

Skintwine

Intentional Skincare &
Conscious Consumption Among
Young Urban Indian women

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Extended Abstract



Fig. 1: Cosmetic smears of creamy texture on a pastel background

1.1 Introduction



“I spend hours researching ingredients, watching YouTube reviews, looking at influencer recommendations on Instagram & reading Reddit threads... but I still don’t know if this moisturizer is actually right for me.”

Aditi, a 24-year-old marketing professional in Mumbai, captures the exhaustion in her voice as she describes her skincare routine. Despite her cautious, research-driven approach, she finds herself trapped in endless cycles of trial and error.

Her reflection reveals a paradox facing young urban Indian women today: unprecedented access to skincare information has created more confusion than clarity. This demographic—tech-aware, digitally engaged, yet thoughtfully critical, reflects a rising mindset that seeks depth in a space too often dominated by superficial solutions. They crave understanding, not clutter, yet remain vulnerable to overconsumption, decision fatigue, and self-doubt.



Fig. 2: Korean care system cosmetic bottles, jars, tubes

1.2 Context & Significance

Aditi’s struggle reflects a broader **crisis of intentionality in contemporary skincare consumption**. Women aged 18–28 in urban India are highly motivated to care meaningfully for their skin yet often struggle to understand its unique needs in relation to lifestyle, hormones, and environmental context. This gap generates emotional strain and contributes to unsustainable consumption patterns.

The issue extends beyond the personal sphere. Skincare overconsumption intersects with global environmental risks — chemical pollution, biodiversity loss, and the release of novel entities, pushing Earth systems beyond safe operating limits, with six of nine planetary boundaries already transgressed (*Stockholm Resilience Centre, 2023*). The Earth4All framework highlights how these patterns drive social inequality and ecological overshoot, reinforcing the interdependence of personal wellbeing and planetary health (*Earth4All, 2025*).

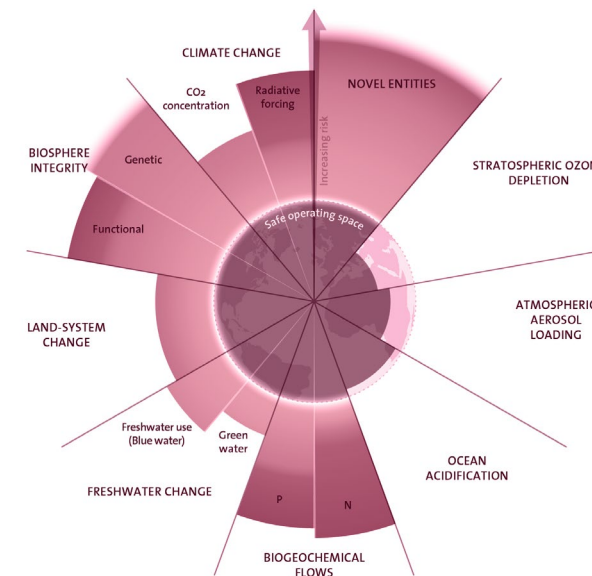


Fig. 3: Planetary Boundaries (Stockholm Resilience Centre, 2023)

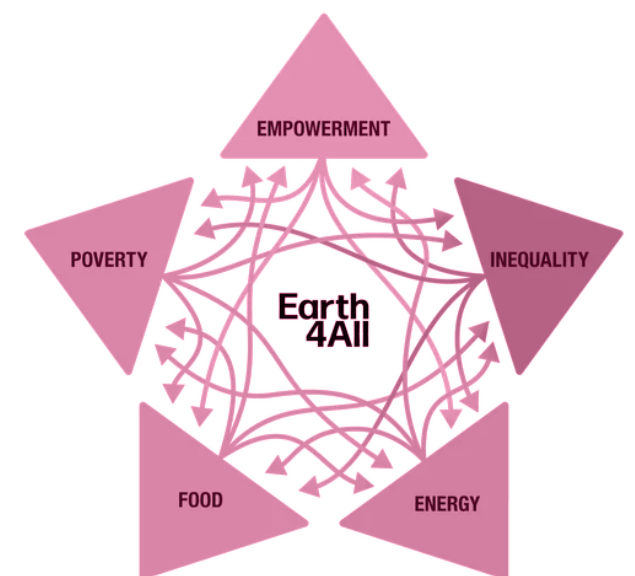


Fig. 4: Earth4All Framework (Earth4All, 2025)

These intertwined personal and ecological stakes informed my Research Question:

How might we enable young urban Indian women to better understand their skin’s real needs and influencing factors, so they can care for it with greater intention, confidence, and contextual awareness— while cultivating both skin literacy and conscious consumption?

1.3 Research Approach

To explore this disconnect, I positioned myself as both an insider and a critical researcher. Growing up in a small hill station and subsequently living in metropolitan cities like Mumbai and London exposed me to diverse consumption cultures and approaches to wellbeing. Coupled with my MA in Design Management, this trajectory expanded my lens from primarily human-centered thinking to one that also acknowledges ecological and systemic dimensions, shaping this investigation’s framing.

Guided by **Human-Centered Design** as my research framework (IDEO, 2015), I employed semi-structured interviews grounded in the **COM-B model** (Michie, van Stralen & West, 2011) to explore participants’ capabilities, opportunities, and motivations (Appendix A: Research Foundation). My initial assumption that young women are heavily influenced by trends and social media was challenged through five in-depth interviews. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) revealed skincare to be described as a deeply personal practice shaped by past experiences, particularly challenging teenage years, which fostered intentionality rather than superficiality.

Data triangulation (Appendix B: Systems Analysis) revealed contradictions with secondary sources. While industry reports characterise Gen Z as hyper-aware and ingredient-literate, participants struggled with ingredient literacy, decision fatigue, and skepticism toward influencers. The critical insight emerged from thematic analysis: participants repeatedly expressed, “I don’t understand why a product is needed for me.” The emphasis lay in “for me”—personal relevance in the context of lifestyle, emotions, hormones, and environment.

Systems mapping informed by Meadows’ framework revealed most interventions operate at low-leverage points addressing only surface-level events and patterns rather than structural drivers (Meadows, 2012), identifying the opportunity at **Leverage Point #6: Information Flows**. Existing solutions reinforced this diagnosis.

Market analysis informed that brands like SkinKraft and Bare Anatomy offer personalized product recommendations but ultimately drive more consumption (Appendix C: Market Analysis). The gap was not insufficient solutions but solutions addressing symptoms rather than root causes of decision-making confusion.

1.4 Findings & Intervention

Three core themes emerged from my analysis:

- 1. Struggles with informed decision-making in noisy landscapes
- 2. Skincare as emotionally charged self-care and identity and
- 3. Craving for meaning and mindfulness in consumption.

The broader behavioral issue that emerged was a disconnect between intentionality and capability. This led to my chosen leverage point of Enhancing Internal Clarity - helping users build awareness and confidence to make decisions based on their unique skin, context, and lifestyle.

The research pointed towards a fundamentally different intervention: not another personalization algorithm or ingredient scanner, but a tool that cultivates internal capability to understand skin needs prior to product consideration. This resulted in Skintwine, **reframing skincare as an integrated practice of self and ecological literacy**.

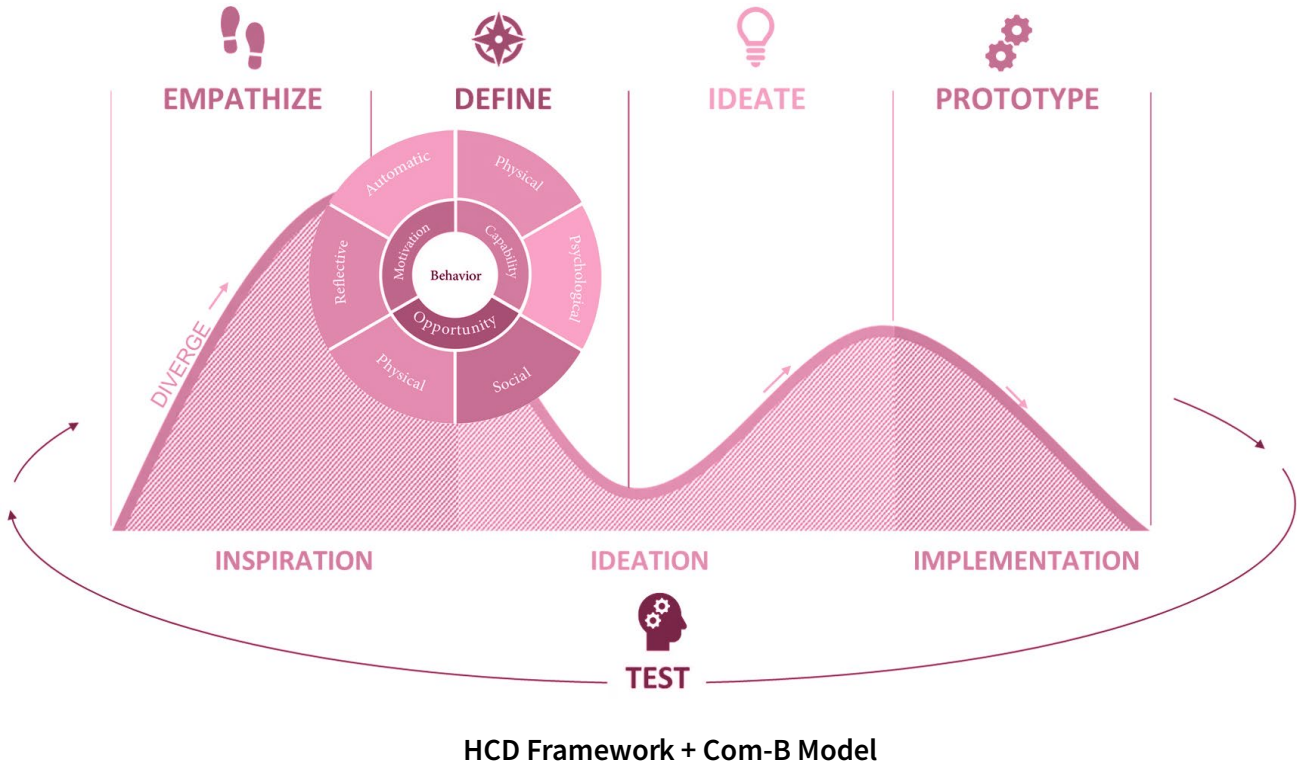


Fig. 5: Human Centered Design Framework (MovingWorlds Institute, 2025), COM-B Model (Khalilollahi et al., 2022)

1.5 Skintwine System Architecture

The resulting intervention translates these insights into a practical system architecture (Appendix D: Design Development). Skintwine operates through integrated physical and digital touchpoints:

Physical Component:

Features a weekly calendar with daily icon-based covering skin condition, mood, sleep, cycle, hydration and dietary triggers. Users employ dry-erase markers on the glass for 2-minute daily input with weekly reflection spaces.



Fig. 6 : Skintwine Calendar Design (Jain, 2025)

Digital Component:

Utilizes image recognition technology to digitize calendar data through weekly photo uploads, automatically syncing with existing health applications including cycle trackers (Flo, Clue), sleep and fitness monitors (Apple Health, Fitbit), and weather data. The app generates intuitive timeline visualizations correlating skin patterns with lifestyle factors.

The Insight Generation System in the app delivers weekly pattern summaries highlighting correlations (e.g., “skin felt oilier 2-3 days before your period”), coupled with insights, gentle reflection prompts and non-prescriptive suggestions. Monthly snapshots provide broader trend analysis while maintaining its reflective approach.

Skintwine directly addresses the “for me” gap identified in research. Rather than prescribing products, it helps users understand why a product or practice may be relevant to their unique skin in the context of their lifestyle, emotions, hormones, and environmental factors. Choice architecture operationalizes Nudge Theory (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), making sustainable behaviors accessible by default, while visual feedback reinforces learning and habit formation.

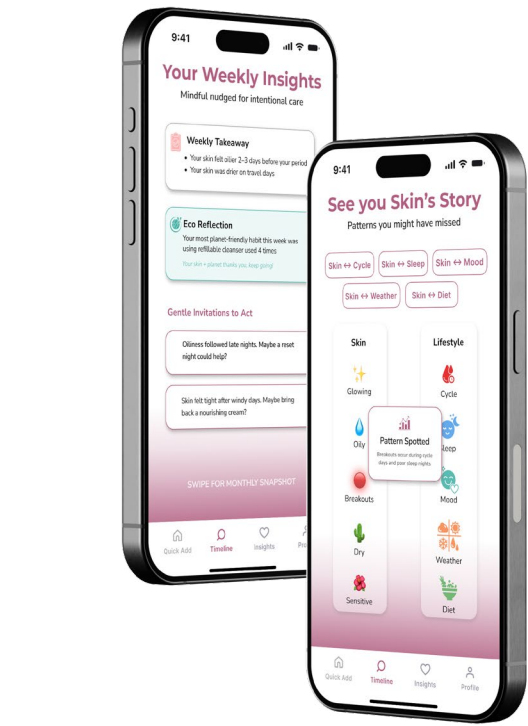


Fig. 7 : Skintwine App Screens (Jain, 2025)

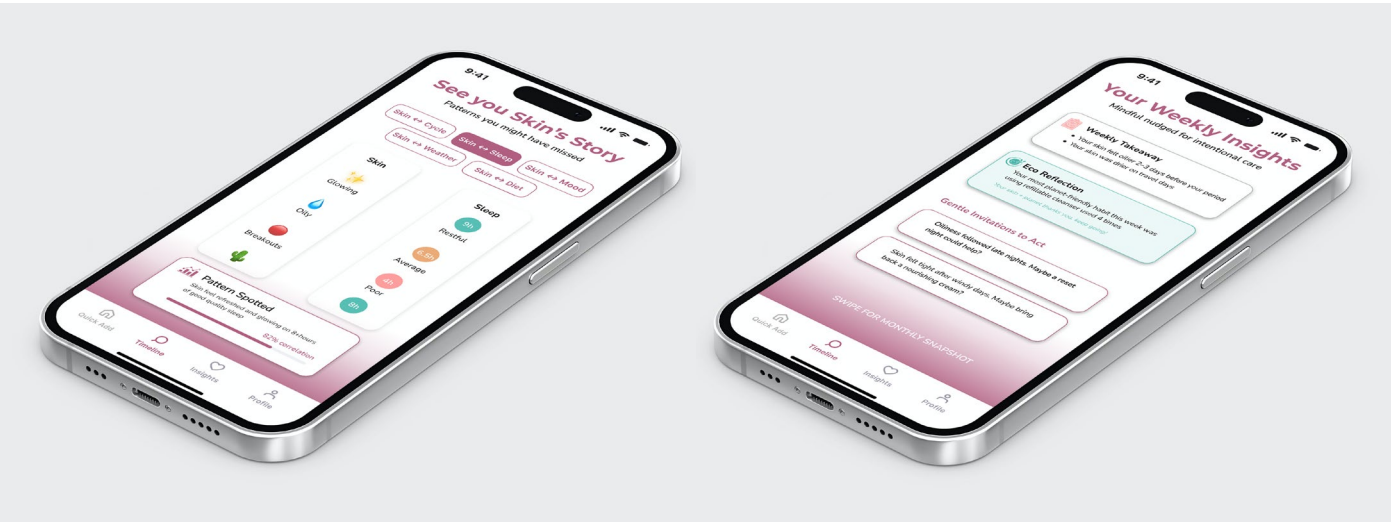


Fig. 8 : Skintwine visual timeline & insight screens (Jain, 2025)

1.6 Design Framework Developmen

The resulting intervention translates these insights into a practical system architecture (Appendix E: Concept Validation). Skintwine operates through integrated physical and digital touchpoints:

1. **Hybrid Physical-Digital Engagement:** Combining tactile calendar interactions with intelligent app integration to accommodate diverse accessibility needs and user preferences identified in primary research

2. **Micro-Commitment Architecture:** Designed for <5 minutes daily interaction versus overwhelming data dashboards, reducing friction while maintaining engagement depth.

3. **Reflection-Before-Prescription Approach:** Prioritizing personal pattern recognition over external product recommendations, aligning with COM-B models to address the core ‘for me’ gap

5. **Cultural Sensitivity Framework:** Adapted for young urban Indian women while remaining demographically scalable, addressing beauty pressures and cultural consumption patterns identified in primary research.

4. **Embedded Sustainability Consciousness:** Integrating eco-awareness through gentle nudges rather than guilt-driven messaging, supporting mindful consumption without overwhelming users or triggering decision fatigue.

1.7 Validation & Impact Assessment

Initial primary stakeholder validation confirms the intervention’s resonance with target users and potential for sustainable impact. When asked about potential implementation, participants expressed intent to use the tool, with one noting it would “*help me be more mindful and understand my skin better and what it needs rather than experimenting*”—directly addressing the core problem identified in research (Appendix E: Concept Validation).

The impact measurement methodology for Skintwine will combine quantitative and qualitative indicators. Quantitatively, success will be measured by 60% of users consistently engaging with the tool for over one month and 80% reporting greater clarity in recognising their skin triggers and patterns. Qualitatively, impact will be assessed through users’ self-reported improvements in decision-making confidence & sustainable consumption habits.

1.8 Conclusion

Skintwine envisions scaling from **individual empowerment to systemic transformation** (Appendix F: Technical Specifications & Future Vision). In the short term (1–2 years), the hybrid toolkit offers a behavioral entry point for urban Indian women. Medium-term (3–4 years), it expands across demographics, integrates with health and lifestyle applications, and embeds ecological metrics. Long-term (5+ years), it becomes a community-oriented platform where anonymized data fosters peer learning, informs sustainable product design, and contributes to policy discourse.

The progression aligns with the Stages of Change model (*Prochaska & DiClemente, 1983*) as internal clarity and skin literacy support transition from contemplation to sustained action. Sustainability nudges embedded in daily routines reinforce **intentional consumption**, collectively facilitating broader shifts aligned with Sustainable Consumption Theory—reframing skincare as an alignment with intrinsic values rather than external marketing pressures (*Jackson, 2005; Lim, 2017*).

Ultimately, this approach addresses challenges identified in the Planetary Boundaries framework (*Stockholm Resilience Centre, 2023*). In 3–5 years, communities could make confident, context-aware skincare decisions, reducing overconsumption and supporting conscious consumption.

Reflective Writing



Add image

Fig. 9 : Chamomile flowers growing from milk splash

2.1 Approach to Reflection

Having outlined the aims, process, and outcomes of my final major project: Skintwine, in the extended abstract, this section now shifts focus from what I did to what I learned. While the abstract captured the project's contribution to intentional skincare and sustainable consumption, this reflective report critically examines how my own assumptions, decisions, and positionality shaped the work, and how the process transformed my understanding of design management and design leadership.

To structure this inquiry, I draw on (Rolfe, 2001) **“What? So What? Now What?” Framework**, complemented by (Ruch, 2007) **Four Lenses of Reflection (technical, practical, process, and critical)**. This combination enables me to move between recounting the process, analysing the deeper significance of my choices, and situating them within broader systemic and professional contexts.

Ultimately, this reflection aims to demonstrate how working on Skintwine not only deepened my research and design practice but also reshaped my understanding of responsibility — highlighting that design leadership is as much about enabling reflection and clarity as it is about creating solutions.

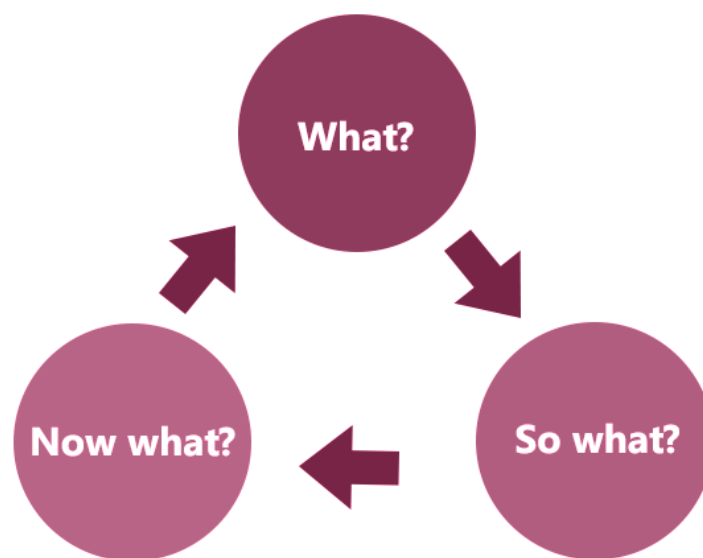


Fig. 10 : Rolfe-model-of-reflection (NursingAnswers.net, n.d)

2.2 Part 1: What?

My project began with a paradox I could not ignore: despite unprecedented access to skincare knowledge and digital communities, young women in India still described their skincare decisions as confusing, exhausting, and full of trial and error. This disconnect — between the abundance of information and the lack of clarity — became the seed of my investigation and, eventually, the foundation of Skintwine. The extended abstract outlines the formal framing of the project, but here I focus on how I experienced and navigated the process.

2.2a Positionality: Insider and Outsider

At the start, I was aware that my own background would shape this project. Growing up in a small hill station in India, then moving to metropolitan cities like Mumbai and London, gave me a layered perspective on consumption and wellbeing. As an insider, I shared cultural and generational reference points with my participants: I understood the social pressures of beauty routines, adaptation of Western norms, and the influence of peers. As an outsider, however, I was conducting this work while studying in London, surrounded by discourses on sustainability, planetary boundaries, and systems thinking that were less familiar to my participants.

This duality gave me both access and distance. It meant participants often trusted me to “get it” when they described beauty anxieties, yet it also made me conscious of the privilege of my academic lens. I could step back and connect their struggles with broader systemic issues — overconsumption, environmental degradation — in ways that might not have been obvious to them. Reflecting on this now, my positionality was not just a background factor but an **active driver of how I designed, framed, and interpreted the project**.

2.2b Research Methods & Decisions

To explore this further, Along with a few other, I relied on these three core methods: **semi-structured interviews**, **thematic analysis**, and **systems mapping**. Interviews gave me access to lived realities, capturing nuance and emotion. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke’s approach, helped me surface recurring patterns while still holding space for contradictions. Systems mapping, influenced by Meadows’ work on leverage points, allowed me to place individual struggles within a larger ecological and industrial context.

Each method carried strengths and challenges. Interviews surfaced rich, nuanced stories, offering deep insights into participants’ experiences and perspectives. Thematic analysis helped clarify insights but required careful interpretation to avoid forcing patterns. Systems mapping opened systemic insights but felt abstract at times, especially when trying to bridge between theory and practice.

Reflecting on these choices now, I see that what worked best was not any single method, but the combination of methods. Together, they gave me both closeness to participants’ lived realities and distance to analyse systemic structures.

2.2c Early Challenges

The project was not without challenges. Time constraints meant I could only interview five participants, which initially left me feeling underprepared to claim insights. Yet this limitation forced me into depth rather than breadth, encouraging a more qualitative richness in the study.

Scope was another tension. At one point, my project risked becoming too broad — spanning from individual decision-making to systemic critiques of the beauty industry. It took guidance from tutors and peers to narrow the focus to “enhancing internal clarity,” a leverage point that still held systemic significance but allowed for a tangible intervention.



Fig. 11 : A Landscape of Waste



Fig. 12 :Young female shopping for skincare products in store aisle

In Element 1, tight timelines led me to rely on structured ideation tools like Fast Idea Generation, Crazy 8, and Affinity Mapping. While efficient, these constrained creativity and left little space for more radical exploration. My initial Skintwine concept (Appendix G) was therefore thoughtful but limited in scope. In hindsight, the rushed start was still valuable—it provided a solid foundation that I later expanded, refining the concept to balance insight-driven grounding with greater creative experimentation.

Cultural sensitivity shaped every decision. Designing for young urban Indian women meant being alert to beauty pressures tied to identity, class, and even marriage prospects. My London environment helped me step back and critique these narratives, but also risked imposing Western ecological framings. Balancing empathy with critique was a constant negotiation.

I chose Human-Centered Design layered with the COM-B model as my behavioral lens because it aligned with the iterative nature of behavioral research. Its focus on learning from users, co-design, and refinement resonated with my belief that behavioral work risks losing focus without constant user alignment. The non-linear structure of HCD also suited my approach of moving between empathy and definition to ensure solutions addressed real user needs.

