Consumer preferences between generations

Preferencias de consumo en la encrucijada generacional

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to analyse generational differences in consumer trends, both digital and traditional, based on five key dimensions: health, housing, technology, leisure, and education. The study consisted of an exploratory-conclusive survey of members of four generations in the city of Loja, Ecuador: Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials,

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and Generation Z. The study used highly reliable measurement instruments, with Cronbach's alphas of over 0.7, ensuring solid internal consistency. Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed statistically significant differences among the generations in terms of digital trends and preferences in relation to housing, technology and leisure, but not in relation to health or education. These findings indicate that while younger generations, such as Millennials and Generation Z, prefer digital media, older generations still lean towards traditional media. This has important implications for marketing and advertising strategies, as it highlights the need for personalised marketing approaches that resonate with each generational group. Companies must adapt their strategies in order to effectively connect with each generation, strategically balancing technology and traditional media to optimise their reach and resonance in a diversified and constantly evolving market.

Keywords: preferences, generations, marketing, trends, market.

Resumen

La presente investigación analiza las diferencias generacionales en las tendencias de consumo, tanto digitales como tradicionales, abarcando cinco dimensiones clave: Salud, vivienda, tecnología, ocio y Educación. Mediante un enfoque metodológico exploratorio-concluyente, se realizó una encuesta en Loja, Ecuador, a miembros de las generaciones Baby Boomers, X, Millennials y Generación Z. Se emplearon instrumentos de medición altamente fiables, con alfas de Cronbach superiores a 0.7, garantizando una sólida consistencia interna. El análisis reveló diferencias estadísticamente significativas entre las generaciones en cuanto a tendencias digitales y preferencias en Vivienda, Tecnología y Ocio, identificadas a través de pruebas de Kruskal-Wallis. Sin embargo, las dimensiones de Salud y Educación no mostraron variaciones significativas entre los grupos. Este descubrimiento es fundamental, ya que indica que mientras las generaciones más jóvenes, como los Millennials y la Generación Z, prefieren los medios digitales, las generaciones mayores se inclinan por los medios tradicionales aun hoy en día. Estos resultados tienen implicaciones cruciales para las estrategias de marketing y publicidad. Subrayan la necesidad de enfoques de marketing personalizados que resonarán con cada grupo generacional. Las empresas deben adaptar sus estrategias para conectar eficazmente con cada generación, equilibrando la tecnología y los medios tradicionales de manera estratégica para captar una audiencia diversa. Este estudio no solo destaca las diferencias en el comportamiento de consumo entre generaciones, sino que también buscan optimizar su alcance y resonancia en un mercado diversificado y en constante evolución.

Palabras clave: preferencias, generaciones, consumo, tendencias, mercado.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic landscape of modern marketing, the market transforms into a live laboratory where consumer tastes and preferences dictate the pulse of business strategies. Detailed understanding of consumer behavior is now the cornerstone upon which commercial success is built; it goes beyond meeting immediate needs to encompass the ability to anticipate and adapt to fluctuating trends. These trends are not only indicators of consumption but also reflections of changes in cultural and social practices, offering a critical lens to analyze individuals' interaction with the market (Ibarra Castillo & Ayala Guatusmal, 2022).

The study of consumer behavior is an odyssey through a variety of activities, ranging from the recognition of a need to post-purchase reflection. The fascination with this field increases when observing how generational differences outline distinct consumption patterns, making a generational analysis of buying behavior imperative (Giraldo, 2019).

Generational cohorts, each forged in the crucible of their own historical experiences and technological evolution, possess distinct identities and sets of values that directly impact their purchasing decisions. Thus, the importance of segmenting the market by generations is recognized to refine marketing strategies and meet the expectations and needs of each group.

Loja, a vital city in the Ecuadorian context, stands as a microcosm of cultural and economic diversity. With its significant role in the country's history and as a center of economic activities including agriculture, mining, and tourism, Loja offers a unique setting to evaluate consumer behavior within an urban matrix of unique relative importance in Ecuador.

This research focuses on unraveling the consumption trends among Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z in the city of Loja, Ecuador. It aims to provide a detailed analysis of how these generations reshape current consumption, exploring the following hypotheses:

H0: There is no relationship between generations and their consumption patterns in relation to current trends and market dimensions.

H1: There is a relationship between generations and their consumption behaviors according to trends and different market dimensions.

To elucidate these hypotheses, an exploratory review will begin by establishing the context of the research concerning the following theoretical framework.

