

A COMPARATIVE STUDY ON ONLINE PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR GENZ AND MILLENNIALS

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Abstract: This study compares the online purchasing behavior of Generation Z and Millennials. It focuses on factors such as shopping preferences, frequency, payment methods, and the influence of social media and online reviews. The findings show that Gen Z is more influenced by social media trends and prefers quick, mobile-based shopping, while Millennials focus on product quality, brand value, and secure transactions. The study helps businesses understand generational differences and develop effective marketing strategies.

Keywords: Online purchasing behavior, Generation Z, Millennials, E-commerce, Consumer preferences, Social media influence, Buying decision, Digital marketing.

INTRODUCTION

In the modern digital era, online shopping has become an integral part of consumers' daily lives. The rapid growth of the internet, smartphones, and digital payment systems has significantly transformed the way people search for products, compare prices, and make purchasing decisions. Online purchasing offers convenience, time savings, a wide variety of products, and easy access to information, which has increased its popularity among different age groups. Among the various consumer segments, Generation Z and Millennials are the most active users of online shopping platforms. Millennials, born between 1981 and 1996, witnessed the transition from traditional shopping to digital commerce and have gradually adapted to online purchasing.

They value convenience, product reviews, brand reputation, and price comparisons while making online purchase decisions. On the other hand, Generation Z, born between 1997 and 2012, are digital natives who have grown up with smartphones, social media, and constant internet access. Their purchasing behaviour is strongly influenced by social media content, online trends, influencers, and personalized shopping experiences. Although both generations actively engage in online shopping, their preferences, motivations, and decisionmaking processes differ. Millennials tend to focus on quality, trust, and long-term value, whereas Generation Z emphasizes speed, visual appeal, peer influence, and seamless digital experiences. Understanding these differences is essential for marketers and online retailers to design effective marketing strategies and improve customer satisfaction. This study aims to conduct a comparative analysis of online purchasing behaviour between Generation Z and Millennials. It seeks to examine factors such as frequency of online shopping, preferred platforms, payment methods, influencing factors, and overall satisfaction. The findings of this study will help businesses, marketers, and researchers gain valuable insights into generational differences and adapt their online marketing strategies accordingly.

The advancement of digital technology has brought a remarkable change in the buying behaviour of consumers. Online purchasing has emerged as a popular method of shopping due to its ease, accessibility, and flexibility. With the availability of e-commerce websites and mobile applications, consumers can purchase products anytime and from anywhere. As a result, traditional shopping patterns are gradually being replaced by online purchasing behaviour. Generation Z and Millennials represent two major consumer groups that actively

participate in online shopping. Millennials have experienced both offline and online shopping environments, which allows them to compare and evaluate products carefully before making purchase decisions. They often rely on product reviews, detailed descriptions, and brand credibility. In contrast, Generation Z is highly comfortable with digital platforms and prefers fast, interactive, and visually engaging online shopping experiences. Social media platforms, short videos, and peer recommendations play a significant role in influencing their purchase behaviour. Despite the similarities in their usage of online shopping platforms, notable differences exist between Generation Z and Millennials in terms of preferences, trust levels, spending habits, and response to online promotions. Millennials are more likely to focus on discounts, loyalty programs, and product reliability, while Generation Z shows a stronger inclination toward trendy products, influencer endorsements, and instant gratification. Therefore, a comparative study of online purchasing behaviour between Generation Z and Millennials is important to understand their expectations and buying patterns. This study highlights the key factors affecting online purchase decisions and provides insights that can help online retailers and marketers develop targeted strategies for different generations. Understanding these generational differences will contribute to improved customer engagement, satisfaction, and long-term business growth.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- ❖ To study the demographic profile of respondents such as age, gender, education, occupation, and income
- ❖ To compare the online purchasing behavior of Generation Z and Millennials
- ❖ To analyse the buying preference of Genz and millennials.
- ❖ To compare factors influencing online purchase decisions among Genz and millennials.
- ❖ To examine the role of digital platforms in influencing online purchasing behaviour of Genz and millennials.

