

Exploring news consumption patterns and preferences of Generation Z

A field Study

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Abstract:

This research aims mainly at addressing news consumption patterns and preferences of Gen Z, through identifying their preferred platforms, types of content, and the level of trust in various sources, in addition to evaluating their digital literacy and the way they deal with technology. By using a quantitative data tool, represented in survey, the researcher examined to what extent different members of Gen Z adapt with technology (access, usage, digital literacy skills), and their attitude toward digital news.

The results showed that the highly mentioned drawback of technology among respondents is "increased screen time, leading to health issues," with 76.9% of the total sample. Besides, a significant percentage of respondents (38.7%) reported that they consume news through digital sources 1-2 days per week. Respondents who consume news from digital sources (5 days or more) represents 31.2% of the total sample. The researcher also revealed that social media platforms are the most popular sources of news, making up 70.4% across all respondents. Online news sources or apps are also another dominant news source for all respondents with a total percentage of 54.3%, reflecting a growing reliance on digital platforms. As for the level of trust, news apps are considered the most trusted news source among respondents. Finally, the majority of respondent (79.6%) reported "scrolling through social media feeds" to be their preferred way of finding news content, and this is consistent with the previous finding which indicates that social media is the primary source of news for this generation.

Keywords: Generation Z, News consumption patterns, news preferences, digital skills, digital news

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دراسة أنماط وتفضيلات استهلاك الأخبار لدى الجيل Z : دراسة ميدانية

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ملخص الدراسة:

يهدف هذا البحث إلى دراسة أنماط وتفضيلات استهلاك الأخبار لدى جيل Z ، من خلال تحديد مصادر الأخبار المفضلة لديهم، ونوع المحتوى الإخباري ، ومستوى الثقة في المصادر المختلفة، بالإضافة إلى تقييم مستوى المعرفة والمهارات الرقمية وطريقة تعاملهم مع التكنولوجيا. وباستخدام أداة البيانات الكمية، المتمثلة في الاستبيان، قامت الباحثة بدراسة مدى تكيف مختلف أفراد الجيل Z مع التكنولوجيا (access, usage,digital literacy skills)، وموقفهم من الأخبار الرقمية. وقد أظهرت النتائج أن أكثر سلبيات للتكنولوجيا بين المستجيبين هو "زيادة الوقت أمام الشاشات، مما يؤدي إلى مشاكل صحية"، بنسبة 76.9% من إجمالي العينة. إلى جانب ذلك، أفادت نسبة كبيرة من المستجيبين (38.7%) أنهم يستهلكون الأخبار من خلال المصادر الرقمية من يوم إلى يومين في الأسبوع. ويمثل المبحوثون الذين يستهلكون الأخبار من المصادر الرقمية (5 أيام أو أكثر) 31.2% من إجمالي العينة. وكشفت الباحثة أيضًا أن منصات التواصل الاجتماعي هي أكثر مصادر الأخبار شيوعًا، حيث شكلت (70.4%) من إجمالي العينة المستطلعة. كما تعد مصادر الأخبار أو التطبيقات الإخبارية عبر الإنترنت مصدرًا آخر مهمًا للأخبار لدى جميع المبحوثين بنسبة إجمالية بلغت (54.3%)، مما يعكس الاعتماد المتزايد على المنصات الرقمية. أما بالنسبة لمستوى الثقة، فتعتبر تطبيقات الأخبار المصدر الإخباري الأكثر ثقة بين المبحوثين. أخيرًا، أفاد أغلب المبحوثين بنسبة (79.6%) أن "تصفح مواقع التواصل الاجتماعي" هي طريقتهم المفضلة للعثور على المحتوى الإخباري، وهذا يتوافق مع النتيجة السابقة التي تشير إلى أن وسائل التواصل الاجتماعي هي المصدر الرئيسي للأخبار لهذا الجيل.

الكلمات الدالة: الجيل Z، أنماط استهلاك الأخبار، تفضيلات الأخبار، المهارات الرقمية، الأخبار عبر المنصات الرقمية

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Introduction

Understanding generational cohorts is imperative when investigating shifts in attitudes and behaviors over time, as age plays a pivotal role in shaping individuals' perspectives and behaviors. Age not only signifies an individual's place in the life cycle but also their connection with a cohort of peers born during a similar period, which results in shared experiences and influences (Galan, et al., 2019).

Generation Z (Gen Z) is the generation following Gen Y, and the last to have experienced part of their childhood without modern technologies, concluding the end of pre-internet experiences. They are the first cohort to have smartphones, social media and other technologies readily available at a young age (Ahmed, 2020).

Additionally, the emergence of these technologies and social media platforms has led to an increase in screen time (Howarth, 2023). Globally, the average screen time is 6.5 hours, growing steadily (Binns, 2023). This means individuals spend half their waking hours clicking through apps and websites. Through the wide array of devices and platforms, the types of content available have increased as well.

Information consumption has been transformed by technological progress, new devices, and new platforms. Smartphones and social media are the main access routes to news (Newman et al., 2021), in addition to being prominent places for interpersonal communication and entertainment.

Modern technologies and media platforms have become deeply embedded into contemporary society. This ever-changing media landscape has implications for how individuals consume content. The first cohort to experience this abundance of information is Generation Z. With the various options available, traditional news content is often side-lined and consumption for entertainment purposes takes precedence (Hartmann, 2024). Furthermore, in the changing news environment, young adult audiences, often dubbed 'the Internet generation', have increasingly gravitated toward online sources of news and information, raising questions about the nature and amount of news consumed.

The surge in mobile device accessibility, unintended encounters with news on social media networks, and the availability of on-demand formats such as podcasts or YouTube appear to have created a scenario in which a majority of young individuals (Gen Z) receive news, whether they actively seek it or not (Joshi, 2023, p.5). In their study, “*News consumption and trust in online and social media*”, Russman and Hess (2020) found that people aged 18–25 mainly accessed news online via platforms like social media and other aggregators apps. Many mentioned that news often finds them rather than the other way around. Algorithm-based news consumption on social media platforms and aggregators is frequently characterized as ‘news-grazing’ and ‘news snacking’ (Molyneux, 2018). These expressions denote the practice of users consuming abbreviated and dispersed news items for a brief snapshot of ongoing events.

Research significance

This research gains its importance from different perspectives:

- The research focuses on a more significant subject that addresses the intersection of age, media preferences and news habits, referring to the differences among generations, especially Generation Z in their news consumption patterns and preferences.
- Knowing how people differently use news media and respond to it, is important to comprehensive understanding of their behaviors.
- Researches into news media usage and practices and its evolving environment have proved to be a remarkable prospect in the field of media studies and is considered a significant contribution to journalism research.
- By understanding media consumption among generation Z, the researcher can clarify how generational factors influence the popularity and relevance of various media channels.
- Researching the topic can illuminate how the rapid development of news media is altering the news consumption.

- Technology and means of communication created new different patterns of communication and interaction among generations, causing shifts in Generation Z's preferences, attitudes and perception.

The research problem

In an age dominated by digital media and rapid technological advancements, Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) has emerged as a unique cohort with distinct behaviors, values, and preferences. Digital media has become integral part of our lives, leading to a great shift in how people, especially Gen Z consume news. In addition, the introduction of mobile devices has brought about a significant transformation in news consumption. According to various studies, Gen Z predominantly turn to smartphones to access news, with social media platforms being a favored source. Their news consumption is marked by incidental engagement, shaped by their broader media consumption habits.

Generation Z, also called internet generation or the first "digital natives" represents a pivotal demographic in news consumption; as they consume news in a way that differ significantly from previous generations. They are grown up in a technology-driven world with easy access to a variety of information and entertainment.

