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Assessment of beliefs and practices of the manifestation phenomenon between millennials and generation Z in a Private Medical College of Lahore City, Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Background and Objective: Manifestation and the law of attraction are new age practices. Different age groups view and practice these differently since their beliefs are influenced by their peers, families, cultures, traditions, and technology. This study compares the perceptions, interpretations, and interactions of Generation Z and Millennials in order to better understand the intricacies of the manifestation phenomenon.

Methods: It was a cross-sectional survey conducted at a private medical college in Lahore, Pakistan. A total of 266 subjects were divided into two groups according to their ages, i.e., Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) and Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) generation. Data were collected using a survey proforma created on Google Forms and statistical analysis was done using relevant tests of significance.

Results: Generation Z had better knowledge ($p = 0.045$) of the concept of manifestation and how it works. Both generations believe that practicing intentional manifestation and trusting your positive beliefs can help in achieving goals (p -value = 0.811). Both generations are somewhat affected by cultural and spiritual beliefs and technology, including social media; however, the difference in the influence between the generations ($p = 0.427$ and $p = 0.698$) is not significant.

Conclusion: The study underscores the influence of generational experiences and cultural context on the adoption and interpretation of new age practices with respect to the manifestation phenomenon.

Keywords: Millennial, generation Z, popular culture, digital technology, manifestation, law of attraction.

Received: 25 May 2024

Revised date: 08 July 2024

Accepted: 10 September 2024

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Introduction

The process of bringing ideas, wants, or intentions into material reality via the force of concentrated belief, visualization, and action is referred to as manifestation.¹ It is based on the idea that one's emotions and thoughts have the power to influence the external environment, leading their dreams to come to reality. The phenomenon of manifestation is frequently associated with the law of attraction.

The law of attraction is a metaphysical and philosophical principle that implies that the major as well as the minor events in a person's life can be influenced by their thinking process and emotions.² It also contends that if a person focuses on the negativity, he might attract more unpleasant experiences. On the other hand, if one focuses on good ideas

and feelings, he might attract even better experiences. This law claims that everyone on this planet actively participates in the creation of their own reality by their feelings, thoughts, and deeds.^{2,3}

The new age practices, such as manifestation and law of attraction, have secured substantial attention among various educational fields such as psychology, spirituality, philosophy, and self-help. Multiple researchers and authors have explored these concepts from different aspects, which lead to both supportive and skeptical claims.¹

A self-help book called "The secret" by Bryne relates the law of attraction into mainstream consciousness. It focuses on the power of visualization, optimism, and gratitude as

means to manifest their deepest desires and dreams into their existing reality.¹

Author Peale⁴, in his famous book “The Power of Positive Thinking” claimed that a positive mindset and approach to life can lead to a happy life and eternal success. His work later laid the foundation for a vast discussion on the connection between beliefs, thoughts, and their outcomes. Positive psychology regularly explores and explains the influence of an optimistic approach to life on the overall well-being and goal achievement of an individual. These studies also justify that maintaining a healthy positive mindset can indeed lead to better outcomes and a boosted motivation.⁴

Numerous critics, including scientists and psychologists, have raised concerns about the rational basis of the law of attraction. They point out that this new age law lacks solid scientific support and could be promoting magical thinking.⁵ The emphasis on practicing positive thinking is often criticized for oversimplifying the complexity of life, which leads to ignoring real-life challenges.^{5,6}

Some studies are focused on the neurological mechanisms behind visualization and its possible influence on the acquisition of certain skills and enhancement of performance thus providing insights into how mental imagery can influence physical outcomes, aligning with aspects of manifestation.⁷⁻⁹

Generational cohorts, such as Millennials and Generation Z, are shaped by unique socio-cultural experiences and technological advancements. These factors have profoundly changed their attitudes and behaviors. Because of their mixed analog and digital upbringing, Millennials may approach manifestation with a combination of cultural beliefs and a careful embracing of global trends. In contrast, Generation Z reinterprets such customs to meet their dynamic, digital-first worldview, which is fueled by their technology fluency and global viewpoint. Generational disparities in adapting and interpreting these effects are highlighted by the complex relationships between belief systems and behavioral patterns that change along with technology, communication, and society standards¹⁰.

