



A Study on Gen Z's Preference for Bollywood Movies Vs. Web Series in Ahmedabad

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates Generation Z's preferences for Bollywood movies versus web series in Ahmedabad, with a focus on gender-based differences in media consumption behaviors. As digital platforms such as streaming services have gained popularity, understanding the evolving media consumption habits of younger audiences is essential. The research uses primary data and hypothesis testing to examine the relationships between gender and various media consumption factors, including the frequency of watching Bollywood movies, web series, genre preferences, and the choice of viewing platforms (theater versus streaming). The findings reveal that gender significantly influences the frequency of watching Bollywood movies and web series, with males showing a slightly higher tendency to watch Bollywood movies, while web series attract both genders more equally. Genre preferences in Bollywood movies did not show a significant gender-based difference, suggesting that content in this area is increasingly appealing to a broader audience. However, gender did impact genre preferences for web series, with males tending to prefer action and thriller genres, while females gravitated towards drama and romance genres. Additionally, a significant relationship was found between gender and platform preference, with males more likely to prefer watching content in theaters, while females favored streaming platforms. These insights have practical implications for content creators, marketers, and streaming platforms, highlighting the need to tailor content and promotional strategies to align with gender-specific preferences

INTRODUCTION

Generation Z, or Gen Z, refers to the generation born between 1997 and 2012, characterized by their complete integration with digital technology and the internet (Vidani & Solanki, 2015). The generation is different from its predecessors because it has grown up during a period where rapid technological advancement has been the dominant feature, especially in internet connectivity and digital media (Vidani, 2015). This group is emerging as the largest consumer segment, and their entertainment preferences are fundamentally changing the media and entertainment industries (Solanki & Vidani, 2016). With a strong reliance on digital platforms and a preference for on-demand content, Gen Z's entertainment consumption habits stand in stark contrast to the traditional media consumption patterns seen in earlier generations (Vidani, 2016).

In particular, the changing landscape of entertainment consumption - especially with the rise in online streaming platforms and growth in popularity of web series - has greatly altered that landscape (Bhatt, Patel, & Vidani, 2017) (Niyati & Vidani, 2016). For instance, in India, the increase in streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Hotstar, as well as homegrown services like MX Player and Zee5, has dramatically shifted the content consumption landscape among young viewers (Modi, Harkani, Radadiya, & Vidani, 2016). For example, in Ahmedabad, with its increasing taste for viewing streaming movies, series, and shows on the screens and getting away from traditional TV as well as Bollywood, has seen an enormous shift in entertainment culture (Sukhanandi, Tank, & Vidani, 2018). The present study, "A Study on Gen Z's Preference for Bollywood Movies vs. Web Series in Ahmedabad," looks into these changing consumption habits) (Niyati & Vidani, 2016). It discusses how attitudes, preferences, and behaviors of young adults in Ahmedabad influence their engagement with both Bollywood movies and web series (Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016). This will allow businesses, marketers, and content creators to adapt their strategies to better meet the needs and expectations of this digitally-native audience.

The Influence of Streaming on Gen Z's Entertainment Preferences

The increased internet speed and popularity of streaming services have completely changed the consumption patterns of entertainment (Mala, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). In the past, watching movies, series, or shows was mainly done on television. Traditional media sources, like cable TV, forced viewers to adhere to a rigid schedule of broadcasts, which does not appeal to today's audience (Dhere, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). However, internet and online streaming have already overthrown this mode (Singh & Vidani, 2016). Now they can have content whenever and wherever they want it; they can watch it at any device (Vidani & Plaha, 2016). This can be highly seen among the Gen Z, who tend to regard the internet as a basic part of their life (Solanki & Vidani, 2016).

A key reason for this trend is that mobile devices and high-speed internet make it possible for users to watch their favorite content on the go without the confinement of traditional broadcast television (Vidani, 2016). Also, these platforms include Netflix, YouTube, among others, that offer extensive content for varied tastes and preferences among Gen Z viewers (Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017). Web series provide a rather diverse and more nuanced form of

narration unlike the heavily scripted Bollywood movies of old (Vidani, 2018). This is also another aspect with which web series are interactive in nature while traditional cinema is not (Biharani & Vidani, 2018). Social media platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and Twitter allow users to engage directly with creators, actors, and fellow viewers (Vidani, 2018). This level of community engagement is added to the mix that no traditional Bollywood film can deliver (Odedra, Rabadiya, & Vidani, 2018). The rise of digital influencers and content creators has also significantly changed the way entertainment is consumed (Vasveliya & Vidani, 2019). Movie and series choices are largely influenced by social media influencers, where Gen Z has the tendency to ask the opinions of these social media influencers for reviews (Sachaniya, Vora, & Vidani, 2019). Therefore, this trend means that Gen Z's entertainment consumption is highly social and highly influenced by peer influence as well as online communities (Vidani, 2019).