Despite a growing attention has been given to the generational gap concept and how this issue has widened in different societies for various reasons, affecting people's perception, preferences, attitudes and their pattern of media use, existing research lacks a comprehensive analysis of news consumption patterns among members of Gen Z, including their preferred platforms, content formats, and trust in various sources.

So, this research sought to address news consumption patterns and preferences of Gen Z, including their preferred platforms, types of news content, and the level of trust in various sources. In addition to evaluating their digital literacy and the way they deal with technology. By using a quantitative data tool, represented in survey, the researcher examined to what extent different members of gen Z adapt with technology (access, usage, digital literacy skills), and their attitude

toward digital news. Through using the uses and gratification theory, this research helps in understanding how Gen Z engages with the news media, their motivations to read news and the gratifications obtained.

Literature review

The researcher paid significant attention to the relevant Arabic and English studies in order to create a strong background that can help understanding enough about the topic, choose the proper methodology, data collection tools and theories. The literature review was categorized into two main dimensions: the first one tackles digital and mobile news consumption across multiple media platforms, and the second dimension discusses news preferences to Generation Z.

The first dimension: Studies that tackled digital and mobile news consumption across multi-platforms.

Many English and Arabic studies discussed news consumption and revealed that it has been undergoing massive changes due to advances of digitization. In the same context and through applying the uses and gratification theory, Olympio (2020) examined the news consumption preferences of University of Ghana students, including their preferred news types, patterns of news engagement, and the gratifications they derive from consuming news. The study used a quantitative, descriptive survey approach.

Findings showed that entertainment, sports and political news were the top most preferred news types. The main use of news to students was to get information. Findings showed that the preferred channel for news consumption by the sampled students was online news but this did not exclude the use of traditional news.

For years traditional and digital media have played an essential role of disseminating news and information to keep their target audience always updated about what is happening nationally and internationally. In this context, a study in 2019 conducted by Maphiri, examined news consumption patterns among the rural youth in South Africa. The study used a self-administered questionnaire and semi-structured personal interview to collect data from youth aged between 18-34 years. Youth participants were randomly selected using

convenience non-probability sampling. The researcher applied the uses and gratification and the media system dependency theories.

The study results agreed with Olympio (2020) as it revealed that most youth highly preferred to access and consume news through online media more than television and newspapers because digital media are cheap, easily accessible and affordable. The findings further indicated that most youth highly preferred to consume news through television channels because it is a credible and reliable source of news.

It is also highlighted that most youth preferred to consume entertainment news more than business, political and sport news because they find the former interesting and relaxing. Also, most youth did prefer to discuss entertainment news with family members and friends and that there are positive relationships between media credibility and news consumption which tend to influence family and friends' news discussions.

Prior to that, Thom (2016) explored how young Canadians are making decisions about what news to consume and what news to believe. Through a series of focus groups, interviews, and diaries, the participants in this study reported that they use factors like interest, source, and experience to decide if they will read or follow a story. Participants determined news believability by trusting the source, finding the story logically plausible, and seeing corroboration from other sources. This study resolved that though many young people identify social media as a source of news, it acts more as a gateway to mainstream news that is considered more trustworthy and believable.

Today's high-choice media environment enables some individuals to consume large quantities of news, while others can seemingly avoid news all together. In a recent study entitled, "*how attitudes about the news media relate to levels of news consumption*", Edgerly (2021) sought to identify the factors related to extremely low levels of news consumption. Survey data from a nationally representative sample of U.S. adults was used to test different explanations for news avoidance. Results pointed out to several factors that explain lower overall levels of news consumption, including; a disinterest in politics, perceptions

of news lacking relevance, low news self-efficacy and a lack of knowledge about the news system.

Social media platforms/sites (SNS) have gained considerable attention among scholars who studied them in different contexts, focusing on its effect on knowledge acquisition, dependency on SNS as a news medium in addition to the consumption patterns. For example, Boukes (2019) investigated how the use of Twitter and Facebook affects citizens' knowledge acquisition, and whether this effect is conditional upon people's political interest.

By using a panel survey design, this study demonstrated that more frequent usage of Twitter positively affects the acquisition of current affairs knowledge while the opposite is found for Facebook. This negative effect of Facebook usage occurred particularly for citizens with less political interest, thereby, amplifying the existing knowledge gap between politically interested and uninterested citizens.

Various studies sought to investigate the Egyptian youth reliance on social media platforms as news sources for current events and for political knowledge acquisition (Alsagheer, 2019; Magdy, 2018 & Ibrahim, 2016). In his study, Magdy sought to identify the role of web pages on social media in providing young people with political information, and the extent of their dependence on them to obtain information about current events, in addition to identifying the levels of interactivity in these pages and their impact on young people's attitudes and opinions on various issues.

The study found that the majority of Egyptian youth follows the news and topics on social networking sites. The study confirmed that the most distinguishing features of news pages on social media, which are increasingly relied upon in times of crises, are the immediate coverage of events, the high degree of its credibility, diversity and objectivity in presenting news.

Shedding light over how social media sites have widely changed the manner in which news is consumed, Ahmed, et al. (2018) sought to identify the factors determining students' news consumption patterns. Using a stratified random sampling procedure, the study compiles a sample from higher education institutions in a Sub-Saharan African

country. The findings suggested that students' attitude towards news consumption via SNS platforms is influenced directly by perceived usefulness, perceived enjoyment and subjective norms.

Under the framework of media system dependency (MSD) and the microeconomic consumption (MEC) theories, Ha, et al. (2013) investigated social network sites (SNS) users' time allocation behavior among various traditional and new media. Specifically, it examines the difference in degree of dependency on SNS between the young generation and the general population as a new form of news medium. The results revealed that SNS, along with other online media are the preferred news sources for young people and they are more likely to be interested in soft news than hard news. Besides, females were also likely to indulge in SNS use than males were.

In the same context, but under the framework of uses and gratifications, Freeman (2013) reached out to the same findings of Ha, et al. (2013) which revealed that the majority of the young adults in Malaysia prefer online news over traditional news media with a particular interest in entertainment news and disinterest in business and finance news. Findings also highlighted that news media consumption appears significantly higher among older youth and males compared to younger youth and females.

The study used a quantitative survey approach with a sample of 500 college students aged 18-24 from two universities in Malaysia. The survey questionnaire had four main sections; interest level in reading news, types of news that young adults look for, which media young adults get most news from, and where they get most news from.

Besides, Omar, et al. (2018) examined the role of demographic variables, mobile and social media use for news, perceived news credibility and users' motivations for news in explaining online consumption of public affairs news in the setting which is known for its tight media control.

An online survey was employed to collect data from Malaysian Internet users, aged between 18 and 64, who regularly read news online. The findings of the study suggest that digital immigrants, or older news users, are more likely to consume public affairs news than

young ones. Malaysians read public affairs news which they perceive to be highly credible to fulfill their information and social needs.

Having a mobile device continuously within an arm's reach has changed everyday life and patterns of news consumption. Both Galal (2019) and Saad, et al. (2021) sought to study smartphone usage as news sources. Galal's research has built its theoretical framework on the Uses and Gratifications Theory, as well as The Media Richness Theory to identify the motives of the Egyptians for using the news Apps on smartphones to access news, as well as their reading habits and their preferred types of news. The findings showed that the Egyptians use the "Social Media Apps" the most (92.2%), while the news Apps were ranked the 5th (45.4%) among the preferred App categories. The ease of use and the ability to follow the news anywhere were the main reasons among the respondents for using their smartphones in following the news through the news Apps.

By adopting the uses and gratifications and media displacement theories, Saad, et al. (2021) examined Emirati university students' usage of smart phones as a news source. In addition to the motivations, patterns, and relationships between hard news and soft news consumption and the different gratifications sought.