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2. THEORIES

2.1 Theories of Consumer Behavior

2.1.1 Consumer Behavior

The study of consumer behavior presents itself as a labyrinth of complexities, marked by the diversity of responses that individuals express towards similar products or services. This heterogeneity reflects a process that extends from the emergence of a need to the post-purchase reflection on a good or service. Santos Millán (2019) encapsulates it as "the behavior that consumers adopt when seeking, acquiring, using, evaluating, and disposing of products and services that they consider satisfy their needs." Research in this field reveals itself as a fundamental pillar for marketing, as it provides the necessary tools to predict and understand consumer needs, a vital aspect for commercial success (Lalaleo-Analuisa et al., 2021). Therefore, it is essential to explore the diversity of consumer behaviors, particularly from a generational perspective that allows characterizing the consumer according to their era.

2.1.2 Generational Comparative Analysis of Behavior

An essential aspect of consumer behavior is the consideration of generational influence on purchasing decisions. Various generations are distinguished by their consumption practices and motivations, which can be examined through specific variables. Consumer behavior, in this context, is a multidimensional field that includes determining factors in intergenerational purchasing decisions, such as purchase frequency, motivation, personality, and self-concept, as well as learning and memory (Barbery Montoya et al., 2018).

It is observed that purchase frequency differs significantly between generations, with Generation X leading in product acquisition, followed by Millennials and Baby Boomers. Regarding motivation, the first two generations tend to be guided by utilitarian motivations, while Millennials are oriented towards hedonistic motivations. In terms of personality and self-concept, although all groups seek to reflect their "real self" in their choices, Millennials show a particular interest in projecting their "ideal self." Additionally, learning from personal experiences is a key component in decision-making, especially noticeable in Baby Boomers (Barbosa de Oliveira, 2016).

The comparative analysis between generations highlights the need to understand these complex dynamics to develop effective marketing strategies that align with the needs and desires of consumers from different generational groups. Each generation, with its specific purchase patterns and motivations, demands differentiated and adaptive marketing approaches to effectively connect with each demographic segment. Thus, the importance of precisely outlining the profile of each generation as consumers becomes evident.

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2.2 Profile of Consumer Behavior by Generation

2.2.1   Baby Boomers

Historically, Baby Boomers have been a dominant force in the market, shaping marketing strategies with their distinctive consumption patterns (Díaz Sarmiento et al., 2017). The COVID-19 pandemic prompted this generation to integrate technology into their daily lives in unprecedented ways, marking a significant shift in their consumption behavior. Despite their initially hesitant relationship with online shopping, Baby Boomers in Ecuador have increasingly adapted to using home delivery platforms and social media to make "vintage" purchases, demonstrating a notable capacity for adaptation (González et al., 2022; Fischer et al., 2021).

2.2.2 Generation X

Generation X, amid the digital transformation accelerated by COVID-19, has shown remarkable technological adaptability (Contreras Lévano & Vergas Merino, 2021). This generation has also evolved towards greater environmental awareness, willing to exchange their personal information for digital services that align with their sustainable concerns (González et al., 2022). They are characterized by consistent digital consumption and caution towards adopting new technological platforms.

2.2.3 Millennials

Millennials, marked by their commitment to conscious and responsible consumption, prefer natural, sustainable, and ecologically ethical products (López Celis et al., 2017). Consumption ethics, along with support for the circular economy and local commerce, are cornerstones of their purchasing behavior. This generation has quickly adapted to changes, with a focus on mental well-being and the economy (González et al., 2022; Flor Freire et al., 2019).

2.2.4 Generation Z

Generation Z presents a unique challenge for marketers, given their demanding and individualistic nature. As digital natives, their consumption is intuitive, leaning towards self-education and visual content. They are highly environmentally conscious and prioritize meeting needs over accumulating possessions (Pazmiño Rodríguez et al., 2021). Their high degree of social engagement results from growing up in a time of instability and crisis (Martín Critikián et al., 2022; Pazmiño Rodríguez et al., 2021).

Each generation, with its distinctive consumption behaviors and trends, presents a mosaic of opportunities and challenges for marketing strategists. Recognizing and understanding these generational differences is crucial for designing marketing strategies that not only satisfy but also anticipate the needs of each group. This study, focused on specific dimensions of consumption, aims to stratify and accurately characterize generational preferences and behaviors.

2.3 Consumption Dimensions According to Trends

The analysis of consumption dimensions, including technology, housing, health, education, and leisure, is fundamental to characterizing and differentiating generational

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consumer preferences. Various factors influence the success of purchasing, including the use of current shopping trends, such as technology and traditional channels (Treviño & Treviño, 2021; Colín Flores, 2018). These dimensions provide a comprehensive perspective on how different generations interact with the market and its trends. Understanding these differences allows companies to refine their strategies to meet and anticipate the needs of each consumer segment.