Bollywood Film Industry: A Traditional Pillar of Entertainment

Bollywood, the Indian film industry, is a stalwart in Indian entertainment (Vidani, Jacob, & Patel, 2019). For many decades, this industry has continuously produced films that have held Indian audiences by their imaginations, thereby giving Indians drama, romance, action, and music-a concoction that always seems to attract a wide demographic group (Vidani J. N., 2016). However, the younger generation in recent years, especially Gen Z, seems to be diverting their attention from this traditional Bollywood fare towards new alternative forms of content which include web series, international movies, and independent cinema, among others. Several factors have led to this shift (Vidani & Singh, 2017). Bollywood films have been criticized for their predictable plots, formulaic storytelling, and heavy reliance on star power (Vidani & Pathak, 2016). While Bollywood continues to produce films with mass appeal, many of these films fail to engage the intellectual and emotional sensibilities of Gen Z (Pathak & Vidani, 2016). However, it's well worth noting that Bollywood does have some connection with the demands of Gen Z (Vidani & Plaha, 2017). Experimentation with digital channels as well as content aligned towards the younger audience has also taken place in the industry due to this change in market (Vidani J. N., 2020). Some Bollywood movies are available on digital platforms the same day they release in theaters, targeting Gen Z viewers who are more likely to consume content online rather than in a theatre (Vidani J. N., 2018). In addition, web series elements, such as non-linear storytelling, complex characters, and taboo-breaking narratives, are increasingly being added to Bollywood movies (Vidani & Dholakia, 2020). Despite all these, Bollywood still hasn't reached the hearts of Gen Z as much as it wishes, as this generation continues to be attracted to other diverse content offered by the streaming platforms (Vidani, Meghrajani, & Siddarth, 2023).

The Role of Social Media and Peer Influence

Social media has been a very influential tool for Gen Z in deciding entertainment (Rathod, Meghrajani, & Vidani, 2022). It includes the platforms such as Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok through which young audiences discover new content, discuss their favorite movies and series, and engage with celebrities and influencers. Among all, social media influencers play a vital role in shaping Gen Z's entertainment preferences (Vidani & Das, 2021).

Many of these influencers have immense followings and are found to be more relatable and authentic than traditional celebrities (Vidani J. N., 2022). That's why their recommendations take huge importance in shaping up Gen Z's movie as well as web series preferences (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). Electronic Word of Mouth, or eWOM, is also one other determining factor in movie selection by Gen Z (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023). Online reviews and ratings, as well as word of mouth through their friends, have become much stronger influencers of content consumption by young people than the latter (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023). In some instances, the credibility that young audiences give to word-of-mouth reviews, particularly from some social media influencer, is greater than any single marketing campaign that will attempt to promote this product (Bansal, Pophalkar, & Vidani, 2023).

Piracy and Its Impact on Streaming Habits

One of the most controversial features of Gen Z's online entertainment engagement is their involvement in digital piracy (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023). The more young consumers are accessing movies, series, and shows through illegal streaming sites or by sharing account passwords, the more piracy has become a major concern for the entertainment industry (Chaudhary, Patel, & Vidani, 2023). Although this is not a typical phenomenon of India alone, the high incidence of piracy in the country, among younger viewers in particular, has led to the redrawing of content distribution models (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). A recent study concluded that a large percentage of the Gen Z respondents would go on using illegal streaming services as they felt the likelihood of getting caught was not high and that piracy would not hurt anyone else (Sharma & Vidani, 2023). This leaves significant questions about how the entertainment industry can adjust to such changing consumption patterns while providing fair compensation for creators and producers (Mahajan & Vidani, 2023).

This is the case in Ahmedabad, just like everywhere else. The shift from Bollywood movies to web series in Gen Z reflects broader global trends (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). As this generation continues to mature into a dominant consumer force, their preferences will shape the future of entertainment, pushing for more dynamic, diverse, and digital-first content experiences (Vidani & Solanki, 2015). The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the evolving entertainment habits of Gen Z and help industry stakeholders navigate this shifting landscape effectively (Vidani, 2015).