Results revealed that students were interested in both hard and soft news, but there was 7% more soft news consumption by students. Additionally, results revealed that smart phones have become students' main source of news as they allow them to find information easily. When assessing the relationships and dynamics between mobile news and the gratifications sought, results revealed that the convenience gratification was the only predictor of both mobile soft news and hard news out of all the gratifications offered.

In the same context, Damme, et al. (2015) aimed to understand in what circumstances mobile news is consumed within these news media repertoires, and how mobile device owners position their mobile news consumption in relation to other types of news media outlets. This study revealed that the majority of news consumers dominantly relies on traditional media outlets to stay informed, only to supplement with online mobile services in specific circumstances.

Mobile news outlets/products do seem to increasingly infiltrate the daily lives of mobile audiences who were previously disengaged with news.

Research indicated that users often encounter news incidentally while using social media platforms via smartphones. This incidental exposure is particularly prevalent among younger users and those with lower interest in news. For example, Mitchelstein, et al. (2017) found out that most young users get the news on their mobile devices as part of their constant connection to media platforms; they encounter the news all the time, rather than looking for it; but click on them only sporadically and spend little time engaging with the content. Thus, the news becomes undifferentiated from the rest of the social and entertainment information.

There are several reasons to look at the impact of trust following the recent changes brought about by the growth of online news consumption, therefore Fletcher and Park (2016) explored the impact of individual trust in the news media on source preferences and online news participation behavior, in particular sharing and commenting, across 11 countries.

The results showed that those with low levels of trust tend to prefer non-mainstream news sources like social media, blogs, and digital-born providers, and are more likely to engage in various forms of online news participation. Seeking alternative views and attempting to validate the credibility of news may be among the motivations behind these associations. The previous result supports what Lancaster, et. al. (2012) reached out to in their study as they mentioned that youth regard mainstream news as lacking credibility and their attitudes toward news media is dependent on individual's characteristics, the relevant of formats, content to their needs and their perceptions of trustworthiness of news media as source of information.

B. The second dimension: News preferences to Generation Z.

Understanding generational differences in news media use and political engagement is fundamental for democracy. Research suggests that age is the most important socio-demographic factor behind news consumption in today's high-choice media environments.

In this context, a recent study conducted by Boulianne and Shehata (2022) highlighted that younger and older generations are differently motivated in relation to news consumption and online political expression. To test the differential role of political interest in news consumption and online political expression, the researchers used a survey of people (18-75 years) from the United States, the United Kingdom, and France.

The findings suggested that young citizens are more frequent users of online news overall. The frequency of online political expression is negatively related to age, with older people less likely to post online. Age moderates the relationship between political interest and news consumption as well as news consumption and online political expression. The correlations of these sets of variables are stronger for younger respondents compared to older respondents. In addition, while younger citizens may be motivated by political interest, older people may be more tied to a duty—duty to be informed and duty to participate— and this participation is in more institutionalized activities rather than the expressive activities enabled by social media platforms.

Another recent study conducted in 2023 mentioned that Gen Z or younger news audiences are believed to contribute to declining news consumption as a result of decreased news interest and reduced trust, particularly in political news. It can have adverse consequences for democratic processes. This study offers a more nuanced perspective by qualifying the role of context, and generational differences and similarities in online political news consumption patterns before and after the 2020 US presidential election.

The findings revealed that while Gen Z are indeed consuming considerably less news, contrary to assumptions, there was significantly increased engagement with news websites following the election. Additionally, media audiences across generations are likely to reduce social media use during such events (Ray, 2023).

As the digital media landscape continues to evolve, comprehending the unique preferences of Gen Z and Millennials is indispensable for news organizations seeking effective audience engagement. In order to

understand how generational disparities influence news consumption habits and attitudes, particularly in the context of mobile news experiences, Joshi (2023) investigated the shifting landscape of news consumption among Gen Z, the first "digital natives," and Millennials, often referred to as "digital immigrants." It also explored their unique relationships with the digital world and their distinct motivations for engaging with news, focusing on mobile platforms.

The study revealed that generational differences in news consumption motivations emerged as a pivotal factor, with younger individuals seeking causes, personal growth, and self-actualization through the information they consumed, while older generations leaned toward traditional news sources and institutional politics. The advent of mobile devices, particularly smartphones, further accentuated the generational gap, with Gen Z and Millennials primarily using smartphones to access news via social media platforms. Their news consumption was characterized by intermittent and serendipitous engagement, emphasizing the need for visually engaging news formats and easily digestible content.

Similarly, another study by Antunovic, et al. (2018) emphasized the importance of understanding generational changes in news consumption patterns, as it explored the stages of news consumption among young adults, focusing on college students. The three-stage process identified includes routine surveillance, incidental consumption, and directed consumption, influenced by new media use. The study highlighted the shift towards online news consumption among younger individuals and the implications for news engagement.

Focus group interviews with college students provided insights into their news consumption habits, shedding light on the evolving media ecology and its impact on news consumption. They reported checking news on their computers or phones, stating that they 'mostly go online' to find information. In addition, college students' daily routine consisted of more than just online news; it incorporated some print and televised news as well. The students named parental habits as structural forces in shaping their news consumption, but also noted, to

varying degrees, a move away from these habits as they adjusted to the campus life.

The study's findings also agreed with Poindexter (2013) in that news for this generation tends to 'pop up', frequently via social media, as more than half of the participants (56.8%) reported that they got most of their news from other people on social media. Besides, incidental news exposure most commonly occurred during mobile phone use, though students reported getting news also when visiting their email browser.

Moreover, Both Vázquez-Herrero, et al. (2022) and Collins (2019) pointed out to the power of social media as the main gateway to information for young people, specially Gen Z, helping to determine and shape the young's visions of the present, which is also conditioned by news sharing among users. Vázquez-Herrero, et al. (2022) aimed to analyze social media news consumption of young Spanish, French, and British people aged 18–25, through identifying their social media use, consumption routines, platform preferences, their attitudes towards news content, in addition to studying news media presence and strategies on social networking sites.

Results confirmed the pre-eminence of social media as channels of information and as alternatives to traditional media, with news consumption occurring incidentally throughout the day and this is consistent with the findings of Antunovic, et al. (2018). Besides, news media are adapting to engage new audiences on platforms like Instagram and TikTok. The study highlighted the disconnect between traditional media and young audiences, emphasizing the importance of social media in shaping young people's worldview.

On the same side, Collins (2019) aimed to examine social media usage for news consumption, news behaviors, and online civic reasoning among Generation Z college-aged students. The researcher defined online civic reasoning as the ability to evaluate digital content and reach warranted conclusions about social and political issues.

Results showed that higher Twitter usage correlated with higher online civic reasoning skills. However, no significant correlations were found for Instagram or Snapchat. The study highlighted the

importance of developing online civic reasoning skills among young adults to navigate the vast amount of information available on social media platforms.

For emphasizing the need to address the spread of disinformation and update MIL practices to suit the changing media landscape. A recent study on Generation Z's media consumption and MIL revealed that they spend considerable screen time, primarily using media for entertainment and social connections. Despite being digital natives, they lack critical media literacy skills, with 58.3% influenced by disinformation. Recommendations include incorporating MIL in formal education curricula and enhancing skills to discern reliable sources. Generation Z's primary media use is for socialization, entertainment, and online purchases, reflecting a shift towards digital platforms (Panagiotou, et al., 2022).

Furthermore, Ahmed (2020) examined post-millennials' news consumption habits and perception of fake news in social media. A survey was completed by a non-random sample of 415 students at State University of New York in Oneonta. The results revealed that more than half of post-millennials accessed various social media several times a day, while nearly one in five admitted accessing social media every hour of the day. As for the amount of time devoted to social media, nearly one-third of the students admitted using social media for 7-10 hours per day, and slightly less than one-third of the students spent 5-6 hours per day on social media.

