

# Digital Streaming Behaviour in the Age of OTT Platforms: A Generational Comparison of Usage Patterns between Generation Z and Y in Lucknow District.

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## Abstract

The rapid expansion of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms has notably changed digital entertainment consumption patterns. This study compares the digital streaming behaviour of Generation Z and Generation Y (Millennials) in Lucknow District by analysing key aspects such as frequency of OTT usage, binge-watching habits, device preference, content preference, and subscription behaviour. Primary data were collected from 214 OTT users through a structured online questionnaire and analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. The findings revealed significant differences between the two generations in terms of OTT usage frequency, binge-watching behaviour, and device preference. However, content preferences were found to be largely similar, while subscription behaviour differed only in terms of annual expenditure. The study provides valuable insights into generational streaming patterns and can help OTT platforms design more targeted engagement and subscription strategies.

**Keywords:** OTT Platforms, Generation Z, Generation Y, Digital Streaming Behaviour, OTT Usage

## Introduction

In recent years, India has experienced a rapid advancement in digital technologies, internet accessibility, and increasing smartphone penetration which has significantly transformed the entertainment industry. The Over-the-Top (OTT) is a digital streaming platform that provide digital content (like movies, television shows, web series) any time anywhere directly to users through internet-connected devices such as smartphones, tablets, laptops, smart TVs, or computers, without relying on traditional cable or satellite television networks. (Kumari, 2021). OTT services had already start gaining attention before 2020 but the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated the adoption across India. During lockdown period consumers increasingly switch to OTT platforms for entertainment because they offered convenient, on-demand access to diverse content across multiple internet-enabled devices. The availability of personalized content, flexibility in viewing time, and freedom to choose preferred genres further strengthened consumer interest in these platforms (Nijhawan & Dahiya, 2020; Anbumalar & Antony, 2023). These developments have accelerated the growth of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms, making them a popular source of digital content among Generation Z and Generation Y (Millennials).

Generation Y comprises individuals born between 1981 and 1996, while Generation Z includes individuals born in 1997 and 2012. Millennials experienced the evolution of technology from traditional media to digital age whereas Generation Z grew up in a technology-driven environment where digital devices and the internet were an integral part of everyday life. (Dimock, 2019; Reisenwitz, 2021). The consumption habit of generation Z and Generation Y are different from each other due to generational gap. Understanding these evolving consumption patterns is crucial for content creators, marketers, and OTT platforms aiming to maintain relevance in this competitive space. This study investigates Gen Z's and Gen Y's OTT usage pattern focusing on OTT usage frequency, binge-watching behaviour, device preference, content

preference, and subscription behaviour in Lucknow. A better understanding of users' streaming behaviour can help OTT platforms deliver more relevant content, improve customer satisfaction, and encourage long-term platform usage. The widespread digital transformation has reshaped entertainment habits, making online streaming a regular and preferred mode of media consumption for many users.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Mulla (2022) reviewed studies published between 2007 and 2021 to identify the factors influencing OTT platform adoption. The study found that content quality, price, convenience, flexibility, perceived usefulness, entertainment value, and binge-watching are key drivers of OTT adoption. It also proposed a conceptual framework for understanding user adoption behaviour. However, the review was limited to existing literature and recommended further empirical research.
2. **Nagaraj et al. (2021)** examined the factors influencing consumers' willingness to subscribe to OTT services in India using a cross-sectional survey. The study found that content, convenience, features, quality, and price significantly influenced subscription decisions. However, the research was limited to the Indian market and suggested further validation in different contexts.
3. **Ezhilarasan et al. (2025)** explored how binge-watching on OTT platforms influences the mindset of Generation Z. The study used a cross-sectional survey of 90 Gen Z participants and analysed the data using correlation analysis. The findings showed that higher binge-watching hours were associated with changes in behaviour, lifestyle, identity, and self-perception. However, the study was limited by a small convenience sample, self-reported data, and an exploratory conceptual framework, limiting the generalizability of the findings.
4. **Kuriakose and Johnson (2025)** examined the OTT usage patterns and its influence on Generation Z in Kottayam District, Kerala. The study used a descriptive survey design with data collected from 129 respondents and analysed using SPSS, Chi-square, correlation, and descriptive statistics. The findings showed that movies and web series were the most preferred content, and OTT usage was significantly associated with education and customer satisfaction. However, the study was limited to Generation Z in a single district, which restricts the generalizability of the findings.
5. **Sangle and Hodlur (2025)** examined the OTT usage habits of Generation Z in Maharashtra to understand their viewing behaviour, content preferences, and subscription patterns. The study adopted a descriptive research design and collected data from **502 Gen Z respondents** through a structured online questionnaire. The findings showed that smartphones were the most preferred viewing device, evening and late-night streaming was common, and affordability and personalized content strongly influenced subscription choices. However, the study was limited to **Generation Z respondents from Maharashtra**, restricting the generalizability of the findings to other age groups and regions.
6. **Singh (2020)** examined the factors influencing the adoption of OTT services among millennial consumers in India. The study used a survey method and collected primary and secondary data from 100 respondents through a structured questionnaire. The findings revealed that content availability, innovation, audio-video quality, fewer advertisements, affordable pricing, and overall user experience were the key factors driving OTT adoption. However, the study was limited to a small sample of millennials and suggested the need for broader studies involving larger and more diverse populations.
7. **Kaushik and Rajput (2025)** examined the genre preferences and content choices of millennials on OTT platforms in Delhi using a descriptive and inferential research design with a structured questionnaire. The study found that millennials actively use OTT platforms to access information, compare products, and make content choices, with their preferences being influenced by online engagement and demographic factors. However, the study was limited to millennials in Delhi, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings.
8. **Sharma and Lulandala (2023)** examined the impact of COVID-19 on OTT platforms by exploring business strategies and changes in consumer media consumption in India. Using multiple case studies and a semi-structured survey, the study found that competitive pricing, content localisation, improved customer experience, and affordability encouraged habitual OTT usage. However, the study was conducted during the