2.3.1 Technology

Interaction with technology has significantly reshaped consumer behavior, with Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) being the pillars of this transformation (Santos Millán, 2019). Baby Boomers, although initially resistant, have shown increasing adaptability, using digital tools for everyday tasks and entertainment. Generation X and Millennials, on the other hand, have integrated technology into their lives more organically, valuing the convenience and information provided by digital platforms (Contreras Lévano & Vergas Merino, 2021). Generation Z, as digital natives, see technology as an extension of themselves, intensively using social media and online consumption tools (Moral Pérez et al., 2021).

2.3.2 Education

Education is perceived differently among generations. Baby Boomers and Generation X view it as a vehicle for progress and success, while Millennials and Generation Z seek flexibility and practicality, in line with the demands of the job market (Díaz Sarmiento et al., 2017). The pandemic accelerated the incorporation of digital technologies in education, promoting educational strategies that adapt to current learning needs (NU. CEPAL UNESCO, 2020).

2.3.3 Housing

Housing preferences vary considerably among generations, influenced by mobility, connectivity, and the cost-benefit relationship of ownership versus renting (GTRM ECUADOR, 2022). The economy and inflation play a key role in generational decisions about where and how to live, with minimum wage and the cost of living being decisive factors (Sánchez Giler et al., 2019).

2.3.4 Leisure

Leisure consumption reflects the diversity of generational interests, ranging from travel to digital entertainment. Millennials and Generation Z tend to prefer immediate and digital experiences, in contrast to older generations who valued more traditional experiences (Montiel Hernández, 2020). The pandemic has reinforced this trend towards digital leisure, with an increase in the consumption of online content and social media (Moral Pérez et al., 2021; Sánchez, L., 2019).

2.3.5 Health

Well-being and health are of utmost importance to all generations, with a particular

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focus on products and services that promote healthy and sustainable lifestyles (González et al., 2022). Generation Z and Millennials, in particular, are willing to invest in premium health products, reflecting a more pronounced awareness of health and the environment (Guzmán Armijos et al., 2021).

3   METHODOLOGY

The research adopted a mixed methodological design, integrating quantitative and qualitative approaches to examine the consumption patterns of the Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z in the city of Loja, Ecuador.

3.1 Research Design

The study was structured as exploratory and descriptive, with a cross-sectional dimension that captured a snapshot of consumption behaviors over a specific period. The research aimed to unravel the relationship between generations and their consumption patterns, addressing the hypothesis posed:

- H0: There is no relationship between generations and their consumption patterns concerning current trends and market dimensions.
- H1: There is a correlation between generations and their consumption behaviors according to trends and different market dimensions.

3.2 Sampling Design

3.2.1. Target Population

The target population comprised residents of the city of Loja, with an estimated population of 276,016 individuals in 2022. This population was used to define the size of the representative sample.

3.2.2. Sampling Frame

To select the sample, strategically located convenience points across the city of Loja were identified. These included high-traffic areas such as shopping centers, parks, and commercial districts, selected to minimize bias and ensure diversity in the sample.

3.2.3. Sampling Techniques

A stratified probabilistic sampling method was employed to ensure that each generational subgroup was proportionally represented according to its prevalence in the general population. This involved dividing the population into strata based on generation and then randomly selecting individuals within each stratum.

3.2.4. Sample Size

The sample for this study was designed to reflect the diversity and proportions of the Loja population, focusing on the representativeness of each generational group. Although initial calculations suggested a sample of 384 individuals to capture consumption trends with a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error, we opted for an adjusted sample size to enhance comparability between groups.

Therefore, a sample size of 400 participants was selected, with the aim of distributing

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this total not proportionally to the population weight of each generation but seeking to equalize numerical representation to facilitate direct comparative analysis. By assigning 100 individuals to each of the four generational groups—Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z—we maintained a balance that allowed for equitable and meaningful comparisons between cohorts.

The choice of a uniform sample size per generational group responds to a methodological strategy aimed at ensuring that observed differences and similarities in consumption trends are attributable to genuine generational differences, rather than variability in the number of responses per group.

This pragmatic approach prioritizes the quality and clarity of analytical data over pure statistical proportionality, considering that the purpose of this research is to unravel and compare the specific consumption patterns of each generation in the context of Loja.

