

Reading Behavior Across Generations: A Comparative Analysis of Gen Z and Millennials

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Abstract: The rapid development of digital technology has significantly influenced reading behaviors across generations. This study focuses on a comparative analysis of reading habits between Millennials and Generation Z. While Millennials have experienced both print and digital transitions, Gen Z has grown up in a completely digital environment. Using a survey-based methodology and secondary data to explore differences in reading formats, preferences, attention spans, and use of e-resources, the study examined how both generations (Gen-Z, Millennials) interact with reading materials academically. Findings suggest that Millennials prefer in-depth and print-based reading, while Gen Z favors digital, short-form, and interactive materials. The study also emphasizes the role of college libraries and e-resources in shaping modern reading habits. This research is useful for educators, librarians, and policymakers in designing effective reading strategies for diverse learners.

Keyword: *Generation (Millennial & Gen Z), Reading Habit, Reading Reference.*

Introduction :

Reading is a fundamental skill that plays a vital role in education, personal development, and knowledge acquisition. However, reading behavior is not static; it evolves with changes in technology, culture, and lifestyle. In recent decades, digital transformation has dramatically changed how people access and consume information.

Millennials (born 1981-1996) grew up during a period of technological transition, experiencing the rise of traditional print media and digital platforms. On the other hand, Generation Z (born between 1997-2012) is the first generation to be fully immersed in the digital world from an early age.

These generational differences have led to differences in reading preferences, habits, and purposes. While Millennials may still engage in long-form reading such as books and research articles, Generation Z is more inclined toward digital content, including social media, blogs, and multimedia resources.

The purpose of this study is to explore and compare the reading behaviors of these two generations, particularly in the context of higher education and the use of college library resources.

Literature Review :

- **Mushtaq, Soroya and Mahmood, (2020)** "Reading habits of generation Z students in Pakistan: Is it time to re-examine school library services?" Recent studies highlight significant differences in reading behavior between Generation Z and Millennials. Research indicates that Gen Z, often referred to as "digital natives," prefers online reading formats such as e-books, social media content, and interactive platforms due to early exposure to technology.

- **Noorda, Berens,(2024)**”Gen Z and Millennials: Contrasts in Reading Behavior and Readerly Identity”In contrast, Millennials show a balanced preference between digital and print media, reflecting their transitional exposure to both traditional and modern reading formats. Studies also reveal that reading is not only a cognitive activity but also a social and cultural practice, influencing identity formation among both generations.

Objectives of the study :

- To analyze the reading habits of Millennials and Gen Z.
- To compare preferences for print and digital reading formats.
- To examine the role of e-resources in shaping reading behavior.
- To understand the impact of technology on attention and comprehension.
- To assess the use of college library resources by both generations.

Research Questions :

- Which source do you usually use for reading?
- Which device do you use for reading?
- I prefer digital sources for reading ?
- I prefer reading printed books ?
- I use websites and online articles for educational information ?
- I also get reading material from YouTube, blogs and social media ?
- Reading e-books seems easier than printed books ?
- Reading on a screen seems difficult for long periods ?
- Library resources are still important ?
- I prefer short-form content (PDF notes, summaries) ?

Research methodology :

This study adopts a descriptive and comparative research design.

Data collection:

As shown in Table 1, out of a total of 70 students, 35 Gen Z and 35 Millennial

Primary Data: Collected through structured questionnaires distributed among college students (Generation Z) and young professionals/graduates (Millennials).

Secondary Data: Collected from books, journals, research articles, and online sources.

Sample Size: Approximately 35-35 respondents from each generation.

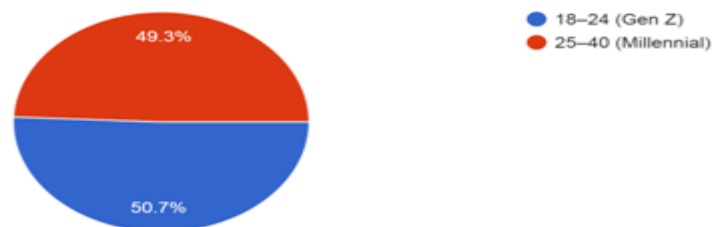
Sampling Method : Random sampling method is used to ensure unbiased results.

Data Analysis : Data is analyzed using percentage method, charts, and comparative tables.

