an individual's intention to repurchase a product and after-purchase complaints. A higher level of customer satisfaction will lead to a higher level of brand loyalty (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007).

### *Switching Costs*

Switching costs occur when consumers face the unavoidable costs of switching between varied brands to use their products or services (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). At a minimum, there are three types of switching costs (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Those types are transaction costs (expenses incurred when buying or selling a good or service), learning costs (only occurring when the consumer ends up switching to a supplier new to them), and contractual costs (financial costs associated with terminating a relationship with an existing provider and

starting a new relationship) (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Switching costs have been shown to have positive effects on prices and profits, deterring new businesses from being created and entering the market (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Switching costs have also been linked to competitive phenomena such as price wars, which occur when businesses offer deep discounts to attract new customers or encourage individuals who have purchased the brand previously to return (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978).

### *Brand Trust*

Brand trust exists when the consumer has confidence in the business's reliability and integrity (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). It has been suggested that trust positively affects commitment and is the basis for loyalty to a brand (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Garbarino and Johnson, 1991; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). Garbarino and Johnson (1991) discovered a strong relationship between loyalty and brand trust. Their research suggests that there is a distinct need for trust in developing favorable attitudes toward brands. So, the higher the trust in a brand, the more likely it is for brand loyalty to develop.

### *Relationship Proneness*

Relationship proneness is a characteristic of the buyer and is defined as a consumer's stable and conscious tendency to engage in relationships with sellers or brands from a particular product category (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). In addition, relationship proneness is a conscious tendency to engage in relationships as opposed to a tendency to engage in relationships based on convenience (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). For example, if an individual decides to purchase a specific brand of toothpaste since it is the cheapest option, then it cannot be a result of brand loyalty because it was done out of convenience rather than genuine preference. If an individual decides to purchase a particular product category from a brand they have a positive experience with, then it is done from a genuine preference and the result of brand loyalty.



### *Involvement*

Product involvement describes the ongoing commitment on the part of the consumer regarding thoughts, feelings, and behavioral responses to a product category (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). Involvement is further defined as a consumer's motivation for product purchase that affects their information processing strategies when forming a brand preference, so the choice is more automatic at low levels and more deliberative at high levels (Friedmann & Lowengart, 2019). The more money someone is willing to spend on a product or brand, the higher the product involvement level tends to be as well. An example of this would be the purchase of motor vehicles (typically a car, truck, or SUV), as they are expensive, and often much research is done by consumers before the purchase takes place. Studies have also suggested that a higher level of involvement with a brand leads to a higher level of brand loyalty among consumers (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007).

### *Perceived Value*

Punniyamoorthy and Prasanna Mohan Raj (2007) describe perceived value as the consumer's overall assessment of the utility of a product

based on perceptions of what its components are. Components are things such as the core item/service and its packaging. The four most common components that represent perceived value are functional value (derived from the product quality and expected performance of the product), emotional value (derived from the feelings or affective states that a product generates), price-worthiness factor (derived from the product due to the reduction of its perceived costs), and social value (derived from the product's ability to enhance social self-concept) (Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). The higher these components are, the higher the rate of brand loyalty (Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007).

### *Commitment*

Brand commitment, according to Kim and colleagues (2008), occurs when consumers pledge themselves to purchase a particular brand. Customer commitment is a central construct in the development and maintenance of marketing relationships because it is a key psychological force that links the consumer to the selling organization (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). Intuitively, affective commitment would lie at the heart of a consumer-brand relationship because consumers come to be identified and involved with many of the brands they regularly consume

(Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Further, there is overwhelming evidence to suggest that the higher the level of commitment, the higher the level of brand loyalty (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007).

### *Repeat Purchase*

Repeat purchase behavior is a term that refers to the extent to which consumers re-purchase the same brand in a given period (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). The strength of brand loyalty based on behavior is a direct function of the repetitive occurrence of purchase or consumption behavior (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Kim et al., 2008; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). The consumer establishes a systematic biased response or habit simply due to the frequency of encounters. The higher the repeat purchase behavior, the more likely brand loyalty is to develop.

### *Brand Affect*

Brand affect is defined as the potential of a brand to elicit a positive emotional response in the average consumer because of its usage (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2002). The effect is characterized in terms of two independent dimensions: positive and negative. Several authors suggest that consumers strive to experience positive affect and avoid negative affect (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Chaudhuri & Holdbrook, 2002; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Positive affect is developed through positive customer interactions, such as a friendly customer service experience (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014). Negative affect is developed through unpleasant customer interactions, such as a product not working as advertised (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014). Consumers who have a positive effect relating to a product are more likely to be brand loyal (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014).

### *Brand Relevance*

Since businesses, nonprofits, and governmental entities are increasingly embracing branding and spending more money on marketing, their brand messages need to become more complex and orchestrated to carry more meaning and establish effective brand relevance (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). A brand needs to stand for something that matters to consumers' needs, wants, and morals while also standing out from the competitors in all other aspects (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014). Brands that are relevant to consumers' needs and wants have a positive impact on the relevance of a brand to consumers (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014). For example, an individual who cares deeply about lowering waste in the environment could gravitate toward buying clothing brands that use recycled materials to make their clothing.

### *Brand Performance*

Brand performance is the customer's evaluation of the performance of a product or service following the consumption experience (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978). Brand performance, according to Musa (2005), is the subjective evaluation of the core product, which encompasses both intrinsic (e.g., effectiveness) and extrinsic (e.g., packaging) characteristics. Direct



Photo by David Gomes

seller performance refers to performance-delivery elements, including the direct salesperson's characteristics and services offered (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Musa, 2005).

### *Culture*

Kotler and Keller (2006) regard culture as the most important consumer buying force in society. Grant (2005), as cited in Bisschoff and Moola (2014), confirms that young individuals remain loyal to family brands until other factors take over. Mann (2007) maintains that family and culture play an integral role in purchasing behavior and brand loyalty. Simons (2004), as cited in Bisschoff and Moola (2014), adds that family introduces a psychological dimension to brand loyalty in that it indirectly assures security and trust through generations of use. Simons (2004) also maintains that nostalgia is a related factor that keeps individuals loyal to classical brands.