COVID-19 period and focused only on subscription-based OTT platforms, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other contexts.

Previous studies have examined different aspects of OTT platform usage, such as binge-watching behaviour, content preferences, device choices, and subscription practices. However, these aspects have mostly been studied separately. Limited research has comprehensively compared Generation Z and Generation Y, particularly in the Indian context. Furthermore, studies focusing on Lucknow District are scarce. Therefore, there is a need to better understand how these two generations differ in their overall OTT usage behaviour. This study aims to address this gap by providing a comparative analysis of OTT consumption patterns among Generation Z and Generation Y in Lucknow District.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To compare OTT usage frequency between Generation Z and Generation Y.
2. To examine differences in binge-watching behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y.
3. To study differences in device preference for OTT consumption between the two generations cohorts.
4. To investigate generational variations in content preferences for OTT platforms.
5. To evaluate differences in subscription behaviour between two generational cohort.

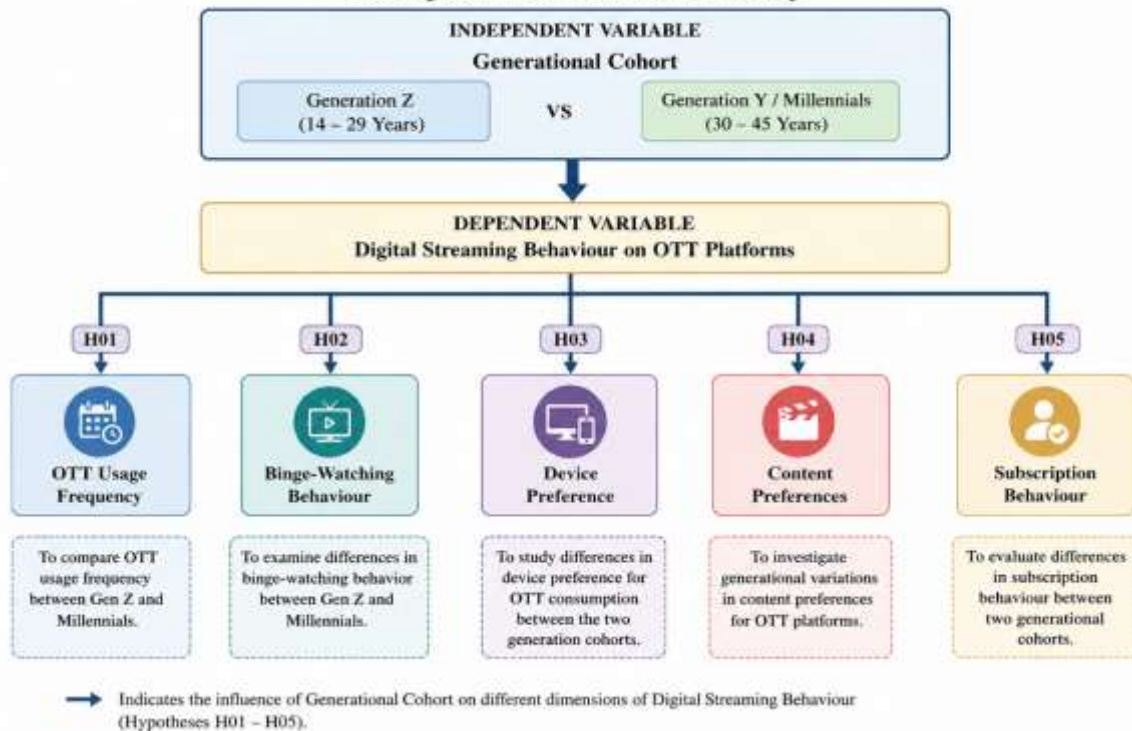
## HYPOTHESES

1. **H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in OTT usage frequency between Generation Z and Generation Y.
2. **H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in binge-watching behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y.
3. **H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in device preference for OTT consumption between Generation Z and Generation Y.
4. **H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference in content preferences for OTT platforms between Generation Z and Generation Y.
5. **H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant difference in subscription behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y.

## Conceptual Framework

The study examined the differences in generational (Gen Z's and Gen Y's) characteristics which lead to variations in OTT consumption behaviour. The generational cohort serves as independent variable where as digital streaming behaviour serve as dependent variables and measured through five dimensions: OTT usage frequency, binge-watching behaviour, device preference, content preference, and subscription behaviour.