Table 1. Study Groups

Study Group	Frequency	Percentage
Baby Boomers (1945-1964)	100	25%
Generation X (1965-1980)	100	25%
Millennials (1981-1997)	100	25%
Generation Z (1998-2012)	100	25%

4. RESULTS

The variables of analysis in this study were defined and measured using a Likert scale, a standard method for assessing attitudes and perceptions in social research. The specific questions formulated for each consumption trend and analyzed dimension allowed participants to express their degree of usability. For example, participants were asked about their frequency of use and preference, where 1 represented 'Never use or prefer' and 5 'Use or prefer very frequently.' These responses provide a quantitative measure of the respondents' consumption attitudes and behaviors.

The research revealed distinct media consumption patterns among the generations, highlighting how cultural and technological legacies have influenced their preferences.

4.1. Analysis of Consumption Trends

Web Pages: Baby Boomers show the least inclination towards using web pages, while Generation X exhibited moderate preference, which could be interpreted as a subjective resistance to change or lesser familiarity with web navigation technologies. In contrast, the high receptivity of Millennials and Generation Z towards web pages reflects congruence with their native digital environment, suggesting an affinity not only for the content but also for the ease of access and immediacy that online media offers.

Social Media: The low activity of Baby Boomers and Generation X on social media could be due to privacy preferences and a lesser perceived value in digital social interaction. On the other hand, Millennials and Generation Z, with their high scores,

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demonstrate an integration of social media into their social and professional lives, using these platforms not only for socialization but also for personal branding and networking.

Mobile Applications: The reluctance of Baby Boomers to adopt mobile applications may reflect greater satisfaction with more traditional interactions or a lack of perceived utility. For Generation X, it is somewhat similar but less significant than for Baby Boomers. In contrast, the preference of Millennials and Generation Z for mobile applications indicates a valuation of convenience and personalization, as well as an expectation of functionality and efficiency.

Traditional Media: The strong preference of Baby Boomers for traditional media may indicate comfort with familiar formats and a possible perception of reliability and authority in these media. The lower preference of younger generations for traditional media may reflect a cultural shift towards more interactive and user-controlled media consumption. According to the research, Generation X, along with Millennials and Generation Z, also uses traditional media, albeit with varying frequency and preference. In this study, "traditional media" refers to platforms such as television, radio, and print newspapers. Generation X scored an average of 3.15, showing a balance between digital and traditional media. Millennials and Generation Z scored 2.50 and 2.40 respectively, indicating a lower inclination towards these media compared to Baby Boomers, who registered the highest score at 3.45.

When considering these results, the influence of technological exposure and the socio-economic milestones experienced by each generation should be taken into account. Baby Boomers and Generation X, who matured in an era dominated by traditional media, might value these media for their familiarity and established role in the social structure. In contrast, Millennials and Generation Z, raised in the digital age, show an affinity for technologies that offer interactivity, immediacy, and connectivity (Cortés Quesada, Barceló Ugarte, & Fuentes Cortina, 2023).

These findings suggest that marketing and advertising strategies cannot be monolithic or one-dimensional. Brands must cultivate a hybrid approach that respects generational diversity, balancing traditional and digital media, and adapting messages and channels to the particularities and expectations of each age group (Barbery Montoya et al., 2018; Martínez Estrella et al., 2023; Llorente, 2019). This can be appreciated in the following graphs:
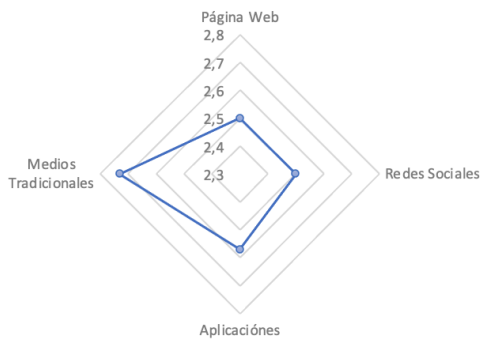
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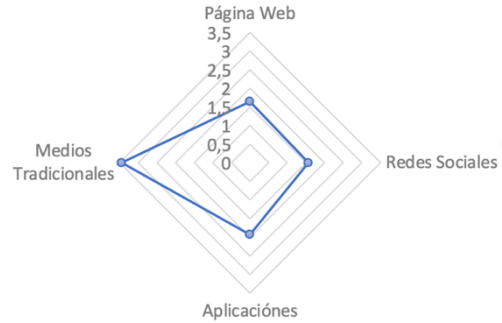**Graph 1.** Digital media Z
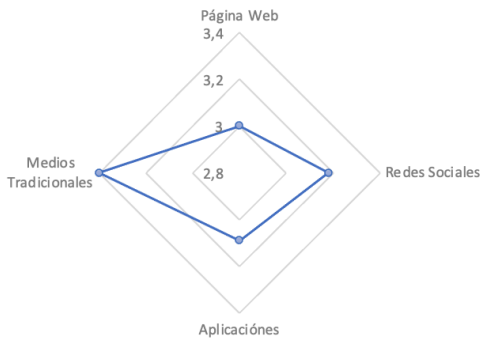
Graph 2. Digital media Y
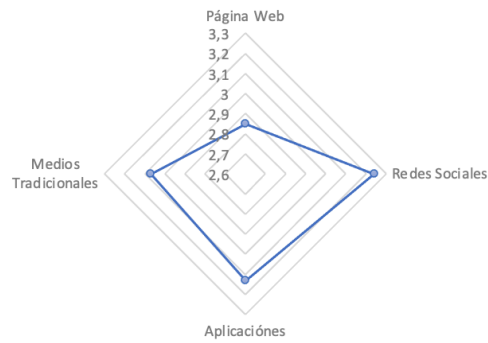
Graph 3. Digital media X