### **HOW DOES BRAND LOYALTY DEVELOP?**

Brand-name products operate in highly competitive markets (Kopp & Mansa, 2023). To thrive within this dynamic, most, if not all, companies use tactics such as monitoring buying trends, analyzing spending data, and designing advertising campaigns using that data (Kopp & Mansa, 2023). Brand loyalty develops because of both perceived high product quality and brand recognition. It may not matter how much money is poured into advertising, as products that are perceived as low quality can kill customer retention. Brand-loyal customers believe that a certain brand represents both higher quality and better service than its competitors (Kopp & Mansa, 2023). Brand-loyal customers might make fewer total purchases, but the profit margins on their purchases are larger (Kopp & Mansa, 2023). So, with that being the case, excellent customer service as well as good product quality aids in customer retention. Although good customer service can be expensive, involving services such as chat representatives available 24/7, managers of social media pages, and phone operators, it can be worth it as first-rate customer service has been found to increase brand loyalty (Kopp & Mansa, 2023). When this happens, consumers view the company and brand as genuinely caring about the issues they raise with the staff (Kopp & Mansa, 2023). Rewards programs, online communities, brand ambassadors, and brand

recognition (more information on brand recognition below) are further tools to maintain customer retention (Kopp & Mansa, 2023; Keller, 2008).

Attractive packaging is also important in creating brand loyalty as it catches the attention of consumers and helps the brands stand out from their competitors (Keller, 2008). This helps to make a brand recognizable. Brand recognition, also known as brand awareness, occurs when consumers recognize and recall specific brands (Keller, 2008). Although brand recognition is not the same thing as brand loyalty, both brand loyalty and brand recognition are important in terms of marketing and advertising efforts.

### *Brand Recognition*

Brand recognition could even be viewed as a method that is used to help develop brand loyalty. It can also be defined as the ability consumers have to identify a specific brand by its attributes over a competing brand (Kenton, 2022). In other words, if a decision-making unit can recognize a brand through visual or auditory cues alone, then the attempt at brand recognition is considered a success. Keeping the product or brand in the consumer's mind is the main goal. This concept is used in advertising and marketing and is considered successful when people can recognize a brand through visual or auditory cues. The marketing departments of big companies are typically the ones who will produce the cues that are then marketed to potential consumers (Kenton, 2022). These cues could be mascots, logos, slogans, packaging, colors, or jingles rather than a company's name (Kenton, 2022). These recognition attempts are especially important when it comes down to so-called stealth marketing, such as product placement. The logo, mascot, jingle, or other cues could be simple ways to help consumers distinguish which product belongs to the brand they are being exposed to. Marketing research is conducted to determine whether these recognition attempts are successful.

### *Product Placement*

Product placement occurs when businesses or manufacturers pay for their products or brands to be placed into social media posts or scenes in television shows and movies (Sanborn, 2023). This practice is conducted with the intent to expose a business's product to more potential consumers in a non-overt way through a popular

celebrity, online influencer, or franchise. Some examples of this would include the toy Etch-a-Sketch featured in the Disney-Pixar movie *Toy Story* and singer-songwriter Rhianna Fenty tagging her brands (Savage X Fenty, Fenty Beauty, and Fenty Skin) as well as brands such as Puma on her Instagram posts.

### *Advertising, Marketing, and Children*

Children live and grow up in a highly sophisticated marketing environment that influences their preferences and behaviors (Calvert, 2008). As marketing and advertising support the United States economy, promoting the sales of goods and services consistently to the next generations is key to keeping a company's income for the near future (De Veirman et al., 2019). Paid advertising towards children has often involved television spots that feature toys and food products which are usually high in fat and sugar and low in nutritional value (Calvert, 2008). More modern marketing approaches have led to online advertising and product placement in films, online, and video games geared towards children (Calvert, 2008). Calvert (2008, p. 205) states that even though companies have been marketing toward children for decades, two trends have increased companies' interest in children's marketing in recent decades:

First, both the discretionary income of children and their power to influence parent purchases have increased over time. Second, as the enormous increase in the number of available television channels has led to smaller audiences for each channel, digital interactive technologies have simultaneously opened new routes to narrow cast to children, thereby creating a growing media space just for children and children's products.

As most of this information comes from a source that was published in 2008, it is important to acknowledge that in the late 2010s and early 2020s, online sites and social media platforms, such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram, have introduced many more gateways for companies to spread their marketing influence on young people.

These days, children spend many hours using the Internet (De Veirman et al., 2019). This is understandable, as there are numerous options of online media for children to explore. 81% percent of U.S. parents let their children under eleven watch YouTube (De Veirman et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2018), where they are usually exposed to advertising before the video chosen starts playing. Brands are also found in these online videos (De Veirman et al., 2019; Weiss,

2018). This online marketing trend is not only present in the United States. In 2019, 72% of people in Mexico who parent children aged 3 to 13 stated that advertising is the reason why their child picked a specific brand or product (Navarro, 2023).

Product placement and sponsored segments are integral parts of keeping popular social media stars' careers up and profitable. This subtle advertising makes the formatting seem less intrusive and harder to recognize, especially for younger children (De Veirman et al., 2019; Hudders et al., 2017). An example of this phenomenon is a YouTube channel with a total of over 55 billion views by the name of "Ryan's World." Ryan's World channel revolves around a young boy by the name of Ryan Kaji who reviews toys with his parents and sisters. Many brands sponsor and send products to online influencers and channels, such as Ryan's, to get eyes on their products and increase profit. The spending total of all advertising marketed toward children reached a total of \$4.2 billion in 2018 (Navarro, 2023). The total amount of advertising was predicted to be \$4.6 billion by 2021, \$4.99 billion by 2022, and \$6.16 billion by 2023 (Navarro, 2023; Dencheva, 2023). It was also predicted that \$1.7 billion of the predicted spending in 2021 would be used for digital advertising formats (Navarro, 2023).

With children being the next generation of consumers, it is important to consider what each adult-aged generation values as well. This helps contextualize a concept such as brand loyalty because the members of these adult-aged generations were once children exposed to advertising and marketing. The advent of technologies such as smartphones and the Internet is relatively recent. So, understanding where each adult-aged generation stands regarding brand loyalty could lead to some insight when examining the possible role technological innovations have played in the development of brand loyalty.