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The present study focuses on a comparative analysis of online purchasing behaviour among Generation Z and Millennials. The scope of the study is limited to understanding the factors that influence online buying decisions of these two generations, such as convenience, price, product variety, payment methods, trust, and promotional offers. The study examines the frequency of online purchases, preferred e-commerce platforms, and types of products commonly purchased by Gen Z and Millennials. It also analyses their attitudes towards online shopping, including satisfaction levels, security concerns, and influence of reviews and social media. The research is confined to selected respondents belonging to Gen Z and Millennials within a specific geographical area. The findings of the study are based on primary data collected through questionnaires and secondary data obtained from books, journals, and websites. The scope is limited to the period of the study and may not be applicable to all age groups or regions.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The rapid growth of online shopping has significantly changed consumer purchasing behaviour. Generation Z and Millennials are the most active users of e-commerce platforms, but their preferences, expectations, and decision-making patterns differ. Despite the increasing importance of these two generations in the digital marketplace, many online retailers and marketers do not clearly understand the differences in their online purchasing behaviour. Lack of proper knowledge about factors such as influencing elements, preferred platforms, payment methods, trust, and satisfaction levels among Generation Z and Millennials may lead to ineffective marketing strategies and reduced customer engagement. Without a comparative understanding of these two generations, businesses may fail to meet consumer expectations and lose competitive advantage. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a comparative study on online purchasing behaviour of Generation Z and Millennials to identify key differences and similarities. This study aims to bridge this gap by analysing their online shopping patterns and providing insights that can help marketers and businesses develop more effective and targeted online marketing strategies.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The present study is done with almost care and delegation. Even though, it has some limitation, they are :

- The accuracy of the information depends upon the data obtained from the respondents; therefore, limitations of generalization are applicable.
- Due to time constraints, the study has been restricted to 110 respondents only.
- The study is conducted only in salem city, and hence the findings of the study may not be applicable to other areas.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methods that were used in the study. It explains the research design, data collection, profile of respondents, sampling method and procedures.

SOURCE OF DATA:

The study is based on primary data and secondary data.

PRIMARY DATA

The data those are collected as a fresh for the first time and happen to be original in character are called primary data. Primary data collected through questionnaire.

SECONDARY DATA

Secondary data consist of information that already exists somewhere, have been collected for another purpose.

Secondary data are collected from

- Website
- Books

SAMPLE SELECTED FOR THE STUDY:

A total of 110 respondents were selected for the study. Convenience sampling method has been followed for collecting the response from the respondents.

AREA OF THE STUDY:

The study area is limited to Coimbatore.

PERIOD OF STUDY:

The study has undergone a period of from December 2025 to April 2026.

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

The tools used under for the study are

- Simple percentage method
- Chi square

SIMPLE PERCENTAGE METHOD

A percentage analysis is used to interpret the data by the researcher for analysis and interpretation. Through the use of percentages, the data are reduced in the standard form with base equal to 105 which fact facilitates relative comparisons. In the percentage analysis, Percentage is calculated by multiplying the number of respondents into hundred and it is divided by the same size.

Formula:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{No. of Respondents} * 100}{\text{TOTAL RESPONDENTS}}$$

CHI – SQUARE:

The chi-squared test is done to check if there is any difference between the observed value and expected value.