### Conceptual Framework of the Study



## Research Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative approach using a descriptive and comparative research design to examine the digital streaming behaviour of OTT platform users belonging to Generation Z and Generation Y in Lucknow District, Uttar Pradesh. The study focused on active OTT users aged 14–29 years (Generation Z) and 30–45 years (Generation Y). Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire distributed online via Google Forms. The sample consisted of 214 respondents, selected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique based on their accessibility and willingness to participate. The collected data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics. Descriptive statistics, the Independent Samples t-test, and the Chi-Square test were used to examine differences in OTT usage behaviour between the two generational cohorts.

## Analysis and Interpretation

A total of 214 valid responses were obtained, comprising 116 Generation Z and 98 Generation Y respondents. The data were analysed to understand the digital streaming behaviour of the two generational cohorts in Lucknow District. The analysis covers key aspects of OTT usage, including frequency of usage, binge-watching behaviour, device preference, content preference, and subscription behaviour. The respondents belonged to different gender, occupation, and income groups, providing a diverse profile for comparison between the two generations.

### 1) To compare OTT usage frequency between Gen Z and Millennials

**H<sub>01</sub>:** There is no significant difference in OTT usage frequency between Generation Z and Millennials.

Table 1- Chi-Square Test for OTT Usage Frequency

| Test            | Value / X <sup>2</sup> | Df | P-Value | Decision               |
|-----------------|------------------------|----|---------|------------------------|
| Chi-Square Test | 50.644                 | 4  | <0.001  | Reject H <sub>01</sub> |

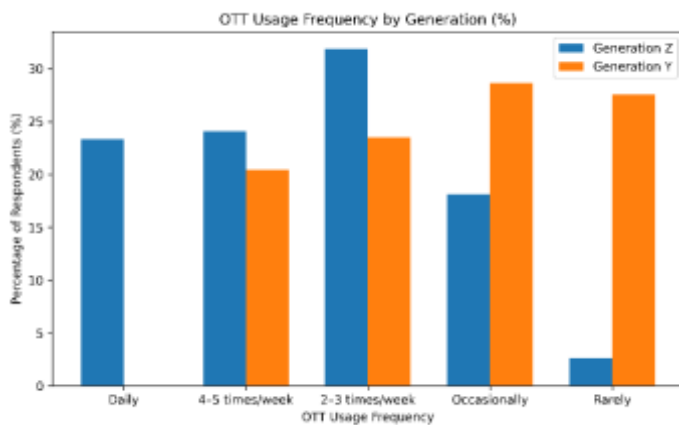


Figure 1- Generational Differences in OTT Usage

The chi-Square test was conducted to examine the differences in OTT usage frequency between Generation Z and Generation Y. As shown in Table 1, the Chi-Square test result ( $\chi^2 = 50.644$ ,  $df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ) revealed a significant difference in OTT usage frequency between Generation Z and Generation Y. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis was accepted.