To further understand the intricacies of the manifestation phenomena, the current study focuses on Generation Z and Millennials’ perceptions, interpretations, and experiences at a private medical institution. The purpose is to examine the specific beliefs and strategies linked with manifestation, which is becoming increasingly popular among younger generations in a distinct socio-cultural environment.

Methods

This cross-sectional study included formal surveys using a self-designed questionnaire, which was validated by piloting and input from experts with a Cronbach alpha of 0.84. The questionnaire was distributed among the participants and

responses were recorded after individually taking informed consent. The sample size of 266 was calculated using OpenEPI with a 95% confidence level. All the participants selected were from Generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012) and Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996) generation. The sample consisted of students and faculty members at Central Park Medical College Lahore and affiliated teaching hospital. The study was completed in 3 months from August to October 2023. Ethical approval was taken from the Institutional Review Board, Central Park Medical College, Lahore.

Statistical analysis

The data obtained from the surveys were organized using Microsoft Excel, and the data analysis was conducted using the software Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 23. The statistical significance was set at p -value ≤ 0.05 . Relationships between the categorical variables were analyzed using the χ^2 analysis. For descriptive analysis, data were assessed and presented in the form of frequency and percentage, the results were presented in the form of tables and Chi-square test, and correlation was employed to assess and compare study variables among groups.

Results

Out of the 266 participants from two generations, 141 (53%) belonged to the Gen Z generation (born between 1997 and 2012), while 125 (47%) belonged to Millennials (born between 1981 and 1996). Of the overall respondents, half were male students, and the remaining half were females. Moreover, half of the students had a Bachelor’s degree, with only a small percentage [56 (21%)] possessing a Master’s degree (Table 1).

Preliminary analysis suggests that both generations hold positive views toward the manifestation phenomenon. Millennials appear to be more inclined toward integrating manifestation practices with traditional belief systems, while Generation Z tends to approach manifestation with a more individualistic and holistic perspective (Table 2).

Generation Z exhibits a greater inclination toward incorporating technology and social media platforms to learn about and engage with manifestation practices (Table 2). Millennials, on the other hand, are more likely to rely on personal connections and self-help literature.

According to our findings, more participants from Generation Z had a better ($p = 0.045$) knowledge of the concept of manifestation and how it works. Both generations believe that practicing intentional manifestation and trusting your positive beliefs can help in achieving goals. Both generations are somewhat affected by cultural and spiritual beliefs to interfere in their practices. However, Generation

Table 1. Demographic information of the respondents.

| Variables | Categories | n (%) |
|----------------------|------------------------|-------------|
| Generation | Gen Z | 141 (53.0%) |
| | Millennials | 125 (47.0%) |
| Gender | Male | 133 (50.0%) |
| | Female | 133 (50.0%) |
| Education background | High school | 72 (27.1%) |
| | Bachelor's degree | 138 (51.9%) |
| | Master's degree/Higher | 56 (21.1%) |

Z's practices of this phenomenon are more influenced by technology and social media apps.

According to the findings in Table 2, Generation Z engages in manifestation activities more frequently and uses more technology than Millennials. This generational divide emphasizes the impact of digital platforms and social media in molding the attitudes and habits of younger generations, indicating a shift in how traditional and modern influences interact. Both generations, however, believe that manifestation promotes personal progress and well-being, indicating a shared grasp of its potential benefits despite variations in cultural, spiritual, and technical factors.

Results have shown that comparatively Generation Z population practices manifestation more than Millennials and many of them do it on a regular basis.

In Figure 1, we have analyzed the key factors that influence manifestation practices. Although Generation Z believes more in the phenomenon, their practices of intentional manifestation are influenced more by the beliefs and attitudes of their friends and family, and cultural and traditional beliefs.

Figure 2 shows that both generations practice visualization, affirmation, vision boards, meditation, and journaling techniques for manifestation.