### **PRODUCTS OF INTEREST FOR BRAND LOYALTY RESEARCH**

Products that are needed and used by most individuals in their daily lives, such as food or soap, typically spark the interest of researchers in brand loyalty. Farley (1964) conducted a study to establish a connection between product variation and brand loyalty. The products used by Farley's study included canned peas, rice, scouring cleanser (used to clean pots, pans, toilet bowls, bathtubs, etc.), canned tuna and



bonito (a fish related to tuna and mackerel), liquid bleach, canned peaches, frozen biscuits, toilet tissue, toilet soap, all-purpose flour, frozen orange juice concentrate, cake mixes (white, yellow, and chocolate), margarine, regular coffee, instant coffee, and canned citrus juice. It was discovered that consumers were less loyal to products that had a wide variety of brands available (Farley, 1964). Published in 1964, this source and the products used for the study are obviously dated.

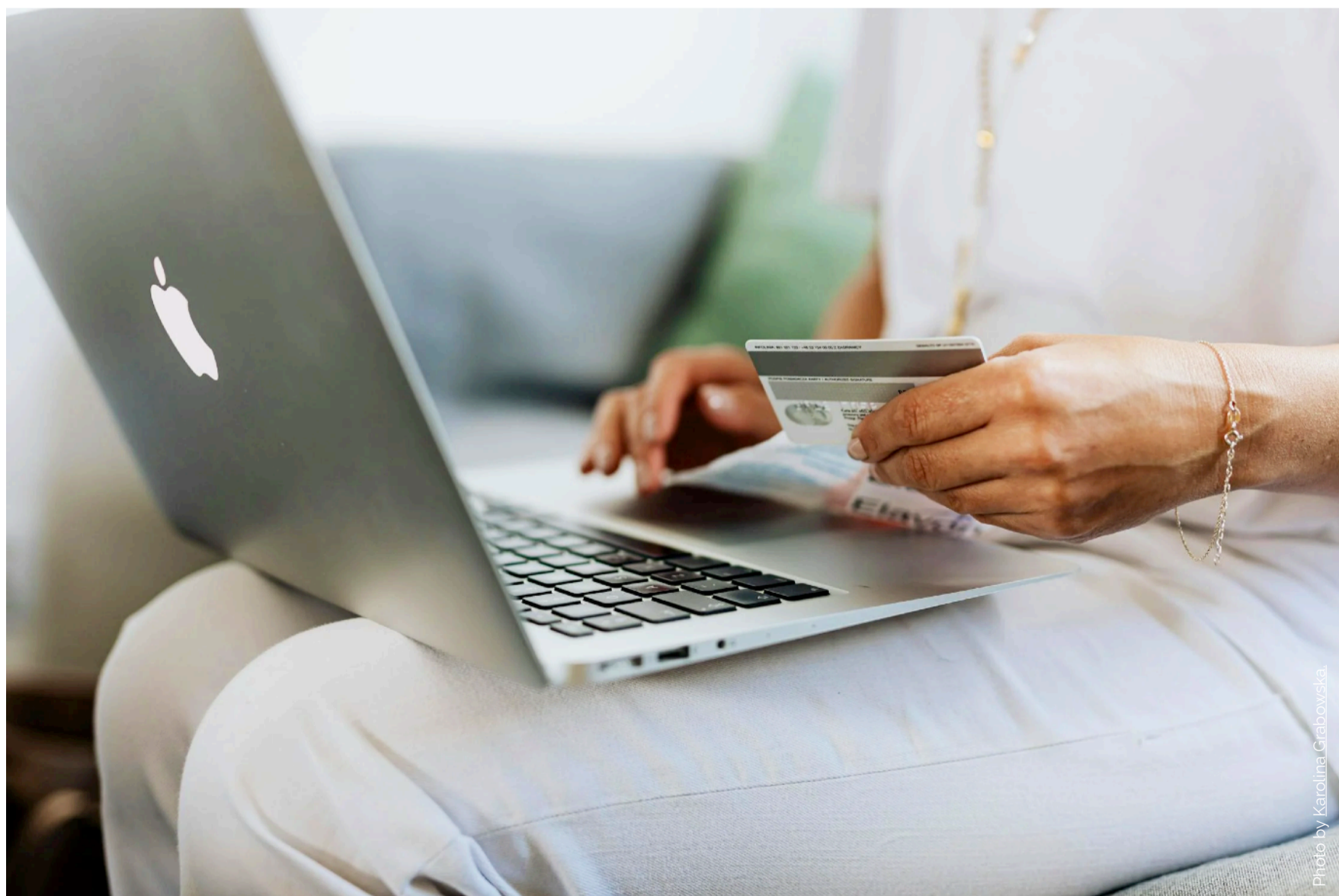
Grabsy and colleagues (2021) conducted a study to establish a connection between different combinations of products in similar categories and brand loyalty. Their study included products such as shampoo, conditioner, cake, donuts, laundry detergent, canned fruit, fresh produce, milk, baking soda, air freshener, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and deodorant (Grabsy et al., 2021). It was discovered that consumers who purchase from two categories are on average 2.4 times more likely to purchase a brand extension (products produced to expand brand reach to different product categories, such as the production of both shampoo and conditioner) in the second category if they had purchased the same brand in the other category (Grabsy et al., 2021). This

trend is more prevalent for brands that produce complementary categories, most notably shampoo with conditioner and blush with foundation (Grabsy et al., 2021).

From Farley (1964) and Grabsy (2021), it can be inferred that when conducting research (more specifically, a survey) into brand loyalty it is important to focus on everyday household products. Everyday household products typically include hygiene products, such as body wash, and food products, such as cola. It could also be important to focus on the number of brands present in different product categories, including whether complementary products purchased are of the same brand or not. This information could be used as a point of interest when attempting to establish whether someone has a brand preference for multiple different products.