With regard to news consumption habits of post-millennials, data analysis revealed that nine in 10 students used their smartphones to check the news online, and most students used multiple sources of news. About four-fifths of the students obtained their news from online newspapers and magazines, while three-fifths of them also used social media for obtaining news. As for the amount of time devoted to consuming news, four-fifths of the students indicated that they spent 1-2 hours in a typical day for news consumption. In terms of exposure to fake news, nine in 10 students indicated that they had seen some news on social media that turned out to be fake news.

General Conclusion on the literature review

- The frequently used data collection tools in studies of that dimension were: survey, in-depth interviews, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.
- The 1st dimension is rich with English and Arabic studies that tackled news consumption patterns, habits, consumers' attitudes toward news trust, social media as a news source and mobile news consumption among young people. The studies pointed out to the changes that happened as a result of digitization and the high-choice media environment.
- The main theories used to study consumers' consumption patterns and attitudes are media systems dependency and uses and gratifications theories, this helped the researcher to choose the suitable theory of the current study.
- Some studies shed light on traditional and new/digital news media consumption among people of all ages (Bergstrom, 2020), and others focused on social platforms as a mean of knowledge acquisitions and political participation among youth (Boukes, 2019).
- No Arabic studies deepened its investigation to mention or evaluate Egyptians news consumptions of different types of news and in what context people seek consumption of soft and hard news.
- Arabic studies were rare in the second dimension that tackled Generation Z in Egypt, to better understand their preferences in the high choice media environment.
- The researcher got benefit from the study of Thom (2016) and Freeman (2013) in which they concluded that people use factors like interest, source and experience to decide if they will read or follow a news story. Besides, they gave us indications that young adults prefer online news instead of the traditional ones, and soft over hard news, applying on the Canadian and Malaysian youth. So, the current study will found out if this is applicable to the Egyptian society or not.

Research objectives

This research aims mainly at exploring news consumption patterns and preferences among Generation Z across various media platforms.

It aims also to achieve a number of sub-goals, as follows:

- Identifying the preferred platforms used by Generation Z for consuming news.
- Exploring the content characteristics that resonate most with Generation Z and drive their engagement with news.
- Exploring the type of news content that Gen Z looks for and prefers to consume.
- Analyzing the motivations behind news consumption among Gen Z, and the gratifications obtained from news media sources.
- Identifying the typical ways of finding news content.
- Exploring disparities in attitude towards digital news and the perceived credibility of those sources.
- Figuring out incidental news consumption behaviors among people of Generation Z.

Research questions

The research aims mainly at answering the fundamental question of: How do Gen Z consume news? Through identifying their patterns of consumption and preference of news content. There is some other sub-question, as follows:

- What are the preferred platforms for consuming news among Gen Z?
- How does trust in news sources vary across digital and traditional media among this generation?
- How individuals of Gen Z find the news content?
- What are the motivations that intrigue people of Gen Z to consume news? And the obtained gratifications?
- What type of news is of primary interest to respondents and what news is not?

- What are the differences in news consumption patterns of Gen Z in the context of digital media?
- How does incidental exposure to news affect the overall engagement among respondents of generation Z?
- To what extent do respondents of Gen Z engage with the news content?

Operational definitions

News: news is information about political, economic, historical, social or cultural events that recently happened around the world, considered interesting enough to be distributed to the public via diverse media sources.

News consumption: the researcher defines news consumption as the sum of information and entertainment content taken in/ absorbed by individuals or groups and the active media consumers have the ability to judge, criticize and understand news content.

Generation: Downs (2019) defined generations based on groups of individuals that share actions and representations because they are all around the same age and have lived during the same period (p.2). In this context, the researcher defines generations as group of people who were born and raised around the same period of time, often sharing similar cultural experiences, values, and social conditions. Thereby, they are shaped by the events and arisen technologies of its era.

Generation Z: Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) is regarded as the first digital natives, also Known as Gen Z, iGen, postmillennial or Zoomers. The first generation that will have little or no memory at all of a world without smartphones and similar technology. They are distinguished by their considerable online presence. They grow up with constant access to digital technology and social media, resulting in a digital-first and technoholic mindset.

Patterns: the researcher means by the news consumption patterns, the habits and behaviors exhibited by members of Generation Z when accessing, engaging with, and sharing news content, including frequency, timing, and preferred platforms.

News preferences: The researcher means the type of news they prefer to consume whether soft or hard.

Theoretical framework

The researcher used 2 theories: the uses & gratifications and the digital divide theories to better understand the news consumption patterns and preferences of Generation Z.

- **The Uses and Gratification theory**

Applying the uses and gratifications theory is very practical as it aims to examine and investigate the media consumption habits and patterns among respondents in the current study sample. The theory helped the researcher examines how Gen Z consumes news. In addition, the researcher can utilize U&G theory to categorize the motivations behind the news consumption among Gen Z, and the type of preferred content. The theory suggested that technologies shape people's patterns of media consumption. So, the researcher could measure to what extent Generation Z access and use technology, their digital skills. Besides, the reasons behind their usage of certain media outlets and their news consumption patterns.

- **The digital divide Theory**

The digital divide can appear in various forms, including differences in internet access and usage, device ownership, and digital literacy, often influenced by socioeconomic status, educational level and age. Employing the digital divide theory provides valuable insights into understanding the news consumption patterns and preferences of Generation Z, as it highlights disparities in access to and use of digital technologies among respondents of the same generation. This theory can be applied to examining how media habits evolve with technological advancements.

The study methodology

Survey research: The survey methodology is widely used in the mass communication field. The study uses it to survey respondents of Gen Z in the Egyptian society around their news consumption patterns and preferences. This descriptive study can effectively study the news consumption patterns and preferences by highlighting the preferred

news sources, digital platforms used to access news and the type of content people seek for. Besides, examining how Gen Z deal with technology and engage with online news sources.

The study sample

To effectively study the news consumption patterns and preferences among Generation Z, the researcher used the convenient sampling which is a type of non-probability sampling technique where the researcher selected participants who are easily accessible, readily available, or willing to participate.

Data collection tools

This research uses a quantitative data collection tool; Survey (Questionnaire). According to Domede and Dinkelman (2022), Surveys are good for gathering data about abstract ideas or concepts that are otherwise difficult to quantify, such as opinions, attitudes, and beliefs. This allows the researcher to analyze trends and patterns in news consumption among Generation Z, making it easier to identify significant differences in preferences, habits, and sources of news across multiple platforms. The survey was conducted during Dec. 2024 and January 2025 on a sample of 186 respondents of the Egyptians belonging to Gen Z.

Validity and Reliability

▪ Validity of measures

Validity determines whether the research truly measures what it was intended to measure or how truthful the research results are. To measure the validity of the survey results, the questionnaire was reviewed and evaluated by a number of academics and experts in the field of mass communication*. According to their recommendations, some adjustments were made regarding the choices in some questions until we had the final form of the survey that was ready for the fieldwork.

▪ Reliability

Reliability refers to the consistency of a measure. A test is considered reliable if the same result was got repeatedly. To gauge reliability in

the present study, the questionnaire was conducted twice at two different points in time by administrating a test twice. Because test-retest reliability is best used for things that are stable over time. A Pre-test was conducted on a sample of 30 respondents to make sure that all questions are clear, understandable.

Scales: Tab. No. (1)

Variables	Cronbach Alfa	Internal Validity
Online news consumption	0.817	0.904
Level of digital literacy	0.735	0.857
Motivations behind consuming news	0.791	0.889
Gratifications obtained	0.706	0.840
The availability of mobile devices	0.750	0.866
Incidental news consumption	0.713	0.844
The level of trust in news sources	0.822	0.907

The table indicates high alpha coefficient values for the study's scales targeting the news consumption patterns and preferences among Gen Z.