By positioning the planet as a stakeholder, I reframed the project from “designing a helpful skincare tool” to “designing an intervention that links personal wellbeing with ecological responsibility.” This was not a clean or immediate transition — it emerged gradually as I wrestled with methods, feedback, and my own assumptions.

2.3 Part 2: So What?

2.3a Technical Level: Effectiveness of Methods

The technical dimension of my reflection centres on the choice and execution of methods. Each of my core Research Methods were deliberately chosen to address different layers of the research problem: interviews to access lived experience, thematic analysis to identify recurring meanings, data triangulation to uncover contradictions between primary and secondary findings, and systems mapping to situate these meanings within wider consumption and sustainability systems.

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation proved especially valuable for surfacing tensions between public narratives of Gen Z as ‘hyper-informed’ consumers and the lived realities of my participants, who often described skincare as guesswork. This contrast also made me reflect on how the term ‘Gen Z’ is often broadly and uncritically generalised in articles and reports.

COM-B Model

Structuring questions through the COM-B model (Michie, van Stralen & West, 2011) helped me probe capability, opportunity, and motivation, ensuring that I considered behavioural drivers beyond simple product preference.

Thematic Analysis

Thematic analysis, drawing on (Braun & Clarke’s, 2006) framework, required rigour but was instrumental in identifying “internal clarity” as the leverage point. The phrase “for me” repeatedly emerged, shifting the project’s focus away from the market’s generic solutions and toward contextualised self-understanding. This method not only generated insights but also pushed me to critically reflect on how meaning-making happens in design research — through iterative coding, revisiting transcripts, and acknowledging my interpretive role.

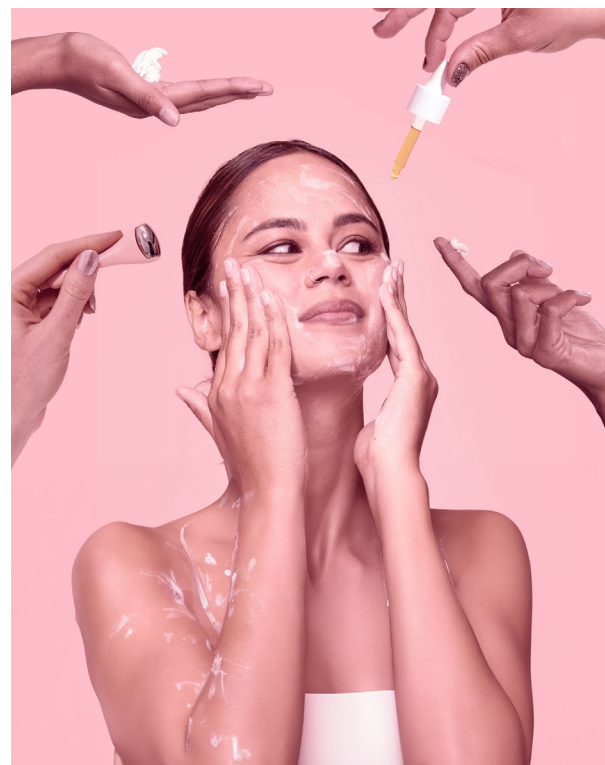


Fig. 13 : Quiet Quitting Is Coming For Your Skincare Routine blog post (Cochran, 2023)

Systems Mapping

Systems mapping, inspired by (Meadows, 1999, 2012) work on leverage points, enabled me to move beyond individual experiences and view industry behaviours at a systemic level. It revealed how most interventions operate at low-leverage parameters (e.g., product launches, marketing campaigns), reinforcing consumption rather than shifting underlying patterns. Mapping crystallised the opportunity to intervene at Leverage Point #6: information flows, reframing skincare from an external prescription to an internal learning process.

Cultural Probe

The cultural probe activity as a part of my primary research, however, did not work as intended. Its failure became a teacher — showing me that asking participants for heavy commitments was unrealistic. This realisation shaped my design philosophy: prioritising micro-commitments that fit seamlessly into daily life, a principle that later defined Skintwine’s design.

Working with AI

The integration of AI into my research process proved both invaluable and complex. A critical turning point came when I used it to examine my thematic analysis from alternative perspectives. After manually coding themes, it helped me recognize that participants' emphasis lay specifically on "for them" rather than just product purpose—a insight that completely shifted my research direction.

However, this raised important questions about the role of AI in qualitative research. I was conscious that AI could introduce biases or miss cultural nuances, so I used it strategically as a supplementary analytical lens rather than a primary method, maintaining the **primacy of my human interpretation and cultural understanding**.

Balancing AI assistance with human creativity proved challenging. While AI accelerated articulation and provided alternative perspectives, it sometimes generated generic solutions or inauthentic language. Future projects require clearer boundaries—leveraging AI for synthesis while preserving space for human intuition and cultural sensitivity (Appendix H)

2.3b Technical Level: Effectiveness of Methods

At the practical level, **intuition and lived experience were as influential as formal methods**. Growing up in India as a young adult gave me embodied knowledge of skincare as both personal practice and cultural construct. My own struggles with product overload and decision-fatigue sensitised me to participants' frustrations. This practice wisdom (Schön, 1983) guided me toward designing a tool that reduced rather than added to complexity.

For example, my trend analysis revealed the rising dominance of wellness apps and trackers. At the same time, I noticed in my own life how “yet another app” often became unsustainable. This intuition aided in my decision to pursue a hybrid format — a physical calendar for quick daily reflection, paired with digital integration for pattern recognition. The decision was less a technical outcome and more a synthesis of theory, lived experience, and resonance with users.

Feedback loops also shaped my judgment. When participants described the final concept as “perfect,” my initial reaction was scepticism. I worried this uncritical feedback signalled disengagement. Over time, I learned to read it differently: as evidence of alignment with their frustrations and aspirations. This reframing required me to **trust my judgment and resist undervaluing validation**. In (Brookfield, 1995) terms, I was learning through the “lens of students” — recognising that their affirmation was not passivity but confirmation of relevance.

My **ideation process** highlighted both strengths and limitations (Appendix I) Fast Idea Generation and Crazy 8s helped me produce ideas quickly, but also led to predictable patterns. The Trends Triangle grounded concepts in market realities, yet I wished I had used more radical, provocation-based methods to spark unexpected solutions.

Reflecting on my projects throughout my MA itself became part of my design practice. Using frameworks such as Gibbs' reflective cycle shaped how I made sense of the process. But more importantly, **reflection became embedded in my work itself**. As for this project, Skintwine became not just about tracking, but about building the reflective muscle in users. This alignment — reflection as both a research practice and design outcome — made the process feel particularly authentic.



Fig. 14 : Female Hands Rubbing with Liquid Soap Foam

2.3c Process Level: Relationships and Context

The process level highlights how relationships and cultural contexts shaped the work. As an insider-outsider, I carried both closeness and distance. My identity as a young Indian woman created rapport, as the participants assumed I intuitively understood their struggles with trends, product relevance, and marketing influences. At the same time, my academic training in London exposed me to sustainability frameworks (e.g., Planetary Boundaries, Earth4All) that were not part of participants' worldview. This gave me distance to critique consumption patterns, but also raised ethical questions about whose perspective was being privileged.

Relationships with peers and tutors further shaped the strategic design process. Tutors urged me to connect personal skincare routines to planetary stakes. Initially, this felt uncomfortable — I feared overextending the scope. Yet, the push helped in expanding the

project's ambition, anchoring it in planet-inclusive design rather than remaining solely user-centred. Peer discussions meanwhile reassured me that my focus on clarity and reflection filled a gap left by product-driven solutions. Together, these dynamics underscored the relational nature of design work: insights were co-constructed as much through dialogue as through methods.

Cultural context also mattered. Indian beauty practices are shaped by family influence, class dynamics, and social expectations, adding emotional weight to skincare decisions. This made it clear why overconsumption could not be addressed through purely rational appeals. Conducting the project from London gave me distance to analyse these pressures, but also risked overlaying Western sustainability discourses onto Indian realities. Navigating this tension demanded constant reflexivity about my positionality.

2.3d Critical Level: Challenging Discourses & Assumptions

The critical level required me to interrogate both industry discourses and my own assumptions. Initially, I assumed participants would be primarily trend-driven, reflecting stereotypes of Gen Z as hyper-consumerist. Research overturned this assumption, showing a deeper desire for intentionality. This pushed me to question how generalisations in secondary sources obscure nuance and to adopt a more critical stance toward market reports.

The project also resisted dominant beauty discourses. Beauty culture thrives on perfectionism, overconsumption, and dependency on products, portraying consumers as incomplete without constant purchasing. Skintwine instead positioned users as capable of generating their own insights through reflection and contextual awareness. By shifting focus from prescription to internal clarity, the intervention disrupted the narrative that solutions must always be bought. This aligns with (Meadows, 2012) critique of low-leverage interventions: most industry efforts reinforce consumption, while systemic change requires altering information flows and feedback loops. Skintwine sought to establish such a loop by showing users how stress, sleep, hormones, and environment intersect with skin health.

I also had to grapple with privilege and accessibility. My academic background gave me access to ecological and behavioural theories that participants had not encountered. The challenge was integrating sustainability without alienating users. Drawing on nudge theory (Thaler & Sunstein, 2008), I embedded gentle cues rather than guilt-driven messages, aiming to make sustainability empowering rather than burdensome. This reflected an **ethical responsibility**: to design not only with empathy but also with awareness of how privilege shapes knowledge and access.

Ultimately, this stage reshaped my understanding of design leadership. Leadership here was not about authority or polished solutions, but about responsibility: **questioning assumptions, holding space for diverse voices, and ensuring interventions contribute to both personal and planetary wellbeing**. It was about guiding conversations away from product-dependence and toward reflective practice, even if that meant challenging dominant industry logics.

2.4 Part 2: What Now?

2.4a Project Improvements

Broader stakeholder engagement

Future iterations would benefit from broader stakeholder engagement—involving dermatologists, beauty wellness brands and sustainability practitioners to test Skintwine against professional expertise and systemic considerations.

Enhanced Prototyping

The prototyping process also offered important lessons. Given the time, for feedback, I shared a concept video that combined storyboards and interaction flows to communicate what Skintwine is, what it does, and how it might help. This was effective for showing intent and gathering broad feedback on resonance, however a complete interactive prototype would have enabled participants to engage effectively. This would allow me to gather richer feedback on usability as well as desirability, shifting validation from concept affirmation to lived experience.

Comprehensive Ideation

The ideation phase could have benefited from more time and a wider range of methods. While Fast Idea Generation, Crazy 8, and Affinity Mapping rooted in trends analysis were useful, experimenting with radical, insight-driven approaches — like “what if” scenarios, provocation cards, or collaborative sketching — might have surfaced unexpected solutions. Integrating playful or material-based techniques, alongside iterative reflection, could have strengthened both the originality and systemic relevance of ideas before converging on the final concept for Skintwine.

Creative methods of probe

I also trialled a cultural probe (Appendix J) during the initial research phase with the aim of capturing everyday skincare practices through creative tasks, but engagement was low, with only one participant completing it fully. In hindsight, the activity may have felt more like an obligation than an enjoyable exercise. In future, I would redesign it to be more playful and engaging — perhaps using visual prompts, gamified elements, or artefacts that invite curiosity. This would make participation feel less like “work” and more like a co-creative exploration. Additionally, a diary study or extended prototype testing could provide deeper insights into behavioural adoption over time. Combining a reworked cultural probe with longitudinal testing would help bridge the gap between initial resonance and sustained practice, giving a clearer picture of how Skintwine fits into daily life beyond first-use novelty.

2.4b Professional Development

This project has reshaped my sense of professional identity. At the start of my MA, I approached design largely through a human-centred lens — focused on empathy, usability, and user needs. Over time, particularly through this project, I shifted toward a planet-inclusive perspective, recognising that human wellbeing cannot be disentangled from ecological systems. This was more than a theoretical adjustment; it fundamentally reframed how I define success in design. My role is not only to address individual needs but also to ensure that interventions respect and sustain planetary health.

The leverage point of internal clarity became central to this transition. I expanded it into the idea of fostering intuitive awareness and understanding of one's unique skin needs and context. This reframing shaped Skintwine's identity as a reflective toolkit rather than a prescriptive recommendation engine. For me, this principle extends beyond skincare: it reflects a way of working where the goal is to help people build their own understanding and confidence, rather than reinforcing dependency on external prescriptions.



Fig. 15 : Skincare flat lay with natural ingredients

Through this project, I also developed a more grounded view of design leadership. Leadership here was not about producing a polished final artefact but about holding responsibility — questioning industry norms, amplifying user voices, and embedding ecological accountability. It involved **navigating tensions between empathy and critique, insider and outsider perspectives, and human and planetary needs**. This kind of leadership is subtle but powerful: it creates space for reflection, challenges assumptions, and keeps a project aligned with its values under pressure.

Looking ahead, I feel equipped to work in spaces that demand integration of strategy, foresight, and innovation. I have strengthened my ability to combine qualitative research with systems thinking and to balance intuition with academic theories.

At the same time, I recognise the need to grow further in co-creating with my diverse stakeholders and in developing more advanced user testing and iteration. Building these skills will help me move from concept-level interventions to scalable, testable systems that can deliver sustained impact.

A key learning from my MA was that **effective storytelling means focusing on what truly matters**. Condensing my work for the LDF and later Skintwine taught me narrative discipline, crucial for communicating complex systemic goals. The WASTE House visit deepened my view of designers as connectors between people, nature, and stories, shifting my approach from imposing solutions to listening and co-creating with participants. Upstream thinking further shaped my ideation—moving me from surface-level brainstorming toward insight-driven, systematic problem-solving that now defines my design strategist identity.

Returning to India as an MA graduate from UAL London will inevitably influence how I am perceived. Within the industry, it will set me apart and create expectations of excellence — not just in the work I produce but also in how I communicate and present myself. Having global exposure has already given me more confidence and clarity about the kind of work I want to do and the person I want to become. At the same time, I am aware of the need to navigate perceptions with modesty, ensuring I bring ecological and forward-thinking perspectives in ways that feel collaborative rather than distant. This transition will require as much cultural humility as professional ambition.



Fig. 16 : Woman covered in foam

2.4c Systemic Impact

In my extended abstract, I outlined a long-term vision for Skintwine: short-term empowerment of individuals, medium-term integration with health and wellness platforms, and long-term contributions to policy and industry discourse through aggregated insights. Developing the business model canvas helped me think through the practical mechanics of scaling. Looking back, I now see this plan less as a strict roadmap and more as an aspirational direction that raises important questions.

In the short term, I remain confident that Skintwine can reduce decision fatigue and strengthen user confidence — an outcome that is both realistic and necessary. The value proposition canvas clarified how its unique offering of internal clarity and contextual awareness addresses specific pain points that existing personalization tools miss. The medium-term vision of integration with wellness platforms is attractive but introduces complex challenges around data privacy, partnerships, and the risk of commercial co-option. The long-term ambition of shaping industry or policy discourse is motivating but highly ambitious, requiring collaborations and infrastructures beyond my current capacity.

These reflections highlight that scaling Skintwine would demand **careful stewardship**. There is always the risk that interventions starting with reflective, empowering intentions could be absorbed into the same consumption culture they were designed to resist. My responsibility, therefore, is not just to imagine growth but to ensure that growth stays aligned with Skintwine's ethos of fostering clarity and sustainability, rather than turning into another data-driven engine for product sales.

I also acknowledge that this is not a task I could achieve alone. Scaling Skintwine responsibly would require collaboration with others bringing complementary expertise — in technology, behaviour change, sustainability, or policy. My role as a design manager would be to hold the vision and integrity of the project, while working with partners who can operationalise, scale, and advocate for it in ways that remain true to its purpose.

2.5 Conclusion

When I first started my MA at UAL, I approached it with curiosity and a desire to broaden my perspectives—both personally and professionally. My early work, like the Impact Poster, reflected my initial focus: exploring my creativity, understanding different viewpoints, and finding my place within the design industry. Now, as I near the completion of this journey, I see how much my expectations and understanding of design have evolved. Beyond honing my research, strategic, and creative skills, I've learned to approach **design as a tool for systemic change**—considering not just individual users, but communities, cultures, and the planet as stakeholders.

The MA built on this foundation, teaching me to navigate complex systems, practice strategic foresight, and use research to uncover patterns in behavior, culture, and change. Now, as a **Design Strategist**, I thrive on decoding insights through a human-centered lens and translating them into solutions that are both strategic and visually compelling—a balance of analysis, creativity, and impact.

Living and studying in London exposed me to diverse perspectives and approaches to design, giving me an insider-outsider lens I can now carry forward into my professional practice. **Overall, this MA has reinforced my confidence, clarified my niche, and deepened my commitment to creating solutions that are socially, environmentally, and culturally conscious.** I carry forward not only the skills and knowledge I've gained, but also a mindset that values intentionality, systemic thinking, and the potential of design to foster positive change.

Appendix

Note: Please zoom into the images to view details clearly :)

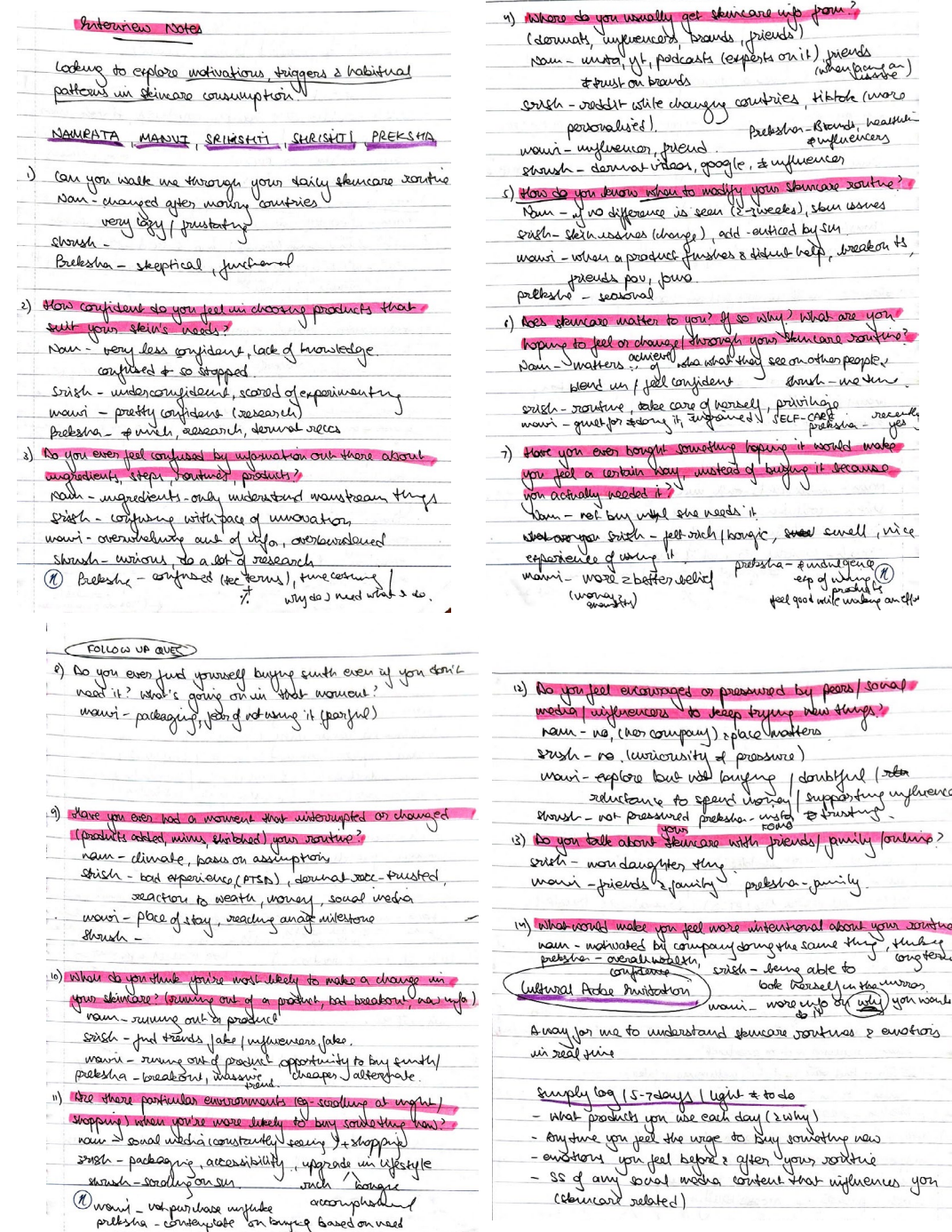


Fig. 17 : Product collections from Phoenix Bath & Beauty

Appendix A: Research Foundation

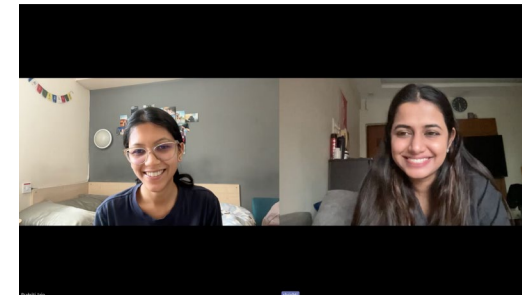
Semi Structured Interview Questions

The text highlighted in pink represents the interview questions. A set of 12 carefully curated questions was designed to be specific yet open-ended, encouraging conversation while uncovering behaviours, habits, and triggers related to skincare consumption among my stakeholders.

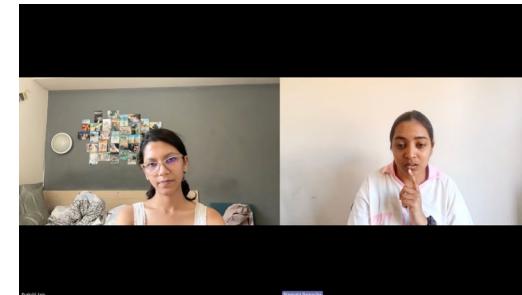


Semi Structured Interview Screenshots

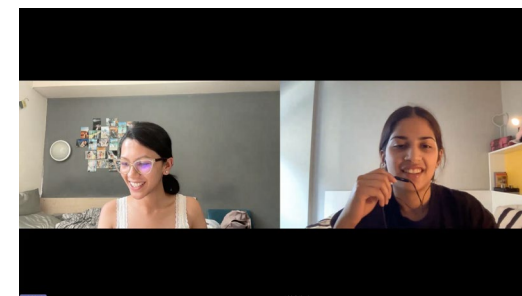
A total of five interviews were conducted — four online via Google Meet and one in person.



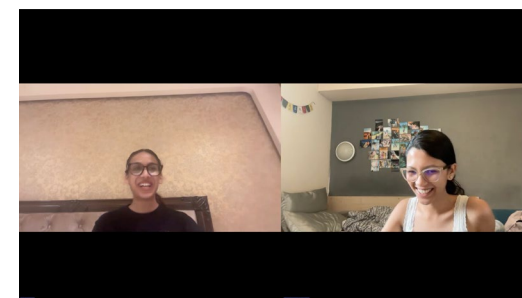
Participant Name: Shrishti Jetli
Age: 24 years
Originally from: Mumbai, India



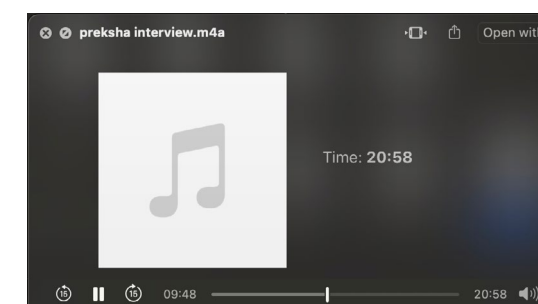
Participant Name: Namrata Bagrecha
Age: 25 years
Originally from: Jodhpur, India



Participant Name: Srishti Ghosh
Age: 24 years
Originally from: Delhi, India



Participant Name: Manvi Jain
Age: 24 years
Originally from: Gurgaon, India



Participant Name: Preksha Mehta
Age: 26 years
Originally from: Mumbai, India

Semi Structured Interview Signed Consent Forms

Participant Consent Form

Research Title: Understanding Consumer Buying Behaviour

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the attached information sheet carefully and discuss with others if you wish. Ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.