Analysis and Discussion :

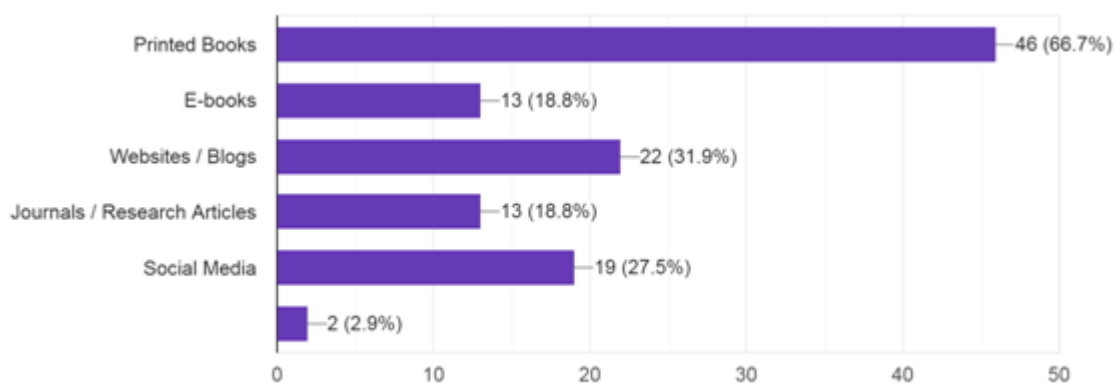
The data has been analyzed using statistical methods. The data has been presented in tables and charts. In the present research, 100 students were given a questionnaire to fill out, out of which 70 respondents filled and returned the questionnaire. As a result, the analysis of the data provided by the 70 respondents is as follows.

Chart -1



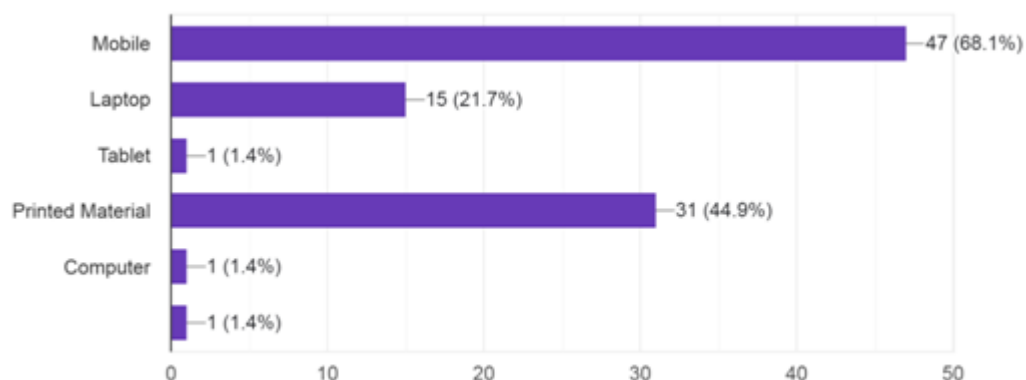
As shown in Table 1, out of a total of Gen-Z 50.7% and 49.3% Millennial.

Chart -2



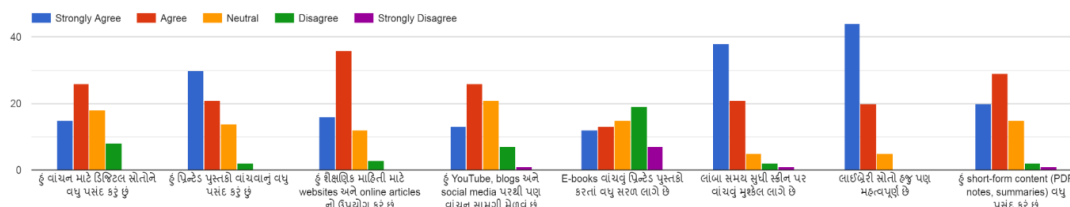
As shown in Chart 2, both generations use various types of e-resources such as, Printed Books 65.7%, E-Books 20%, Website/Blogs 31.4%, Journals/Research Articles 18.6%, Social Media 27.1% & Unidentified Samples 2.9%.

Chart - 3



As shown in Chart 3, both generations use different types of devices for reading such as, Mobile 68.1%, Laptop 21.7%, Tablet 1.4%, Printed Material 44.9% and Computer 1.4% & Unidentified Samples 1.4%.

Chart - 4



Analysis of these responses reveals a clear difference in reading habits between Gen Z and Millennials. Gen Z reads more from digital sources such as websites, e-books, YouTube, blogs and social media and prefers short-form content (PDF notes, summaries). While Millennials value both digital and print reading, and especially prefer printed books for longer and more in-depth reading. Online articles are important for learning for both generations, but reading on a screen for long periods of time is difficult, especially for Millennials. However, both generations give more importance to library resources. Thus, this study shows that Gen Z is more inclined towards digital and short reading, while Millennials use a balanced mix of both traditional and modern reading methods.

Limitation of Study:

- This study is based on a limited sample, so the results may not apply to all Gen Z and Millennials.
- Since this study is limited to students from a single college, it is difficult to generalize globally.
- The reading habits of Gen Z and Millennials are changing rapidly, so the results may change over time.

Conclusion:

The study shows clear generational differences in reading behavior. Millennials engage in deeper, more focused reading and prefer a mix of print and digital formats. In contrast, Gen Z favors digital, fast-paced, and interactive content, often influenced by technology and social media.

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