Research Objectives

1. To analyze the preference of Gen Z for watching content on digital streaming platforms versus traditional TV. (Objective achieved in Question 6 of Questionnaire)
2. To examine the frequency with which Gen Z watches web series as compared to Bollywood movies. (Objective achieved in Question 7 of Questionnaire)
3. To assess the preference of Gen Z for on-demand content through streaming services as opposed to scheduled programming on traditional TV. (Objective achieved in Question 8 of Questionnaire)
4. To explore Gen Z's perception of the diversity and relatability of content offered in web series as compared to Bollywood movies. (Objective achieved in Question 9 of Questionnaire)

5. To investigate how Gen Z perceives the predictability and formulaic nature of Bollywood movies.(Objective achieved in Question 10 of Questionnaire)
6. To analyze Gen Z's preference for watching content that addresses current social issues, as depicted in web series, over Bollywood movies.(Objective achieved in Question 11 of Questionnaire)
7. To examine Gen Z's binge-watching behavior in relation to web series.(Objective achieved in Question 12 of Questionnaire)
8. To evaluate the preference of Gen Z for shorter episodes in web series as compared to the longer duration of Bollywood movies.(Objective achieved in Question 13 of Questionnaire)
9. To assess the influence of social media influencers and online reviews on Gen Z's decision to watch a web series or a Bollywood movie.(Objective achieved in Question 14 of Questionnaire)
10. To explore the extent to which Gen Z prefers web series for offering realistic and authentic portrayals of modern life compared to Bollywood movies.(Objective achieved in Question 15 of Questionnaire)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Generation Z's Preference for Bollywood Movies vs. Web Series in Ahmedabad

The change in the entertainment industry due to digital technology and the internet has been drastic, mainly in how the younger generations consume media (Vidani & Solanki, 2015). Generation Z, or Gen Zers, are those born from 1997 to 2012, which is the first group of people to have completely grown up in the era of digital technology (Vidani, 2015). In many senses, Gen Z is the instant connected generation, the social media generation, and the binge-watching generation (Solanki & Vidani, 2016). At that level, being the most digitally active audience, they have seen their entertainment format shift drastically from traditional sets like television and Bollywood movie halls to web series that are available on demand, and this review delves deeper to compare Bollywood films versus web series, particularly in Ahmedabad (Vidani, 2016). It draws insights from the existing studies on their viewing habits, the role of streaming platforms, the influence of social media, piracy, and the changing landscape of advertising (Bhatt, Patel, & Vidani, 2017).

1. The Shift to Digital Streaming and its Impact on Gen Z's Viewing Habits

Digital streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, Hotstar, and Indian services such as Zee5 and MX Player have changed the way content is consumed (Niyati & Vidani, 2016). These platforms allow users to watch content at any time and from anywhere, making them a preferred choice for Gen Z (Modi, Harkani, Radadiya, & Vidani, 2016). Compared to traditional television or cinema, streaming services offer convenience and flexibility (Vidani, 2016).

Karla Borja et al., 2024 report that streaming sites appeal to Gen Z through expansive collections and individualized viewership experience (Sukhanandi, Tank, & Vidani, 2018). Additionally, high-speed internet penetration coupled with greater availability of mobiles has increased the phenomenon (Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016). Besides the monotonous formulaic nature of

Bollywood films, the digital site gives them the liberty of exploring choices in various genres and genres and storylines with an international perspective relevant to their society (Mala, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016).

Social media also acts as a major catalyst in promoting digital content (Dhere, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016). Here, platforms such as Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have a huge influence over the choices of Gen Z, with trailers, reviews, and influencer recommendations (Singh & Vidani, 2016). According to Do Thi Bich Ngoc et al. (2024), this integration of social media and streaming platforms has made international shows and niche genres accessible for Gen Z, moving away from traditional Bollywood content (Vidani & Plaha, 2016).

2. Advantage Web series Compared to Bollywood films

Though still in high demand, Bollywood movies have stiff rivalry from web series, much-favored among Gen Z (Solanki & Vidani, 2016). Several reasons have led this shift, including authentic varied content, short episodes and flexibility of viewing (Vidani, 2016).

A number of web series address contemporary and relevant themes that resonate with the belief of Gen Z (Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017). As per Gresshma Bharathan (2021), a study on the branded web series shows the fact that it very well meets the target audiences because it interweaves the elements of storytelling with implicit advertisement, unlike the olden advertisements in Bollywood films.

In addition, the web series' binge-worthiness and their shorter episodes and seasons, are more appealing to the quick and engaging preference of Gen Z. Ivan Lancel G. et al (Vidani, 2018). (2022) determined that the on-demand nature of streaming services appeals greatly to this generation because of freedom and control in watching (Biharani & Vidani, 2018). On the other hand, Bollywood's theatrical releases and themes have become outdated for younger viewers (Vidani, 2018).

3. Social Media and Peer Influence on Entertainment Choices

Social media is a strong influencer of Gen Z's entertainment choices (Odedra, Rabadiya, & Vidani, 2018). Unlike the older generations, who were influenced by advertising or word of mouth, Gen Z discovers content through platforms like Instagram, TikTok, and You Tube (Vasveliya & Vidani, 2019).