The research results

Tab. No. (2): Sample characteristics

Demographics		Generation	Z (n=186)
Gender	Male	F	72
		%	38.7%
	Female	F	114
		%	61.3%
Educational Level	Lower than medium level education	F	2
		%	1.1%
	Medium level education	F	20
		%	10.8%
University education	F	140	
	%	75.3%	
Postgraduate	F	24	
	%	12.9%	
current professional status	Student	F	72
		%	38.7%
	Working	F	85
		%	45.7%

Demographics	Generation	Z (n=186)	
		F	%
	Not working	F	29
		%	15.6%
The monthly income of the family	Less than 3000 pounds	F	18
		%	9.7%
	From 3000 to less than 6000 pounds	F	35
		%	18.8%
	From 6000 to less than 10,000 pounds	F	48
		%	25.8%
	10,000 or more	F	85
		%	45.7%

The table shows the demographic characteristics of respondents, as follows:

- Females constitute the largest portion of the respondents with 61.3%, while Males were 38.7%.
- The majority of respondents were university graduates with a percentage of 75.3%, followed by a low percentage of respondents from the postgraduates (12.9%). Few respondents were less educated with 10.8% with a medium level education and just 2 respondents received lower than medium level education.
- The results highlight workforce-dominated respondents, with a total percentage of 45.7%, followed by students who represent 38.7% of the total sample. While those who are not working make up the smallest group, with 15.6% (29 out of 186).
- The majority of respondents earn relatively high monthly income, with 45.7% have a monthly income of 10,000 pounds or more. Additionally, 25.8% of the total sample earn from 6000 to less than 10,000 pounds. In contrast, 18.8% of the respondents earn from 3000 to less than 6000 pounds, and only 9.7% (18 respondents) earn less than 3000 pounds.

A. Generation Z and technology access

Tab. No. (3): The devices owned and have accessed to

Devices	Generation Z (n=186)	
	F	%
Smartphone	F	182
	%	97.8%
Laptop	F	108
	%	58.1%
Desktop computer	F	32
	%	17.2%
Smart TV	F	73
	%	39.2%
Tablet	F	47
	%	25.3%

The table shows that Gen Z focuses more on mobile, streaming and portable devices. They demonstrate a high level of smartphone ownership, with 97.8%, making it their most prevalent device. Laptops ranked second by 58.1%, as their needs for portability and mobility are often met with smartphones, followed by Smart TV with 39.2%, then tablet came in the third place with 25.3%, and finally desktop computers by 17.2%.

This is because Gen Z is the first cohort to have smartphones, social media and other technologies readily availability at young age, resulting in a digital-first and technoholic mindset. To support this result, Miller and Grace (2016) mentioned that Gen Z has grown up in an era of rapid technological advancements, with digital devices and the internet being an integral part of their lives.

Tab. No. (4): Facing barriers in accessing technology

Facing	Generation Z	
	F	%
Yes	F	72
	%	38.7%
No	F	114
	%	61.3%
Total	F	186
	%	100%

Respondents of the study sample were asked about if they face any barriers in accessing technology. A total of 114 respondents (61.3%) reported facing no barriers in accessing technology. This may be due

to their upbringing in a digitally connected world and their adaptability to emerging technological advancements. Conversely, a significant percentage (38.7%) of the total sample cited having barriers.

Tab. No. (5): Barriers faced in accessing technology

Barriers	Generation		Z (n=72)
	F	%	
Cost of device or internet	F		17
	%		23.6%
Lack of technical skills or knowledge to use technology effectively	F		19
	%		26.4%
Lack of access to devices	F		9
	%		12.5%
Concerns about online privacy and security	F		31
	%		43.1%
Lack of interest or perceived need for technology	F		10
	%		13.9%
Internet connectivity issues	F		25
	%		34.7%

The table highlights the barriers to accessing technology among respondents of Gen Z. The most significant barrier is “concerns about online privacy and security”, with a total percentage of 43.1%. The second most notable barrier is “Internet connectivity issues”, mentioned by 34.7% of respondents. Other barriers include “Lack of technical skills or knowledge to use technology effectively”, which came in the third place, impacting 26.4% of the total sample. Also, cost of device or internet ranked fourth by 23.6% of respondents. Finally, “lack of interest or perceived need for technology” and “Lack of access to devices” are the least mentioned barriers, impacting only (13.9% and 12.5%, respectively) of the total sample.

B. Technology usage and digital literacy

Tab. No. (6): Daily hours to use technological devices

Daily hours	Generation		Z
	F	%	
Less than an hour	F		4
	%		2.2%
1 to less than 2 hours	F		16
	%		8.6%
2 to less than 3 hours	F		37
	%		19.9%
3 hours or more	F		129

Daily hours	Generation	Z
	%	69.4%
Total	F	186
	%	100%

The table shows the daily hours spent on using technology among the study sample. The majority of respondents (69.4%) reported using technology 3 hours or more a day. Respondents who use technology 2 to less than 3 hours a day represents 19.9% of the total sample. 8.6% of respondents reported using technology 1 to less than 2 hours. A minor proportion of respondents reported spending less than an hour, with 2.2%. The researcher concludes that there is a strong tendency towards longer periods of engagement with technology, especially for Gen Z.

Tab. No. (7): Purpose of using the Internet

The primary purpose	Generation	Z (n=186)
Communication (messaging apps, social media platforms or emails)	F	158
	%	84.9%
Online shopping	F	93
	%	50%
Accessing news and current events	F	112
	%	60.2%
Research and information gathering	F	111
	%	59.7%
Entertainment (through Streaming videos, music or gaming)	F	146
	%	78.5%
Other	F	8
	%	4.3%

The table outlines the primary purposes for which respondents use the internet. The most common purpose across all respondents is communication (through messaging apps, social media platforms or emails), with 84.9%. This indicates that communication is the most dominant online activity among all respondents of the study sample.

Entertainment through streaming videos, music or gaming, came in the second place with 78.5%. In addition, accessing news and current events is another significant activity with 60.2% of the respondents use that the internet for that purpose. Research and information gathering came in the fourth place with 59.7% of the total sample.

Besides, half of respondents (50%) use the internet for online shopping. This indicates that online shopping is highly preferred by the younger generation.

Tab. No. (8): Respondents' perceptions of their digital literacy skills

Feeling	Generation	Z
No	F	5
	%	2.7%
Somewhat	F	101
	%	54.3%
To a large extent	F	80
	%	43%
Total	F	186
	%	100%

This table presents data on respondents' perceptions of their digital literacy skills in relation to their personal and professional needs. Digital literacy refers to the ability to effectively navigate, evaluate, create, and communicate information using a variety of digital platforms and tools. It encompasses a range of skills necessary for engaging with technology in a meaningful and responsible way.

More than half of the respondents (54.3%) reported that their digital skills are “somewhat” adequate for their personal and professional needs. 43% of respondents feels that their digital skills are “to a large extent” adequate for their personal and professional needs. This is because younger cohorts like (Gen Z) have grown up in a highly digitalized world and is more likely to feel comfortable and competent with digital technologies, compared to older generations who may have had less exposure to digital technologies in their formative years. Conversely, only 2.7% feels that their digital skills aren’t adequate.

Tab. No. (9): The most appropriate ways for learning new digital skills

The ways	Generation	Z (n=186)
Online tutorials or courses	F	136
	%	73.1%
Self-learning through reading	F	80
	%	43%
In-person workshops or training	F	90
	%	48.4%
Attending webinars	F	59

The ways	Generation	Z (n=186)
	%	31.7%
Learning from friends or family	F	74
	%	39.8%

The table highlights preferences for various learning methods across respondents of Gen Z. Online tutorials or courses are the most popular method for learning new digital skills, with 73.1% of responders favoring them. In-person workshops or training ranked second by 48.4%. In addition, 43% of the total sample prefer Self-learning through reading, followed by learning new skills from friends and family which came in the fourth place by 39.8%. Attending webinars shows a lower overall adoption by 31.7% of the total respondents.