- I understand that I have given my consent to be interviewed about my thoughts on Understanding Consumer Buying Behaviour
- I fully give my consent to take part.
- I understand that I have given approval for my opinions to be included in the research outputs. Anything I say may be used in academic papers relating to the project, although these quotations will be anonymous.
- I have read the information sheet about the research project, which I have been asked to take part in and have been given a copy of this information to keep.
- What is going to happen and why it is being done has been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions.
- Having given my consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without having to give any reason.
- I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study, which has been fully explained to me.


Participant's name NIMRATA BAGSICHA _____ Date: 4th July 2017
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Participant's signature: *Nimrata* _____ Date: _____

Investigator's name PRAVRITI JAIN _____
(BLOCK CAPITALS)

Investigator's signature: *Pravriti* _____ Date: 4th July 2017

Contact Researcher: Pravriti Jain



university
of the
south
africa

Page No. _____


Date: _____

Participant Consent Form

Research Title: Understanding Consumer Buying Behaviours

You are being invited to take part in a research project. Before you decide to take part it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the attached information sheet carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Ask if anything is unclear or if you would like more information.


- I have given my consent to be interviewed about my thoughts on Understanding Consumer Buying Behaviours
- I fully give my consent to take part.
- I understand that I have given approval for my opinions to be included in the research outputs. Anything I say may be used in academic papers relating to the project although these will not be anonymous.
- I have read the information sheet about the research project, which I have been asked to take part in and have been given a copy of this information to keep.
- What is going to happen and why it is being done has been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions.
- Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the research programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without having to give any reason.
- I honestly fully and freely consent to participation in the study, which has been fully explained to me.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):	PREKSHA MENTA	Date: _____
Participant's signature:	Virtual consent received	_____
Investigator's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):	PRIYARTHI JAIN	Date: _____
Investigator's signature:		Date: _____

Contact

Researcher: Priyarthi Jain
 +91 944550515
 p.jain@unisa.ac.za
 p.jain@2020242@unisa.ac.za

fully explained to me.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):	PREKSHA MEHTA	
Participant's signature:	Verbal consent received	Date: 08 July 25
Investigator's name (BLOCK CAPITALS):	PRAKRTI JAIN	
Investigator's signature:		Date: 08 July 25

Contact
 Researcher: Prakriti Jain
 +44 7741066935
 p.jain0220242@arts.ac.uk

Project Scope : Aim, Objectives & Methods Matrix

The scope of the problem, as well as the final framing of my research aim and objectives, evolved gradually through the research process. Rather than being based on assumptions, the aim emerged from iterative engagement with primary and secondary research, including interviews and analysis. What follows is the current framing of the project.

Scope of the Project

AIM

To empower young urban Indian women (aged 18–28) who see skincare as a meaningful part of their identity and emotional wellbeing, by creating tools and approaches that help them **understand their skin's unique needs** intuitively and personally—so they can make **mindful skincare choices** that support both their health and sustainable consumption.

Scope of the Project

Objectives & Methods

OBJECTIVES	METHODS
To explore and understand the motivations, triggers and habitual patterns skincare consumption among young urban Indian women.	Semi-structured interviews, cultural probes, observation
To identify and analyze the core problems and challenges faced by this group by synthesizing primary data.	Thematic analysis, data synthesis
To apply secondary research and contextual analysis to frame the problem and inform the design direction.	Literature review, PESTLE analysis, contextual analysis, case studies, trends analysis
To map and examine the wider skincare ecosystem, including key stakeholders and systemic factors influencing consumption behaviors.	Stakeholder mapping, systems mapping
To generate and develop targeted design interventions addressing identified leverage points within the system.	Ideation techniques, persona mapping, competitor analysis, value proposition, concept development
To refine and validate the proposed interventions collaboratively with primary stakeholders to ensure relevance and effectiveness.	Co-design workshops, user testing

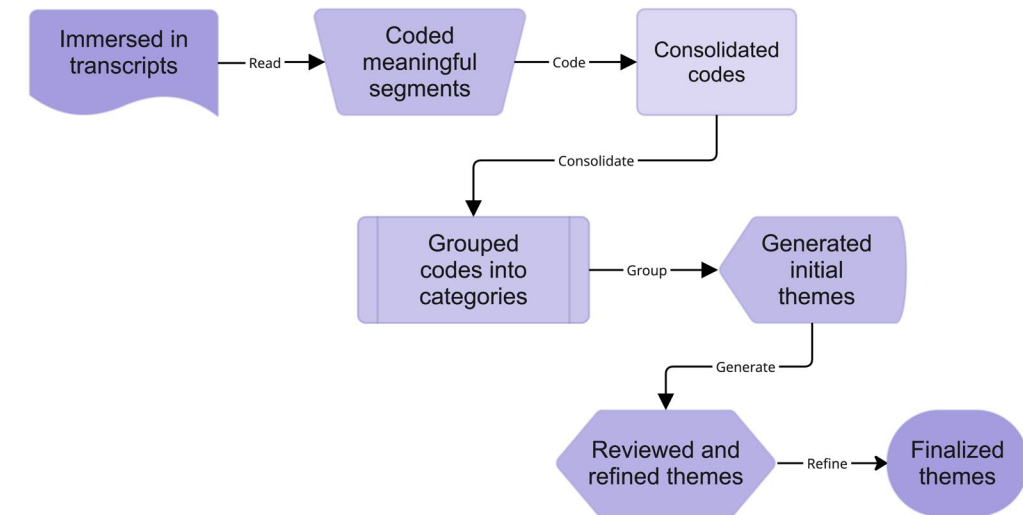
PESTLE + E Analysis

The PESTLE analysis was conducted to unpack the systemic factors influencing frequent skincare consumption in India and its environmental impact. By examining political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental, and ethical dimensions, the exercise highlighted how market forces, cultural norms, regulatory gaps, and consumer aspirations interact to drive over-purchasing. This mapping provided a macro-level foundation that contextualised primary insights.

Analysing PESTLE Factors causing consumers to frequently buy skincare products, overlooking its environmental impact	POLITICAL		ECONOMICS		SOCIAL		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Terms like "natural," "organic," or "herbal" in skincare products are not strictly regulated allowing brands to market their products as eco-friendly without actually adhering to sustainable practices.Though India has laws related to Plastic Waste Management Rules, enforcement varies across regions leading to continued use of non-recyclable packaging.India does not have strict regulations against harmful chemicals like parabens or sulfates in skincare products harming the environment and health.Initiatives like "Make in India" aim to boost local manufacturing, including the cosmetics sector, leading to more production.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">The rise of microtrends such as graphic eyeliners, lip stains, and tinted moisturizers, all of which have become must-have products thanks to their visibility on platforms like Instagram.Beauty industry growth is fueled by rising disposable incomes, increased consumer aspirations, and the influence of social media and e-commerce.The proliferation of social media platforms is encouraging regular use of skincare products to achieve desired aesthetics.Availability of a wide range of skincare products at various price points makes them accessible to a broad consumer base prioritising cost effectiveness, not environment.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Concept of "stepification," where multi-step routines have become the norm in skincare.Social circles and peer recommendations significantly impact purchasing decisions.Consumers often associate skincare products with health and wellness benefits.In Indian culture, personal grooming and appearance hold significant importance, driving consistent use of skincare products.Engagement with content related to skincare can lead to increased preferences for these products		
TECHNOLOGY		LEGAL		ENVIRONMENT		ETHICS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Instagram's algorithm ensures that content from influencers are targeted effectively and personalisedInstagram Shopping allow influencers to tag products directly in their posts, streamlining the purchase process.Beauty brands are using AI to deliver personalized recommendations and search experiences for consumers.Advertisements on Instagram frequently use time-sensitive deals or highlight limited stock availability, creating FOMO.The proliferation of online shopping platforms has made skincare products more accessible to a broader audience.Advances in biotechnology and formulation science have led to the rapid introduction of new and innovative skincare products very frequently.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Influencers often have access to personal information about their followers and subscribers.Duping culture has resulted in the production of more of counterfeit products, therefore more buyingThe absence of stringent regulations governing environmental claims in product marketing allows companies to use terms like "eco-friendly" or "green" without standardized definitions, misleading consumersThe complexity of the regulatory landscape can lead to compliance challenges for companies, potentially resulting in the prioritization of marketability over sustainability.The legal framework offers limited incentives for companies to adopt sustainable practices in sourcing, production, and packaging.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">India's diverse climate conditions and high pollution levels drive consumers to invest in skincare products aimed at protection and maintenance.Despite a shift towards sustainability many Indian consumers prioritize product efficacy, price points and personal benefits over environmental considerations.Traditional practices emphasizing natural beauty solutions contribute to the use of natural material found in the environment for skincare production, overusing them.since there is an easy supply of natural ingredient in India, brands capitalize on this by promoting their products as being more eco-friendly or better for health, even though not all of them might truly be sustainable or organic.Consumers often overlook the negative environmental impacts of their buying patterns, which contribute to the depletion of natural resources, ocean pollution, harm to wildlife, and the production of hazardous microplastics.		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consumers often prioritize personal health and safety when selecting skincare products over environmentSocietal and cultural norms emphasizing specific beauty idealsThe pervasive impact of social media platforms and peer recommendations can drive consumers to frequently buy trending skincare productsFactors like ethical consumerism, health concerns, brand image, and economic considerations influence purchasing patterns.	

Thematic Analysis

Process of doing thematic analysis



1. Individual Codes



PREKSHA

Participant 2

Preference for natural/home remedies	Skin concern/issue as a trigger for starting skincare	Lack of knowledge about what would work for her	Skepticism towards putting stuff on her skin	Low confidence in skincare product decision-making	Self-research before purchase
Overwhelm & fatigue in ingredient understanding and its use	Questioning product necessity	Conscious of need for skincare product for her	Trust in medical/credible sources	Distrust in influencer marketing	Seasonal adaptation of skincare routine
Shifting priorities towards skincare due to age	Skin issues impact emotional well-being	Skincare Product experience over results	liking the illusion of taking care of her skin even if no proof of it working	Skin problems as triggers for product revisit	Skepticism toward trends,
Trust in a product based on brand reputation/social proof	Needs-based consumption habit	FOMO as a driver for product exploration	sense of curiosity build up due to social media followed by research for proof	Treating Skin as health indicator, being healthy overall	Self Confidence linked to how skin is looking

SHRISHTI

Participant 3

Mood-based skincare routine	Skincare as daily ritual, Habitual consistency	Try-before-buy behaviour	Trust in social recommendation (friends)	Results-oriented decision-making for continual use of product	product Ingredient curiosity followed by research
Functional over elaborate routines	trust on dermat influencers for product finding	Skepticism toward influencers	Reliance on dermatologist for any product use (new/changed)	trust in peer recommended products	Guided decision-making by dermat
focus on skincare to evade makeup confidently	skincare as unwinding ritual/ me time	Functional, not aspirational buying	curious to try new products but cautious and research driven	Trend-triggered curiosity	curiosity triggered by seeing someone use/ observation
Flexible but consistent skincare routine	Product info from friends	Research-before-buy behaviour	Review-led decision-making	skepticism around store salesperson suggested products	Shift from impulsive skincare to intentional and functional; self realisation
Visual proof as influence	No pressure to use products from social hype	Peer discussions generating curiosity and encouragement	Habitual consumption with the belief of long term benefits		

NAMRATA

Participant 4

Demotivation due to ineffectiveness of skincare being used	Lack of confidence in decision-making	overwhelm due to many choices available	Low skincare product ingredient knowledge /	Budget-conscious consumption	Skincare complexity overwhelm/ not sure what'll work for her
Desire for minimal yet consistent skincare routine	Preference for glowing skin due to influence from others	Lack of education on product ingredients / Ingredient illiteracy	apprehension towards chemicals in skincare & not enough knowledge	skin Safety-conscious buying behaviour	Skepticism towards influencer marketing
basic familiar level understanding of ingredients	Contradictory information confusion	Tech-enabled and trusted ingredient verification	belief in Lifestyle change over products for good skin	Prioritising internal wellness over extensive product use	DIY homemade skincare practices
Fear of using skincare with chemicals	trust in peer recommendation for skincare	experimental approach (try and buy) to skincare	social influence as a motivator for skincare	good skin boosts confidence	trends introducing curiosity
functional minimalist approach to skincare	conscious need based buying and product experimentation	trust in peer recommendations	Passive product discovery via social media	Collective skincare motivation	

SRISHTI

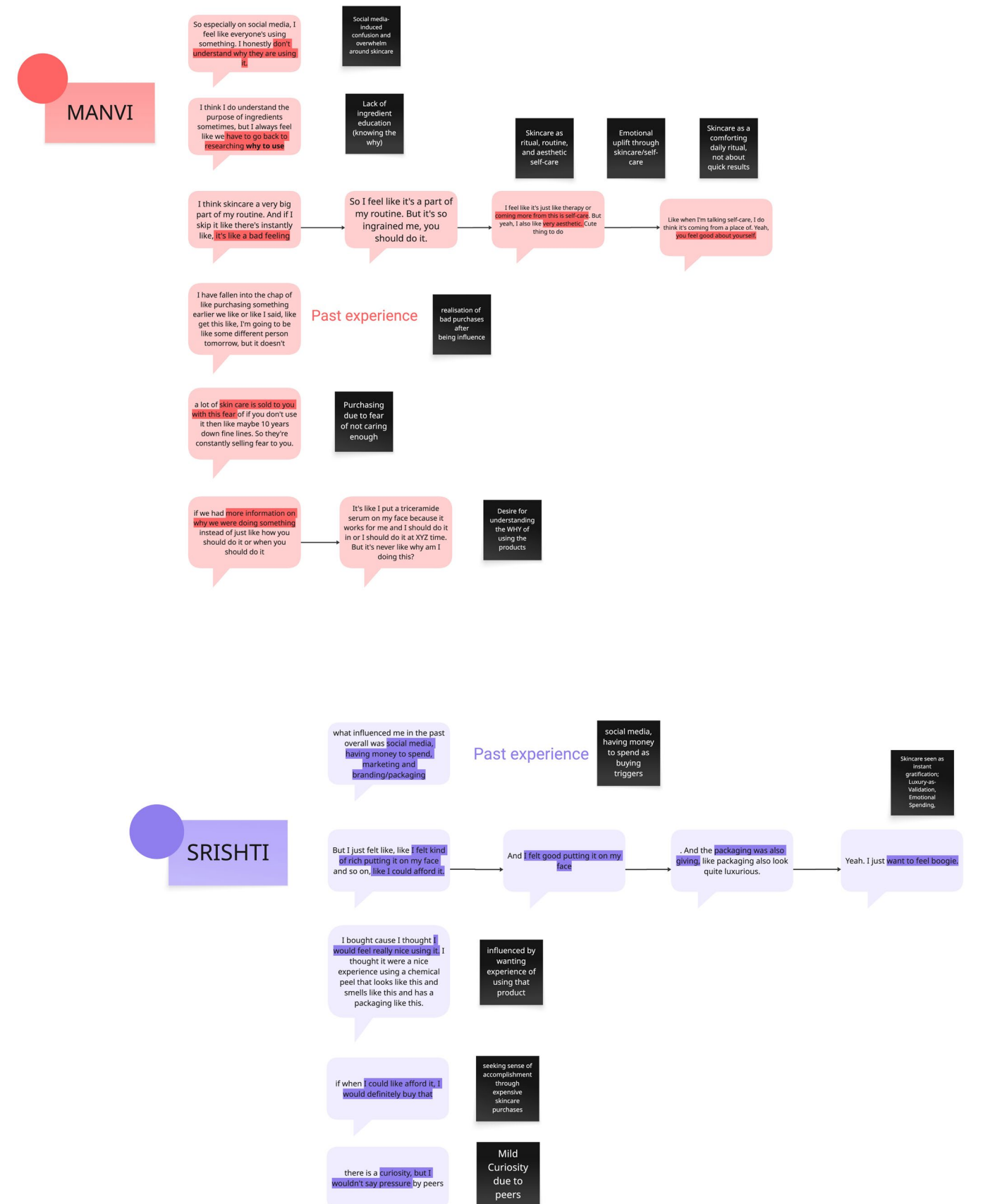
Participant 5

Fear of Experimentation, Past Skin Trauma	Environmental Context Shift in skincare	Safety in Routine, Fear of too much Change	Aesthetic buying Triggers (packaging)	social media, having money to spend as buying triggers	Information Overload, Product Fatigue & confusion
skincare Content Avoidance; fear of repeating same mistakes for skin	Disconnection from Trends on purpose to avoid being influenced	Cautious Ingredient Use, Past Trauma-Informed Habits	Research-Oriented buying Behaviour, Reddit > Instagram, larger trust on localised content	Trust on a product Based on real life visual Results on people	Problem-Driven skincare products Change
seeing product Results on someone as a Driver for purchase	Skepticism of Influencers and Authenticity Doubts	Skincare as Habit, Autopilot Behaviour	Seeing skincare as Privileged Practice, showing Self-Worth,	Skincare seen as instant gratification; Luxury-as-Validation, Emotional Spending,	influenced by wanting experience of using that product
Environmental Trigger as a change in skincare	Budget Constraints when buying skincare	Past-Positive Product Reintroduction	Fear-Based skincare Consumption, Age Anxiety	Trend Fatigue	Relatability as Trust Factor when taking product recs from someone
seeking sense of accomplishment through expensive skincare purchases	Mild Curiosity due to peers	Skincare seen as Empowerment and taking care of herself			

2. Merged/Consolidated Codes



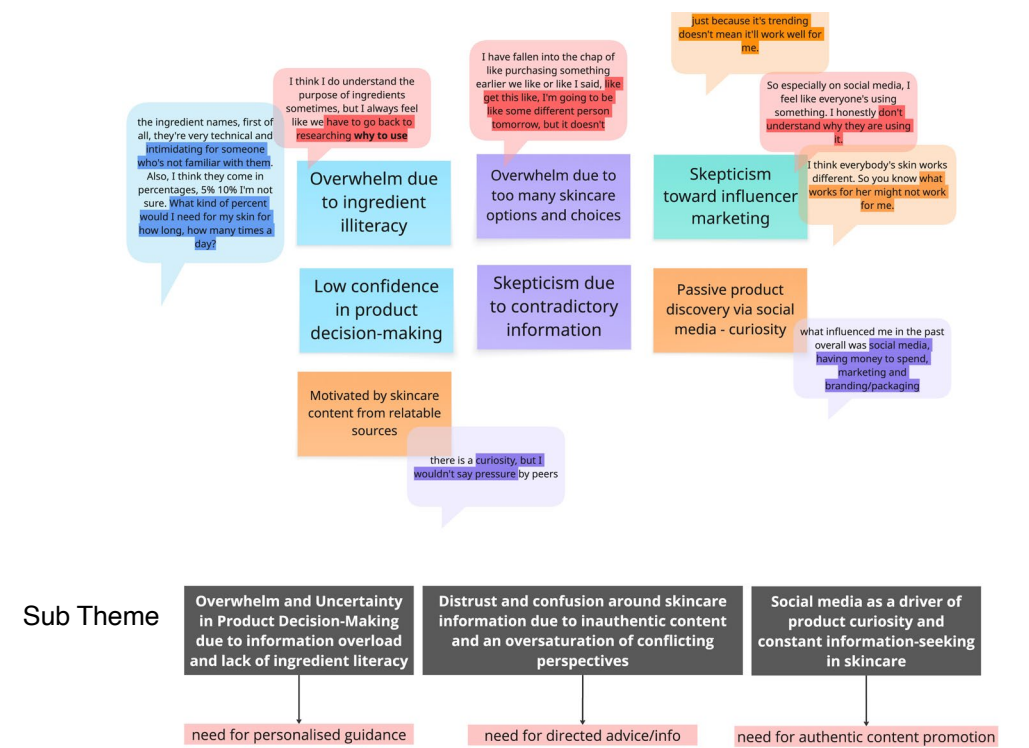
3. Key Insights from the Transcripts





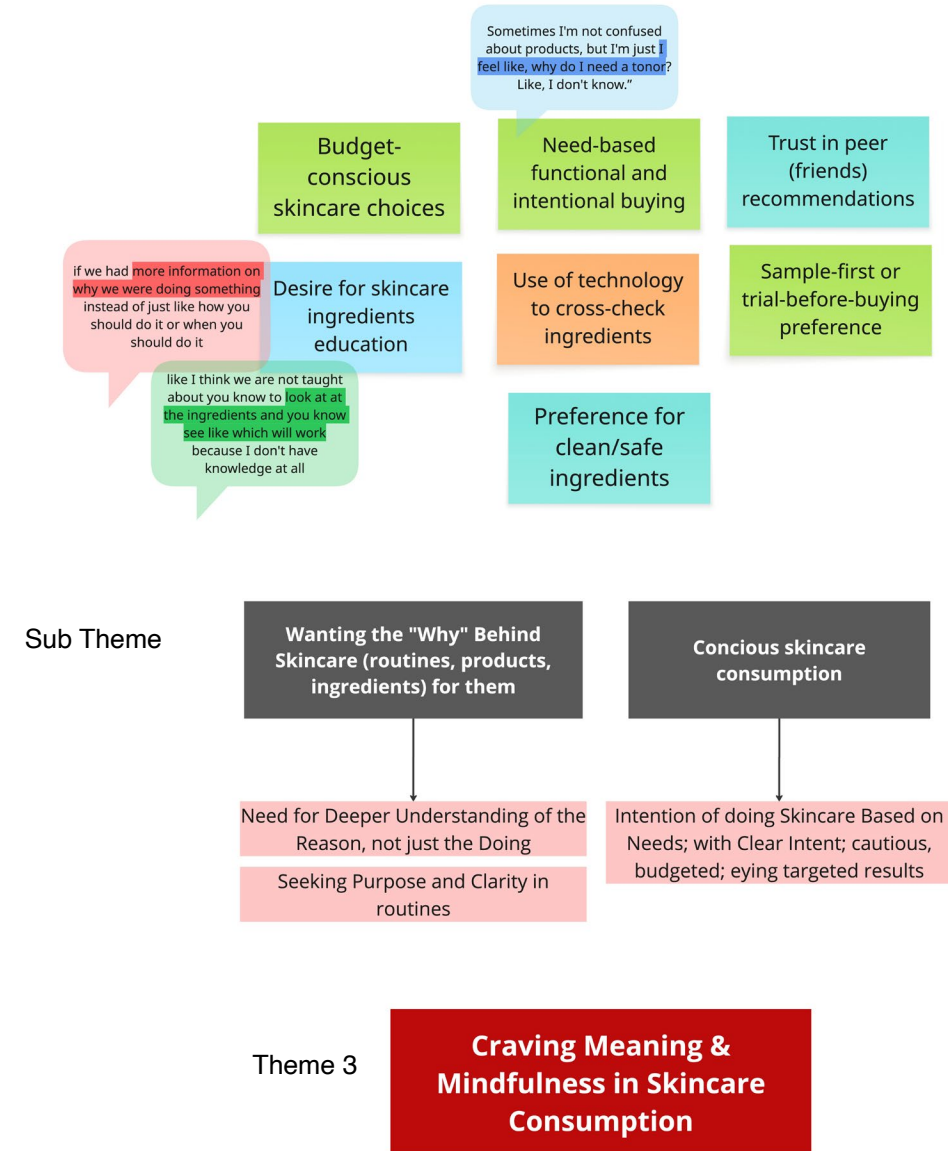
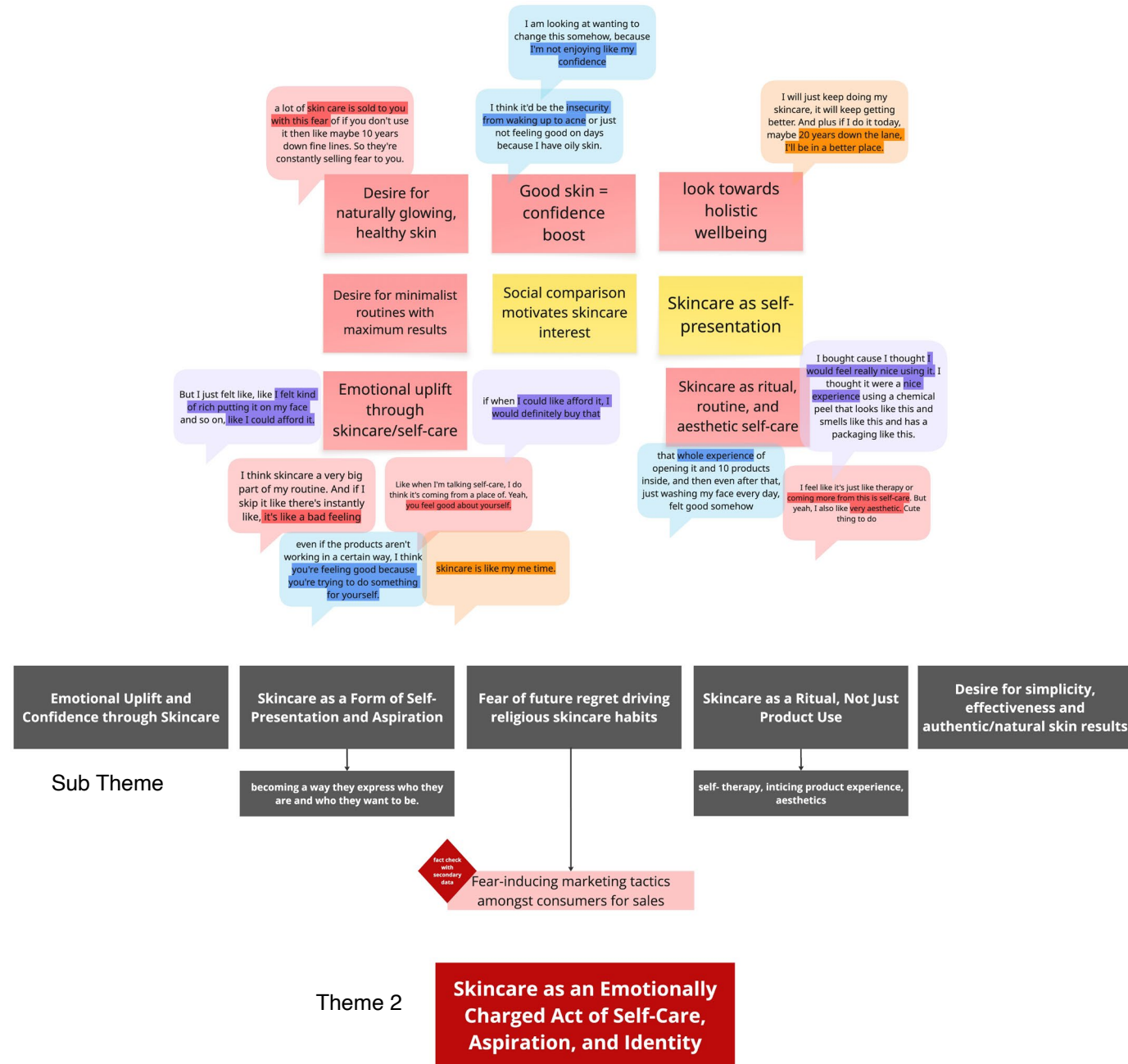
4. Generating Themes and Sub Themes

Consolidated Themes



Theme 1

Struggling to Make Informed Skincare Choices in a Noisy, Confusing Landscape



Appendix B: Systems Analysis

Systems mapping

Goals of creating a systems map

To clarify the root causes of the disconnect between user motivation and capability in choosing the right products.