The above Figure 1 represents the percentage distribution of OTT usage frequency across Generation Z and Generation Y. The results indicated that Generation Z respondents were more frequent OTT users, with a greater proportion reporting OTT usage 2-3 times per week (31%) and daily (23%), whereas Generation Y respondents were more likely to watch content occasionally (28.6%) or rarely (27.6%).

## 2) To examine differences in binge-watching behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y

**H<sub>02</sub>:** There is no significant difference in binge-watching behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y

Table 2- Independent Samples t-Test Results

| Variable                 | Test                       | T     | p-value | Decision               |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|-------|---------|------------------------|
| Binge-Watching Behaviour | Independent Samples t-Test | 6.919 | < 0.001 | Reject H <sub>02</sub> |

An Independent Samples t-Test was conducted to examine differences in binge-watching behaviour between Generation Z and Millennials. As presented in Table 2, the results revealed ( $p < 0.05$ ) a significant difference in binge-watching behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected and alternate hypothesis was accepted.

## 3) To study differences in device preference for OTT consumption between the two generational cohorts

**H<sub>03</sub>:** There is no significant difference in device preference for OTT consumption between Generation Z and Generation Y.

Table 3- Chi-Square Test for Device Preference

| Test            | $\chi^2$ | p-value | Df | Decision               |
|-----------------|----------|---------|----|------------------------|
| Chi-Square Test | 14.992   | 0.002   | 3  | Reject H <sub>03</sub> |

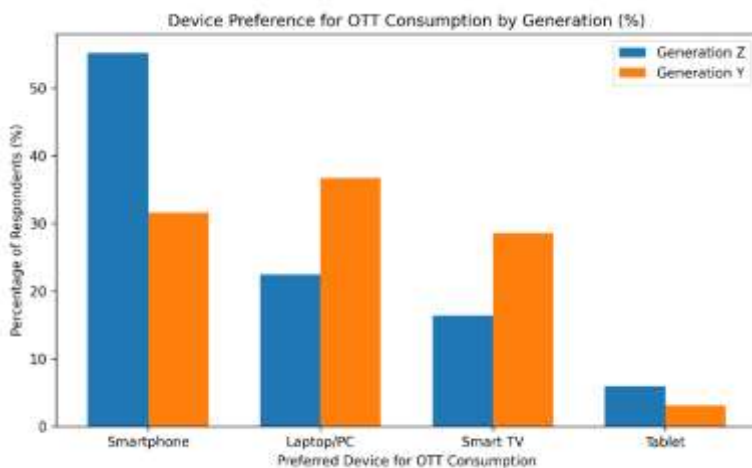


Figure 2- OTT Device Preference by Generation

The chi-Square test was conducted to examine the device preference for OTT consumption between Generation Z and Millennials. As shown in Table 3, the Chi-Square test result ( $\chi^2 = 14.992$ ,  $df = 3$ ,  $p = 0.002$ ) revealed a significant difference in device preference for OTT consumption between Generation Z and Generation Y. Therefore, the findings support the alternative hypothesis

The above Figure 2 represents the percentage distribution of device preferences for OTT consumption among Generation Z and Generation Y respondents. The results show that smartphones are the most commonly used device among Generation Z, with more than half of the respondents (55.2%) preferring them for OTT viewing. On the other hand, Generation Y respondents tend to prefer Laptop/PCs (36.7%) and Smart TVs (28.6%).

#### 4) To investigate generational variations in content preferences for OTT platforms

**H<sub>04</sub>:** There is no significant difference in content preferences for OTT platforms between Generation Z and Generation Y.