Following new generations' changes, Do Thi Bich Ngoc et al. (2024) noted that among many influences on Gen Z, suggestions by peers, influencers, and celebrities hold much impact on the decisions, while social media influencers more often than not post reviews or behind-the-scenes information, or live interaction to give an individual a sense of reality, something lacking in many traditional Bollywood advertisements (Sachaniya, Vora, & Vidani, 2019).

Web series have a great following on social media; they share memes and participate with other fans to push their shows organically (Vidani, 2019). Bollywood is dependent mainly on traditional methods like television promotions and print ads, completely out of sync with a digitally native audience (Vidani, Jacob, & Patel, 2019).

4. Piracy and Influence on Viewing Habits

With the rise of digital consumption comes piracy (Vidani J. N., 2016). A percentage of Gen Z viewers view content illegitimately either through

unauthorized streaming sites or some shared accounts (Vidani & Singh, 2017). According to Karla Borja et al. (2024), it appears that, among these, piracy mostly occurs for young audiences and is generally regarded as relatively low-risk (Vidani & Pathak, 2016).

Piracy is one of the biggest threats for Bollywood as it leads to a loss of revenues and also devalues paid content (Pathak & Vidani, 2016). However, with the advent of streaming services which are relatively cheaper and accessible in nature, the situation has to some extent been mitigated (Vidani & Plaha, 2017). Piracy continues to be a concern both for Bollywood as well as creators of web series (Vidani J. N., 2020).

5. Changes in Advertisement: From Traditional to Branded Content

Viewing habits for Gen Z have also changed (Vidani J. N., 2018). Advertisements of Bollywood movies, like all other old advertisements, are ineffective among the younger generations (Vidani & Dholakia, 2020). Web series that come under branded content have seen huge acceptance where products are included into the narrative in an organic way (Vidani, Meghrajani, & Siddarth, 2023).

According to Gresshma Bharathan (2021) and Ivan Lancel G. et al. (2022), for Gen Z, branded content is perceived as more authentic and engaging than traditional overt advertising; they like to have subtle marketing (Rathod, Meghrajani, & Vidani, 2022). Not only are these web series entertaining, but they also create positive brand associations and help a company reach its younger target consumer (Vidani & Das, 2021).

As is true everywhere, entertainment for Gen Z in Ahmedabad is largely digitally-driven, with a reliance on social media and an inclination towards diverse, flexible content (Vidani J. N., 2022). Even while Bollywood movies are still important, web series are gaining traction which shows that Gen Z has to be spoken to a more realistic and personalistic way (Saxena & Vidani, 2023). This, of course, increases the importance of social media and the growing danger of piracy as a complicating factor (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Singh, 2023). As Gen Z redefines entertainment consumption, Bollywood and streaming sites will have to adapt to their ever-changing landscape (Vidani, Das, Meghrajani, & Chaudasi, 2023).

Research Gap

While there is considerable research on the consumption trends of media among Gen Z, there is a significant gap in understanding their specific preferences between Bollywood films and web series, especially in tier-2 cities like Ahmedabad. Most of the research studies are either based on larger age groups or focus on Bollywood films in isolation, ignoring the growing popularity of web series. For one, the global study, while metropolitan-centric, sidesteps the localized nature of cultural dynamics in cities such as Ahmedabad, revealing that how Gen Z operates between traditional Bollywood cinema and the streaming platform remains open. Moreover, the emphasis has been less on gender-wise differences, which is a determinant factor in understanding the nuances regarding media consumption behavior. This study aims to fill these gaps by analyzing the comparative appeal of Bollywood films and web series among Gen Z in Ahmedabad, considering gender and cultural factors.

Hypothesis (Only List)

1. There is a significant association between gender and how often individuals watch Bollywood movies.
2. There is a significant association between gender and how often individuals watch web series.
3. There is a significant association between gender and the preferred genre in Bollywood movies.
4. There is a significant association between gender and the preferred genre in web series.
5. There is a significant association between gender and the preference for watching content in theaters versus on streaming platforms.