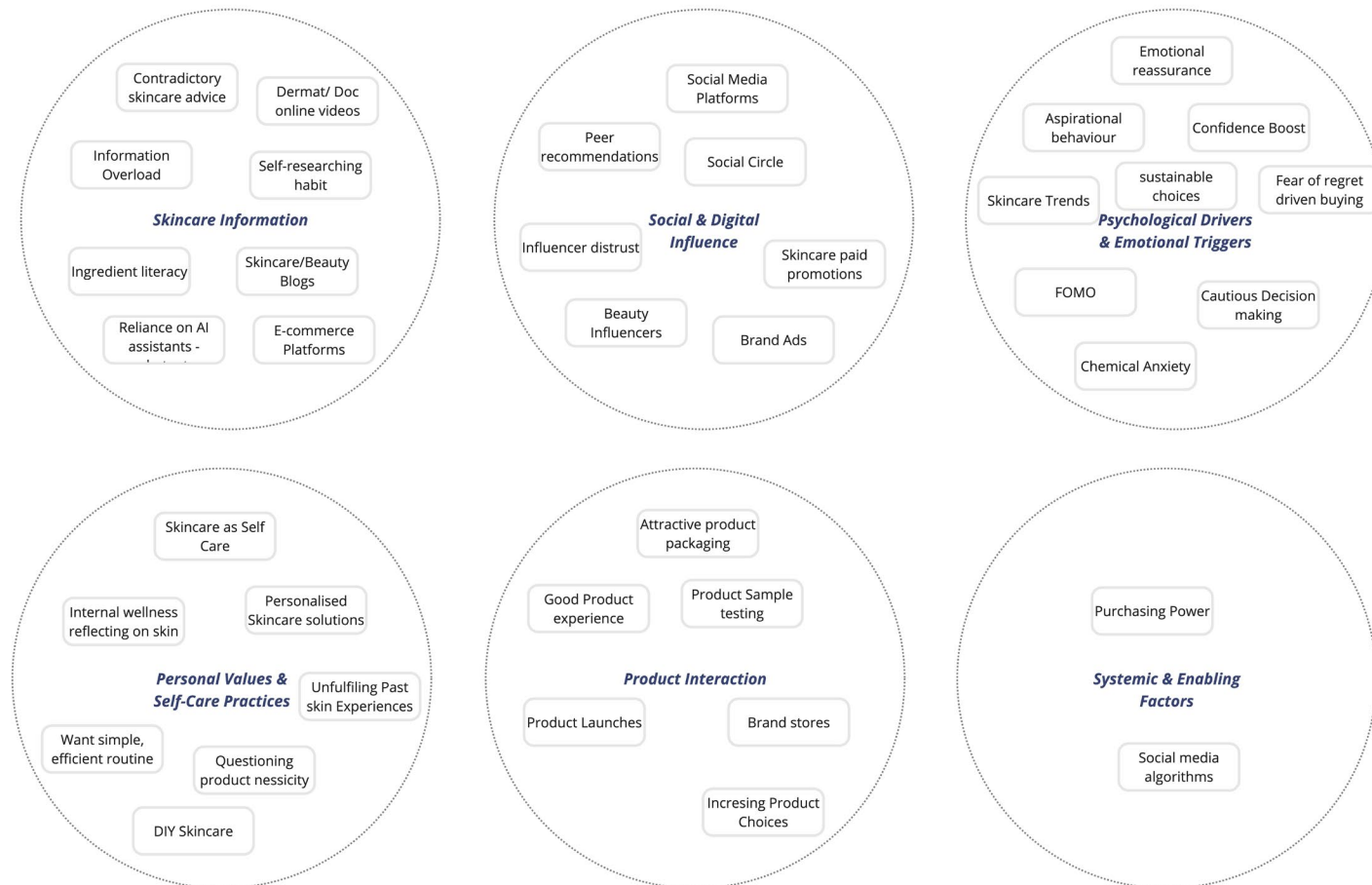
To identify the relationship between patterns, stakeholders, and influences shape how intentional users make decisions about skincare.

To uncover leverage points within the skincare consumption system that can reduce user overwhelm and confusion.

1. Thematic Grouping of Variables Influencing main variable

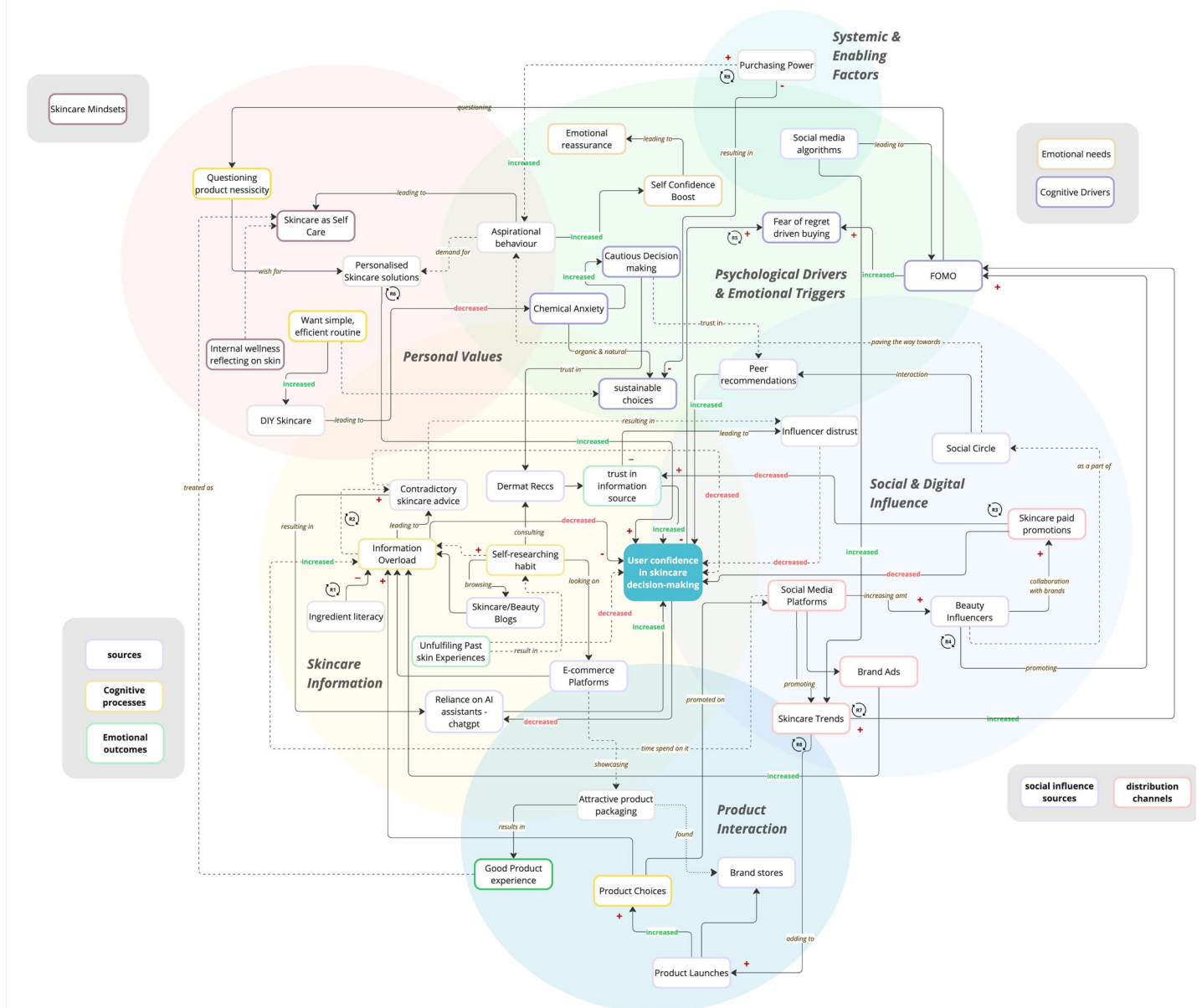
Main Variable

Low confidence in skincare decision-making



2. Sysystems Map

This systems map visualises the interconnections between personal values, psychological drivers, social and digital influences, and systemic factors that shape skincare decision-making. It highlights how information flows, emotional triggers, and stakeholder interactions influence user confidence and consumption behaviours.



Leverage point + Intervention Identification

Leverage Point

Chosen Leverage Point #6 from Donella Meadows' model: Changing Information Flows.

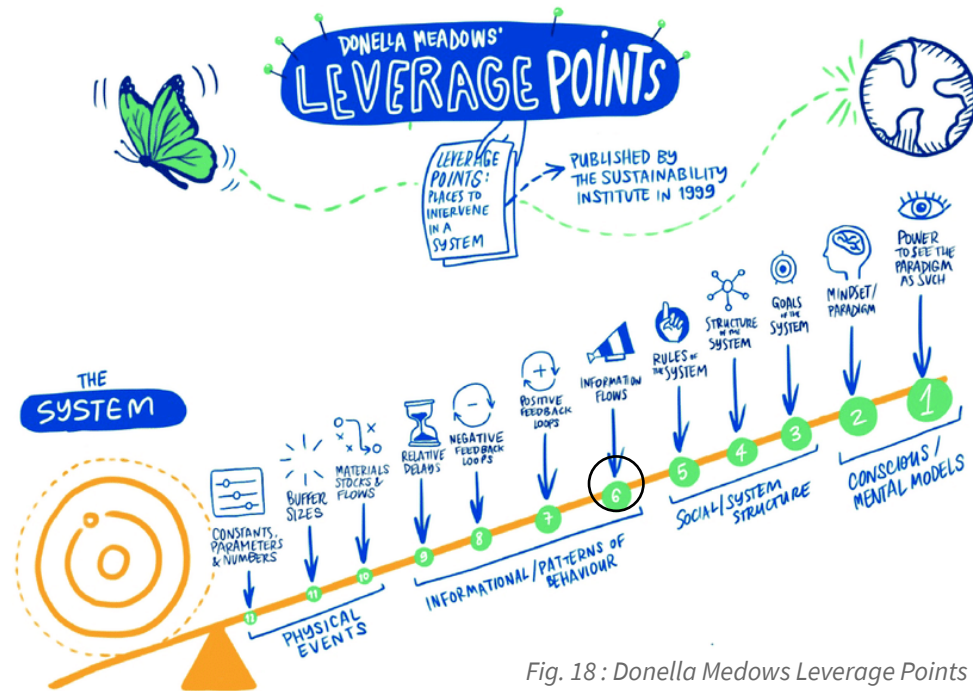
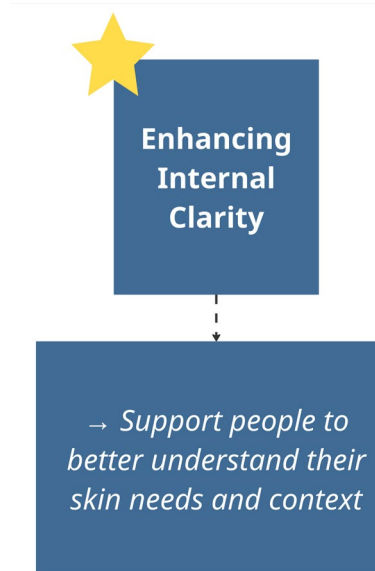


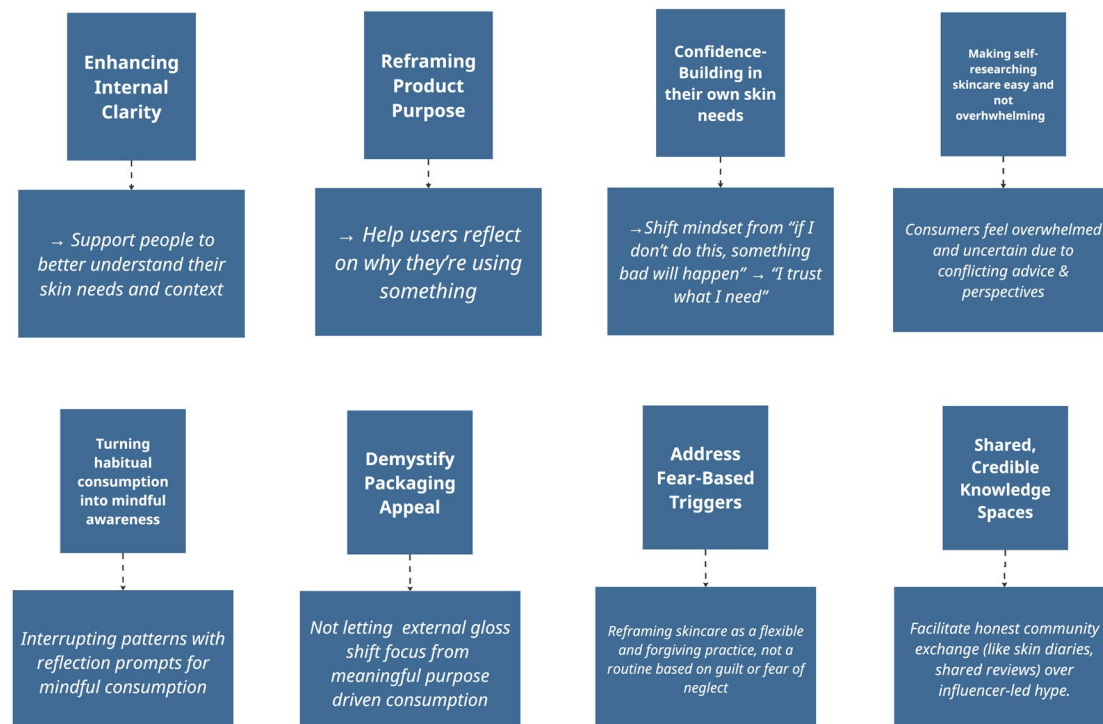
Fig. 18 : Donella Meadows Leverage Points (Ehrlichman, 2018)

Chosen Intervention and Reasoning



Developing the confidence to discern which products actually support their skin health, instead of just collecting what looks trendy or promising.

Intervention Ideas



Domino Effect

If we enhance internal clarity →

1. women begin to understand their unique skin needs and context more deeply →
2. they start to question why they're using certain products →
3. this leads to reframing product purpose and breaking away from trend-led choices →
4. with greater clarity, they feel more confident in trusting their own skin and less dependent on outside advice →
5. this reduces fear-based decision-making and the guilt of not following strict routines →
6. their improved self-awareness makes self-researching easier and less overwhelming →
7. they can now filter out noise and focus on relevant, supportive information →
8. as they become more intentional, habitual overconsumption slows down →
9. mindfulness and reflection take the place of automatic buying →
10. and with that clarity, they can contribute honestly to community spaces →

Data Triangulation

Supporting primary research findings



Contradictions/ Gaps from Primary Findings

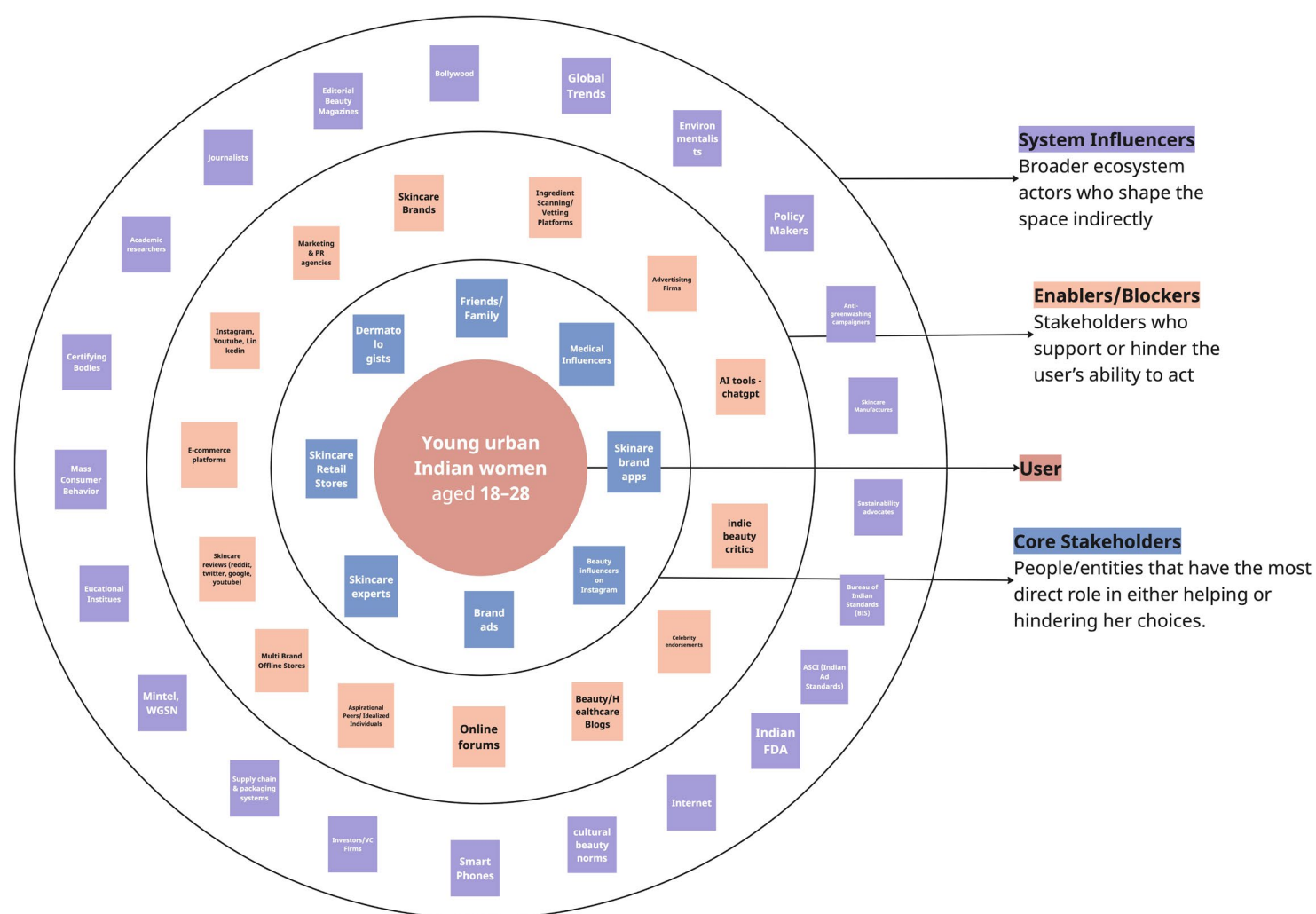


Facts and Figures on Skincare in India



Stakeholder Mapping

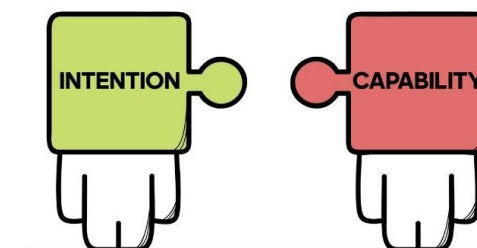
The stakeholder map shows the key influences of the issue — from direct ones like dermatologists, friends, and influencers to broader forces like media, cultural norms, and certifying bodies.



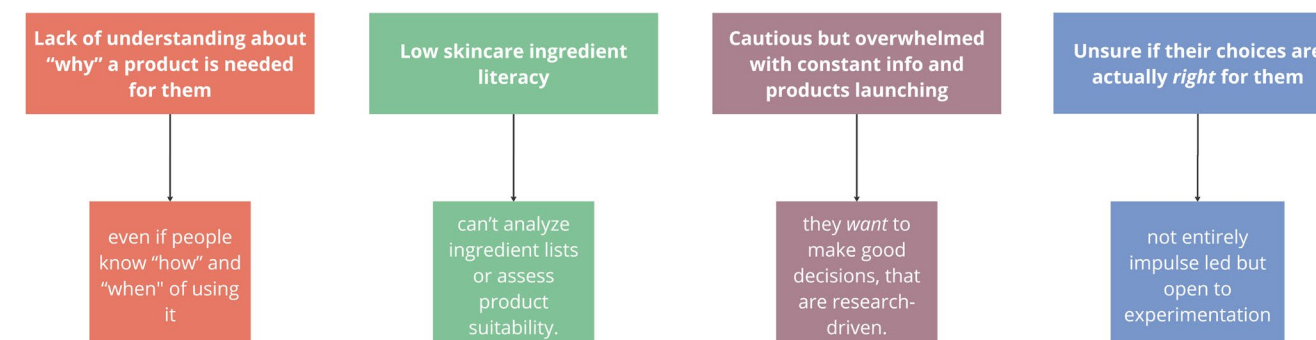
Intervention pathway analysis

Larger Problem Area

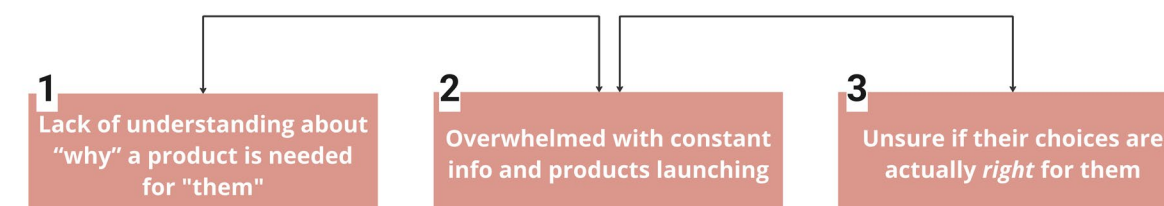
A disjoint between intentionality and capability — consumers want to make smart, values-based choices, but face overwhelm, lack of clarity, and confusion.