Table 4-Generational Variations in Content Preferences for OTT Platforms

| Content Dimension  | Preference | Most Preferred by Gen Z | Most Preferred by Gen Y | $\chi^2$ Value | p-value | Result          |
|--------------------|------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|---------|-----------------|
| Content Type       |            | Web Series (39.7%)      | Web Series (39.8%)      | 0.875          | 0.646   | Not Significant |
| Genre Preference   |            | Drama (22.4%)           | Comedy (20.4%)          | 4.152          | 0.656   | Not Significant |
| Preferred Language |            | English (31.0%)         | Hindi (27.6%)           | 2.051          | 0.562   | Not Significant |

To investigate generational variations in content preferences for OTT platforms, three dimensions were examined: preferred content type, preferred genre, and preferred language. As presented in Table 4, web series emerged as the most preferred content type among both Generation Z and Millennials. In terms of genre preference, Generation Z showed a relatively higher preference for drama, whereas Millennials displayed a greater preference for comedy. Likewise, Generation Z respondents showed a stronger inclination towards English-language content, while Millennials demonstrated a slightly higher preference for Hindi-language content.

However, the Chi-square test results revealed that the differences in content type ( $p = 0.646$ ), genre preference ( $p = 0.656$ ), and preferred language ( $p = 0.562$ ) were not statistically significant, as all  $p$ -values exceeded the 0.05 level of significance. Therefore, the null hypothesis ( $H_{04}$ ) was accepted and findings indicate that although some differences are visible in the descriptive statistics, the overall content preferences of Generation Z and Millennials are largely similar. Thus, generational cohort does not have a significant influence on content preferences among OTT users in Lucknow District.

### 5) To evaluate differences in subscription behaviour between two generational cohorts

**H<sub>05</sub>:** There is no significant difference in subscription behaviour between Generation Z and Generation Y

*Table 5-Summary of Subscription Behaviour Differences Between Generation Z and Millennials*

| Subscription Behaviour Dimension | Chi-Square Value | p-value | Result              |
|----------------------------------|------------------|---------|---------------------|
| Access Method                    | 4.266            | 0.234   | Not Significant     |
| Number of OTT Subscriptions      | 3.756            | 0.289   | Not Significant     |
| Preferred Payment Interval       | 6.032            | 0.176   | Not Significant     |
| Annual OTT Expenditure           | 14.065           | 0.007   | Significant         |
| Overall Subscription Behaviour   | —                | —       | Partially Different |

To examine differences in subscription behaviour, Chi-Square tests were conducted across four dimensions: access method, number of OTT subscriptions, preferred payment interval, and annual expenditure on OTT subscriptions. As presented in Table 5, no significant differences were found between Generation Z and Millennials with respect to access method ( $p = 0.234$ ), number of OTT subscriptions ( $p = 0.289$ ), and preferred payment interval ( $p = 0.176$ ), as all  $p$ -values were greater than 0.05. This suggests that both generations follow similar subscription patterns on OTT platforms. However, a significant difference was observed in annual expenditure on OTT subscriptions ( $\chi^2 = 14.065$ ,  $p = 0.007$ ). This indicates that while Generation Z and Millennials subscribe to OTT services in similar ways, they differ in the amount they spend on these platforms.

Therefore,  $H_{05}$  was partially rejected, indicating that the two generations exhibit similar subscription behaviour in most aspects, but differ significantly in their annual spending on OTT services.

### Conclusion

The findings revealed that Generation Z uses OTT platforms more frequently, engages in higher binge-watching, and primarily prefers smartphones for streaming, whereas Millennials are more inclined towards laptops and smart TVs. Although both generations exhibited similar content preferences, they differed significantly in their annual OTT expenditure while showing similar subscription patterns in other aspects. These findings are consistent with earlier studies highlighting the importance of content quality, convenience, affordability, and personalized viewing experiences in shaping OTT usage (Mulla, 2022; Nagaraj et al., 2021; Sharma & Lulandala, 2023; Singh, 2020). By providing a comparative analysis of two major generational cohorts, this study offers valuable insights that can help OTT service providers develop targeted content, marketing, and subscription strategies to improve user engagement and long-term customer retention.

### Limitations of the Study

Despite providing valuable insights into OTT usage behaviour, this study has certain limitations. The research was conducted only in Lucknow District, which may limit the applicability of the findings to other geographical regions. The use of convenience sampling may not fully capture the characteristics of the entire population of OTT users. The analysis was restricted to Generation Z and Generation Y and did not include other age cohorts that may exhibit different streaming behaviours. Furthermore, the study focused on selected dimensions of OTT usage, such as usage frequency,

binge-watching behaviour, device preference, content preference, and subscription behaviour, while other factors that could influence streaming behaviour were beyond its scope.

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