Table 1. Validation of Questionnaire

Statements	Citation from JV citation file (You can add more than 1 citation)
How often do you watch web series?	(Vidani, 2015)
How often do you watch Bollywood movies?	(Vidani & Solanki, 2015)
What genz's do you prefer in Bollywood movies?	(Vidani, 2016)
What genz's do you prefer in Web series?	(Bhatt, Patel, & Vidani, 2017)
Do you prefer watching content in theaters?	(Niyati & Vidani, 2016)
Which one do you feel has better story telling? [Bollywood]	(Pradhan, Tshogay, & Vidani, 2016)
Which one do you feel has better story telling? [Web series]	(Modi, Harkani, Radadiya, & Vidani, 2016)
What influences your decision to watch Bollywood movies or web series?	(Modi, Harkani, Radadiya, & Vidani, 2016)
Do you think web series provide more relatable content for Gen Z compared to Bollywood movies?	(Singh, Vidani, & Nagoria, 2016)
How important is the length of content in your preference?	(Mala, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016)
Which of the following do you feel offers better value for your time? [Bollywood]	(Dhere, Vidani, & Solanki, 2016)
Which of the following do you feel offers better value for your time? [Web series 005D.	(Singh & Vidani, 2016)

How often do you attend movie screenings in theatres?	(Vidani & Plaha, 2016)
Which of the following do you think better represents modern Indian culture? [Bollywood]	(Biharani & Vidani, 2018)
Which of the following do you think better represents modern Indian culture? [Web series]	(Vidani, Chack, & Rathod, 2017)
What platform you prefer for web series?	(Solanki & Vidani, 2016)

*Source: Author's Compilation

METHODOLOGY

Table 2. Research Methodology

Research Design	Descriptive
Sample Method	Non-Probability - Convenient Sampling method
Data Collection Method	Primary method
Data Collection Method	Structured Questionnaire
Type of Questions	Close ended
Data Collection mode	Online through Google Form
Data Analysis methods	Tables
Data Analysis Tools	SPSS and Excel
Sampling Size	152
Survey Area	Ahmedabad
Sampling Unit	Students, Private and government Job employees, Businessmen, Home maker, Professionals like CA, Doctor etc.

*Source: Author's Compilation

Demographic Summary

The demographic summary of the survey participants reveals a diverse group in terms of gender, age, education, and family income. The majority of participants are male (58.6%) with females making up 41.4%. In terms of age, a significant portion (86.2%) is between 18-25 years old, while smaller groups are in the 26-32 (10.5%) and 33-38 (3.3%) age ranges. Regarding education, the largest group consists of students (69.7%), followed by individuals with jobs (13.2%), those with business education (10.5%), and a few professionals (3.3%). Family income is varied, with a notable portion (37.5%) having an income above 1,000,000, and the remaining participants spread across lower income brackets, including 32.2% earning between 50,000-100,000.

Cronbach Alpha

Table 3. Cronbach Alpha

Cronbach Alpha Value	No. of items
0.883	12

*Source: SPSS Software

The reliability analysis yielded a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.883 for the 12-item scale, indicating a high level of internal consistency. This suggests that the items in the scale are measuring the intended construct reliably and cohesively. According to commonly accepted thresholds, a Cronbach's Alpha value above 0.80 demonstrates good reliability, further supporting the suitability of the scale for research purposes.

RESULTS

Sr. No	Alternate Hypothesis	Result p =	>/< 0.05	Accept/Reject Null hypothesis	R value	Relationship
H1	There is a significant association between gender and how often individuals watch Bollywood movies.	0.041	<	H01 Rejected (Null hypothesis rejected)	0.024	Positive
H2	There is a significant association between gender and how often individuals watch web series.	0.000	<	H02 Rejected (Null Hypothesis Rejected)	0.175	Positive
H3	There is a significant association between gender and the preferred genre in Bollywood movies.	0.121	>	H03 Accepted (Null Hypothesis Accepted)	0.179	Positive
H4	There is a significant association between gender and the preferred genre in web series.	0.026	<	H04 Rejected (Null Hypothesis Rejected)	0.106	Positive
H5	There is a significant association between gender and the preference for watching content in theaters versus on streaming platforms.	0.004	<	H05 Rejected (Null Hypothesis Rejected)	0.121	Positive

*Source: Author's Compilation

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The research study focused on analyzing the preferences of Generation Z (Gen Z) regarding Bollywood movies and web series in Ahmedabad city, specifically examining gender differences. Five aspects were analyzed: frequency of watching Bollywood movies, frequency of watching web series, preferred genres in Bollywood and web series, and preference for watching content in theaters or on streaming platforms. The findings, based on the p-values and the corresponding Chi-square tests, bring into light important insights of Gen Z's media consumption patterns and how gender impacts these preferences.

