



# A STUDY ON “GENERATIONAL DIFFERENCE IN BUYING HABITS”

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## ABSTRACT

*This research paper examines the variations in purchasing behavior among generations they are Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z. Through the analysis of trends in shopping behavior, brand loyalty, buying platforms, and driving factors such as technology and social media, the study seeks to determine the distinctive consumer characteristics of each generation. The study's findings indicate that marketing efforts need to be adjusted according to generational preferences in order to optimize engagement and conversion. The article ends with some suggestions for companies to target each generational segment effectively.*

**KEYWORDS:** Generational Buying, Consumer Behavior, Gen Z, Millennials, Boomers, Marketing Strategy, Digital Influence.

## INTRODUCTION

Consumer purchase behavior is the most dynamic of all marketing variables that are influenced by a variety of factors like culture, technology, age, and social environment. Of these, age is also the most vital factor since it mirrors the technology exposure, the economic status, and the value system prevalent during the era as reflected through generational influences to shape one's buying habits. Generations have developed under different social and technological environments, resulting in dramatically different consumer attitudes. Baby Boomers, for example, are generally more attached to brand loyalty, quality, and human contact, while Gen Z and Millennials are more comfortable with convenience, speed, online platforms, and peer pressure. Generation X lies somewhere in the middle, marrying traditional values with a willingness to use digital technology. With the online shopping era, social media marketing, and influencer culture, it is essential that businesses know how each generation buys.

This study seeks to compare and contrast such generational patterns of buying and consumption to enable marketers and businesses to craft customized strategies that speak to particular groups of consumers. Through this, brands can promote greater customer satisfaction, better engagement, and improved sales through bespoke approaches.

## STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

- There is much diversity in consumer preferences across generations.
- Age-related behavior is usually ignored by marketers.
- Younger generations are affected more by digital tools.
- Older generations prefer dependability and integrity.
- There is no in-depth comparison of purchasing behavior.
- The study will investigate the way different generations act as consumers.

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To investigate the most preferred shopping modes (online, offline, hybrid) across different generations.
- To determine the major drivers of purchasing behavior for every generational segment.
- To examine the extent of price sensitivity and brand loyalty between generations.
- To discuss the influence of technology, social media, and online marketing on generational consumer behavior.
- To compare generational perceptions of marketing trends like influencer marketing, product reviews, and personalization.
- To offer actionable recommendations and market insights derived from generational preferences and trend



## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Digital Behavior and Platform Preferences

Recent research (e.g., Kapoor & Dwivedi, 2022) indicates that Gen Z and Millennials control digital retail environments, opting for mobile-first experiences, influencer marketing, and short-form video content. In contrast, Gen X and Boomers continue to use older platforms such as email and brick-and-mortar stores, although their digital uptake grew after the pandemic.

### Influence of Social Media and Online Reviews

Verma et al. (2021) found that Gen Z makes purchases relying significantly on social proof like TikTok reviews, Instagram reels, and YouTube recommendations. Millennials are not far behind, and Gen X makes use of online reviews to a moderate extent. Boomers prefer professional reviews and word of mouth over social sites.

### Spending Habits and Value Orientation

A 2023 Nielsen report pointed out that Boomers and Gen X focus on product quality, reliability, and brand heritage. Millennials focus on value-for-money and individual experiences, while Gen Z values trendiness, speed of service, and brand authenticity, influenced by social causes.

### Sustainability and Ethical Consumption

Singh & Rajan (2023) noted that Gen Z consumers are the most concerned about sustainability, looking for eco-friendly packaging, cruelty-free manufacturing, and ethical working conditions. Millennials are concerned to a lesser degree. Boomers and Gen X are interested but less impactful on purchasing behavior.

### Omnichannel and Hybrid Shopping Trends

Based on Jain & Thomas (2024), COVID-era consumer behavior shifted in every age group. Millennials and Gen Z prefer hybrid models—online browsing with offline purchasing or vice versa. Gen X and Boomers adjusted to online buying due to need but do not like high-involvement products bought anywhere other than a physical store.

### Brand Loyalty and Personalization

Chakraborty et al. (2022) demonstrated that Gen Z is the least brand loyal, switching frequently for better prices or innovative features. Millennials seek personalization and reward programs. Gen X exhibits moderate loyalty, while Boomers are the most loyal but require consistent service quality.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

1. Type of Research: The research is comparative and descriptive in its nature. It seeks to establish and study differences in purchasing behavior between unique generational groups.

2. Area of Study: The study was done in Bangalore, Karnataka, as it presents a diverse and urban demography across ages, which is perfect to research about generations.