Graph 4. Digital media BB

An analysis of preferences in digital trends and traditional media shows that Millennials and Generation Z have a significantly higher affinity for digital platforms compared to Baby Boomers and Generation X. In terms of numbers, Millennials lead the preference for social media with an average of 3.24, followed closely by Generation Z with 3.18. However, regarding traditional media, Baby Boomers show the highest preference with an average of 3.45. This suggests a generational divide in media consumption, with younger generations leaning towards digital and older generations towards traditional media.

4.2. Analysis of Consumption Dimensions

Technology: Generation Z, giving the highest score for technology, demonstrates its role as the generation most integrated with the digital world. This reflects not only a preference but an extension of their identity and their way of interacting with the world. Millennials, although they value technology, may be beginning to balance their digital life with concerns about privacy and mental well-being. Generation X and Baby Boomers, with lower scores, may adopt technologies that offer clear pragmatic value, preferring quality and functionality over innovation for its own sake.

Education: The high valuation of education by Baby Boomers may indicate their commitment to lifelong learning, perhaps motivated by a mix of personal interest and the need to stay relevant in a changing job market. Generation X values education but may focus more on practical and applied learning, in line with their professional and personal responsibilities. Millennials and Generation Z, while valuing education, may be

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seeking alternatives to traditional formal education, reflecting an interest in more flexible and self-directed approaches that align with their careers and lifestyles.

Leisure: Baby Boomers may enjoy recreational activities as part of a retired lifestyle, while Generation X may value leisure as a necessary respite from work and family responsibilities, justifying this dimension as a priority below housing and health. Generation Z significantly values leisure, suggesting a prioritization of experiences and entertainment in their lifestyle. This preference may reflect the influence of an immediacy culture and an attention economy that values entertainment and quick gratification. Millennials, with the lowest score, may be facing the demands of balancing work and personal life, limiting their time and resources for leisure. Older generations, with moderate scores, may have more established and traditional leisure patterns, valuing time with family and social interactions outside digital environments.

Health: The high valuation of health by Baby Boomers may reflect a life stage focused on health preservation and maintenance. This generation may have recently experienced a need for health services, influencing their perception of its importance. Generation X also prioritizes health, which can be explained by their proximity to retirement. Millennials and Generation Z also show a strong preference for this dimension, with their focus possibly more oriented towards preventive well-being and health and fitness trends, manifesting the growing health culture among the young.

Housing: Baby Boomers have a certain priority for housing, which could be related to interests in downsizing or investing in retirement properties. Conversely, Generation X shows the highest valuation of housing, which may be associated with their life stage, often involving establishing and securing a home for their family. For Millennials and Generation Z, the slightly lower valuation might reflect current economic challenges, such as the high cost of housing and a cultural shift towards flexibility and mobility, rather than traditional home ownership.