### **PRODUCT PREFERENCES AND GENDER IDENTITY**

Although it might be expected that there would be significant gender differences regarding brand loyalty, it is considered an insignificant factor by most researchers (Munef et al., 2009). A study published in 2009 (Munef et al., 2009) showed minimal differences in brand loyalty



between male and female customers. Even with this being the case, the influence of the situational factors—personality differences and age specifically—involved with brand loyalty, development cannot be denied concerning gender stereotypes (Munef et al., 2009; Worth et al., 1992). A study conducted by Worth, and colleagues (1992) indicated that individuals who self-identified their personalities as stereotypically masculine would lean more towards preferring products that were described using masculine terms, and individuals who self-identified as stereotypically feminine would prefer products described in feminine terms. Stereotypically masculine individuals are associated with Type A personalities, which are aggressive, ambitious, controlling, and highly competitive workaholics

who lack patience (Planned Parenthood, 2023; Sissons, 2022). Stereotypically feminine individuals are associated with Type B personalities which are relaxed, flexible, patient, emotional, and expressive (Planned Parenthood, 2023; Sissons, 2022). What these findings indicate is that gender stereotypes associated with personality Type A (stereotypically masculine) and Type B (stereotypically feminine) are important for developing preferences for certain products and brands, not necessarily an individual's gender identity (Dai et al., 2023; Friedmann & Lowengart, 2019). Although gender identities of individuals have not been found to have an impact on the development of brand loyalty, age and an individual's generation have been found to impact brand loyalty (Munef et al., 2009).

### CONCEPTUALIZATION OF THE GENERATIONS

Conceptualizing generations is difficult, as numerous sources tend to set the parameters for each generation differently. For the sake of the present research, the focus will be placed on the five adult-aged generations. Conceptualizing what years encapsulate those generations will be done using the sources of Dimock (2019) and Gandhi (2023). The sources were chosen because they specifically laid out the characteristics of each generation, both living and non-living. The generations being examined are the Silent Generation (1925-1945), Baby Boomers (1946-1964), Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and Generation Z (1997-2012).

Each generation has been through its own trials and tribulations resulting from living through various historical events. As Gandhi said, "Our environment is the invisible hands that shape human behavior" (Gandhi, 2023, para. 1). More specifically, events such as



Photo by Yehor Andriukhovych.

wars, recessions, and pandemics have shaped how we as individuals and as generations think, act, and live our everyday lives. Below is one author's (Gandhi, 2023) conceptualization that contrasts the values of each adult generation.

### *Silent Generation (1925-1945)*

The Silent Generation gained its name in 1951 in *Time* magazine (Time, 1951). The reason for this is that the generation before them, the Greatest Generation, came of age during the Great Depression and World War II; in contrast, the Silent Generation did not experience nearly as much disruption, hence the label "silent." The Silent Generation was born during the Korean War, World War II, and the Great Depression. As a result, they desire stability. They respect authority figures and are also very loyal to their employers, having been noted as working for the same companies for many years (Gandhi, 2023). As of 2024, the Silent Generation is between the ages of 79 and 99 years old.

### *Baby Boomers (1946-1964)*

Baby Boomers are named such because, when World War II and the Korean War ended, soldiers were able to return home and start their families. This led to the birth rate increasing significantly. Baby Boomers were notable for their desire for change and progress as young adults. A large subset of this generation participated in the civil rights and feminist movements. They were also at the forefront of efforts to promote social justice and equality. This generation was also referred to as the "Me Generation" by writer Tom Wolfe (1976) since they focused a lot on self-fulfillment. Baby Boomers were the first generation to grow up with widespread access to technology such as television, so they were considered technologically innovative. They have also played a significant role in developing and adopting innovative technologies (Gandhi, 2023). As of 2024, Baby Boomers are between 60 and 78 years old.

### *Generation X (1965-1980)*

Generation X was named by photographer Robert Capa because of their unique styles of clothing, attitudes, outlooks, and mentalities (Ulrich, 2003). Capa viewed their unique styles and outlooks on life as skeptical of traditional values and institutions. It is unknown what year he coined this term (Ulrich, 2003). Members of Generation X tend to value independence, display technological savviness, and desire work-life balance. As more women entered the

workforce, more children were left to care for themselves after school, which led many in Generation X to become more self-sufficient as children than those in previous generations. As a result of this independence, valuing their time outside of work is important. Widespread personal computer ownership and access to the Internet were more common during this time, so becoming more knowledgeable about how to use personal computers and the Internet became a hallmark for this generation (Gandhi, 2023). As of 2024, Generation X is between 44 and 59 years old.

### *Millennials (1981-1996)*

Also referred to as Generation Y, Millennials were defined by Howe and Strauss in their 1991 book called *Generations: The History of America's Future, 1584-2069*. Millennials are described as entrepreneurial, highly educated, and flexible with their opportunities. Because they came of age during the Great Recession in 2008, they faced a tough job market. This pushed many Millennials to figure out ways to make their own money, such as starting their businesses. There are a lot of Millennials who are highly educated and have been exposed to a wide range of ideas and perspectives. This has led them to pursue careers within their passions rather than out of necessity. Not restricted to a traditional nine-to-five job, many Millennials are also flexible when it comes to employment and are willing to work independently, remotely, or as freelancers. For this reason, some members of generations older than Millennials view them as narcissistic and vain, even nicknaming them the "Me Me Me Generation" (Gandhi, 2023; Time, 2013). However, others view them as the most diverse and socially conscious generation (Time, 2013; Gandhi, 2023). As of 2024, Millennials are between 28 and 43 years old.

### *Generation Z (1997-2012)*

Generation Z, also known as the iGen or Zoomers, are digital natives, socially and politically aware, and diverse. Members of Generation Z are the first generation born into the age of widespread, easily accessible digital technologies such as smartphones, laptops, and tablets. Being more liberal and progressive than generations before them, both social and political issues are big areas of concern for members of Generation Z who are often active in efforts to bring about positive change. This positive change is usually within the realm of prioritizing LGBTQ rights, racial and gender

equality, and climate change awareness. Generation Z is also the most ethnically and racially diverse generation in American history. This diversity is reflective of this demographic's push to increase acceptance and understanding of different cultures, gender identities, and backgrounds (Gandhi, 2023). As of 2024, Generation Z is between 12 and 27 years old.

## **BRAND LOYALTY THROUGH GENERATIONS**

As they are the most recent adult-aged generation, members of Generation Z are key in the strategy of brands to remain competitive in the long term (Cagnin & Nicolas, 2022). However, the loyalty of Generation Z is more difficult to gauge compared to that of other generations; this is related to their specific expectations and the way brands handle them (Cagnin & Nicolas, 2022). The expectations are related to the observed or assumed values and relevance of a company. The more companies' values and relevancy resonate with Generation Z, the more trust they will develop with the brand. Currently available research shows that, out of Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z, Generation X is the most brand-loyal, while Generation Z is the least brand-loyal (Brooks, 2023; Faria, 2023; Lamb, 2017). According to an article published by Forbes in 2016, "erosion of consumer loyalty among the most esteemed brands represents a changed philosophy of buying" (Kusek, 2016, para. 4). Lamb (2017) found that Generation X is intensely brand-loyal compared to Millennials and Baby Boomers.