Formula:

$$\text{Chi square formula } \chi^2 = \frac{\sum(O_i - E_i)^2}{E}$$

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

1.Donthu & Garcia (2020) Donthu and Garcia examined consumer behaviour in online shopping environments and found that online shoppers tend to seek convenience, variety and time-saving benefits. The study revealed that younger consumers were more likely to adopt online shopping compared to older consumers due to their higher familiarity with technology. The research emphasized that demographic factors such as age, income and education significantly

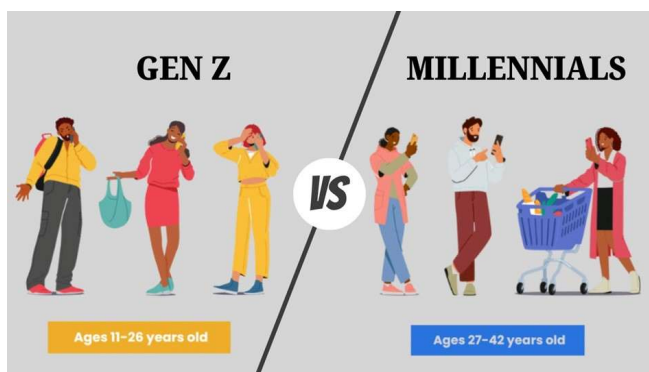
influence online purchasing behaviour. The study laid the foundation for understanding generational differences in e-commerce adoption.

2.Smith (2021) Smith analysed the online behaviour of Millennials and concluded that Millennials prefer interactive, personalized and engaging digital experiences. They are more likely to compare prices online, read reviews and seek peer opinions before making purchase decisions. The study highlighted that Millennials value convenience and brand transparency. They respond positively to email marketing, loyalty programs and promotional discounts. Trust and secure payment systems were found to be important determinants of purchase intention among Millennials.

3.Priporas (2021) Priporas and colleagues focused specifically on Generation Z consumers and found that Gen Z is highly technology-oriented, mobile-dependent and socially connected. Unlike Millennials, Gen Z prefers fast, seamless and visually engaging online platforms. The study concluded that Gen Z consumers are influenced by social media trends, influencer marketing and peer reviews more than traditional advertising. They also expect instant responses and personalized recommendations while shopping online.

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

The rapid diffusion of digital technologies has fundamentally transformed the way consumers search for information, evaluate alternatives, and complete purchases. Electronic commerce has shifted from being a complementary channel to becoming a dominant marketplace where convenience, speed, and personalization shape consumer expectations. Within this environment, generational cohorts play a critical role in determining demand patterns, communication preferences, and responses to marketing stimuli. Among these cohorts, Generation Z and Millennials represent the most powerful and digitally connected segments. Their substantial purchasing power, constant online presence, and influence on trends make them primary targets for businesses seeking competitive advantage. A comparative examination of their online purchasing behaviour is therefore necessary to understand how variations in age, technological exposure, lifestyle orientation, and value systems affect consumption in the digital era.

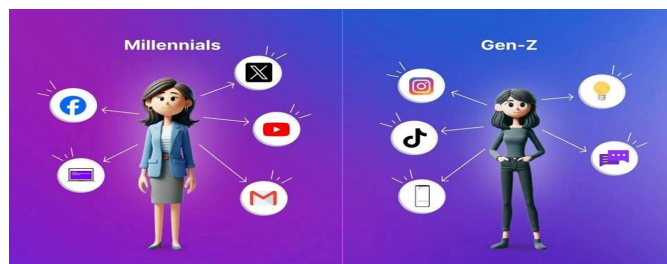


Generational cohort theory suggests that individuals born within a particular historical and social context develop shared attitudes, beliefs, and behavioural tendencies. Millennials, generally born between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s,

witnessed the transition from analog systems to widespread internet adoption. They adapted to evolving technologies such as online banking, e-mail communication, and early social networking. Generation Z, born from the mid-1990s onward, entered a world where smartphones, high-speed connectivity, and social media ecosystems were already embedded in everyday life. As true digital natives, their interaction with commerce is often instantaneous, mobile-first, and heavily influenced by visual and interactive content.

The role of social media in shaping online purchasing behaviour has intensified for both generations but manifests differently. Millennials tend to use digital networks for product research, reading reviews, and validating brand reputation. They value authenticity and long-term credibility. Generation Z, meanwhile, is strongly affected by trends, viral content, and influencer culture. Visual storytelling, relatability, and rapid engagement can drive immediate purchase intentions.