Marketing strategies must be highly differentiated to resonate with each generation. For Baby Boomers, marketing should focus on health and well-being, presenting products and services that promote a healthy and active lifestyle. Generation X, highly valuing housing, could be the target audience for home-related products and real estate services. Millennials and Generation Z, with their inclination towards technology, would be receptive to marketing campaigns highlighting technological innovations and digital leisure experiences (Valaskova, Kramarova, & Bartosova, 2015; Rivera Arias, O. C., 2020). Additionally, educational approaches for these younger generations should focus on flexibility (Intel Education, 2018). All these insights can be visualized in the following graphs:
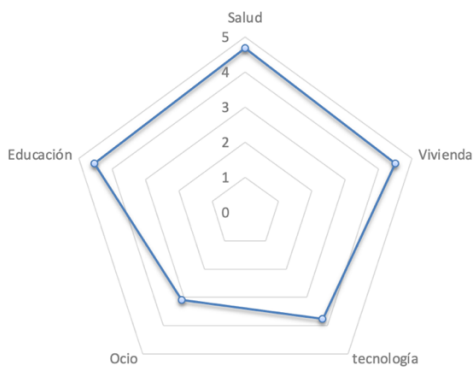
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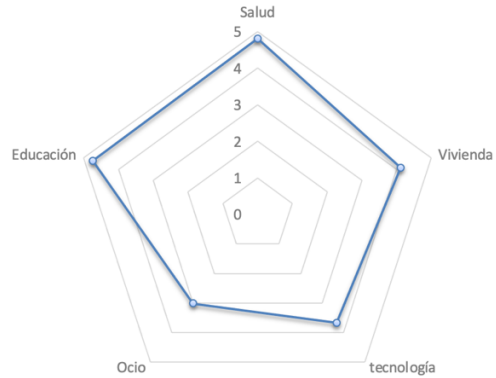**Graph 5.** Consumption Dimension Z
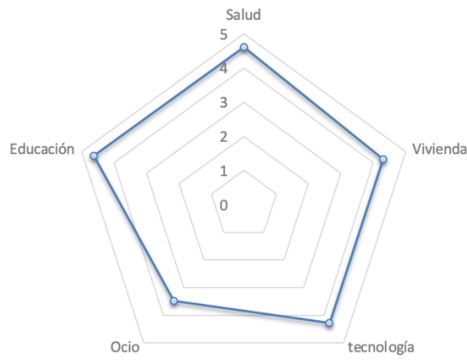
Graph 6. Consumption Dimension Y
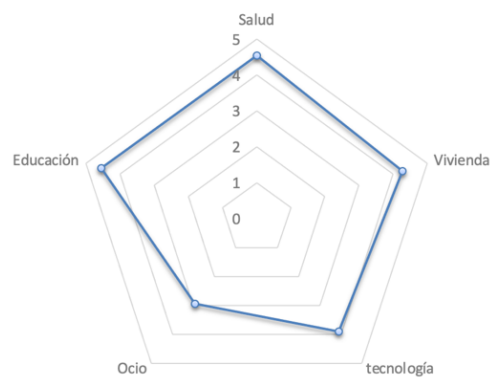
Graph 7. Consumption DimensionX

Graph 8. Consumption Dimension BB

In the five key consumption dimensions—Health, Housing, Technology, Leisure, and Education—it is observed that Baby Boomers and Generation Z place significant emphasis on health, with scores of 4.81 and 4.61 respectively. Generation X assigns the highest importance to housing, reflected in a score of 4.51. In terms of technology, Generation Z has the highest score with 4.28, indicating their readiness to adopt and spend on technology. Millennials show a lower preference for leisure compared to Generation Z, which has the highest score of 3.49, highlighting the value they place on entertainment activities. In education, all generations value this aspect, but Baby Boomers lead with a score of 4.74, suggesting a focus on continuous education or an interest in lifelong learning.

4.3. Analysis of Reliability and Correlation
In the development of this research, reliability and correlation tests were implemented to ensure the robustness and relevance of the instruments and methods used. These tests are fundamental for validating the internal coherence of the measurement scales and for examining the relationships between the variables of interest. Specifically, the reliability analysis, measured through Cronbach's alpha, was used to assess the

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consistency of responses within each construct, ensuring that each set of items reliably measured the same psychological or behavioral phenomenon.

The results of the reliability tests, reflected in the Cronbach's alpha values for digital trends and consumption dimensions, indicate high internal consistency for the constructs Trends (α = 0.808) and Health (α = 0.801), as shown in Table 2. These values, which are above 0.7, suggest that the items within each construct are well correlated and that the constructs are reliable and consistent in measuring the preferences of the generations in these areas.

Table 2. Cronbach's Alpha Values for Trends and Health Constructs

Construct	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha
Trends	Web Pages	0.808
	Social Media	
	Mobile Applications	
	Traditional Media	
Health	Health	0.801
	Housing	
	Technology	
	Education	
	Leisure	

Antes de proceder con las pruebas de correlación, fue esencial determinar la naturaleza de la distribución de los datos. A través de un análisis preliminar, se identificó que la muestra no seguía una distribución normal. Esta información es crucial, ya que la normalidad de la distribución es una suposición subyacente en muchas pruebas estadísticas paramétricas. Por tanto, para examinar las diferencias entre las generaciones en nuestras variables de interés, se optó por un enfoque no paramétrico.