Decoding the Problem : Four areas of concern



Interconnectedness of the identified issues



Problem in Focus

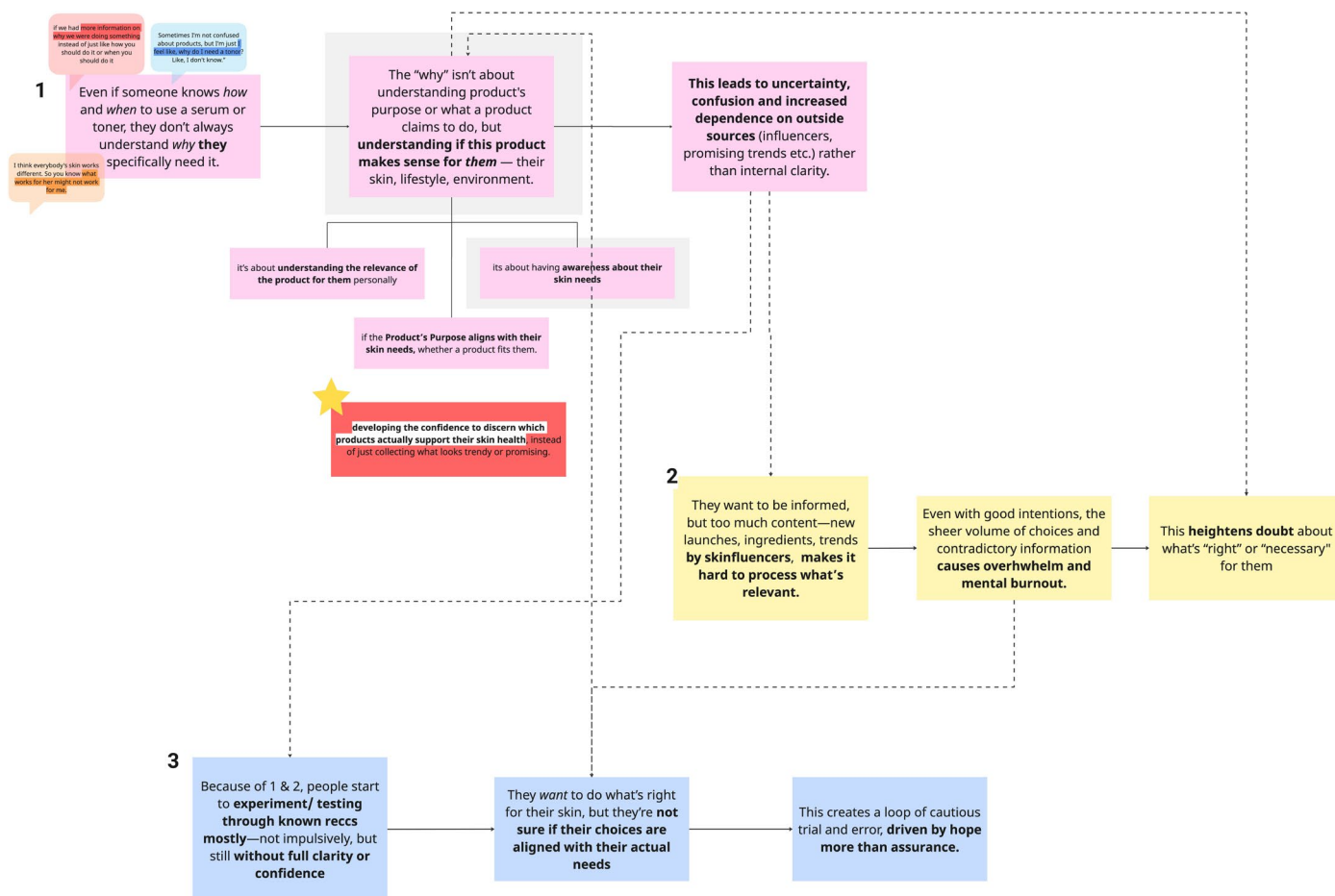
Lack of understanding about "why" a product is needed for "them"

Why This Matters

When people don't have clarity about the why, they:

- Rely more on trends and influencers
- Over-consume products they don't need
- End up disappointed or confused when results don't show
- Get stuck in a trial-and-error cycle

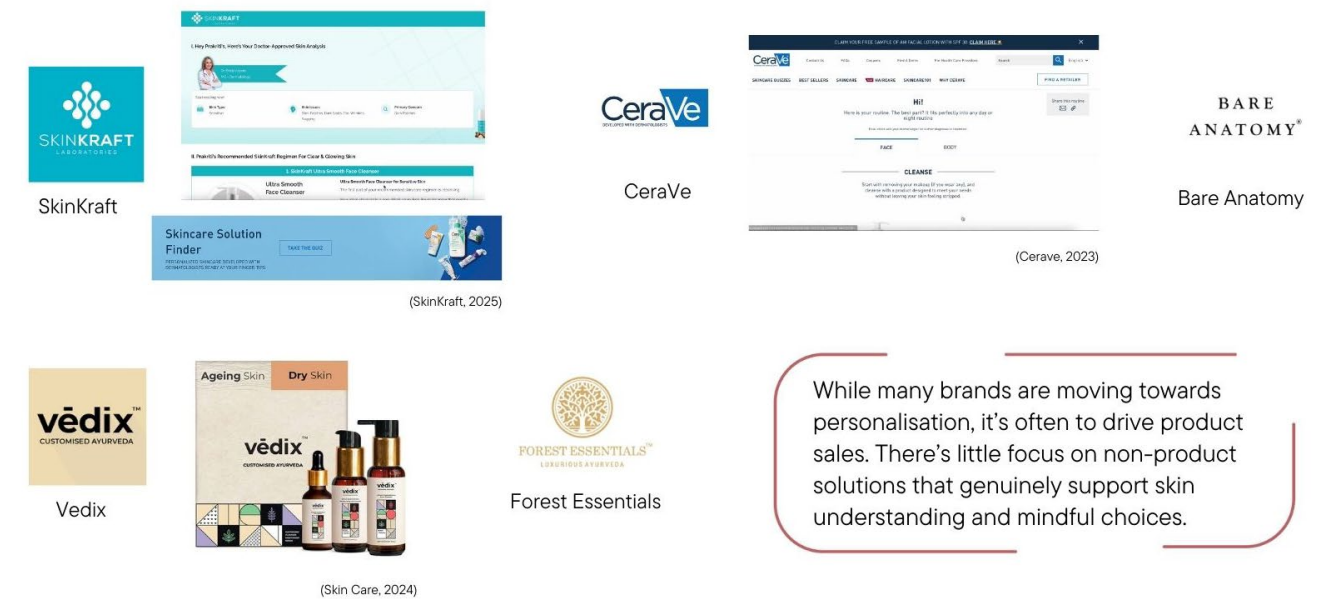
Understanding the Problem in Focus



Appendix C: Market Analysis

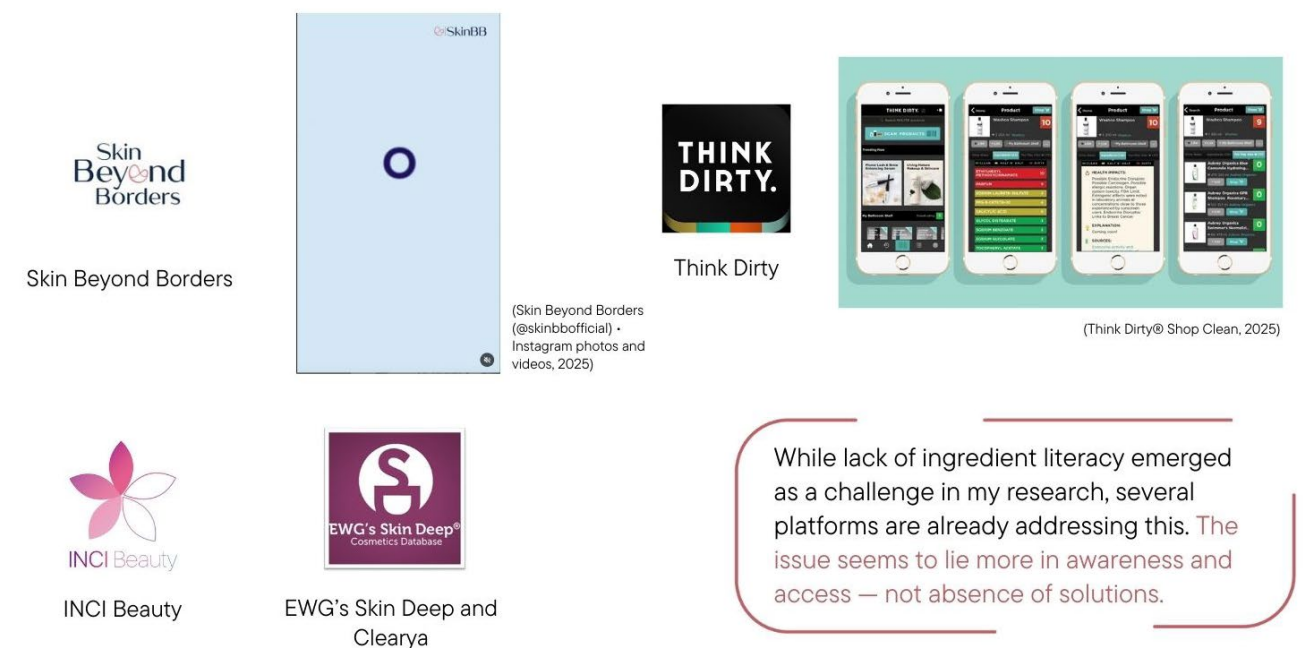
Case Studies

Personalisation



While many brands are moving towards personalisation, it's often to drive product sales. There's little focus on non-product solutions that genuinely support skin understanding and mindful choices.

Ingredient Literacy



While lack of ingredient literacy emerged as a challenge in my research, several platforms are already addressing this. The issue seems to lie more in awareness and access — not absence of solutions.

Appendix D: Design Development

Skintwine Concept Development

Competitive Landscape

Indian Skincare Platforms

Akvile AI

Features:
 ✓ Daily logging
 ✓ Progress track
 ✓ Product scan

Gaps:
 ✗ Poor UI
 ✗ No timeline
 ✗ No patterns

Skin Beauty Pal

Features:
 ✓ AI analysis
 ✓ Weather track
 ✓ Expert plans

Gaps:
 ✗ Clinical focus
 ✗ No emotion
 ✗ No timeline

FeelinMySkin

Features:
 ✓ Full tracking
 ✓ Sleep/mood data
 ✓ Product mgmt

Gaps:
 ✗ Task logger
 ✗ No patterns
 ✗ No timeline

Other Apps

Features:
 ✓ Habit track
 ✓ Reminders
 ✓ Product logs

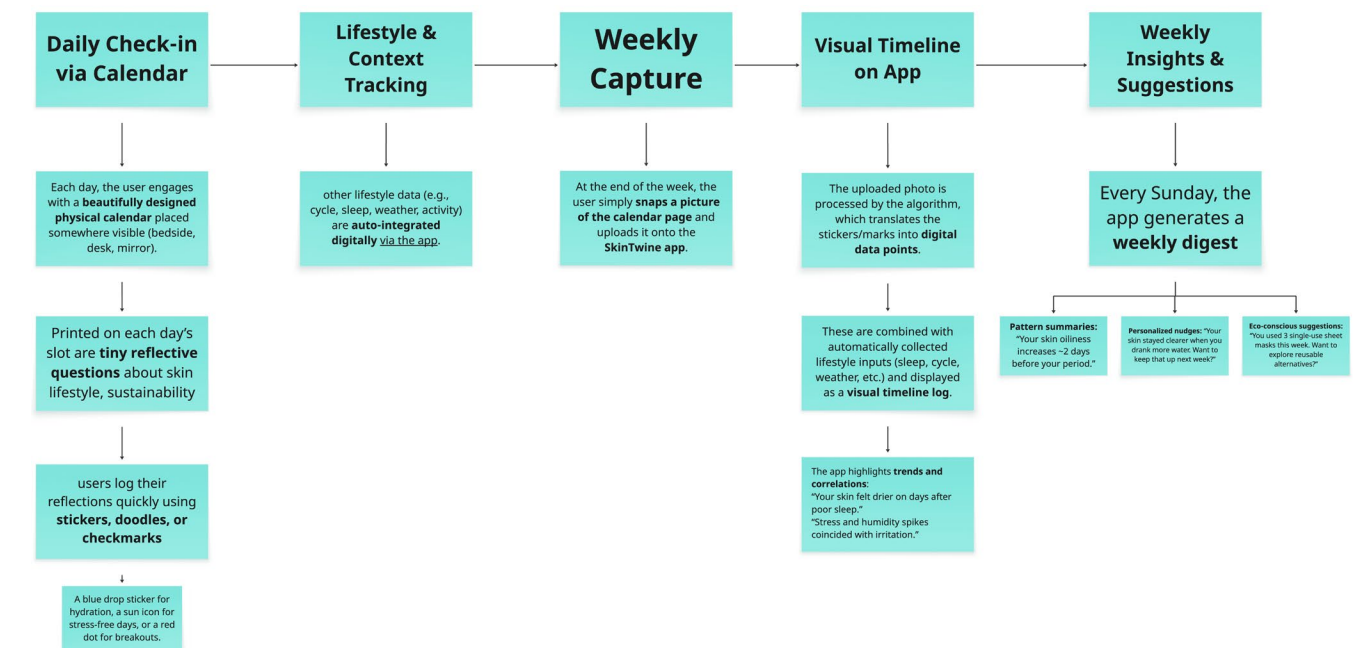
Gaps:
 ✗ No cycle sync
 ✗ Limited insight
 ✗ No coaching

Glowy


Features:
 ✓ Community
 ✓ Routine share
 ✓ Creator collab

Gaps:
 ✗ No personal
 ✗ Community focus
 ✗ Limited data

SkinTwine's Unique Position:
 Combines intuitive logging with contextual pattern recognition & personalized insights



User Persona for Skintwine



Aditi

- Age - 24
- Occupation - Marketing Consultant
- Location - Mumbai
- Gender - Female

Bio

Aditi, 24, is a marketing professional in Mumbai balancing a 9-5 job, flat-sharing, and busy evenings. Skincare is her way of feeling confident and ready for the day as well as a winding down and caring for herself ritual after a long day. She is digitally active and tech savvy. When it comes to skincare, she often feels overwhelmed by the amount of information and conflicting advice online. She's budget-conscious but open to investing in meaningful routines and personal wellbeing. She values clarity and confidence over hype and micro trends and tends to distrust influencer advice, preferring her own research.

Personality

Introvert	Extrovert
Analytical	Creative
Busy	Time rich
Messy	Organized
Independent	Team player
Passive	Active

Aditi

- Age - 24
- Occupation - Marketing Consultant
- Location - Mumbai
- Gender - Female

User Needs

What high level needs does the user have that they're looking to fill with your service?

Users need help making informed choices about skincare routines, product use, and self-care. They want to feel confident rather than overwhelmed by too many options. Users want to feel in control of their skincare journey and reassured that their efforts are meaningful, helpful and aligned with their personal wellbeing and self-care goals.

User Mindsets

What kind of a mindset is your user in when they're finding or engaging with your service?

The user is curious about their skin but uncertain about what really works. They feel overwhelmed by conflicting advice, lack of clarity and too many product choices but are motivated to improve their skin and self-care. They approach the service open to guidance, hopeful for meaningful insights, yet slightly skeptical based on past experiences.

Supporting research and documentation

- "Sometimes I'm not confused about products, but I just I feel like, why do I need a toner? Like, I don't know."
- "If we had more information on why we were doing something instead of just like how you should do it or when you should do it"

More about Aditi (user persona)

Quote

"Sometimes I'm not confused about products, but I'm just I feel like, why do I need a toner? Like, I don't know."

"If we had more information on why we were doing something instead of just like how you should do it or when you should do it"

"I think everybody's skin works different. So you know what works for her might not work for me."

Behavior / Habits

May keep screenshots, notes, or mental logs of what worked/didn't, but lacks a structured system.

Reads ingredient labels, watches multiple reviews before buying, bookmarks skincare tips and threads.

Has a set AM/PM skincare routine but tweaks it sometimes for how's she's feeling, time, routine

Mixes buying from usual, known brands with occasional splurges on international products and trendy products; tracks spending loosely.

Aware of sustainability concerns but doesn't actively help with it; prioritises herself and her needs first

Sees skincare as more than functional — a way to unwind, feel good and signal care for herself.

Influences

Consults personal dermatologists; trusts their advice but not always accessible or affordable.

Peers & friends → Trusted for reliable, lived experiences and trial of something

Online communities on youtube, reddit, instagram for reviews and product research and also health blogs for information

AI tools like ChatGPT for quick ingredient understanding or product reliability (research)

Skincare gurus/ influencers → Followed with caution; their advice sparks curiosity but rarely taken at face value.

Motivations

Desire to feel confident in her own skin and in social settings

Sees skincare as a ritual of self-care and emotional grounding

Wants to make informed, intentional choices rather than impulsive ones

Motivated by curiosity and the need to understand her body better

Seeks alignment between personal wellbeing and sustainable values

Goals

Build a simple, intentional skincare routine without over-purchasing

Feel confident and in control of her skincare decisions

Balance self-care with budget and time constraints

To be able to identify skincare products that are safe and functional for her

Clear understanding of "why" she needs or should use a skincare product or routine (not just how/ when)

Pain points and frustrations

Pressures to buy or follow something due to fear-based marketing

Low confidence in decision-making and second-guessing what's right for their skin

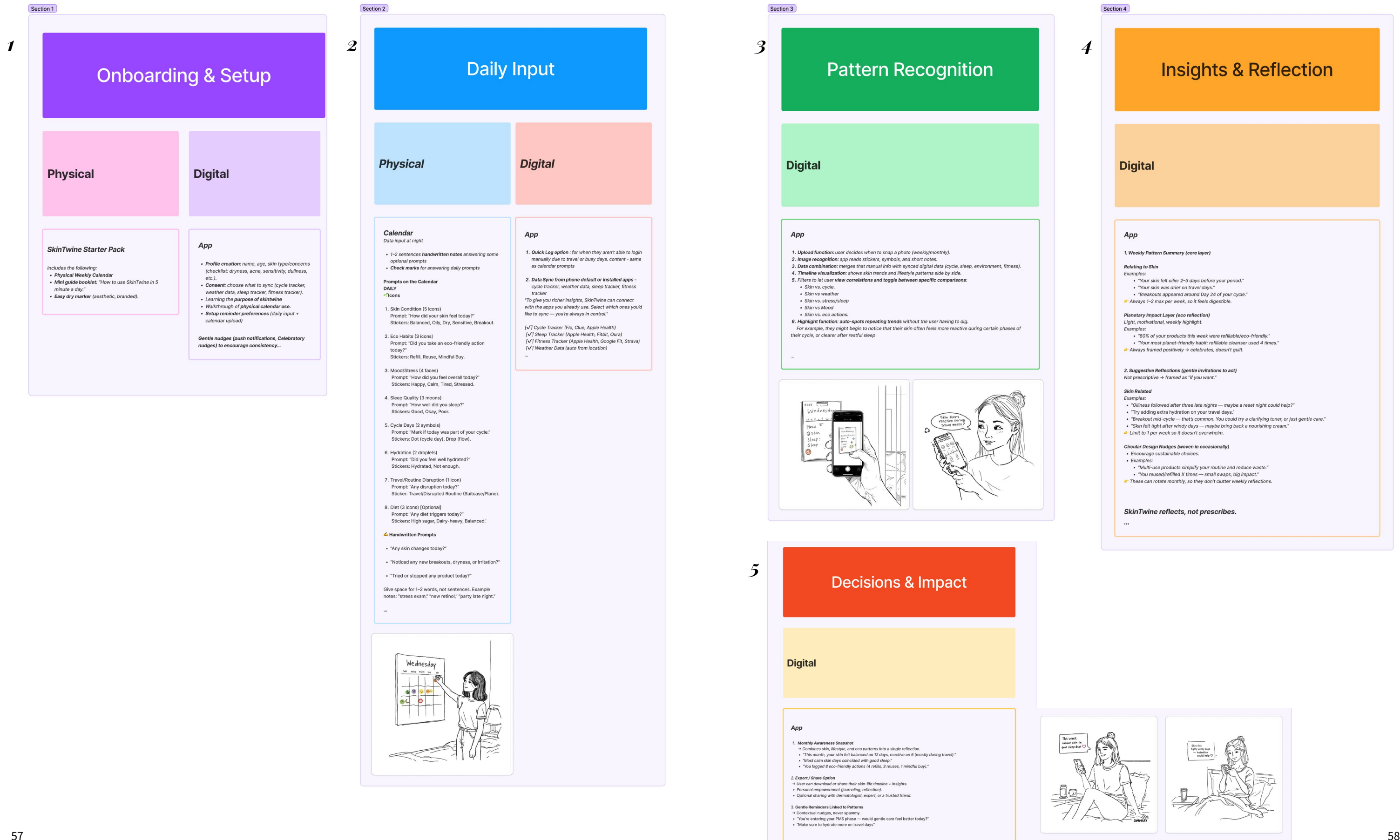
Overwhelm and paralysis due to information overload and conflicting advice