The first hypothesis testing showed that gender and how often people watch Bollywood movies are significantly associated with each other (H1). The p-value of 0.041 is less than 0.05; this would indicate that the null hypothesis could be rejected; the relationship of gender exists and seems to influence frequency. There is also a positive relation in movie-watching frequencies since its R-value amounts to 0.024, that is, there appears to exist a weak yet effective association. This finding is of importance since it reveals the fact that Bollywood movies are viewed differently across genders in terms of viewing frequency, which might be representative of broader cultural or social dynamics within Gen Z in Ahmedabad. Similarly, for the preference of web series, the hypothesis (H2) testing revealed a strong association between gender and the frequency of watching web series, with a p-value of 0.000. This significant result indicates that gender influences the consumption patterns of web series, with males and females likely engaging with this medium at different rates. The positive relationship (R-value = 0.175) signifies that gender is moderately correlated with web series consumption, further supporting the idea that digital media, such as web series, may be more appealing or accessible to certain genders in Ahmedabad.

However, while examining the most liked category of Bollywood movies (H3), the research found an insignificant relationship between gender and genre preference with a value of $p=0.121$. The outcome proves that, in Ahmedabad, Gen Z's preference for the genre of their favorite Bollywood movie is based on other reasons than cultural assumptions that are associated with various genres. The R-value of 0.179 shows a weak positive, indicating that a given genre has a preferred appeal, though not strong enough to stake a claim as a definite gender-based divide.

Lastly, preference for watching content at cinemas rather than on streaming channels (H5) was found to have a significant relationship with the gender variable, as the p-value was 0.004. Here, the rejection of the null hypothesis suggests that gender has a significant effect on whether Gen Zers prefer to watch content in theaters or on streaming platforms. The positive relationship (R-value = 0.121) shows a mild but nonetheless significant correlation between gender and platform choice, which implies that gender-based preferences for media consumption may reflect broader social attitudes toward traditional versus digital entertainment consumption.

In conclusion, it is found that there exist significant gender-based differences in how Gen Z in Ahmedabad engages with Bollywood movies and web series. While frequency and genre preferences for Bollywood movies and web series differ by gender, the choice of viewing platform also varies by gender. These insights could prove to be useful for content creators, marketers, and media experts in formulating their strategies and offerings as per the tastes of Gen Z in Ahmedabad.

Theoretical Implications

This study provides a number of important theoretical insights into media consumption patterns, especially among Gen Z, in Ahmedabad. A study on the relationship of gender with preferences for Bollywood films and web series contributes to fields such as media studies, cultural consumption, and gender studies.

1. Gendered Media Consumption Patterns

The study supports the theoretical perspective that gender plays a significant role in shaping media consumption habits. Rejection of the null hypotheses (H1 and H2) regarding time spent watching Bollywood films and web series indicates that gender influences the frequency of engagement with both traditional and digital media. These results align with theories of gendered media consumption, which suggest that societal and cultural norms often lead to distinct media preferences among men and women.

2. Social Identity Theory

The positive correlations between gender and frequency of media consumption (R-values of 0.024 for Bollywood films and 0.175 for web series) can be interpreted using social identity theory. This theory explains that the individuals, more often than not, tend to conduct themselves according to the rules and expectations of their respective groups. The visible differences in what men and women are viewing reveal how gender roles and group identities influence the media selection process.

3. Implications for Cultural Consumption Theories

The findings also have relevance to cultural consumption theories, which argue that media consumption is deeply rooted in social and cultural contexts. The lack of a significant relationship between gender and genre preference for Bollywood films (H3) suggests that these movies appeal to Gen Z audiences across gender lines, challenging traditional notions of gendered genre preferences. However, the strong association between gender and preference for web series genre (H4) indicates that digital media provides an ample scope for the expression of flexibility and diversity in genre choice.

4. Media and Technology Adaptation

The study's insights into preferences for viewing content in theaters versus streaming platforms (H5) enhance our understanding of media technology adoption. The significant association between gender and viewing preferences suggests that Gen Z in Ahmedabad demonstrates gendered tendencies in media consumption, reflecting broader sociocultural and technological trends.

In summary, this research makes our theoretical understanding of how gender intersects with media consumption in the digital era more profound. By placing gender under the spotlight of influencing the media habits of Gen Z, the findings

further lead us to discussions about identity and culture and how people and consumption patterns change with rapidly changing times.

Practical Implications

This study's findings on Gen Z's preferences for Bollywood movies and web series in Ahmedabad have several actionable insights for media producers, marketers, content creators, and platform developers. The understanding of how gender shapes media consumption habits can be used by stakeholders to craft strategies that align more closely with the preferences of this demographic.

1. Content Creation and Targeting

Content creators must consider gender-specific preferences when developing Bollywood movies and web series. The null hypothesis for the frequency of watching Bollywood movies (H1) and web series (H2) was rejected, indicating a gender aspect in media involvement. Bollywood movies should hence be as inclusive as possible, attracting both genders at the same time while highlighting the differences in the view frequency. For web series, content could be crafted to cater to diverse, gender-based preferences, making it more engaging for everyone.