### *Why is Generation Z Considered the Least Brand-Loyal?*

Brooks (2023), conducted a study that involved 6,000 Generation Z individuals. Results indicated that awareness and familiarity metrics, which are linked to brand loyalty, are quickly losing relevance, especially among Generation Z, a generation that is not interested in holding onto the past (Brooks, 2023). Only 37% of Generation Z were considered brand-loyal, which is quite low compared to 56% of Baby Boomers (Brooks, 2023). They found that the reason for this could go back to the fact that Generation Z has many options for online shopping; they do research on companies and their products before purchasing, and they shop based on their values (Brooks, 2023; James 2022). Specifically, Brooks discovered that 60% of Generation Z agree that the brands they purchase are an expression of who they are, and 77% don't want to feel like they're put in a box when shopping (James,

2022). Another study by PwC (a consulting firm for businesses and brands) corroborated this when discovering that 73% of Generation Z say it's hard to save money right now, and 56% say inflation has created more financial stress in their lives (James, 2022). This causes issues as retailers do not seem to know how to connect with Generation Z and generate brand loyalty (James, 2022). This research implies that generational shifts seem to be powerful motivators when it comes to Generation Z and brand preferences or loyalty.

### *Need for Additional Research*

Although informative, the existing research about generational categories, product preferences, and brand loyalty is relatively general and apparently does not explore brand loyalty in specific product categories. There are currently no studies that provide a concrete explanation as to what product categories have the highest or lowest brand loyalty, with much research focusing on a specific product. In addition, although research has been conducted relating to brand loyalty differences among generations, there are no studies available that offer a concrete explanation as to which products and brands different generations prefer. However, it is known that low-involvement products and high-involvement products elicit some type of brand loyalty response (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007). High-involvement products have the highest degree of brand loyalty while low-involvement products have the lowest degree of brand loyalty (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014; Jacoby & Chestnut, 1978; Punniyamoorthy & Prasanna Mohan Raj, 2007), but its specific product categories have not been identified as having high or low involvement.

Research into brand loyalty and product preferences regarding gender identity is also sparse. Yet, the research available seems to indicate that an individual's gender identity itself does not influence brand loyalty (Munef et al., 2009). It has been determined that personality types attached to gender stereotypes are more important influences on the development of brand loyalty (Dai et al., 2023; Friedmann & Lowengart, 2019; Munef et al., 2009). But would this same conclusion be reached if research were conducted on specific product categories?

To address these gaps in the literature, in this study a 42-question questionnaire was devised to assess participants' preferences

regarding 35 different products from a wide array of categories. In comparison to previous research, the current study also sought to be a more in-depth examination of gender identity and generation as related to brand loyalty in specific product categories. Overall, then, this study aimed to fill in the gaps between what is known about brand loyalty and what is not known regarding generation, gender identity, and specific product categories.

## METHOD

### Questionnaire

Before participants began the questionnaire, informed consent was obtained. If consent was not given, the questionnaire automatically ended. If consent was given, participants continued to the 42-question survey. The first six questions were used to gather data on demographic information, the next 35 questions gathered data on brand preferences related to certain product categories, and the last question asked if the participant has any brand preferences for products that were not listed in any previous questions. For the 35 questions examining brand loyalty categories, participants were asked to indicate on a 1 to 7 scale (1 = strongly disagree and 7 = strongly agree) the extent to which they preferred a specific brand within that product category. The survey was created using Qualtrics software, and it was distributed to participants electronically through Lucid Theorem.

### Participants

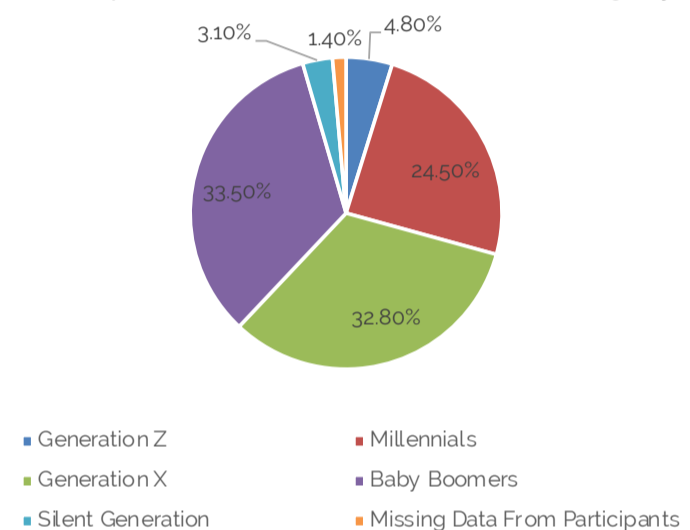
Participants were recruited using the online platform Lucid Theorem, which provides access to a variety of potential participants across the United States. Participants were paid a small stipend (approximately \$1) in exchange for their time in completing the survey. The total sample size of this study consisted of 421 participants, but only 415 of the participants filled out the survey to completion. Out of all 421 participants, 52.7% identified as male, and 47.3% identified as female. These participants ranged between 18 and 99 years of age, the mean being 52 years old.

### Generational Categories

Among the participant sample of 421, Generation Z made up 4.8% of participants, Millennials made up 24.5% of participants, Generation X made up 32.8% of participants, Baby Boomers made up 33.5% of participants, and the Silent Generation made up 3.1% of

participants. There was missing age data for 1.4% of participants (see **Fig. 1**). According to one source, in 2024, Generation Z made up 20.88% of the adult population in the U.S., Millennials made up 21.67%, Generation X made up 19.61%, Baby Boomers made up 20.58%, and the Silent Generation made up 5.49% (Statista, 2024). The remaining 11.57% make up Generation Alpha. Thus, in the current sample, Generation Z was underrepresented, while Generation X and Baby Boomers were overrepresented. Millennials and the Silent Generation are fairly representative in this sample compared to the United States population.