Feeling skincare is becoming more confusing than helpful


Difficulty finding trustworthy, context-relevant information

Online advice, skincare suggestions feel very generic and not tailored to them

Skintwine Features Map

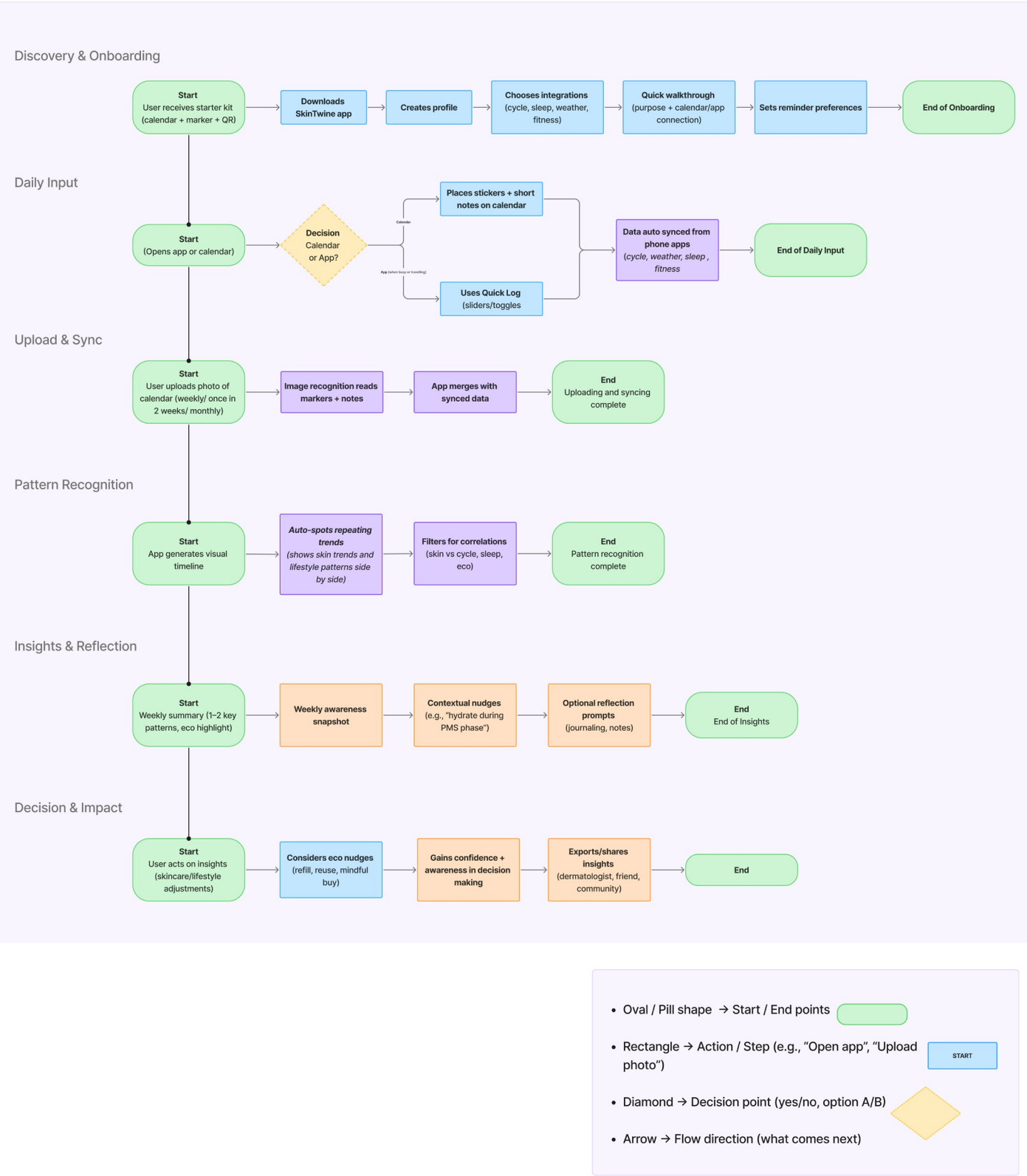


Comprehensive User Journey Map for Skintwine

User steps	Discover & Onboard	Daily Use & Input	Pattern Recognition (visual timeline)	Insights & Reflection	Decisions & Impact
What is each step of the user journey?					
User actions What action does the user take during each step?	<p>1. Finds out about Skintwine (Discovery)</p> <p>2. Opens the Physical Toolkit and downloads the Skintwine App</p> <p>3. Creates a simple profile (age, skin goals and sync permissions) on the app</p> <p>4. Learns the purpose of Skintwine: connecting skin patterns with lifestyle/wellbeing.</p>	<p>Users markers to mark on the physical calendar to answer prompts related to skin, daily activity and sustainability</p> <p>Answers short written reflective prompts on calendar about skin condition, mood, or products used.</p> <p>Allows Syncs & allows app integrations for skin-care cycle tracker, sleep, weather, fitness.</p> <p>Uploads weekly, every 2 weeks or monthly photo (upon direction) if they filled out calendar to the Skintwine app.</p>	<p>Opens the app to see visual timeline (skin + lifestyle data)</p> <p>Notifies patterns and correlations (e.g., "skin clear on travel weeks", "breakouts near cycle").</p>	<p>Engages with personalized insights generated by Skintwine based on skin patterns and sustainability habits</p> <p>If curious, the user can interact with the tool's reflective prompts for deeper clarity.</p> <p>Pre-curated explanations are available if they want more background knowledge on a topic like hydration, hormones, or sustainability.</p> <p>Considers the suggestive reflections given by the tool as gentle nudges to act on.</p> <p>Skintwine is not here to tell you what to do, but to reflect back your patterns. If you want, you can ask it questions to explore possible connections more deeply.</p>	<p>Adjusts skincare or lifestyle decisions based on insights.</p> <p>Feels more confident and reassured about skincare choices and decision making</p> <p>Makes sustainable consumption efforts (Researches products, eco in response to ecological prompts.</p> <p>Continues cycle of logging → reflecting → acting</p>
Goals & experiences What is the user trying to accomplish?	<p>Goal: Understand what Skintwine is and how it can help me.</p> <p>Expectation: It will be user friendly, easy to use and effective</p> <p>Experience: Curious, slightly skeptical, wants clarity without jargon.</p>	<p>Goal: Capture how my skin feels and my lifestyle in a simple, low-effort way.</p> <p>Expectation: Logging will be easy, fast, and not a burden.</p> <p>Experience: Curious, slightly skeptical, doesn't want it to feel like homework, lot of thinking</p>	<p>Goal: See connections between my skin changes and lifestyle/emotional/ environmental factors.</p> <p>Expectation: The visuals will be clean & easy to interpret, not overwhelming like a chart or excel</p> <p>Experience: Wants clear, intuitive visuals that make patterns obvious without overthinking.</p>	<p>Goal: Get meaningful, personalized insights that help me understand "why" my skin behaves the way it does</p> <p>Expectation: The tool will provide explanations that feel accurate, personal, not generic.</p> <p>Experience: Curious, reflective, reassured that the tool acknowledges her unique context.</p>	<p>Goal: Use insights to make more confident, mindful choices and decisions about skincare and self-care.</p> <p>Expectation: My efforts of skincare will feel worthwhile and I'll find ways to improve my skin</p> <p>Experience: Feels more in control, empowered, less impulsive, and aligned with her values.</p>
Feelings and thoughts Use the emojis below to help illustrate how the user might be feeling. 	<p>Curious, a bit skeptical</p> <p>"Will this actually help me understand my skin, or is it just another app?"</p>	<p>Engaged, cautious about effort</p> <p>"Okay, this is simple enough... Just don't want to become a chore."</p>	<p>Intrigued, hopeful</p> <p>"Oh wow, I never noticed my skin reacts a certain way around these times!"</p>	<p>Reassured, thoughtful</p> <p>"This makes sense now. I can see why my skin behaves this way & what I can do about it."</p>	<p>Empowered, confident</p> <p>"I really feel in control of my skincare — and much more confident in making mindful skincare choices and decisions"</p>
Pain points What's not working well? What causes friction? How many people does this affect? Nuisance = slightly annoying, but user can still continue. Moderate pain = may affect engagement or consistency. Show-stopper = so frustrating the user might quit altogether.	<p>Pain: Skepticism from past "skin apps" or distrust of product-driven tools.</p> <p>Don't wish to download another app; no phone space</p> <p>no space to put a physical calendar; calendar doesn't match their aesthetic</p> <p>could stop adoption if onboarding feels pushy or unclear.</p> <p>Severity: Moderate</p>	<p>Pain: Logging feels repetitive, time-consuming, or like extra "homework."</p> <p>if daily use feels like a chore, they'll drop off.</p> <p>Severity: Show-stopper</p>	<p>Pain: Overly complex visuals; hard to interpret connections.</p> <p>if users don't "get it" quickly, they'll lose interest.</p> <p>Severity: Moderate</p>	<p>Pain: Insights feel too generic, prescriptive, or not relevant to their skin.</p> <p>if they don't trust the insights, the tool loses its core value.</p> <p>insights given are difficult to read or time consuming</p> <p>Severity: Show-stopper</p>	<p>Pain: Difficulty turning insights into real action</p> <p>find it difficult to remember the suggestions or follow everything</p> <p>don't follow through after a certain point</p> <p>suggestions don't align with what they want</p> <p>they might still use the tool but without meaningful change.</p> <p>Severity: Moderate</p>
Opportunities How might we address these pain points? How big is the opportunity if we correct this pain point? What are new ways to serve this person?	<p>How might we build trust without feeling product-pushy? → emphasize Skintwine as reflective, not prescriptive (tool that helps them)</p> <p>How might we reduce app fatigue? → offer a lightweight app with optional integrations</p> <p>How might onboarding communicate value quickly? → use storytelling to show it's about self-awareness, not product selling.</p> <p>How might we make the toolkit feel aspirational? → design the physical calendar as aesthetic, minimal, and has variations</p> <p>Opportunity size: Medium — solving this boosts adoption and early trust.</p>	<p>How might we make daily input playful and effortless? → checkmarks to answer prompts like an MCQ & minimal writing</p> <p>How might we reduce friction? → auto-sync data from cycle trackers, weather apps, step counters, sleep hours in app directly</p> <p>How might we encourage consistency? → gentle nudges like push notifications, streaks, or celebratory prompts that feel supportive, some (eco) incentive (check duo lingo strategy & nam video)</p> <p>Opportunity size: High — this is make-or-break for sustained use.</p>	<p>How might we simplify data into intuitive stories? → timelines with icons, color coding, simple correlations. (great UX)</p> <p>How might we keep users curious without overwhelming? → layered design: quick-glance highlights first, deeper insights on demand.</p> <p>How might we ensure quick comprehension? → patterns are easy to understand</p> <p>Opportunity size: Medium-High — clarity sustains engagement and learning.</p>	<p>How might we keep insights personal and relevant? → use user's own tone of language to communicate reflections.</p> <p>How might we encourage agency over prescription? → frame insights as "invitations to reflect", not commands.</p> <p>Opportunity size: High — this is the core value prop; if not solved, trust collapses.</p>	<p>How might we nudge small, doable actions? → single, gentle suggestions (e.g., "hydrate more today") instead of full routines.</p> <p>How might we help them remember? → timely reminders tied to patterns (e.g., PMS week → gentle skin care tip), not a notification overload</p> <p>How might we let users adapt suggestions? → offer flexible suggestions with options, not rigid prescriptions.</p> <p>Opportunity size: Medium-High — supports long-term behavior change and habit formation.</p>

User Flow

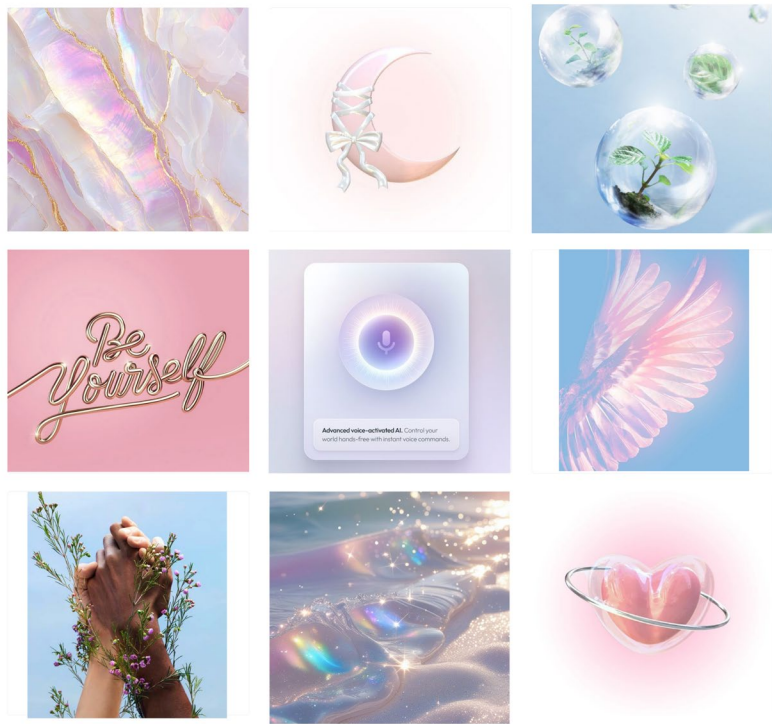
The user flow illustrates the step-by-step journey within the toolkit, mapping how a user moves through key interactions. It highlights the sequence of actions, decision points, and feedback loops that shape the overall experience.



Skintwine Visual Identity

The user flow illustrates the step-by-step journey within the toolkit, mapping how a user moves through key interactions. It highlights the sequence of actions, decision points, and feedback loops that shape the overall experience.

Moodboard



Logo, Typography and Color Palette

HEADINGS

Montserrat

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

BODY COPY

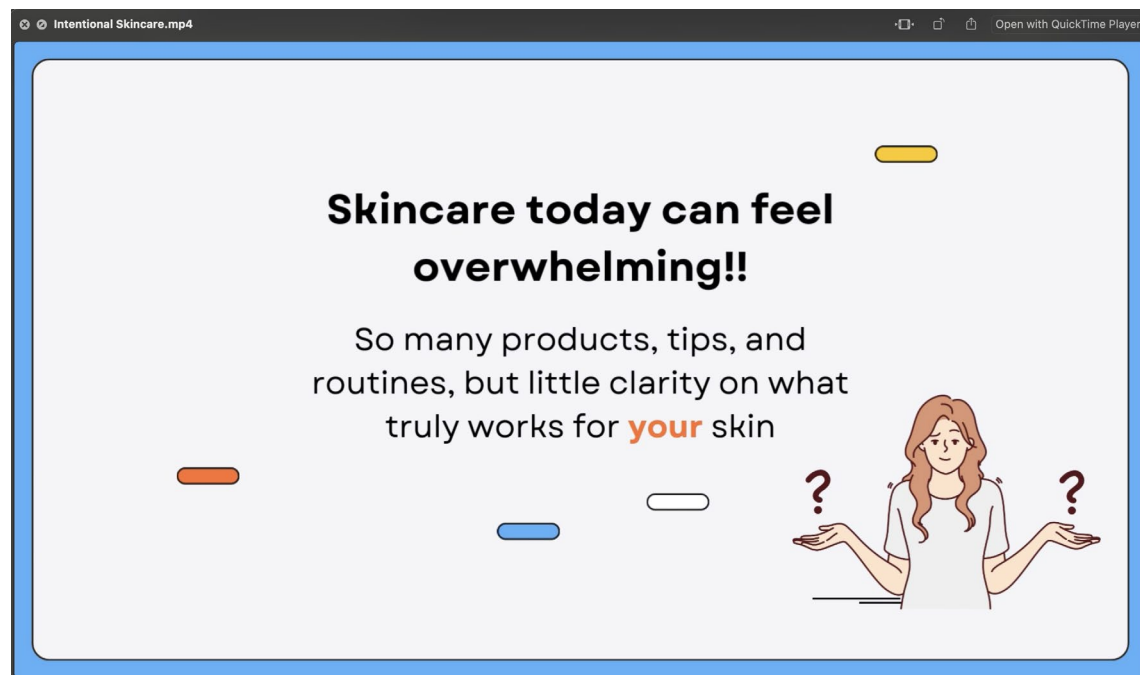
Nunito Sans

abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

Appendix E: Concept Validation

Skintwine Concept Explanation Video

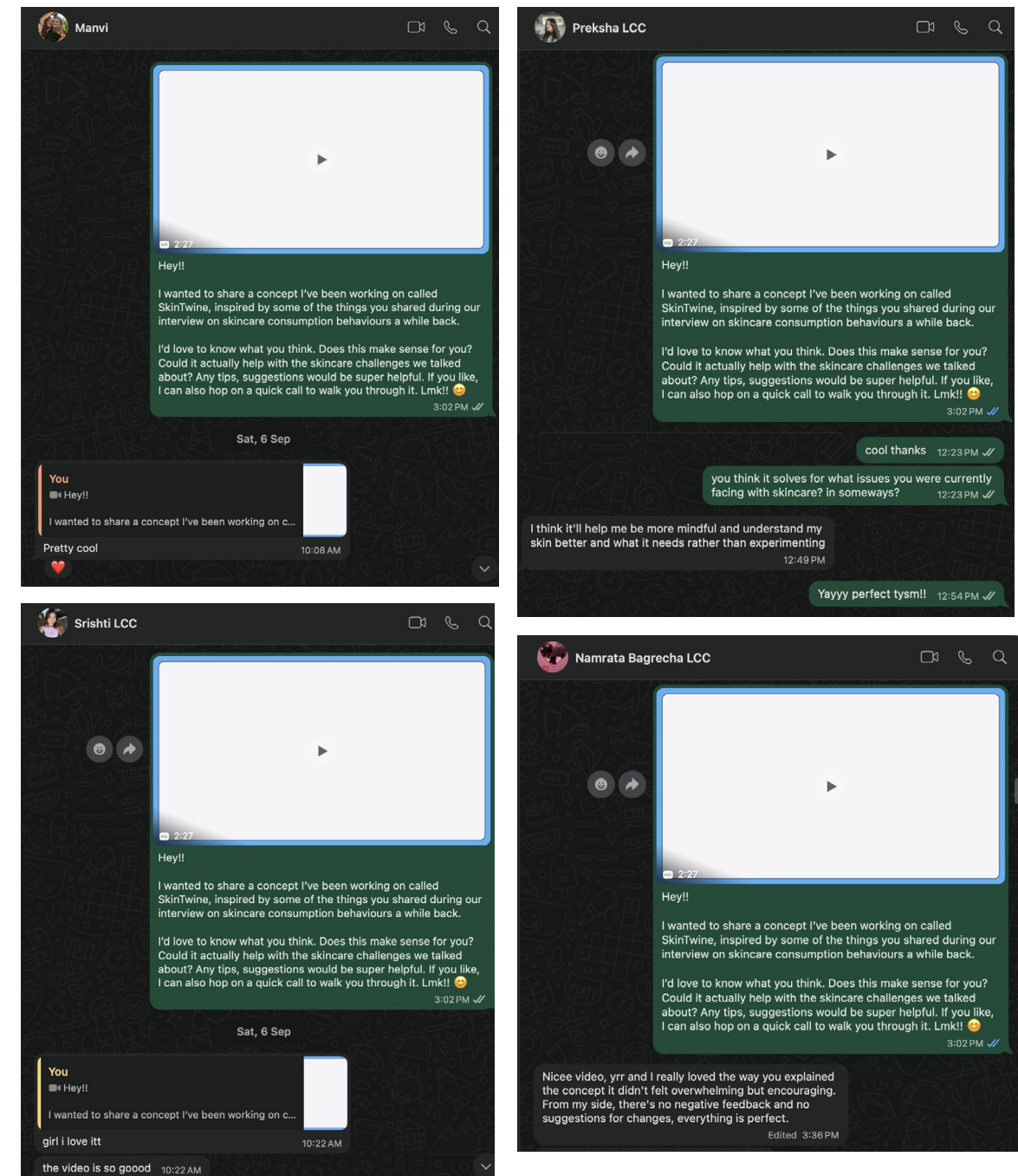
To validate the final concept of Skintwine, I created a short concept video that explained its purpose, features, and intended impact. This video was shared with my primary stakeholders to gather their feedback on usability, relevance, and overall value, helping ensure the concept was both clear and grounded in user needs.



You can view the video by clicking on this link:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Mh75_tX_YFWfzVM0jJY0HOKniIbhixx/view?usp=drive_link

Stakeholder feedback on Skintwine concept video



Appendix F: Technical Specifications & Future Vision

Skintwine Calendar

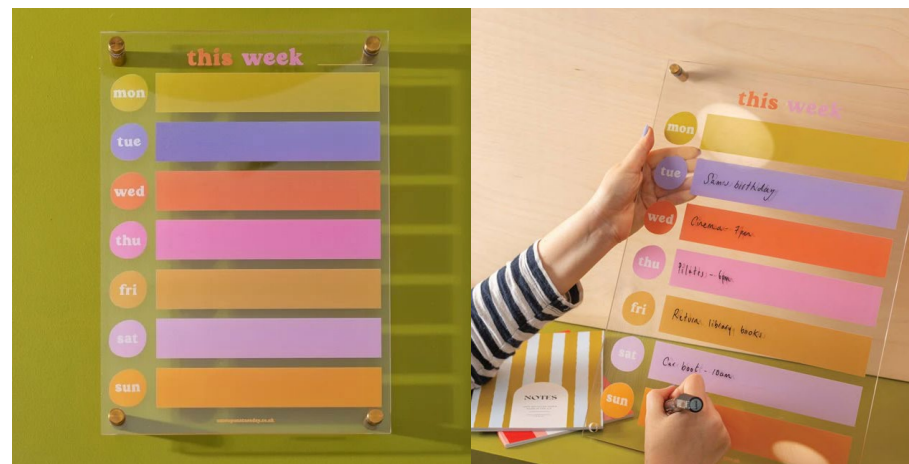


Fig. 19: Wipable wall mounted weekly calendar (Etsy seller, n.d)

Fig. 20: Dry erase weekly planner pad (GoodTuesday, n.d)

CALENDAR SPECIFICATIONS

- Format & Size: **A3**
- Material Choice: **Glass surface** – premium, reusable, sustainable, and visually elevates the “ritual” aspect of skincare journaling.
- Placement: Can be **placed on a desk, bedside, or wall** for everyday use.
- Functionality: **Writable and erasable surface**
- Why Glass vs. Paper?: Glass is long-lasting and engaging, while paper calendars risk feeling disposable & less like an “object of care.”

SKINTWINE CALENDAR

How to Use

The user marks the appropriate icon under each category every day using the dry-erase marker, selecting the symbol that best reflects their experience (skin, hydration, sleep, etc.). In the 'Weekly Input' section, they can jot down any additional notes in response to the prompts.

Icons Guide

This legend explains what each icon means in its row:

Skin Condition

Balanced
 Oily
 Dry
 Sensitive
 Breakouts

Hydration + Cycle

Good water intake
 Low water intake
 Cycle Day

Sleep Quality

Good
 Okay
 Poor

Routine

Daily Routine
 Travel

Diet

High Sugar
 Junk
 Healthy

Mood

Joyful
 Tired
 Stressed
 Calm

Upload & Insights:

At the end of each week, user scans the QR code in the bottom right to download the Skintwine app and upload a photo of the calendar to unlock their personalized skin insights.