Ultimately, comparing Generation Z and Millennials provides a dynamic picture of how commerce continues to evolve. As younger consumers mature and their economic power expands, distinctions observed today may shift, merge, or intensify. Continuous research is therefore essential to track emerging patterns, anticipate future demands, and design resilient business strategies.



DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

TABLE 1 shows the age of the respondents

S.no	PARTICULAR	NO.OF RESPONDENT	PERCENTAGE
1	Male	53	48.2%
2	Female	57	51.8%
3	Others	0	0
	Total	110	100

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA INTERPRETATION

Out of the total 110 respondents, 51.8% (44 respondents) are female, while 48.2% (41 respondents) are male, indicating a nearly balanced gender distribution with a slightly higher

proportion of females. There are no respondents in the “Others” category (0%). Overall, the data shows an equal representation of male and female participants in the study

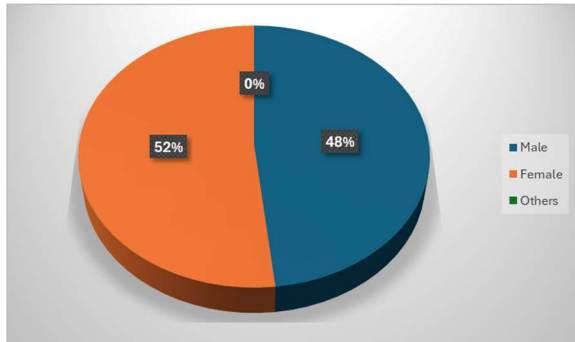
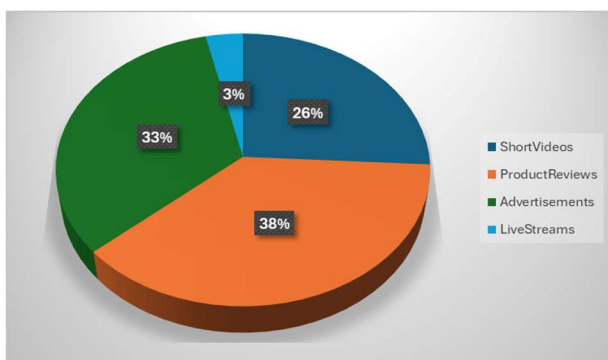


TABLE 2 Shows influential digital content

S. no	PARTICULAR	NO.OF RESPONDENT	PERCENT AGE
1	Short video	28	25%
2	Product review	41	37%
3	Advertisement	36	32%
4	Live stream	5	3.5%
	Total	110	100

SOURCE: PRIMARY DATA INTERPRETATION

Out of the total 110 respondents, the majority (37.6%, 32 respondents) are most influenced by Product Reviews, making it the leading content type. Advertisements follow closely at 32.9% (28 respondents), while Short Videos account for 25.9% (22 respondents). Live Streams have the least influence at 3.5% (3 respondents), indicating that reviews and advertisements play a more significant role in shaping respondents’ decisions.



CHI-SQUARE TEST Table 1.1: Observed Frequencies (O)

Gender	Social Media	Search Engines	E-commerce Apps	Brand Websites	Total
Male	20	15	15	10	60
Female	25	10	10	5	50
Total	45	25	25	15	110

INTERPRETATION

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): There is no significant relationship between gender and the platform usually used to discover new products.

H₁ (Alternative Hypothesis): There is a significant relationship between gender and the platform usually used to discover new products.

Observed (O)	Expected (E)	(O - E)^2	(O - E)^2 / E}
20	24.545	20.657	0.842
15	13.636	1.86	0.136
15	13.636	1.86	0.136
10	8.182	3.305	0.404
25	20.455	20.657	1.01
10	11.364	1.861	0.164
10	11.364	1.861	0.164
5	6.818	3.305	0.485
110	110		3.341

RESULT

Calculated Chi-Square Value : 3.341

Significance Level: 0.05

Degrees of Freedom (df): (2 - 1) * (4 - 1) = 3

Critical Table Value ($df=3, \alpha=0.05$): 7.815 The Calculated Chi-Square value (3.341) is lesser than the Critical Table value (7.815).