The key difference is the frequency with which they practice it. Generation Z is more likely to interact with these behaviors on a weekly basis, indicating a proactive and consistent approach. Millennials, on the other hand, may approach these behaviors with a more contemplative and occasional perspective, shaped by their experiences transitioning from the analog to digital ages.

Discussion

The findings highlight the impact of generational differences and cultural contexts on the manifestation phenomenon. Generation Z's technological prowess and global exposure have led to a unique approach to manifestation that diverges from the more community-oriented perspective of Millennials. These findings are consistent with international research, which suggests that Millennials frequently

incorporate manifestation techniques into larger wellness routines, emphasizing self-improvement and life pleasure.¹⁰ Similarly, another research suggests that Generation Z, as digital natives, engages with these notions through online platforms and social media, relying on the digital environment for exposure, direction, and community.¹¹ This could be due to their increased exposure to digital technologies and social media trends, which frequently encourage these approaches as part of a self-improvement mindset.

While the study on manifestation behaviors in Western countries is vast, studies in non-Western cultures, notably in South Asia, are few. In Pakistan, where traditional traditions and modern lives mix, comprehending and implementing manifestation practices is inextricably related to religious and cultural beliefs. Unlike in Western contexts, where manifestation is frequently associated with secular self-help ideologies¹⁰, the Pakistani interpretation combines modern techniques with spiritual frameworks, providing a culturally complex view of the phenomenon. These findings highlight the changing nature of manifestation activities in modern urban contexts.

The emergence of social media has had a tremendous impact on generational engagement with self-help activities around the world. Similar to Gatton's¹¹ findings, this study demonstrates that Generation Z in Pakistan uses internet platforms to get knowledge about manifestation, which influences their understanding and application of the practice. This technology absorption distinguishes Generation Z from Millennials, who, while digitally savvy, frequently take a more balanced approach to digital and traditional influences.

Both generations in Pakistan understand the importance of manifestation in achieving personal goals, improving well-being, and reaching financial and professional milestones. These findings are consistent with those of Hall et al.¹⁰, who emphasize the role of manifestation in promoting individual growth and self-empowerment. However, the motivations and objectives that drive these practices vary throughout generations, indicating deeper socio-cultural changes.

Recent research has looked into the psychological basis of belief in manifestation, offering light on its prevalence and

Table 2. Perspectives on beliefs and practices of manifestation across generation.