Tab. No. (10): The digital literacy skills respondents feel they lack

The skills	Generation	Z (n=186)
Basic computer skills	F	52
	%	28%
Internet navigation skills (e.g. searching for information and using search engines effectively)	F	30
	%	16.1%
Online communication skills	F	26
	%	14%
Digital content creation	F	82
	%	44.1%
Cybersecurity knowledge and awareness (e.g., online privacy, safe browsing)	F	102
	%	54.8%

The table provides insights into the perceived digital literacy skill gaps across Gen Z respondents. Cyber-security knowledge and awareness is the most frequently cited skill gap across all respondents, with 54.8%, highlighting a common concern among individuals regarding online privacy and security in today's increasingly interconnected world where online threats are constantly evolving. Digital content creation ranked second by 44.1% of the total sample. Besides, 28% of the total sample reported lacking basic computer skills.

Internet navigation skills and online communication ranked last among the skills respondents reported lacking with (16.1% and 14%, respectively). This is because Gen Z have grown up in an era dominated by digital media and this early frequent engagement with

technology has made them skilled at searching and communicating with others through various tools.

Tab. No. (11): The biggest drawbacks of technology

The drawbacks	Generation	Z (n=186)
Increased screen time, leading to health issues	F	143
	%	76.9%
Information overload and stress	F	58
	%	31.2%
Decreased face-to-face interaction	F	131
	%	70.4%
Overreliance on devices and internet services	F	99
	%	53.2%
Privacy and security issues	F	82
	%	44.1%
Isolation or disconnection from real life relations	F	120
	%	64.5%
Reduced attention span and focus	F	101
	%	54.3%

The table highlights the perceived drawbacks of technology usage across Gen Z. The most frequently reported issue is "increased screen time, leading to health issues," with 76.9% of the total sample. "Decreased face-to-face interaction" ranked second as another widely recognized drawbacks of technology usage, affecting 70.4% of the total sample.

Besides, isolation or disconnection from real-life relations", ranked third and was reported by 64.5% of respondents, followed by "Reduced attention span and focus" which was identified by 54.3% of participants overall. More than half of respondents (53.2%) identified "overreliance on devices and internet services", as a drawback of technology usage. "Privacy and security issues" was less mentioned drawback with a total percentage of 44.1%. Finally, "Information overload and stress" was the least reported drawback, impacting only 31.2% of respondents overall.

C. The gap in attitude towards digital news

Tab. No. (12): The frequency of consuming news from digital sources during the week

The rate	Generation Z	
		F
1-2 days	F	72
	%	38.7%
3-4 days	F	56
	%	30.1%
5 days or more	F	58
	%	31.2%
Total	F	186
	%	100%

The table highlights the frequency of consuming news from digital sources during the week across Gen Z. A significant percentage of respondents (38.7%) reported that they consume news through digital sources 1-2 days per week. Respondents who consume news from digital sources (5 days or more) represents 31.2% of the total sample. Similarly, respondents reported consuming news (3–4 days) per week with 30.1%.

Tab. No. (13): The daily hours respondents consume news from digital sources

Daily hours	Generation Z	
		F
Less than an hour	F	65
	%	34.9%
1 to less than 2 hours	F	60
	%	32.3%
2 to less than 3 hours	F	25
	%	13.4%
3 hours or more	F	36
	%	19.4%
Total	F	186
	%	100%

The table reveals the daily hours respondents spent in consuming digital news. The results show variation in the consumption among respondents of the study sample. 34.9% of respondents spend less than an hour in consuming digital news. In the same context, 32.3% of the total respondents reported following digital news for 1 to less than 2 hours daily. 19.4% of respondents reported consuming the digital news for 3 hours or more daily. This result shows that Gen Z is less

likely to engage for extended periods. Finally, 13.4% of respondents reported consuming digital news for 2 to less than 3 hours daily.

Tab. No. (14): The digital platforms respondents primarily use to get news

The digital platforms	Generation	Z (n=186)
News websites or apps	F	59
	%	31.7%
Social media platforms	F	154
	%	82.8%
News aggregators (Google news)	F	48
	%	25.8%

This table reveals the digital platforms respondents of Gen Z primarily use to get/ consume news. Social media platforms are the most common source of news across all respondents, with an overall percentage of 82.8%. News website or apps came in the second place by 31.7% of the total respondents. Finally, news aggregators such as Google news are the least used platforms, with an overall percentage of 25.8%. The researcher concludes that social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, X, Instagram) are the dominant source of news over others. This is because news is often embedded within users’ daily social media browsing without exerting any effort to search for it.

Tab. No. (15): The level of trust in news sources among Gen Z (n=186)

Sources	Rate	I trust completely	I Trust somewhat	I Don't trust	Mean	RI
Traditional news sources (e.g. newspapers)	F	53	102	31	2.12	70.6%
	%	28.5%	54.8%	16.7%		
Social media platforms	F	17	122	47	1.84	61.3%
	%	9.1%	65.6%	25.3%		
News apps	F	49	116	21	2.15	71.7%
	%	26.3%	62.4%	11.3%		
Online news websites	F	47	108	31	2.09	69.5%
	%	25.3%	58.1%	16.7%		
Influencers/ content creators	F	20	88	78	1.69	56.3%
	%	10.8%	47.3%	41.9%		

This table provides data on the level of trust Gen Z (n=186) has in various news sources. News apps is considered the most trusted news source among respondents of this generation, with a mean score of

2.15 and RI (71.7%). The majority of respondents (62.4%) expressed "somewhat" trust in these sources, while 26.3% trust them "completely" and 11.3% "don't trust" them. This indicates their growing importance as reliable digital tools for accessing news. Their high level of trust may be attributed to their ease of use, perceived objectivity, and professional curation of content.

Traditional news sources ranked second and are perceived as relatively trustworthy, with a mean score of 2.12 and RI (70.6%). A higher percentage of respondents (54.8%) trust them "somewhat", 28.5% trust them "completely", while only 16.7% "distrust" them. Online news websites followed closely, with a mean score of 2.09 and an RI (69.5%). A majority of respondents (58.1%) expressed "somewhat" trust in these sources, while 25.3% trust them "completely". Online news websites have the same level of distrust as traditional news sources (16.7%). This means, despite differences in format and accessibility, both types of news sources experience equivalent degrees of distrust from respondents.

On the other hand, social media platforms show a notable decline in perceived trustworthiness, with a mean score of 1.84 and RI (61.3%). While a majority of respondents (65.6%) expressed "somewhat" trust in these platforms, a significant percentage (25.3%) "distrust" them. The relatively high levels of skepticism may stem from issues like misinformation, and bias commonly associated with social media. Influencers and content creators are viewed as the least reliable source, with a mean score of 1.69 and RI (56.3%). 41.9% of respondents indicated that they "don't trust" them. This suggests that influencers have less credibility as reliable information providers.

Tab. No. (16): The ways of verifying the accuracy of digital news respondents consume

The ways	Generation	Z (n=151)
I check multiple sources or platforms for confirmation	F	105
	%	69.5%
I rely on trusted news outlets	F	84
	%	55.6%
I use fact-checking websites or apps	F	46
	%	30.5%
Ask friends, relatives or family for their opinion	F	50
	%	33.1%

This table provides a detailed analysis on how respondents verify the accuracy of digital news they consume. The most common method across all respondents is checking multiple sources or platforms, with 69.5%. This reflects an awareness of the need for thorough verification among different generations.