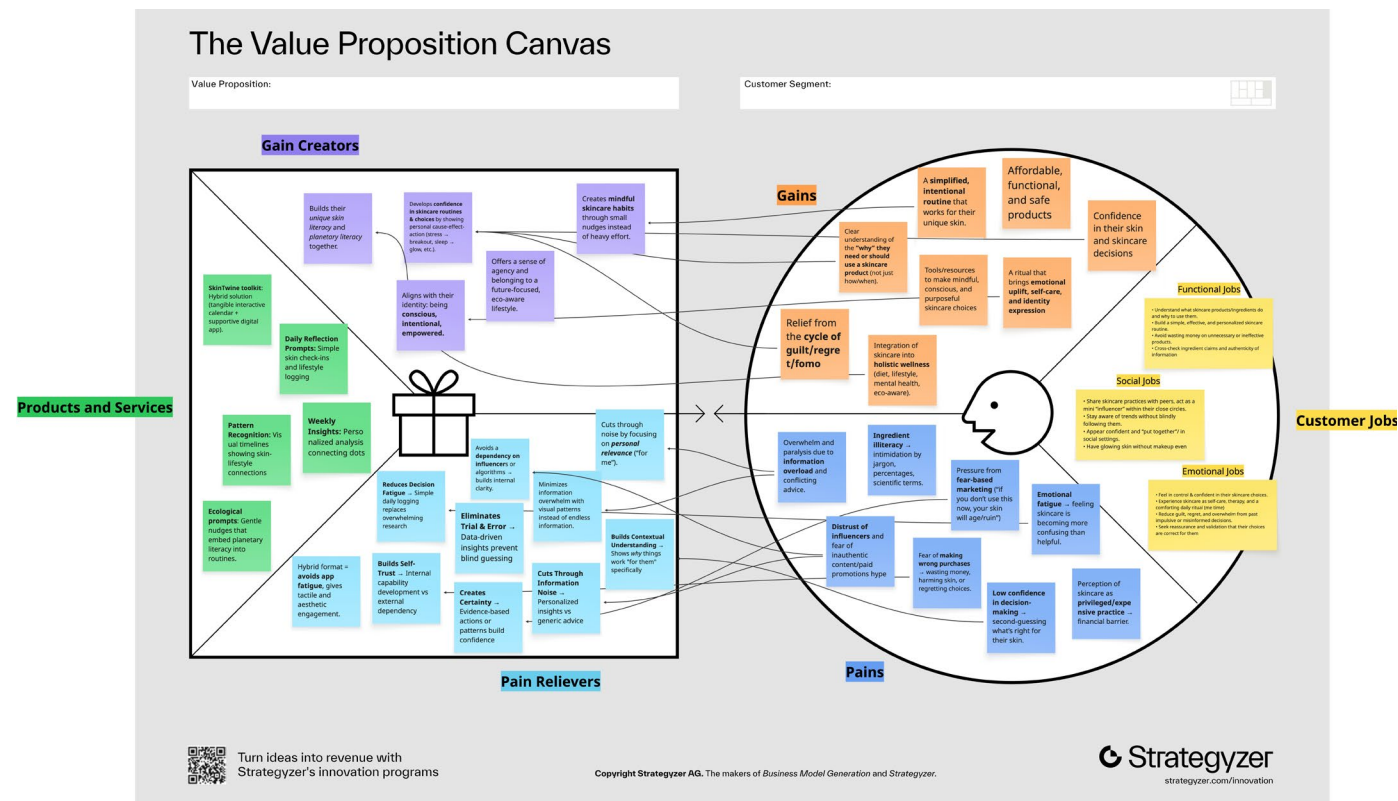


The Skintwine toolkit comes with *easy dry marker* and a *mini guide booklet* on how to use the calendar and app

Calendar Size : 11.7 in × 16.5 in

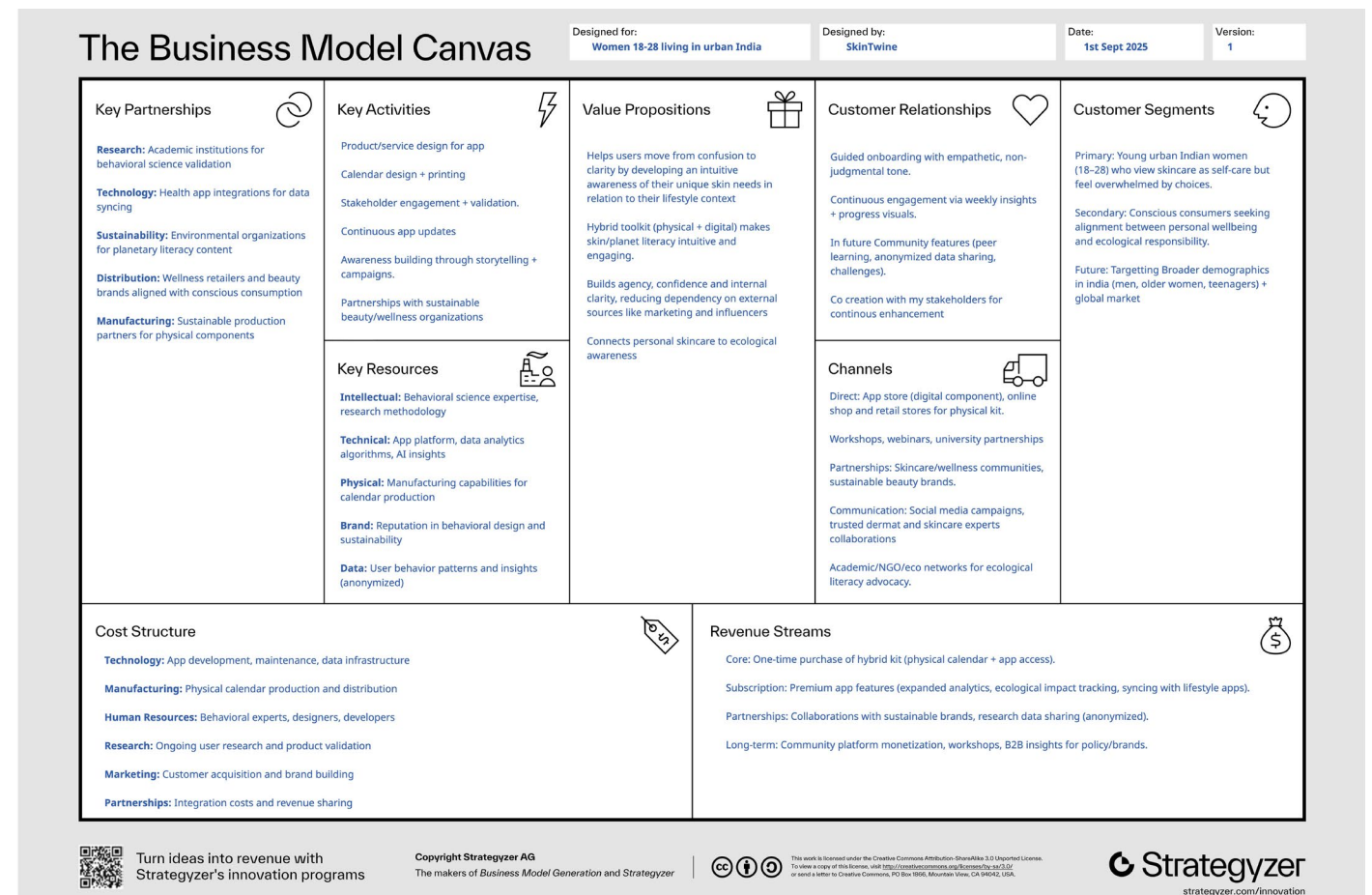
Value Proposition canvas

This Value Proposition Canvas was developed using the template created by Alex Osterwalder and Strategyzer (2014). It has been adapted here to map the pains, gains, and jobs of young urban Indian women in relation to skincare, and to align them with the proposed offerings of SkinTwin. It maps the relationship between customer jobs, pains, and gains (right) and the products, services, and value offerings of Skintwine (left) and demonstrates how Skintwine aligns with user needs to offer clarity, empowerment, and mindful engagement in skincare.



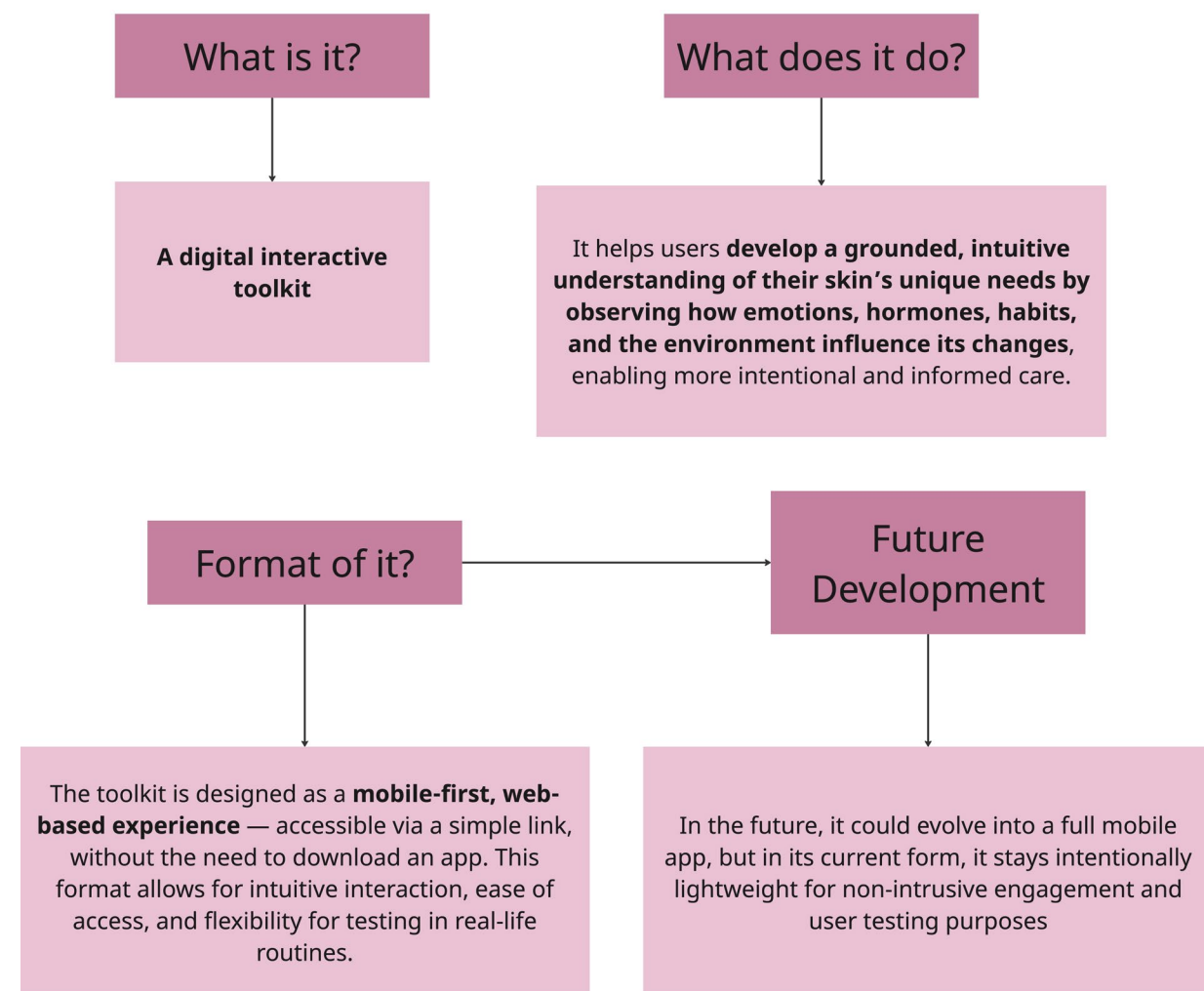
Business Model Canvas

The Business Model Canvas, developed using the Strategyzer framework (Osterwalder & Pigneur, 2010), was applied to map the key elements of Skintwine's value creation and delivery. It outlines the customer segments, value propositions, channels, relationships, key activities, resources, partners, and revenue/cost structures, providing a holistic view of how the concept can function as a sustainable and user-centered business model.



Appendix G: Skintwine Initial Format

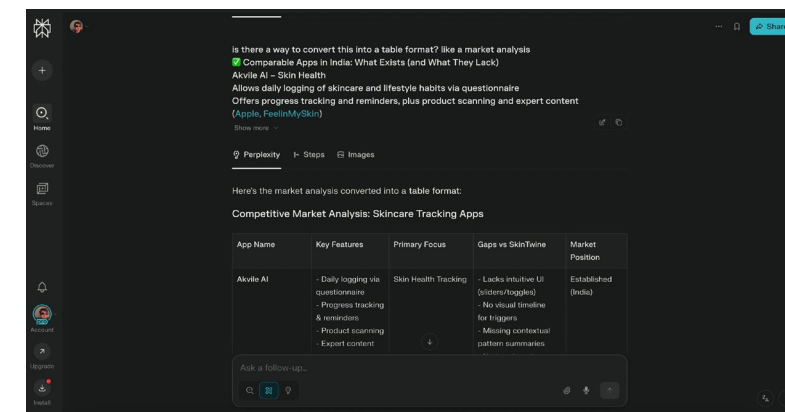
The initial format of Skintwine was envisioned as a digital interactive toolkit, accessible through a web link. It required no app downloads or physical components, yet presented its own challenges in terms of feasibility and engagement.



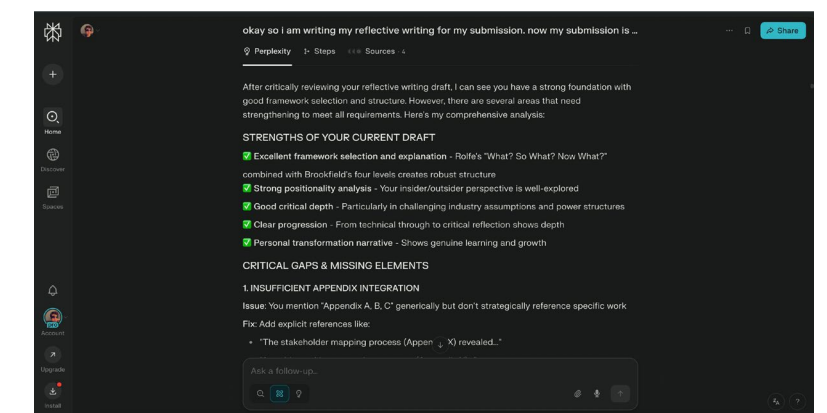
Appendix H: AI Prompts

Perplexity AI

Asked AI to curate a table out of the content I provided

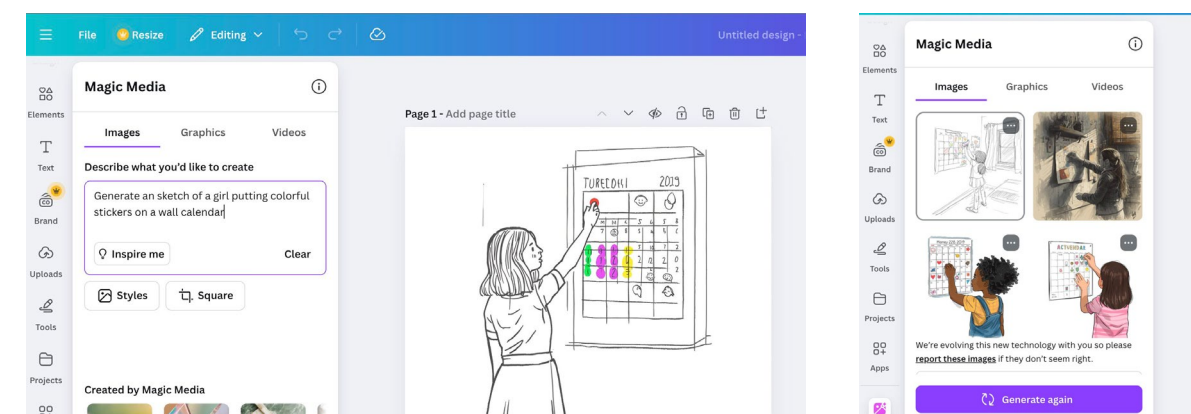


Seeking feedback on my written draft against certain metrics

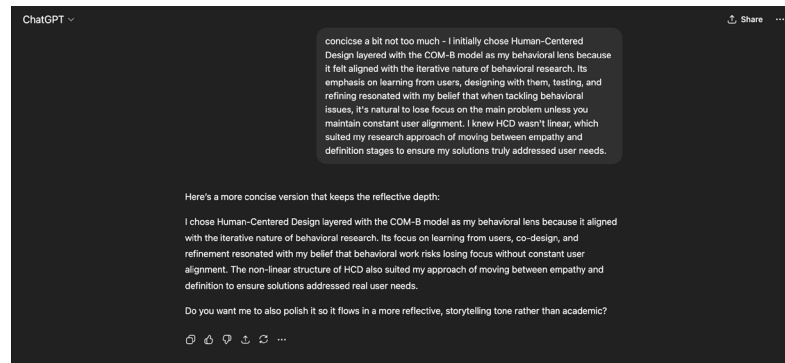


Canva AI

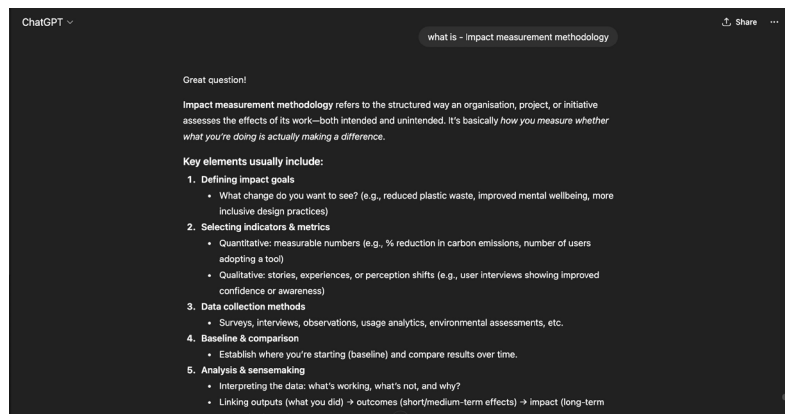
Seeking AI's assistance on curating storyboard sketches for my concept video



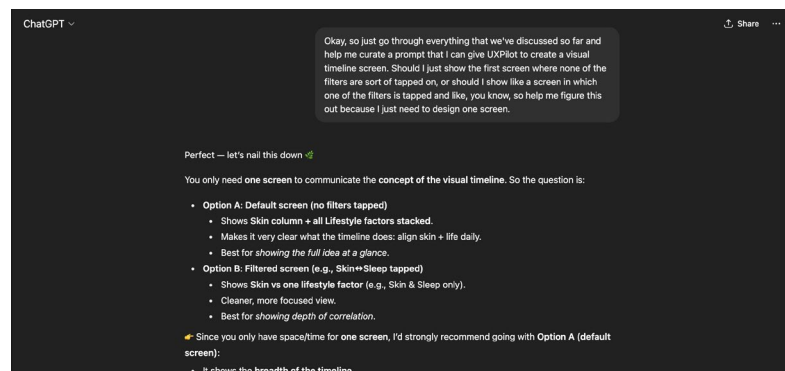
Asking AI to concise my written draft



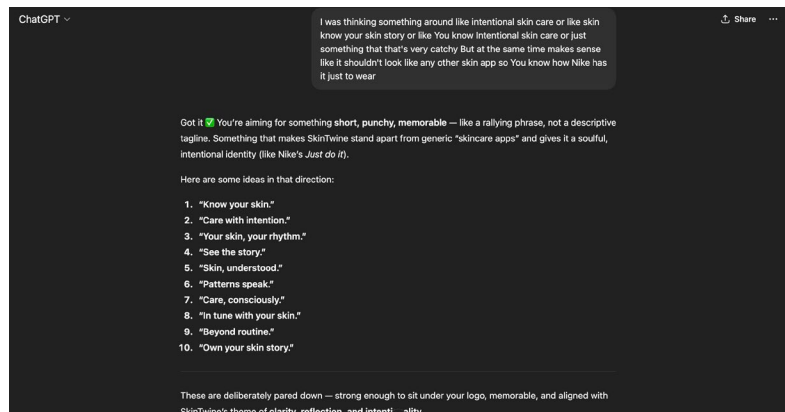
Seeking help in understanding methodologies & concepts



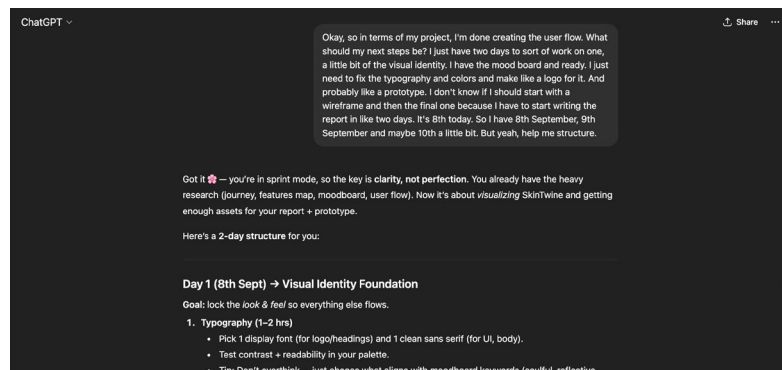
Prompt generation for creating UI visuals on another AI platform



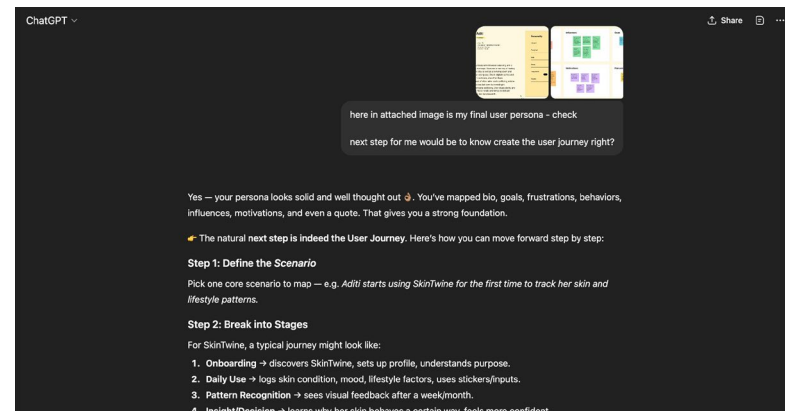
Ideating taglines for Skintwine



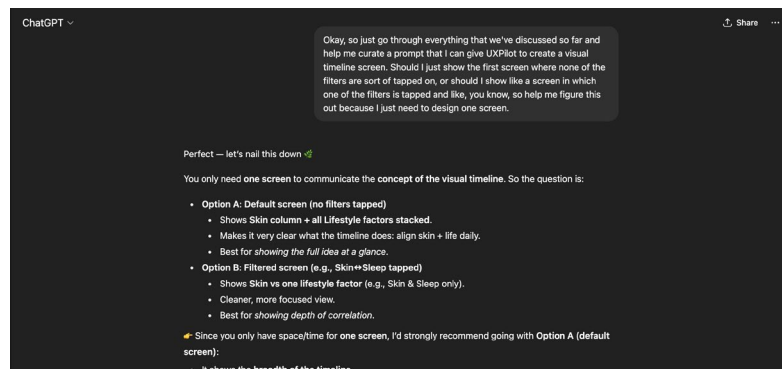
Creating a work plan and timeline with AI to FMP



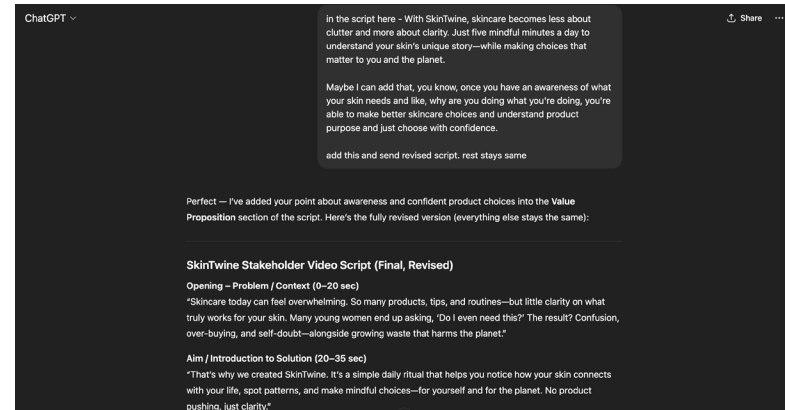
Rechecking my work with AI for feedback on improvements