Participants in Each Generational Category



**Fig. 1.** Percent breakdown of participants in each generational category.

### Racial Categories

Regarding racial categorization, 74.3% of participants were White, 19.0% were Black, 2.6% were Asian, 0.5% were Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 0.5% were American Native/Alaska Native, and 2.9% selected the Other category (see **Fig. 2**). According to United States Census estimate for July of 2023, 75.5% of the population is White, 13.6% of the population is Black, 6.3% of the population is Asian, 0.3% of the population is Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 1.3% of the population is American Native/Alaska Native, and the remaining 3% of the population makes up the Other category for race (United States Census Bureau, 2024). After comparing this study's participants to the United States Census, racial categories appear to be represented relatively fairly in this study.

Racial Identity of Participants

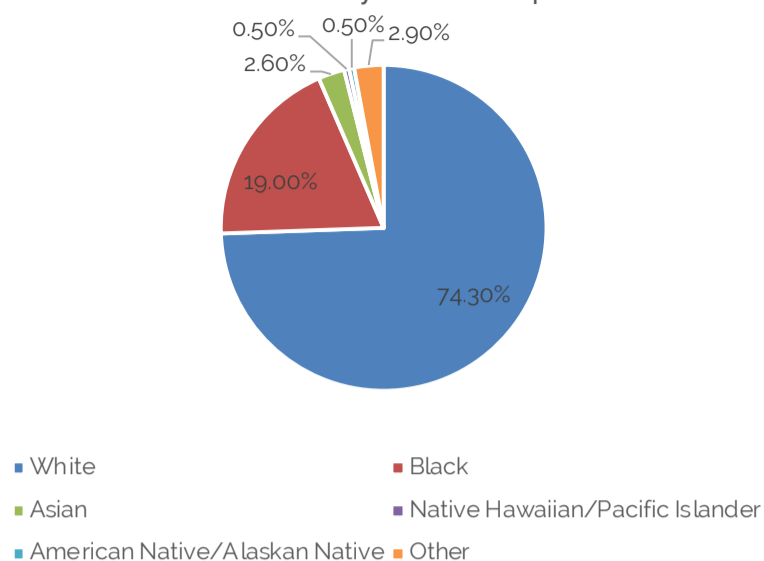


Fig. 2. Percent of responding participants who identify with specific racial categories.

### Religious Affiliation

Regarding religious affiliation, 55.3% of participants were religiously affiliated, 38.2% were not religiously affiliated, 6.2% chose that they may be religiously affiliated, and 0.2% of participants chose "Other" for religious affiliation. According to the United States Census, U.S. law prohibits the Census Bureau from requiring anyone to disclose their religious affiliation (United States Census Bureau, 2020). As a result of this, the overall U.S. population's religious affiliation cannot be compared to the responding participants, at least from Census data.

### Employment Status

Regarding employment status, 30.9% of participants were not employed, 40.1% were employed full-time, 11.9% were employed part-time, and 17.1% chose "Other" for employment status.

## RESULTS

To explore the product categories in which participants had the strongest brand preferences, means were calculated on a 1-7 scale, with 1 indicating a very weak preference and 7 indicating a very strong preference. See **Table 1** for the means and standard deviations for product brand preference, in order from lowest to highest mean. The five products with the lowest means were mechanical pencils, makeup concealer, makeup foundation, pens, and video game consoles. The five products with the highest means are mobile phones, deodorant, laundry detergent, toothpaste, and cola.

Product	Mean	Standard Deviation
Mechanical Pencils	3.39	1.79
Makeup Concealer	3.54	1.95
Makeup Foundation	3.63	2.00
Pens	3.79	1.89
Videogame Console	3.84	2.04
Bottled Water	3.94	1.86
Facial Cleanser	4.20	1.78
Bleach for Laundry	4.21	1.85
Mustard	4.24	1.84
Facial Tissue	4.25	1.76
Orange Juice	4.25	1.77
Conditioner	4.33	1.83
Body Wash	4.42	1.87
Desktop Computer	4.43	1.86
Toothbrush	4.46	1.75
Body Lotion	4.46	1.85
Ketchup	4.46	1.88
Mouthwash	4.46	1.76
Potato Chips	4.47	1.71
Sliced bread	4.48	1.75
Paper Towels	4.51	1.80
Shampoo	4.55	1.77
Home Brewed Coffee	4.56	1.88
Bar Soap	4.58	1.84
Peanut Butter	4.59	1.77
Laptop	4.62	1.80
Breakfast Cereal	4.79	1.71
Mayonnaise	4.80	1.86
Toilet Paper	4.83	1.79
Dish Detergent	4.87	1.77
Cola	4.96	1.85
Toothpaste	4.97	1.69
Laundry Detergent	5.09	1.76
Deodorant	5.15	1.71
Mobile Phone	5.23	1.69

Table 1: Means and standard deviations for different product categories, in order from lowest means to highest means. Note. Mean relates to the average choice on a scale between 1 to 7 by participants of the survey.

In an open-ended question in which participants could disclose any additional product categories for which they had brand loyalty, several product categories were mentioned at least twice. Products that were not included in the survey but elicited a brand preference were cars, ice cream, shoes, jeans, butter, cheese, pet food, tea, and milk. Additional analyses were conducted focusing on product category preferences between gender identities and generations.

### Gender Identity Analyses

To explore the potential differences in product category preferences between males and females, analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted that compared the mean ratings of males and females for each product category. A number of these ANOVAs revealed significant gender differences. Specifically, there were significant ANOVAs for shampoo ( $F [1, 419] = 4.37, p = .037$ ), conditioner ( $F [1, 417] = 28.36, p < .001$ ), facial cleanser ( $F [1, 418] = 12.61, p < .001$ ), bar soap ( $F [1, 415] = 6.13, p < .014$ ), body lotion ( $F [1, 415] = 22.54, p < .001$ ), makeup foundation ( $F [1, 417] = 54.73, p < .001$ ), makeup concealer ( $F [1, 417] = 35.67, p < .001$ ), video game consoles ( $F [1, 415] = 9.87, p = .002$ ), laptops ( $F [1, 418] = 16.56, p < .001$ ), and desktop computers ( $F [1, 418] = 20.69, p < .001$ ). See **Table 2** for details about how the means within each of these product categories differ between the gender identities of participants.