| Factor | Category | Generation | | Chi-square | p-value | |
|--|---|-------------------|-------------|------------|---------|-------|
| | | Gen Z | Millennials | | | |
| Beliefs about manifestation | I am familiar with the concept of manifestation | Strongly disagree | 12 (4.5%) | 14 (5.3%) | 7.634 | 0.045 |
| | Disagree | - | - | | | |
| | Neutral | 19 (7.1%) | 32 (12.0%) | | | |
| | Agree | 70 (26.3%) | 51 (19.2%) | | | |
| | Strongly agree | 40 (15.0%) | 28 (10.5%) | | | |
| Practicing manifestation can help to achieve goals and desires | Strongly disagree | 16 (6.0%) | 9 (3.4%) | 1.589 | 0.811 | |
| | Disagree | 13 (4.9%) | 11 (4.1%) | | | |
| | Neutral | 32 (12.0%) | 30 (11.3%) | | | |
| | Agree | 57 (21.5%) | 51 (19.2%) | | | |
| | Strongly agree | 23 (8.6%) | 24 (9.0%) | | | |
| Cultural or spiritual beliefs influence my understanding of manifestation | Strongly disagree | 16 (6.0%) | 8 (3.0%) | 3.849 | 0.427 | |
| | Disagree | 21 (7.9%) | 13 (4.9%) | | | |
| | Neutral | 32 (12.0%) | 31 (11.7%) | | | |
| | Agree | 50 (18.8%) | 48 (18.0%) | | | |
| | Strongly agree | 22 (8.3%) | 25 (9.4%) | | | |
| Practices about manifestation | | | | | | |
| I have actively practiced manifestation techniques | Strongly disagree | 8 (3.0%) | 14 (5.3%) | 2.990 | 0.560 | |
| | Disagree | 21 (7.9%) | 16 (6.0%) | | | |
| | Neutral | 47 (17.7%) | 37 (13.9%) | | | |
| | Agree | 46 (17.3%) | 42 (15.8%) | | | |
| | Strongly agree | 19 (7.1%) | 16 (6.0%) | | | |
| I engage in manifestation practices on a regular basis | Strongly disagree | 10 (3.8%) | 12 (4.5%) | 6.037 | 0.196 | |
| | Disagree | 29 (10.9%) | 33 (12.4%) | | | |
| | Neutral | 40 (15.0%) | 26 (9.8%) | | | |
| | Agree | 39 (14.7%) | 42 (15.8%) | | | |
| | Strongly agree | 23 (8.6%) | 12 (4.5%) | | | |
| Technology, such as apps and social media, has influenced my manifestation practices | Strongly disagree | 11 (4.1%) | 8 (3.0%) | 1.431 | 0.698 | |
| | Disagree | - | - | | | |
| | Neutral | 37 (13.9%) | 31 (11.7%) | | | |
| | Agree | 57 (21.4%) | 46 (17.3%) | | | |
| | Strongly agree | 36 (13.5%) | 40 (15.0%) | | | |
| Outcomes and aspirations | | | | | | |
| Manifestation efforts give positive outcomes in my life | Strongly disagree | 18 (6.8%) | 12 (4.5%) | 1.148 | 0.765 | |
| | Disagree | - | - | | | |
| | Neutral | 39 (14.7%) | 33 (12.4%) | | | |
| | Agree | 50 (18.8%) | 51 (19.2%) | | | |
| | Strongly agree | 34 (12.8%) | 29 (10.9%) | | | |
| Manifestation practices achieve personal growth and well-being | Strongly disagree | 11 (4.1%) | 10 (3.8%) | 1.795 | 0.773 | |
| | Disagree | 16 (6.0%) | 15 (5.6%) | | | |
| | Neutral | 34 (12.8%) | 31 (11.7%) | | | |
| | Agree | 59 (22.2%) | 44 (16.5%) | | | |
| | Strongly agree | 21 (7.9%) | 25 (9.4%) | | | |

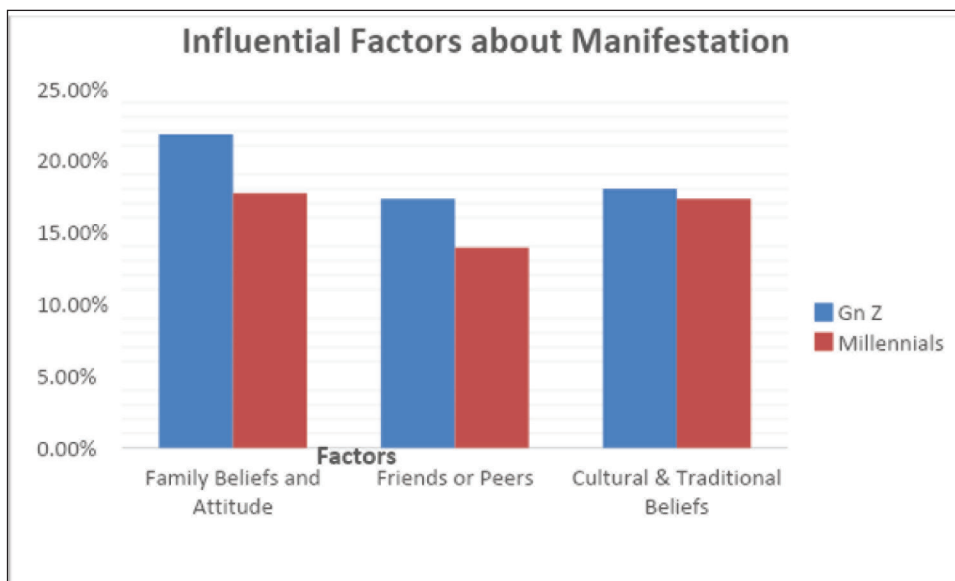


Figure 1. Key elements shaping manifestation across two generations.