Before proceeding with correlation tests, it was essential to determine the nature of the data distribution. Through a preliminary analysis, it was identified that the sample did not follow a normal distribution. This information is crucial, as normality is an underlying assumption in many parametric statistical tests. Therefore, to examine the differences between generations in our variables of interest, a non-parametric approach was chosen.

The use of non-parametric tests such as the Kruskal-Wallis test is especially suitable in situations where the data distribution deviates from normality. These tests offer a robust alternative, allowing for the comparison of means between groups without assuming a specific data distribution. Thus, the Kruskal-Wallis analysis was conducted to investigate significant differences in consumption trends and dimensions among Baby Boomers, Generation X, Millennials, and Generation Z.

The application of the Kruskal-Wallis test allowed us to identify significant differences in generational preferences concerning consumption trends and dimensions. Specifically:

Digital Trends: Web Pages, Social Media, Mobile Applications: The asymptotic

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significance (Asymp. Sig.) close to zero in these three categories (0.000 for each) indicates statistically significant differences between at least two generations. This reflects the evolution of digital behavior, with younger generations leaning towards greater integration of these technologies into their daily lives.

Traditional Media: With an asymptotic significance of 0.001, it is observed that while there are significant differences, they may not be as pronounced as in digital trends. This could indicate a certain degree of uniformity in the use of traditional media among the generations.

It is recommended to observe Table 3 and the Kruskal-Wallis Test graph for independent samples to understand the behavior of the groups as explained.
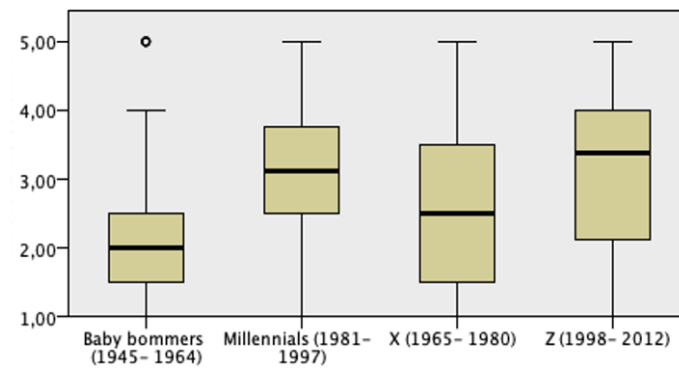
Tabla 3. Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics for Trends

	Web Pages	Web Pages	Web Pages	Traditional Media
Kruskal-Wallis H	64,821	91,911	48,363	15,767
dfl	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	,000	,000	,000	,001

a.   Kruskal-Wallis   Test
b. Grouping Variable: Generation

Graph 9. Kruskal-Wallis Test for Independent Samples, Trends

The dimensions of consumption: Health and Education with asymptotic significances of 0.339 and 0.690 respectively, do not show statistically significant differences between generations. This may suggest shared values regarding health and education that transcend generational differences. Housing, Technology, and Leisure, on the other hand, have low asymptotic significances in these dimensions (0.008, 0.000, and 0.011, respectively), indicating significant differences between generations. Generation X and Generation Z, in particular, seem to prioritize housing and technology, while leisure stands out as a differentiating consumption dimension, especially for Generation Z.

It is recommended to observe Table 4 and the Kruskal-Wallis Test graph for independent samples to understand the behavior of the groups as explained.
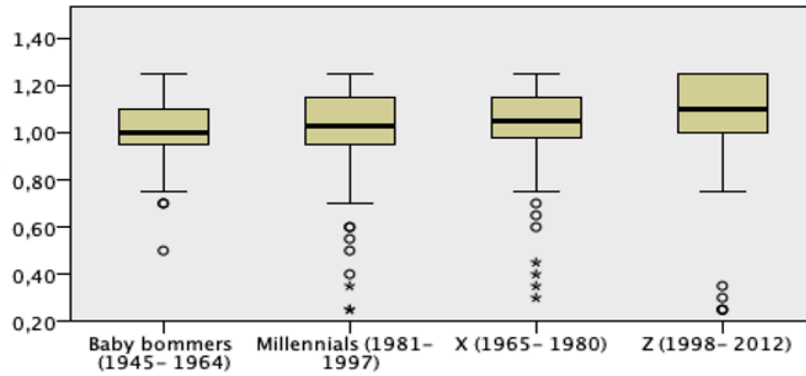
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Tabla 4. Kruskal-Wallis Test Statistics for Dimensions

	Health	Housing	Technology	Leisure	Education
Kruskal-Wallis H	3,365	11,766	21,433	11,050	1,467
df	3	3	3	3	3
Asymp. Sig.	,339	,008	,000	,011	,690

a.Kruskal-WallisTest

b. Grouping Variable: Generation

Graph 10. Kruskal-Wallis Test for Independent Samples, Dimensions

These findings highlight the importance of recognizing generational differences in certain consumption dimensions while also acknowledging the shared values that transcend these differences. This understanding can inform more targeted and effective marketing strategies tailored to the specific priorities of each generational group.