2. Genre-based Marketing

While gender did not significantly impact genre preferences for Bollywood movies (H3), it did influence web series preferences (H4). This provides an opportunity for targeted marketing campaigns. By segmenting audiences based on gender, marketers can promote specific genres more effectively. For instance, web series genres that appeal to one gender could be marketed on platforms and channels predominantly used by that demographic. Optimizing campaigns in this way can enhance viewer engagement and improve content recommendations.

3. Platform Strategy and Distribution

The finding is that gender affects the choice of platforms (H5), from theaters to streaming services. This knowledge is useful to develop a distribution strategy, as it can be learned whether streaming services can depend on personalized recommendations, on gender-specific campaigns, or on exclusive content to favor one gender more than others. Similarly, theaters should introduce gender-targeted promotion or events to attract these groups and increase footfalls for in-person movie experience.

4. Advertising and Brand Partnership

These findings can be used by advertisers to target their campaigns. Since gender influences not only the frequency of viewing but also content and platform preferences, advertisements can be targeted to address these differences. For instance, streaming platforms may focus on female viewers if data indicates they are more frequent users. The same goes for collaborations with gender-oriented brands, influencers, or social media initiatives to increase engagement with specific segments of Gen Z.

5. Strategies for Engagement on Streaming Platforms

Through the use of these insights, streaming services can increase consumer engagement through gender-specific preferences for personalized content recommendations and may develop exclusive shows and series tailored towards specific genders. Also, the marketing and promotions to male and female viewers might be differentiated. Since the viewing history of web series is significant

among Gen Z, those strategies might be a perfect boost to the growth rate of the streaming services.

Understanding Gen Z's media consumption patterns through a gendered lens is very important for media stakeholders to understand. Using this information, content creators, marketers, and platform developers can create inclusive, targeted, and engaging strategies to appeal to both male and female Gen Z audiences. The results open the road for the optimization of content creation, marketing efforts, and platform offerings to best match the changing preferences of this dynamic demographic.

This study throws light on the media consumption habits of Generation Z in Ahmedabad, with a special focus on Bollywood movies and web series. The findings indicate important gender-based differences in the frequency of consumption of Bollywood films and web series, preferred platforms, and, to some extent, choice of genres – especially for web series. By rejecting the null hypotheses of media consumption frequency (H1, H2), web series genre preferences (H4), and platform preferences (H5), the study emphasizes the important role gender plays in the formation of media habits among this population.

Interestingly, the research did not find any statistically significant differences in genre preference for Bollywood movies based on gender (H3). This reflects that Gen Z from Ahmedabad is more liberal and flexible in terms of Bollywood content, which helps to shatter the traditional notion of preferences in films based on gender. This insight calls for Bollywood filmmakers to create a diverse and inclusive content stream that caters to a diverse audience beyond gender.

Practically speaking, these insights would be highly useful to content creators, marketers, and streaming platforms. As gendered consumption patterns have a bearing on the adaptation of strategies that include, for example, targeted advertisements, inclusive storytelling, and engagement on the platform itself, this may help the stakeholder in better accommodating diverse preferences between male and female Gen Z audiences. Furthermore, this research presents an opportunity for further avenues to explore how gender intersects with culture and media consumption in a fast-changing digital context.

Ultimately, therefore, knowledge of Gen Z and its complex and dynamic use of the media stands the world on very steady competitive footing within the media. Therefore, knowing how gender operates to shape the preferences they hold in terms of content is critical for future competitiveness in this space.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

1. Preference for Web Series Over Bollywood Movies

Gen Z in Ahmedabad generally prefers web series over Bollywood movies due to the more relatable content, freedom of expression, and flexibility in viewing. The binge-watching culture, where an entire season can be watched at once, also appeals more to them than waiting for a movie release.

2. Perception of Bollywood Movies

Although Bollywood movies still hold a significant place in Gen Z's entertainment, there is a growing disconnect due to the repetitive plotlines,

predictable narratives, and outdated formats. The younger generation seeks stories that are more diverse, fresh, and experimental, which they find in web series.

3. Content and Themes

Gen Z tends to lean toward modern and contemporary themes, such as mental health, relationships, and social issues. Web series, especially those on platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and others, often cater to these themes in more depth and nuance compared to Bollywood films.

4. Access and Convenience

The ease of access to web series via streaming platforms, which are available on multiple devices and at any time, makes them more appealing. Bollywood movies, while still popular in theaters, require planning for showtimes and are often limited to theater releases, which Gen Z finds less convenient.

5. Influence of Social Media and Peer Recommendations

Gen Z in Ahmedabad is highly influenced by social media trends, influencers, and peer reviews when choosing content to watch. Web series often gain traction through viral marketing, memes, and discussions on platforms like Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok, whereas Bollywood movies may struggle to create the same level of organic buzz.