Prompt generation for creating UI visuals on another AI platform



Scriptwriting and articulation assistance from AI



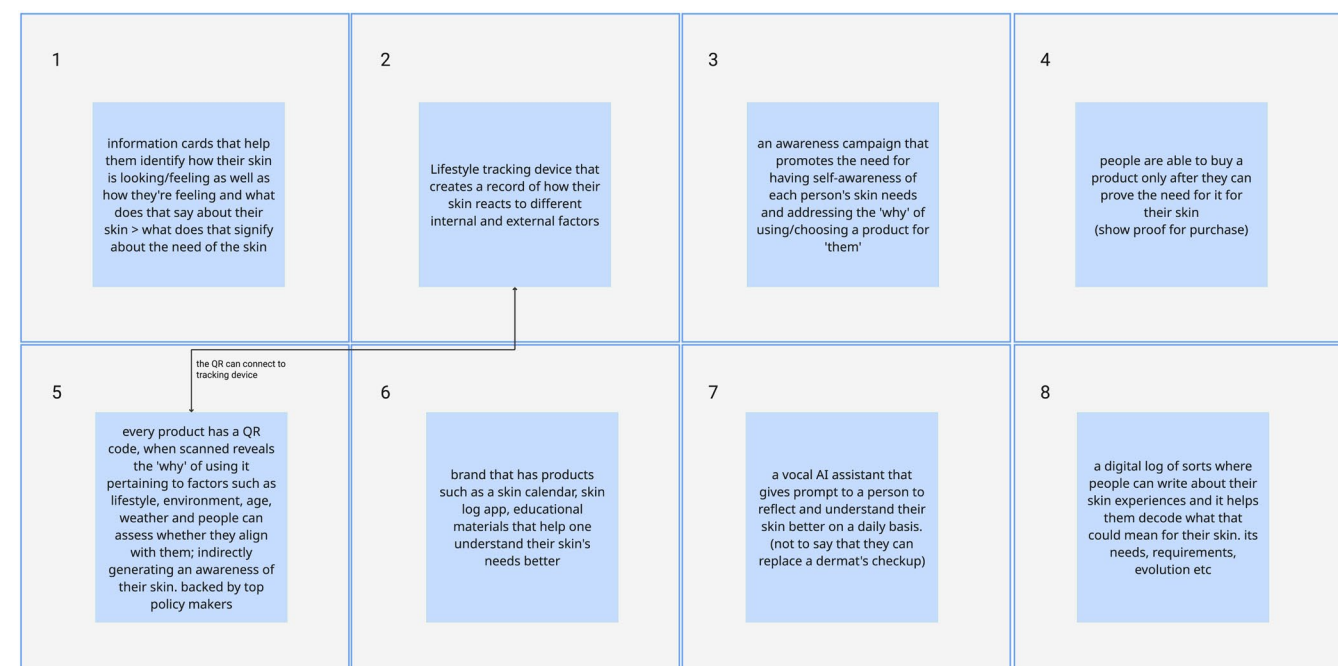
Appendix I: Ideation Process

Initial Ideation Phase - Before Element 1 feedback

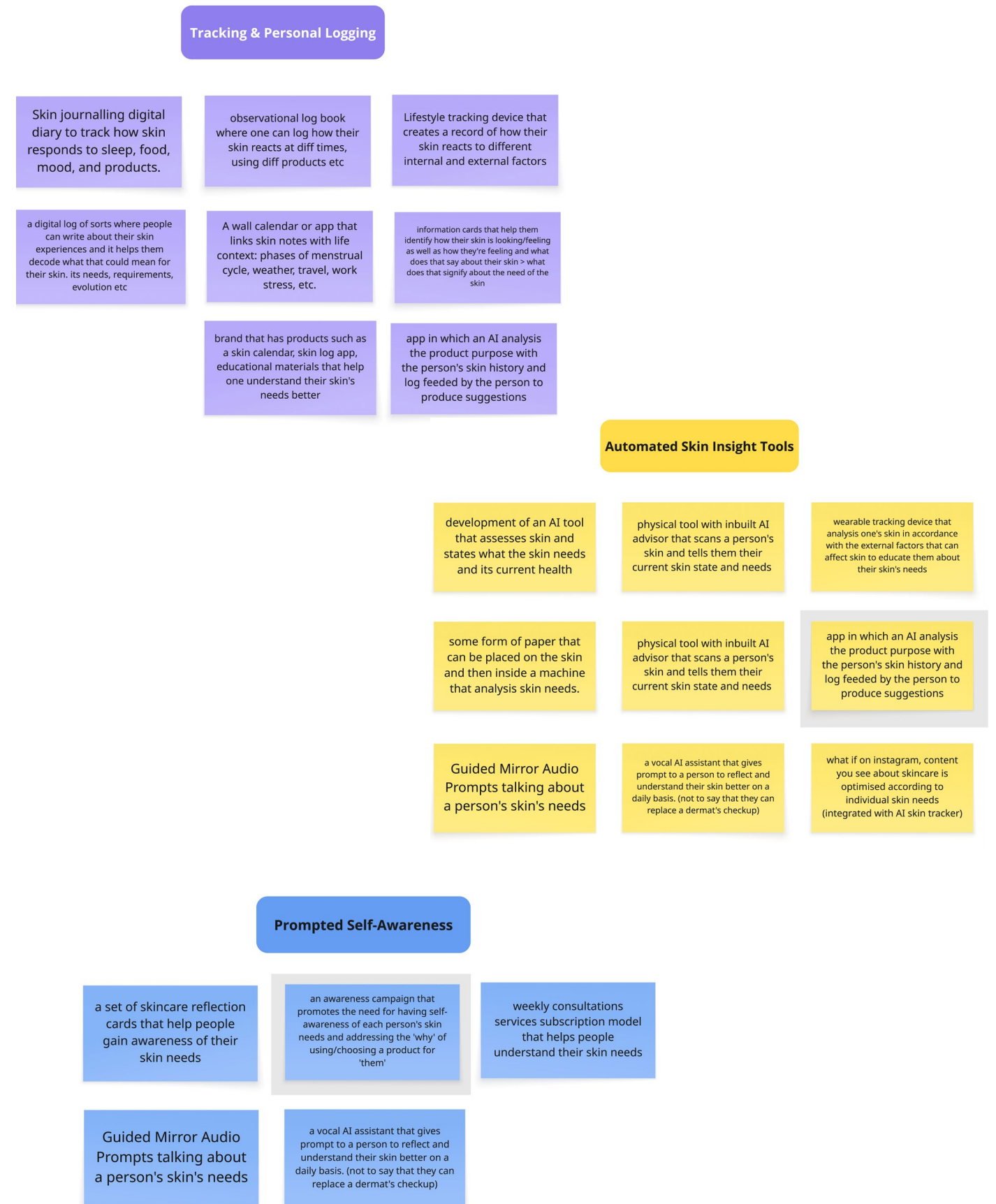
Fast Idea Generation Method



Crazy 8 Ideation Method



Affinity Mapping

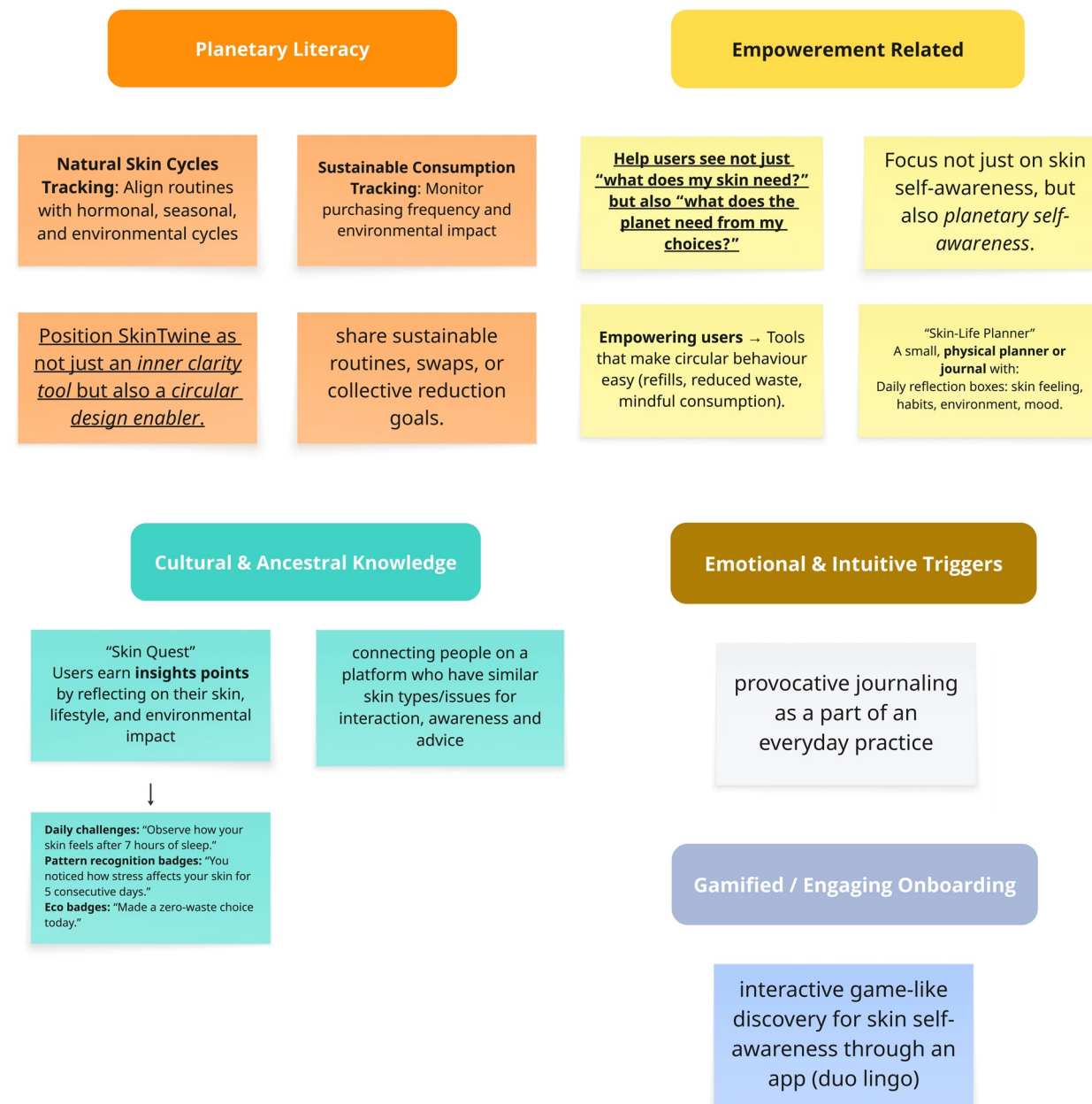


Gaps Identified

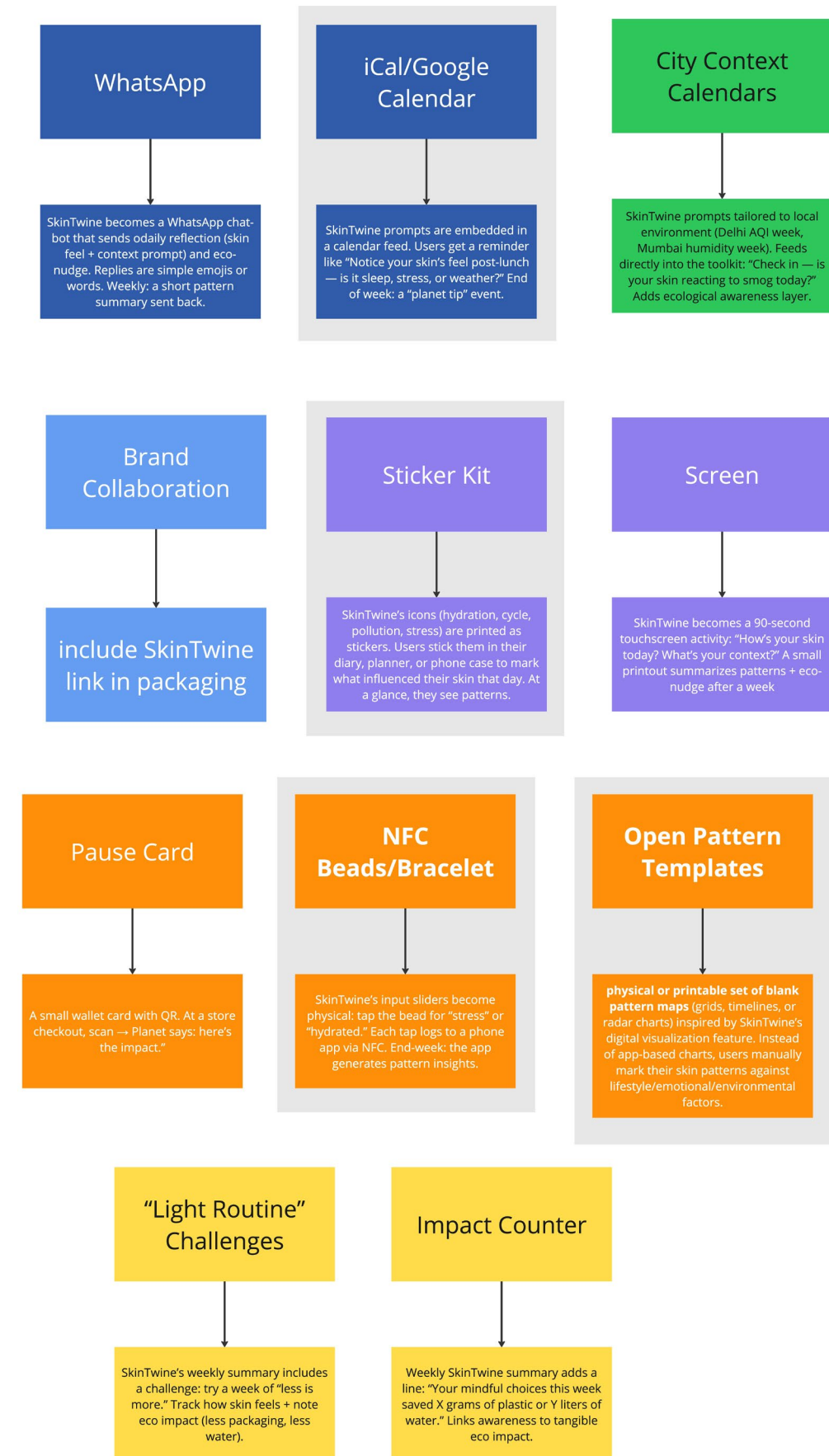


Enhanced Ideation – Post Element 1 feedback

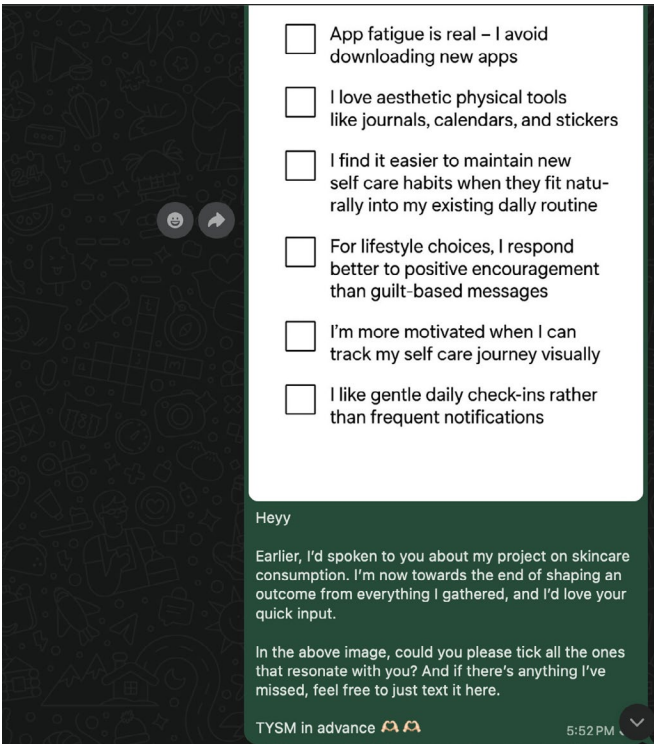
The second phase of ideation focused on integrating environmental aspects, drawing inspiration from frameworks such as the circular design model. This stage addressed earlier ideation gaps and explored alternative formats of the Skintwine concept, aligning them with principles of nudge theory.



Ideas around different formats of Skintwine

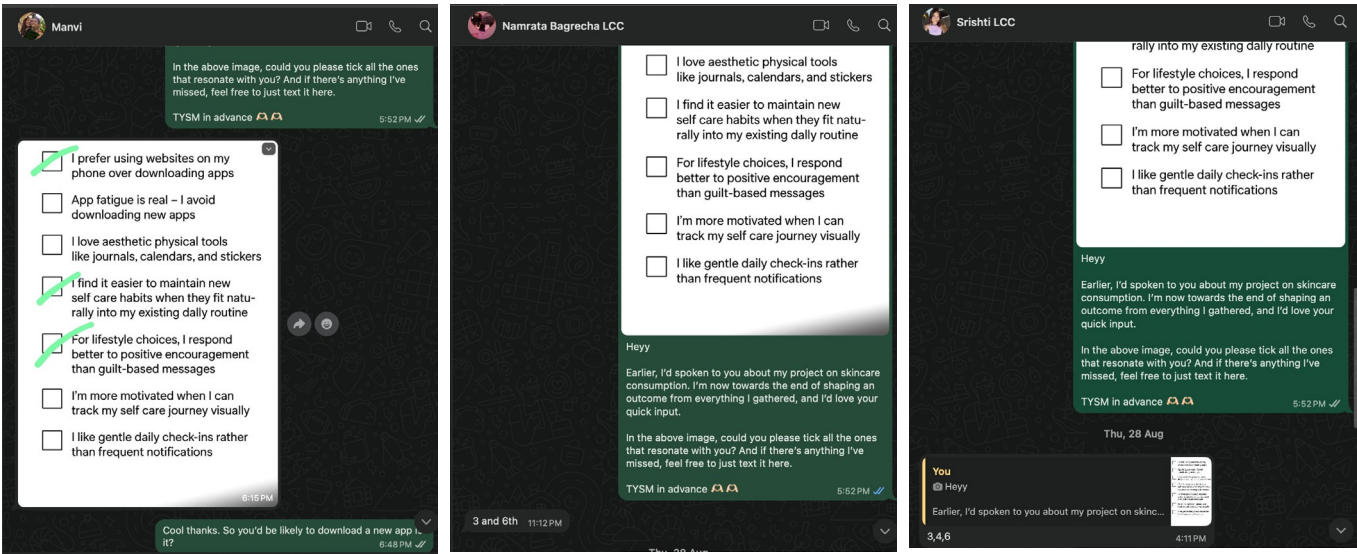


Stakeholder Input on Skintwine format & Features

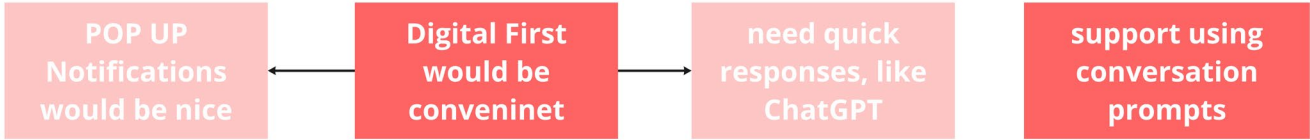


Feedback survey sent to participants

Participant Responses



Insights



Key Trends

Ideas were developed in alignment with the micro, meso, and macro trend analysis.

01. Holistic Beauty

Holistic beauty redefines Skincare by shifting focus from treating specific concerns like acne and wrinkles to nurturing the whole individual. More consumers recognize the link between skin health, physical well-being, and mental wellness. Consequently, Estheticians are evolving into wellness advisors, offering guidance beyond topical treatments to include lifestyle modifications and mindfulness practices (Skin Science Institute, 2023).

This development signifies a broader consumer shift towards **natural, ethically-produced, and wellness-focused products** that align with overall wellbeing. (Groupe Berkem, 2023). Within the Indian context, this shift is deeply rooted in traditional practices. Brands such as Kama Ayurveda, Ranavat, Forest Essentials, and Fable & Mane integrate Ayurvedic principles into contemporary skincare formulations.

Simultaneously, global brands are innovating within **‘neurocosmetics’**, meaning products designed to benefit dermatological and psychological health. These formulations often feature sensory elements, such as calming fragrances and soothing textures, which aim to alleviate stress and enhance mood while delivering skin benefits (Menteath, 2024).

Collectively, these trends signify a paradigmatic shift in the conceptualization of beauty, emphasizing health, and holistic wellbeing over traditional ideals of physical perfection (Forbes Tech Council, 2024).

02. Overexposure & Growing Digital Fatigue

The beauty and skincare market, particularly among young Indian consumers, is increasingly shaped and overwhelmed by constant exposure to new products, micro-trends, and influencer recommendations. In an era where digital platforms are deeply embedded in everyday life, social media is marking **Skincare as entertainment and a status symbol**, resulting in a never-ending pursuit of the latest products and trends. Gen Z users are continually introduced to emerging skincare products and routines by influencers, encouraging them to experiment and switch products frequently, often without sustained use or long-term commitment (Vogue Business, 2024).

This constant novelty contributes to choice paralysis, a growing issue in the skincare industry. With an overwhelming number of brands and formulations available, consumers face stress, confusion, and frustration when attempting to find a product that suits their needs (Saliency, 2024). Although trends like “glass skin,” “skin cycling,” and “slugging” may initially generate excitement, the sheer pace of innovation and hype can lead to emotional exhaustion and eventual cynicism, mainly when the promised results fall short of expectations.

While access to a vast array of skincare information and innovations has empowered consumers, it is also beginning to backfire. The current digital and product overexposure risks alienating users through fatigue, disillusionment, and burnout, prompting a cultural pivot toward slower, simpler, and sustainable beauty practices.

03. Scientific, Sustainable and Personalized Skincare

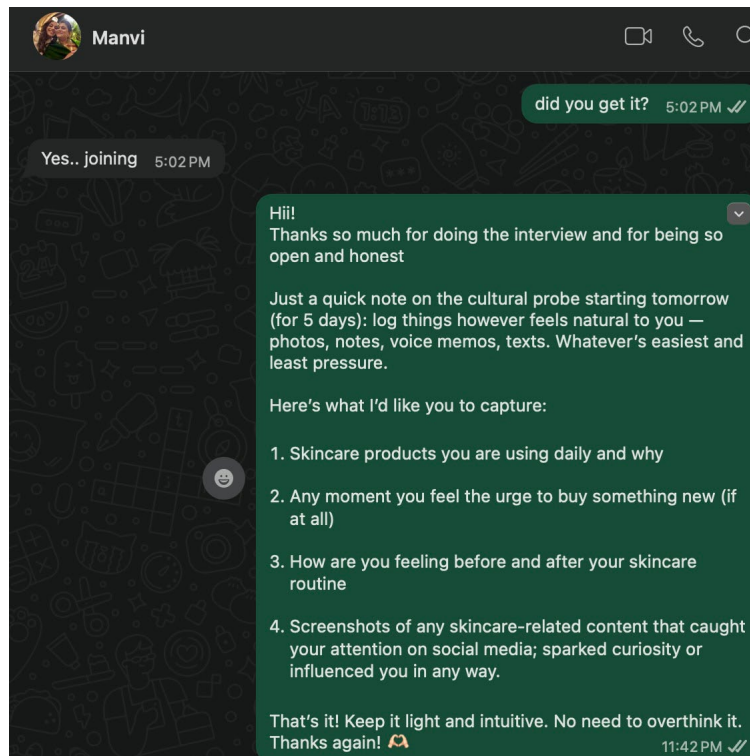
The global skincare market's growth is propelled by AI-driven technologies that enhance personalized experiences and rapid product innovation. The tech indicates a future where skincare regimens are solutions and tailored experiences seamlessly integrate science, regulations, and beauty (Sprivil, 2023). Businesses are using machine learning to adjust their product strategies by predicting popular skincare trends. This proactive approach enhances product relevance and strengthens competitive advantage while guiding tailored skincare innovations. Although **biotechnology** has long been employed in medicine, its

effects on the beauty industry are becoming more apparent (Cosmetics Business, 2024). Integrating biotechnology and AI is also revolutionizing India's skincare industry. Companies like Novology are developing clinically proven products co-created with dermatologists, focusing on conditions like acne and dry skin (Vocal Media, 2024). Additionally, brands like WOW, Skin Science and Mamaearth utilize AI algorithms to analyze skin types and concerns, providing personalized skincare solutions (Ranjandas Talks, 2024).

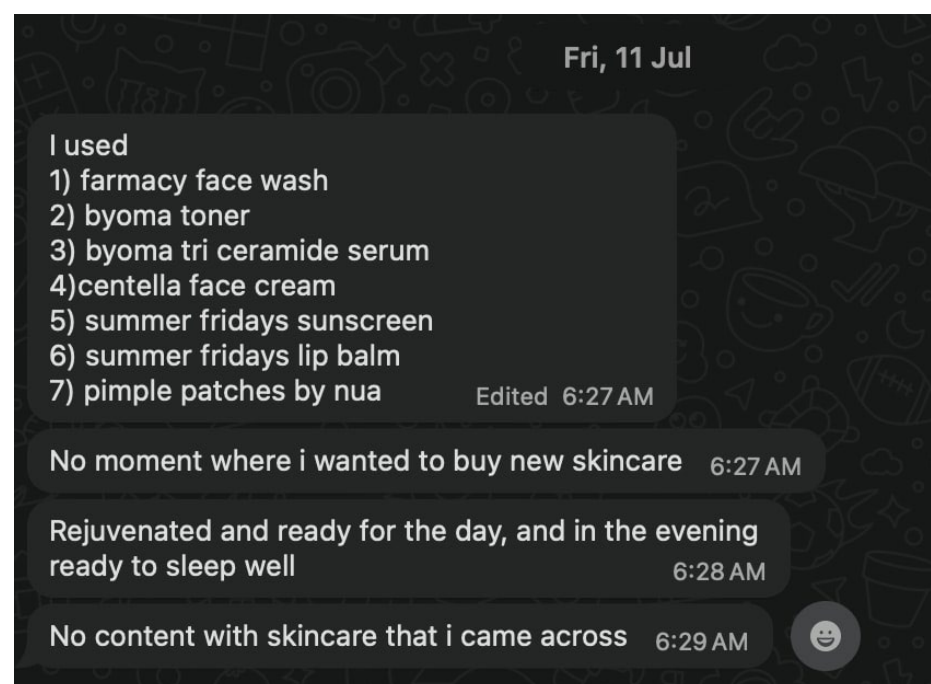
As beauty brands navigate the future of hyper-personalization, customer identity is becoming increasingly crucial. The early adoption of the technology has led to a flood of beauty tech solutions with big promises and flashy marketing (BeautyMatter, 2024).

Appendix J: Cultural Probe

Cultural Probe Questions



Participant Response



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