Conclusion: We fail to reject the null hypothesis H_0 . At the 5% significance level, there is no statistically significant relationship between gender and product discovery platforms. This indicates that discovery habits are relatively similar across genders in this group.

FINDINGS

1. The majority of respondents (65.9%) belong to the 18–22 years age group.
2. Most respondents are highly educated, with 96.5% being undergraduates or postgraduates.
3. Nearly half of the respondents (48.2%) earn below ₹10,000 per month.
4. The majority shop online 2–3 times per month, showing moderate purchasing frequency.
5. Smartphones (55.3%) are the most preferred device for online shopping.
6. Fashion & Accessories are the most commonly purchased products online.
7. Cash on Delivery (38.8%) is the most preferred payment method.
8. Lower price is the most important factor when choosing an online shopping platform.
9. Customer reviews are the most attractive feature influencing purchase decisions.
10. The lowest price is the primary factor when deciding between similar products.
11. Product availability moderately influences online purchase decisions.
12. Delivery charges affect purchase decisions occasionally for most respondents.
13. Social media platforms are the main source for discovering new products.
14. Product reviews are the most influential type of digital content.
15. Most respondents spend less than 30 minutes before making an online purchase decision.
16. Product quality strongly influences online buying behaviour.
17. Trust and security of websites/apps play a significant role in purchase decisions.
18. Respondents show a neutral to slightly positive preference for online shopping over offline shopping.
19. A moderate number of respondents are willing to try new brands online.
20. Most respondents are satisfied with online pricing of products.

SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings of the study, online shopping platforms should focus on offering competitive pricing and attractive discounts, as price and promotional offers significantly influence customer decisions. Companies should enhance user-friendly app design and ensure smooth navigation, particularly optimizing mobile applications since most consumers prefer shopping through smartphones. Improving product quality, encouraging genuine customer reviews, and providing detailed product descriptions can

further strengthen purchase confidence. Delivery services should be made faster and more reliable, with reduced or transparent delivery charges to minimize customer hesitation. Additionally, return and refund policies need to be simplified and processed quickly to improve satisfaction levels. Online retailers should also emphasize secure payment systems and clearly display trust signals to enhance customer confidence. Since social media and digital content strongly influence buying behaviour, businesses should invest in engaging advertisements, product reviews, and short videos to attract and retain customers.

Overall, continuous feedback collection and service improvement strategies are essential to increase customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

CONCLUSION

The study titled “A Comparative Study on Online Purchasing Behaviour towards Gen Z and Millennials” concludes that online shopping has become an integral part of consumer behaviour for both generations, but their preferences, motivations, and decision-making patterns differ significantly. The findings reveal that the majority of respondents belong to the younger age group, indicating strong participation of Gen Z consumers, while Millennials also form an important segment of online buyers. The study highlights that price, offers and coupons, and product quality are the most influential factors affecting online purchase decisions for both generations. However, Gen Z consumers are more influenced by social media platforms, short digital content, peer reviews, and trends, whereas Millennials place greater emphasis on brand reputation, trust, security, and detailed product information. Smartphones are the dominant device for online shopping, especially among Gen Z, while Millennials use both smartphones and laptops.

Although respondents show overall satisfaction with pricing, usability of apps/websites, and payment options, areas such as delivery speed and return/refund policies require improvement. Trust and security also play a significant role in shaping purchase decisions across both generations. In conclusion, while both Gen Z and Millennials actively engage in online shopping, their behaviour differs in terms of influence sources, brand loyalty, and purchase motivations. Businesses must adopt generation-specific strategies—leveraging social media engagement and trend-based marketing for Gen Z, and emphasizing quality, reliability, and secure transactions for Millennials—to enhance customer satisfaction and long-term loyalty.

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