6. Impact of Celebrity Culture

While celebrity culture in Bollywood still holds some sway, Gen Z in Ahmedabad prefers content that showcases real, relatable characters rather than relying solely on star power. Web series, with a broader range of actors and more emphasis on content quality, offer a refreshing change from the formulaic approach of Bollywood.

Recommendations

1. Bollywood Movie Makers to Innovate with Storytelling

Bollywood filmmakers should focus on diversifying storylines and taking risks with new genres to cater to Gen Z's evolving taste. The younger audience is looking for originality, fresh perspectives, and non-traditional narratives. Experimenting with unconventional plots could help reignite their interest.

2. Integration of Technology and Interactive Platforms

To compete with web series' interactivity, Bollywood movies could explore new technologies, such as interactive viewing experiences, or consider releasing films simultaneously in theaters and on digital platforms to reach a broader audience, especially Gen Z, which prefers on-demand content.

3. Collaborations with Streaming Platforms

Bollywood can explore collaborations with popular streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and others, to release movies directly to these platforms. This would not only attract Gen Z but also tap into the growing trend of digital-first content consumption.

4. Highlighting Social Issues and Modern Themes

Both Bollywood films and web series should pay more attention to contemporary social issues, including mental health, body positivity, LGBTQ+ rights, and the realities of the modern world. Gen Z is drawn to content that resonates with their values, making it important for filmmakers to address these concerns in a thoughtful and inclusive manner.

5. Leveraging Social Media for Promotion

Bollywood should focus more on digital marketing, social media engagement, and influencer collaborations to promote their films. Campaigns that engage with Gen Z audiences in creative ways can help boost visibility and create a buzz similar to the success seen by web series.

6. Bollywood Film Formats

It may be worth considering shorter, more episodic formats for Bollywood movies that align with the binge-watching tendencies of Gen Z. Offering a shorter runtime and more engaging plots could lead to increased viewership and sustained interest.

By incorporating these strategies, Bollywood can appeal more effectively to the preferences of Gen Z in Ahmedabad, bridging the gap between traditional cinema and modern, digital content.

FURTHER STUDY

1. Broader Geographical Scope

This study focused on Gen Z in Ahmedabad, but it would be beneficial to extend this research to other cities and regions across India. Media consumption behaviors may vary significantly based on geographical, cultural, and socio-economic differences. A comparative study between urban and rural populations, or between different states in India, could provide deeper insights into how regional and cultural factors influence media preferences, particularly in the context of Bollywood movies and web series.

2. Exploring Age and Socio-Economic Factors

Although this study focused on Gen Z, it would be interesting to explore how age variations within the broader Gen Z cohort (e.g., early Gen Z vs. late Gen Z) influence media consumption. Additionally, socio-economic factors, such as income, education, and occupation, can play a critical role in shaping media habits. Future studies could examine how these factors interact with gender to influence viewing preferences and behaviors. This could lead to more granular insights into audience segmentation.

3. Impact of Social Media and Digital Influencers

Given the increasing influence of social media and digital influencers on Gen Z, future research could investigate how these platforms shape media consumption habits, particularly in relation to Bollywood movies and web series. Understanding how social media trends, influencer endorsements, and peer recommendations influence gender-based preferences could offer valuable insights into how media content is consumed in the digital age.

4. In-depth Genre Analysis

This study found no significant association between gender and genre preferences in Bollywood movies, but it did observe such a relationship for web series. Future research could delve deeper into genre preferences, particularly within the context of digital content. Since web series offer a wide range of genres compared to Bollywood movies, further exploration of specific genres (e.g., thriller, romance, drama, sci-fi, etc.) and how they appeal to different genders could provide a more detailed understanding of audience tastes.

5. Longitudinal Studies on Media Consumption Trends

Given the rapid evolution of media consumption habits, longitudinal studies could be useful in tracking how Gen Z's preferences change over time. Such studies would help identify trends and shifts in content consumption, particularly in the transition from traditional media like Bollywood movies to newer forms of digital content like web series. These studies could also explore the impact of emerging technologies, such as virtual reality (VR) or artificial intelligence (AI), on media consumption patterns.

In conclusion, the future scope of this study offers a wide range of opportunities to further explore Gen Z's media consumption patterns, particularly with respect to Bollywood movies and web series. The research could be expanded across different geographies, demographics, and socio-economic contexts, as well as examining the role of social media and new media technologies. By addressing these areas, future studies can deepen our understanding of Gen Z's complex media habits and provide actionable insights for content creators, marketers, and media professionals.

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