Product	Gender Identity	Mean	Standard Deviation
Makeup Foundation	Male	2.99	1.85
	Female	4.35	1.91
Facial Cleanser	Male	3.20	1.75
	Female	4.53	1.76
Makeup Concealer	Male	3.03	1.89
	Female	4.12	1.84
Body Lotion	Male	4.05	1.84
	Female	4.89	1.76
Conditioner	Male	3.90	1.92
	Female	4.82	1.58
Desktop	Male	4.82	1.75
	Female	4.01	1.89
Laptop	Male	4.95	1.70
	Female	4.25	1.84
Videogame Console	Male	4.15	2.10
	Female	3.53	1.92
Bar Soap	Male	4.37	1.86
	Female	4.81	1.77
Shampoo	Male	4.38	1.90
	Female	4.74	1.60

**Table 2:** Significant mean differences in product categories between males and females. *Note:* Products are in order from highest to lowest mean differences between males and females.

### Generational Analyses

To explore potential generational differences in product category preferences, analyses of variance (ANOVAs) were conducted that compared the mean ratings of each generation for each product category. A number of these

ANOVAs revealed significant generational differences. Specifically, there were significant ANOVAs for conditioner ( $F [4, 408] = 4.16, p = .003$ ), orange juice ( $F [4, 407] = 2.71, p = .030$ ), bottled water ( $F [4, 406] = 4.42, p = .002$ ), facial cleanser ( $F [4, 409] = 4.10, p = .003$ ), body wash ( $F [4, 407] = 9.49, p < .001$ ), makeup foundation ( $F [4, 408] = 3.34, p = .010$ ), makeup concealer ( $F [4, 408] = 5.73, p < .001$ ), video game console ( $F [4, 406] = 14.25, p < .001$ ), laptops ( $F [4, 409] = 6.84, p < .001$ ), desktop computers ( $F [4, 409] = 3.43, p = .009$ ), mechanical pencils ( $F [4, 409] = 7.12, p < .001$ ), and pens ( $F [4, 408] = 5.08, p < .001$ ). See **Table 3** for details about how the means within each of these product categories differ regarding various generations.

Product	Generation	Mean	Standard Deviation
Conditioner	Generation Z	5.35 <sup>b</sup>	1.14
	Millennials	4.58 <sup>ab</sup>	1.64
	Generation X	4.43 <sup>ab</sup>	1.83
	Baby Boomers	3.95 <sup>a</sup>	1.96
	Silent Generation	3.69 <sup>ab</sup>	1.70
Orange Juice	Generation Z	4.68 <sup>ab</sup>	1.79
	Millennials	4.67 <sup>a</sup>	1.69
	Generation X	4.16 <sup>ab</sup>	1.84
	Baby Boomers	4.02 <sup>b</sup>	1.69
	Silent Generation	3.77 <sup>ab</sup>	1.96
Bottled Water	Generation Z	4.68 <sup>abc</sup>	1.86
	Millennials	4.42 <sup>a</sup>	1.72
	Generation X	3.75 <sup>bc</sup>	1.84
	Baby Boomers	3.69 <sup>bc</sup>	1.89
	Silent Generation	3.00 <sup>abc</sup>	1.73
Facial Cleanser	Generation Z	4.90 <sup>ab</sup>	1.55
	Millennials	4.62 <sup>a</sup>	1.66
	Generation X	4.21 <sup>ab</sup>	1.77
	Baby Boomers	3.85 <sup>b</sup>	1.82
	Silent Generation	3.54 <sup>ab</sup>	1.89
Body Wash	Generation Z	5.48 <sup>abd</sup>	1.49
	Millennials	5.02 <sup>abd</sup>	1.59
	Generation X	4.53 <sup>abc</sup>	1.75
	Baby Boomers	3.78 <sup>d</sup>	1.94
	Silent Generation	3.96 <sup>abcd</sup>	2.18
Makeup Foundation	Generation Z	4.63 <sup>a</sup>	1.75
	Millennials	3.88 <sup>ab</sup>	1.99
	Generation X	3.72 <sup>ab</sup>	1.94
	Baby Boomers	3.31 <sup>b</sup>	2.03
	Silent Generation	2.77 <sup>ab</sup>	1.30

Makeup Concealer	Generation Z	5.00 <sup>a</sup>	1.72
	Millennials	3.85 <sup>abcd</sup>	1.97
	Generation X	3.59 <sup>bcd</sup>	1.91
	Baby Boomers	3.12 <sup>cd</sup>	1.88
	Silent Generation	2.92 <sup>bcd</sup>	1.44
Videogame Console	Generation Z	4.63 <sup>ab</sup>	1.87
	Millennials	4.83 <sup>ab</sup>	2.01
	Generation X	3.91 <sup>ad</sup>	1.97
	Baby Boomers	3.15 <sup>cd</sup>	1.82
	Silent Generation	2.31 <sup>c</sup>	1.65
Laptop	Generation Z	5.33 <sup>ab</sup>	1.44
	Millennials	5.26 <sup>b</sup>	1.62
	Generation X	4.46 <sup>ac</sup>	1.84
	Baby Boomers	4.31 <sup>ac</sup>	1.77
	Silent Generation	3.54 <sup>c</sup>	2.03
Desktop Computer	Generation Z	4.95 <sup>ab</sup>	1.43
	Millennials	4.90 <sup>a</sup>	1.77
	Generation X	4.33 <sup>ab</sup>	1.87
	Baby Boomers	4.20 <sup>b</sup>	1.84
	Silent Generation	3.62 <sup>ab</sup>	2.14
Mechanical Pencil	Generation Z	4.95 <sup>d</sup>	1.64
	Millennials	3.77 <sup>ab</sup>	1.76
	Generation X	3.34 <sup>bc</sup>	1.84
	Baby Boomers	3.05 <sup>c</sup>	1.68
	Silent Generation	2.69 <sup>c</sup>	1.32
Pens	Generation Z	5.20 <sup>a</sup>	1.54
	Millennials	4.07 <sup>ab</sup>	1.82
	Generation X	3.77 <sup>b</sup>	1.95
	Baby Boomers	3.52 <sup>b</sup>	1.83
	Silent Generation	2.85 <sup>b</sup>	1.52

**Table 3:** The significant mean differences in product categories across generations. Note. Differing subscripts indicate significant mean differences among generations for each product category listed.