5. DISCUSSION

The correlation tests in this context are designed to address the hypotheses posed at the beginning of the research. Here are the hypotheses and conclusions based on the results of the Kruskal-Wallis tests:

Null Hypothesis (H0): Generations do not have any relationship between their consumption behavior according to trends and the different consumption dimensions in the market.

Resolution of H0: Given that the asymptotic significance in the consumption dimensions varies, with some dimensions like housing, technology, and leisure showing significant differences (asymptotic significance values of 0.008, 0.000, and 0.011, respectively), and others like health and education not showing significant differences (asymptotic significance values of 0.339 and 0.690), the null hypothesis is partially rejected. Generations differ in certain consumption dimensions, but not in all.

Hypothesis 1 (H1): Generations have a relationship between their consumption behavior according to trends and the different consumption dimensions in the market.

Resolution of H1: The Kruskal-Wallis tests indicated statistically significant differences in the preferences for digital trends and traditional media among generations, with asymptotic significance values close to zero for web pages, social media, and mobile applications, and a value of 0.001 for traditional media. This confirms that there is a relationship between generations and their consumption behavior regarding digital trends.

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The results support the existence of generational differences in digital trends and certain consumption dimensions, thus validating Hypothesis 1 and partially rejecting the Null Hypothesis. Companies should consider these differences to develop marketing and advertising tactics that resonate with each generational group, leveraging areas of divergence and convergence in consumption patterns.

These quantitative results provide a solid foundation for the development of differentiated marketing and advertising strategies. Brands should recognize and capitalize on the digital preferences of Millennials and Generation Z, who favor web pages, social media, and mobile applications. At the same time, they should not neglect traditional media, which maintain their relevance among Baby Boomers and Generation X (Sánchez García & Sánchez-García, 2023; Espinosa, 2020; López Celis et al., 2017; López Sánchez et al., 2022).

In terms of consumption dimensions, strategies need to be more nuanced. Although health and education did not show significant differences, suggesting a more universal marketing approach, the areas of housing, technology, and leisure require a more personalized approach, leveraging specific trends within each generation.

The detailed analysis demonstrates the need for market segmentation and marketing strategies that not only recognize the significant differences in digital preferences and consumption dimensions among generations but also explore opportunities in areas where preferences are uniform across generations. This allows companies to develop more effective marketing campaigns, maximizing impact and resonance with their target audience.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Statistical tests have confirmed that significant differences exist among generations in terms of digital consumption, including web pages, social media, and mobile applications. This distinction emphasizes the importance of developing digital marketing strategies that are specific and differentiated for each generation, based on their unique consumption behaviors.

On the other hand, the variety in preference for traditional media is highlighted. While Baby Boomers and Generation X show a significant affinity for these media, Millennials and Generation Z do not completely discard them, suggesting that traditional media still play a crucial role in an integrated marketing approach.

Regarding the relationship between generation and consumption dimensions, although significant differences were found in aspects such as housing, technology, and leisure, the dimensions of health and education presented shared values that transcend generational differences, offering opportunities for more unified marketing strategies.

The above highlights the need for personalized marketing strategies. The differentiation in preferences and priorities among generations reveals the importance of market segmentation, requiring companies to adopt tailored and well-directed communication approaches to resonate with each generational group.

These conclusions should be considered by organizations and companies seeking to better understand their audience and how their products and services can meet the needs and expectations of distinct demographic groups. Furthermore, these results provide valuable insights into how generational differences can inform strategic and operational decisions within an increasingly segmented and diversified market.

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Lastly, concerning implications for future research, the current findings provide a basis for exploring the underlying causes of generational differences and how they might change over time. It also opens the field for investigating how personalized marketing strategies based on these findings affect purchasing behavior in each generation.

It is important to note that this study focuses on the population of Loja, and while it provides valuable insights, the conclusions cannot be generalized without considering specific regional or cultural contexts. This research contributes to the existing body of knowledge, and it is recommended to compare these results with similar studies to assess the coherence and added value of the presented conclusions.

Recommendations:

These conclusions should be considered by organizations and companies seeking to better understand their audience and how their products and services can meet the needs and expectations of distinct demographic groups. Furthermore, these results provide valuable insights into how generational differences can inform strategic and operational decisions within an increasingly segmented and diversified market.

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