Relying on trusted news outlets ranked the second most preferred source for verification, with 55.6%. Asking friends, relatives, or family for their opinions is utilized by 33.1% of the total respondents, making it the third most common method across all respondents. On the other hand, fact-checking websites or apps is the least common method among respondents with 30.5%. The lower percentage indicates that respondents don't pay much attention to that method, possibly due to their lack of awareness or the difficulty in accessing and using them.

Tab. No. (17): Engaging with news content on digital platforms

Engagement	Generation	Z
Yes	F	129
	%	69.4%
No	F	57
	%	30.6%
Total	F	186
	%	100%

The data gives insights into the level of engagement with the news content across the study sample. The majority of respondents (69.4%) engage with the news content published on different digital platforms. however, there is a significant proportion (30.6%) who are not.

Tab. No. (18): The ways to engage with news content on digital platforms

The ways	Generation	Z (n=186)
I read the headline only	F	45
	%	34.9%
I usually read the entire news story	F	67
	%	51.9%
I share news links with others	F	33
	%	25.6%
I comment or engage with posts	F	45
	%	34.9%
I watch the video, if available	F	58

The ways	Generation	Z (n=186)
	%	45%
I View the photo album, if available	F	51
	%	39.5%
I click on the link for more details	F	32
	%	24.8%

“Reading the entire news story” came in the first place with more than half of respondents (51.9%). Respondents reported “watching the video, if available” as another method to engage with the news content with a total percentage of 45%. Viewing the photo album, ranked third by a total percentage of 39.5%. Both “commenting or engaging with posts” through like and “reading only the headline” came in the fourth place with 34.9%.

“Sharing news links with others” was mentioned by 25.6% of the total sample. Finally, clicking links for more details was less commonly identified as a way to engage with the news content through digital platforms with 24.8%. This ensures the idea that younger generations may be more satisfied with the headline or a quick overview.

D. Patterns of news consumption:

Tab. No. (19): The primary source of news

The sources	Generation	Z (n=186)
TV	F	68
	%	36.6%
Radio	F	16
	%	8.6%
Print newspapers	F	23
	%	12.4%
Online news sources or apps	F	101
	%	54.3%
Social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, X, Instagram)	F	131
	%	70.4%
Word of mouth (family and friends)	F	72
	%	38.7%

Respondents were asked to identify the primary sources they rely on to consume news. Social media platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, and others are the most popular sources of news, making up 70.4% across all respondents. Online news sources or apps are also

another dominant news source for all respondents with a total percentage of 54.3%, reflecting a growing reliance on digital platforms. Word of mouth ranked third with a total percentage of 38.7%. TV as a traditional medium, remains also a significant source of news, ranked fourth by 36.6% of the total respondents.

On the other hand, print newspapers show a diminishing role, with a total percentage of 12.4%. This ensures its declining significance in the digital age. Finally, Radio exhibits a steep decline, as it's only used by 8.6% of the total sample.

Tab. No. (20): The type of news content Gen Z prefers to consume (n=186)

Types	Preference	Always	sometimes	rarely	Mean	RI
Political news	F	47	85	54	1.96	65.4%
	%	25.3%	45.7%	29%		
Business and economy	F	23	83	80	1.69	56.5%
	%	12.4%	44.6%	43%		
Health and wellness	F	59	91	36	2.12	70.8%
	%	31.7%	48.9%	19.4%		
Sports news	F	61	70	55	2.03	67.7%
	%	32.8%	37.6%	29.6%		
Technology and science	F	59	78	49	2.05	68.5%
	%	31.7%	41.9%	26.3%		
Entertainment and celebrity news	F	69	74	43	2.14	71.3%
	%	37.1%	39.8%	23.1%		
Crime and safety	F	55	80	51	2.02	67.4%
	%	29.6%	43%	27.4%		
Education	F	72	88	26	2.25	74.9%
	%	38.7%	47.3%	14%		
Environmental issues	F	21	78	87	1.65	54.8%
	%	11.3%	41.9%	46.8%		

The table provides data on the types of news content Gen Z prefers to consume. Education-related news is the most preferable content among respondents, with a mean score of 2.25 and RI (74.9%). A significant percentage of respondents (47.3%) reported that they “sometimes” consume it. Similarly, entertainment and celebrity news ranked second with a mean score of 2.14 and RI (71.3%). The majority of respondents (39.8%) reported that they “sometimes” consume them.

Health and wellness news closely followed with a mean score of 2.12 and RI (70.8%). A higher percentage of respondents (48.9%) claimed that they “sometimes” consume it, making it another area of interest. Then, technology and science ranked fourth with a mean score of 2.05 an RI (68.5%). Both sports news and crime and safety, with RIs (67.7% and 67.4%, respectively), show a balanced interest among respondents in their consumption patterns.

On the other hand, political news ranked fifth, with a mean score of 1.96 and RI (65.4%). The majority of respondents (45.7%) reported that they “sometimes” consume it. Business and economy news falls in the lower end in the preference list, with a mean score of 1.69 and RI (56.5%). In addition, environmental issues appear to be less favored for this generation with a mean score of 1.65 and RI (54.8%). Overall, the table highlights varying levels of respondents’ interest in different types of news content. Education, celebrity news/entertainment and health/wellness news are significantly valued, while political, business/economy, environmental issues receive less attention from respondents.

Tab. No. (21): The ways for finding news content

The ways	Generation	Z (n=186)
Actively searching for it (through visiting news sites or using news apps)	F	64
	%	34.4%
Scrolling through social media feeds	F	148
	%	79.6%
Following links from friends or family	F	61
	%	32.8%
Receiving notifications from news apps or social media	F	50
	%	26.9%

This table shows the different ways for finding news content among Gen Z. The majority of respondent (79.6%) reported “scrolling through social media feeds” to be their preferred way of finding news content. This is consistent with the previous finding which indicates that social media is the primary source of news for this generation.

In the same context, “actively searching for news through websites or apps” ranked second with a total percentage of 34.4%. This shows a decline in the traditional way of searching news among younger

generation. “Following links from friends or family” came in the third place with 32.8%. Finally, “receiving notifications from news apps or social media” is the least popular method overall with a total percentage of 26.9%.

Tab. No. (22): Consuming news on mobile devices

Feeling	Generation	Z
I prefer to consume news on my mobile device	F	95
	%	51.1%
I use my mobile device occasionally for news	F	67
	%	36%
I rarely consume news on mobile devices, I prefer other methods	F	18
	%	9.7%
I don't consume news on mobile devices at all	F	6
	%	3.2%
Total	F	186
	%	100%

The table shows how different respondents feel about consuming news on mobile devices. More than half of respondents (51.1%) show an interest in using mobile devices for news. Besides, a considerable percentage of respondents (36%) use their mobile devices “occasionally” for news. This suggests that even individuals who do not consider mobile devices their primary device for consuming news still turn to them at times for updates, emphasizing its convenience and accessibility.

However, there is a smaller subset of respondents (9.7%) who rarely consume news on their mobile devices. Finally, only 3.2% of all respondents reported not consuming news on mobile devices at all. This indicates that some people prefer other methods of consuming news, such as television, print media, or desktop computers.