## DISCUSSION

Regarding overall brand loyalty for product categories, the categories of mechanical pencils, makeup concealer, makeup foundation, pens, and video game consoles have the lowest overall means for brand preferences (**Table 1**). This result is not that surprising in that four out of these five products can be grouped into similar low-involvement product categories, those being beauty products (makeup foundation and makeup concealer) and writing utensils (mechanical pencils and pens). These products are assumed to not be used by some individuals consistently, or perhaps not at all. There is no defined risk if these products fail since none of them are inherently necessary to

keep an individual's everyday life functioning and some can be purchased inexpensively.

The products cola, toothpaste, laundry detergent, deodorant, and mobile phone had the highest overall means for brand preference, yet there does not immediately appear to be any indication that these products are from related categories (see **Table 1**). However, in looking a little deeper, these product categories are perhaps used by individuals on a consistent enough basis to cause them to become high-involvement products. There is a defined risk for each product if they fail since they are all used by individuals on a consistent enough basis to notice the quality. Some of the products can also be relatively costly, specifically mobile phones and laundry detergent.

The gender identities of participants in the current study were 52.7% male and 47.3% female. Staying in line with products that would be stereotypically feminine, females were found to have stronger brand preferences for the products makeup foundation, makeup concealer, facial cleanser, shampoo, bar soap, conditioner, and body wash than males did (see **Table 2**). On the other hand, males had stronger brand preferences for the products of video game consoles, desktop computers, and laptops than females did (see **Table 2**). It could be assumed that these trends were observed because of gender stereotypes, with those identifying as female having strong brand loyalty for beauty products, and those identifying as male having strong brand loyalty for electronics. As noted above, items stereotypically related to femininity and masculinity are often dictated by gender stereotypes. Also recall that Type A personalities are usually associated with the stereotypical view of masculinity and Type B personalities are associated with the stereotypical view of femininity, although this personality type dichotomy was not assessed in the current study.

Throughout the study, it was also observed that Generation Z and Millennials happened to not have many varying opinions from each other when it came down to brand preferences for products (see **Table 3**). The only products that Millennials and Generation Z differed from each other were mechanical pencils (**Table 3**). Baby Boomers and Silent Generation individuals happened to not have any varying opinions from each other when it came to brand preferences for products either (see **Table 3**). The reasoning for this could go



back to what each generation happens to value and grew up with.

As previously noted, Generation Z and Millennials are very close in age, yet they do not immediately appear to value the same things. Generation Z values social justice in the form of LGBTQ rights, racial equality, gender equality, and combating climate change. On the other hand, Millennials seemingly only value pursuing higher education and starting their businesses. Even though this might be the case, the reason why this is happening could result from how similar their life stages are since both Millennials and Generation Z are comprised of young adults who are in their twenties and thirties.

Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation are also closer in age and, by extension, life stages. This is not surprising since they do appear to value the same things. Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation individuals had hardly any differing opinions on brand preferences for the product categories of interest (**Table 3**). The only exception is the product body wash, with the difference being between Generation X and Baby Boomers (**Table 3**). It is also interesting to note that in **Table 3** for many product categories, Baby Boomers appeared to differ in their brand loyalty from youngest generations the most frequently, in fact indicating lower brand loyalty in many cases. The reason for this could extend to the fact that many of these products most likely did not exist when Baby Boomers were coming of age (e.g., bottled water).

Generation X appeared to not have too many varying opinions from any of the other generations regarding product preference. Generation X's age range was essentially in the middle since they encompassed those in their fifties and sixties, meaning that those of younger and older generations could still have common ground concerning a few products. Generation X and Silent Generation opinions on product brand preference did not vary for any product of significance besides video game consoles (**Table 3**).

The average age of participants in the sample for this study was 52 years of age, which is an age range within Generation X as of 2023. Individuals who are no longer enrolled in educational institutions do not pay much attention to the types of writing utensils they use. It can be theorized that as individuals get older, using beauty products or writing utensils

could also have less of an impact on their lives. This conclusion is in line with the findings that Generation Z had the most brand preference towards the products pens and pencils, and makeup foundation was seen to have the largest mean disparity between Generation Z against the three oldest generations, Generation X, Baby Boomers, and Silent Generation (**Table 3**). It can also be theorized that even though each generation values different things if their age ranges are close enough, they could develop brand loyalty or preferences for similar products. For many product categories examined in the study, Baby Boomers' mean brand loyalty scores were lower than Millennials and Generation Z, but their responses were typically very similar to Generation X (**Table 3**). This is counter to what was expected based on some existing literature (e.g., Brooks, 2023; James, 2022) but again may relate to some product categories not existing when older generations were children, adolescents, or young adults.

### **DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

In this study, attitudinal responses were recorded rather than behavioral responses. The reason for this is that there was not enough time allotted to pursue creating and conducting more research. Even though Mellens and colleagues (1996) believed that behavioral responses were more reliable for data collection, it would be valuable for future research to ensure that both attitudinal responses and behavioral responses are measured. This information will provide more insight into how attitudes and physical actions could co-exist in the development of brand loyalty.

Assessing how the 12 metrics of brand loyalty are influenced by specific product categories would also be a great asset to future research (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014). Satisfaction, switching costs, brand trust, relationship proneness, involvement, perceived value, commitment, repeat purchase, brand affect, brand relevance, brand performance, and culture were also listed as being instrumental in the development of brand loyalty (Bisschoff & Moola, 2014). Valuable insight would be gained by creating a survey to address how each of these metrics influences brand loyalty in specific products amongst the generations and gender identities. There was not enough time allotted for this study to go through with the creation of this survey. Original plans for this study did

include the creation of a survey that would incorporate the 12 metrics of brand loyalty to analyze what metrics are most influential in developing brand loyalty for what specific product categories.

Even though prior research indicated that gender identities do not have any influence on product preference or brand loyalty (Munef et al., 2009; Worth et al., 1992), further research must be done to confirm this, as the results from this study seem counter to that notion (Munef et al., 2009; Worth et al., 1992). Gender stereotyping is believed to be one of the main contributors, and these stereotypes are often connected to Type A or Type B personality traits. So, questioning participants on which personality traits they believe describe them would be the most reliable option to collect data. This was also not included in this study because of time constraints. Time constraints also prevented a more extensive investigation of participants' memories of the ages at which they developed brand loyalty for specific product categories.

A lengthy survey consisting of all the aforementioned topics could be posted and sent out to have information on behavioral responses, attitudinal responses, the 12 metrics of brand loyalty, and the personality types of the participants. This could be done so that information is collected from the same individuals. ❖

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