3. Sample Size and Composition: 100 respondents were chosen by stratified sampling, split equally into four generational cohorts:

- Baby Boomers (25 respondents)
- Generation X (25 respondents)
- Millennials (25 respondents)
- Generation Z (25 respondents)

### 4. Data Collection Method:

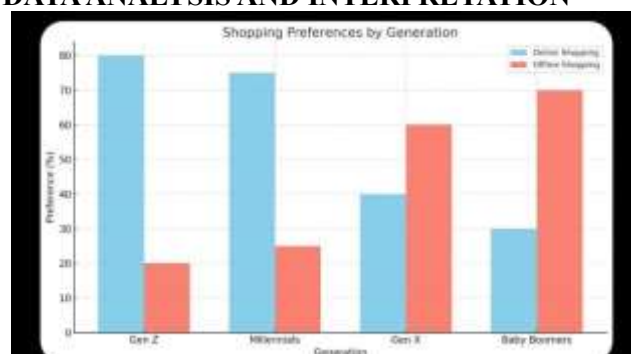
Primary Data: Gathered through systematic questionnaires provided through Google Forms and face-to-face interviews. The questions were regarding shopping habits, brand allegiance, online versus offline behavior, and driving forces. Secondary Data: Collected from scholarly journals, industry publications, white papers, marketing magazines, and consumer behavior studies.

5. Tools and Techniques Used: Data was tabulated and analyzed using Microsoft Excel to make statistical comparisons.

### 6. Key Variables Examined:

Shopping platform of choice (online/offline), impact of social media and technology, frequency of shopping, Brand loyalty and price sensitivity, trust in ads and word-of-mouth.

## DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION



The information gathered from 100 respondents was then examined to look for generational differences in consumption patterns.

**Shopping Habits:** Gen Z and Millennials prefer shopping online, but Baby Boomers and Gen X prefer shopping in stores.

**Digital Influence:** Social media and web reviews have strong impacts on the younger generations, particularly Gen Z, while the older generations pay more attention to traditional media and word of mouth.

**Brand Loyalty:** Baby Boomers and Gen X have greater brand loyalty, while Millennials and Gen Z are more prone to change brands based on trends, reviews, and promotions.

**Price Sensitivity:** Gen Z is the most price-conscious, tending to compare prices online before buying. Baby Boomers, on the other hand, value quality over price.

### Interpretation

Each generation acts differently based on the period they were brought up in, their exposure to technology, and priorities in their lifestyle. Companies must implement generation-specific marketing campaigns to effectively appeal to and convert each generation.



## FINDINGS

### 1.Age Differing Shopping Preferences:

Baby Boomers and Gen X prefer physical stores, whereas Millennials and Gen Z prefer online shopping sites.

### 2.Digital Influence is Greatest Among Youth:

Gen Z and Millennials are most impacted by social media, online reviews, and digital advertising when making a buying decision

Gen Z and Millennials are most influenced by social media, online reviews, and digital advertisements when deciding to make a purchase.

### 3.Brand Loyalty Decreases with Younger Generations:

Later generations (Boomers, Gen X) are brand loyal, with younger segments regularly changing brands with the trends and peer influence Older generations (Boomers, Gen X) are more brand loyal, while younger groups often switch brands based on trends and peer influence.

### 4.Price Sensitivity is High Among Younger Consumers:

Gen Z and Millennials are more price-conscious and seek discounts and deals before making purchases.

### 5.Generational Values Impact Purchase Behavior:

Boomers value quality and trust; Gen X balances value with reliability; Millennials seek convenience; Gen Z prefers speed, personalization, and trends

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1.Use Different Ideas for Different Age Groups:

Individuals of various generations have different ways of thinking and shopping. Therefore, companies ought to have various styles and messages for every age group.

### 2.Target Social Media with Young Adults:

Gen Z and Millennials have plenty of time spent on the internet. Use Instagram, YouTube, and influencers.

### 3.Establish Trust with Mature Customers:

Baby Boomers and Gen X desire quality service and products they can trust. Demonstrate that you are reliable.

### 4.Provide Fast and Customized Service:

Young consumers prefer things to be speedy and tailor-made for them—such as personalized messages or special deals.

### 5.Start Rewards Programs:

Reward repeat customers for buying from you repeatedly. This suits older consumers but can entice younger ones as well.

### 6.Be Everywhere Online and Offline:

Ensure people are able to find your business both offline and online. Then, you'll be able to target every age group.

### 7.Assist Older Individuals in Online Shopping:

Educate Baby Boomers on how to shop online easily. Make your website simple and provide assistance if they require it.

## CONCLUSION

It is fairly evident from the study that consumption patterns differ extensively between generations based on differences in values, technology exposure, lifestyle, and expectations. The Baby Boomers and Generation X tend to be more conservative in their style, favouring brick-and-mortar shopping, value products, and good service. They are also more brand loyal and less affected by digital media. Conversely, Millennials and Generation Z have adopted digital shopping, social media influence, and instant gratification. These younger consumers are more price-conscious, less brand loyal, and strongly influenced by trends, online reviews, and peer recommendations.

These findings are beneficial for companies that seek to enhance their marketing and customer interaction efforts. By identifying and honoring the distinctive traits of each generation, companies can adjust their products, services, and communication channels to effectively reach their target markets. This understanding of generations is central to developing effective, inclusive, and future-oriented business strategies in a highly competitive market.

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