Tab. No. (23): Incidental news exposure among Gen Z (n=186)

Statements	Preference		Always	sometimes	rarely	Mean	RI
	F	%					
do you read or even click on news you encounter incidentally on your mobile device	F		37	127	22	2.08	69.4%
	%		19.9%	68.3%	11.8%		
does incidental news consumption on your mobile device lead you to actively seek out more information on the issue/topic	F		48	108	30	2.10	69.9%
	%		25.8%	58.1%	16.1%		
do you avoid or discard news that you incidentally come across while using different apps or platforms	F		34	113	39	1.97	65.8%
	%		18.3%	60.8%	21%		
do you share or discuss the news you come across with friends or family	F		46	100	40	2.03	67.7%
	%		24.7%	53.8%	21.5%		
do the news you come across incidentally affect your awareness of current events and your understanding of political issues	F		70	85	31	2.21	73.7%
	%		37.6%	45.7%	16.7%		

The table measures the incidental news consumption across Gen Z respondents. incidental news consumption seems to have a remarkable impact on respondents' awareness of current events and political issues, with 45.7% of respondents reporting it "sometimes" impacts them, and 37.6% noting it affects them "always", at a mean score of 2.21 and RI (73.7%). The majority of respondents tend to engage with news they come across incidentally, with a significant portion (68.3%) doing so "sometimes", and 19.9% doing so "always", however, their behaviors regarding the news vary: while 25.8% are motivated to actively seek more information on topics/issues they encounter, 58.1% of them does so "sometimes". When it comes to sharing or discussing the news with friends or family, 53.8% do so "sometimes", and 24.7% "always" engage in this action, at a mean score of 2.03 and RI (67.7%). On the other hand, a notable percentage (60.8%) "sometimes" avoids or discards incidental news, and only 18.3% doing so consistently, at a mean score of 1.97 and RI (65.8%)

E. News consumptions motivations and obtained gratifications

Tab. No. (24): The primary motives for consuming news among Gen Z (n=186)

Motives	Preference	Always	sometimes	rarely	Mean	RI
To stay informed about current events and trends	F	88	78	20	2.37	78.9%
	%	47.3%	41.9%	10.8%		
To engage in social conversations	F	59	79	48	2.06	68.6%
	%	31.7%	42.5%	25.8%		
To fulfill a habit or routine	F	37	90	59	1.88	62.7%
	%	19.9%	48.4%	31.7%		
For entertainment	F	67	80	39	2.15	71.7%
	%	36%	43%	21%		
To stay updated about global issues and international events	F	88	73	25	2.34	78%
	%	47.3%	39.2%	13.4%		
To find solutions for current issues	F	32	88	66	1.82	60.6%
	%	17.2%	47.3%	35.5%		
To gain insights into political or social issues	F	66	93	27	2.21	73.7%
	%	35.5%	50%	14.5%		
To fulfill a sense of obligation as a citizen	F	50	82	54	1.98	65.9%
	%	26.9%	44.1%	29%		

The table shows the motives of consuming news among respondents of Gen Z. Staying informed about current events and trends ranks as the most significant motive, with a high mean score of 2.37 and RI (78.9%). A significant percentage of respondents (47.3%) “always” engage in this activity, indicating a strong preference for being aware of what’s happening in the world. Besides, staying updated about global issues and international events ranks second in importance, with a mean score of 2.34 and RI (78%). A significant percentage of respondents (47.3%) “always” engage with news for this reason, and 39.2% do so “sometimes”.

Gaining insights into political and social issues has a mean score of 2.21 and RI (73.7%). Half of the respondents (50%) “sometimes” engage for this reason, and 35.5% do so “always”. Entertainment ranked fourth in importance with a mean score of 2.15 and RI (71.7%). A significant percentage of respondents (43%) “sometimes” engage with news content for this reason, while 21% of respondents “rarely” seek news for entertainment. Then, engaging in social

conversations has a mean score of 2.06 and RI (68.6%). A significant proportion (42.5%) “sometimes” engage for this reason, and 31.7% do so “always”. This highlights a sense of duty driving many individuals' engagement with information. On the other hand, fulfilling a sense of obligation as a citizen has a lower mean score of 1.98 and RI (65.9%). 44.1% “sometimes” engage with news for that reason, 26.9% do so “always” and 29% do so “rarely”.

Fulfilling a habit or routine with finding solution for current issues both have the lowest mean scores of (1.88 and 1.82, respectively). As for fulfilling a habit or routine, 48.4% of respondents “sometimes” pursue this goal, while 31.7% “rarely” engage for this reason. This reveals that fulfilling a habit or routine is less prioritized compared to other motives. The researcher concludes that staying informed about current events, being updated about global/international issues, and gaining insights into political/social issues are considered the most significant motives among respondents.

Tab. No. (25): The gratifications obtained from consuming news among Gen Z (n=186)

Gratifications	Preference	To a large extent	somewhat	No	Mean	RI
Information and knowledge acquisition about current events	F	99	82	5	2.51	83.5%
	%	53.2%	44.1%	2.7%		
Social interaction with others about news topics	F	68	85	33	2.19	72.9%
	%	36.6%	45.7%	17.7%		
Feeling connected to the community through shared information	F	74	85	27	2.25	75.1%
	%	39.8%	45.7%	14.5%		
Understanding different perspectives of issues	F	85	92	9	2.41	80.3%
	%	45.7%	49.5%	4.8%		
A sense of empowerment	F	50	95	41	2.05	68.3%
	%	26.9%	51.1%	22%		
Escaping boredom or passing time	F	62	83	41	2.11	70.4%
	%	33.3%	44.6%	22%		
Fostering civic engagement	F	39	94	53	1.92	64.2%
	%	21%	50.5%	28.5%		
Monitoring trends	F	70	91	25	2.24	74.7%
	%	37.6%	48.9%	13.4%		

The table examines the gratifications derived from consuming news among Gen Z. The most significant gratification is acquiring information and knowledge about current events, with a mean score of 2.51 and RI of 83.5%. More than half of respondents reported obtaining it “to a large extent”, while only 2.7% of them says “No”.

Understanding different perspectives of issues ranks second, with a mean of 2.41 and an RI of 80.3%. Feeling connected to the community through shared information also ranks high, with an RI of 75.1%, followed closely by monitoring trends with an RI (74.7%).

Social interaction with others about news topics is also mentioned among respondents with a mean score of 2.19 and RI (72.9%), followed by escaping boredom or passing time with RI (70.4%), and a sense of empowerment (RI= 68.3%). The least valued gratification is fostering civic engagement, with a mean score of 1.92 and the lowest RI of 64.2%. The researcher concludes that Gen Z prioritizes gratifications related to personal knowledge and understanding over civic engagement.

Summary

This research aims mainly at addressing news consumption patterns and preferences of Gen Z, through identifying their preferred platforms, types of content, and the level of trust in various sources, in addition to evaluating their digital literacy and the way they deal with technology. By using a quantitative data tool, represented in survey, the researcher examined to what extent different members of Gen Z adapt with technology (access, usage, digital literacy skills), and their attitude toward digital news. The results showed that the highly mentioned drawback of technology among respondents is "increased screen time, leading to health issues," with 76.9% of the total sample. Besides, a significant percentage of respondents (38.7%) reported that they consume news through digital sources 1-2 days per week. Respondents who consume news from digital sources (5 days or more) represents 31.2% of the total sample.

The researcher also revealed that social media platforms like Facebook, X, Instagram, and others are the most popular sources of news, making up 70.4% across all respondents. Online news sources

or apps are also another dominant news source for all respondents with a total percentage of 54.3%, reflecting a growing reliance on digital platforms. As for the level of trust, news apps are considered the most trusted news source among respondents of this generation, with a mean score of 2.15 and RI (71.7%).

Education-related news is the most preferable content among respondents, with a mean score of 2.25 and RI (74.9%). entertainment and celebrity news ranked second with a mean score of 2.14 and RI (71.3%). The majority of respondents (39.8%) reported that they “sometimes” consume them. Finally, the results also revealed that the majority of respondent (79.6%) reported “scrolling through social media feeds” to be their preferred way of finding news content, and this is consistent with the previous finding which indicates that social media is the primary source of news for this generation.

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