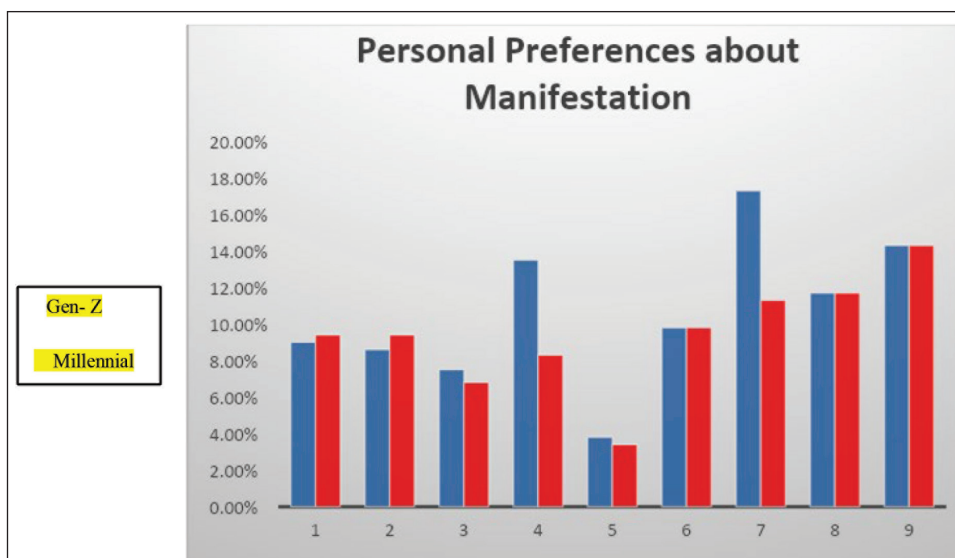


Figure 2. Comparison of the two generations' personal preferences about manifestation.

implications across age groups. For example, a 2023 study called “The Secret” to Success? The Psychology of Belief in Manifestation discovered that belief in manifestation is linked to an internal locus of control and a proclivity for cognitive biases such as the illusion of control and the optimism bias.¹² This shows that those who believe in manifestation may overestimate their power to influence external events, which could vary across generations due to differences in life experiences and exposure to cultural narratives. Despite the variations in the frequency with which both generations practice these behaviors, the daily or monthly engagement rates remain consistent, demonstrating that both generations

understand the importance of manifestation in accomplishing personal objectives and promoting well-being. This confirms the notion that, while tactics may differ, fundamental practices are universally appealing across age groups.

The findings of our study have provided us with significant insights into the dynamic relationship between technology, modernity, and traditional values in influencing the expression of one’s ideas and daily life practices. This study has also enhanced our understanding of the new age phenomena such as law of attraction and manifestation by delving into the intricacies of how the Millennials and Generation Z perceive and engage with them.

Limitations of the Study

The study population belonged to a single private medical institution in Lahore city, and hence, the findings might not be applicable on a larger scale in particular for the rural population in Pakistan. This limits the generalizability of the results. Moreover, due to the narrow focus on two specific generations (Millennials and Generation Z) and a specific phenomenon (manifestation), the findings may not apply to other age groups or to different phenomena. The results might be relevant only within the context of the manifestation phenomenon.

Conclusion

The study underscores the influence of generational experiences and cultural context on the adoption and interpretation of manifestation practices among Millennials and Generation Z.

Acknowledgement

The authors wish to extend their gratitude to Dr. Sibghat Ullah Khan, Registrar Anesthesia at Saint Lukes General Hospital Kilkenny, Ireland, for his brilliant insights and a fresh perspective to the study and Ms. Mamoonah Shafique, the Statistician at Central Park Medical College, Lahore, Pakistan, for teaching and assisting the authors in using SPSS software for data analysis.

List of Abbreviations

SPSS Statistical Package for Social Sciences (Software)

Conflict of interest

None to declare.

Grant support and financial disclosure

None to disclose.

Ethical approval

Ethical approval for the study was taken from the Institutional Review Board at Central Park Medical College, Lahore, Pakistan, vide Letter No. CPMC/IRB-NO/1433 dated October 17, 2023.

Authors' contributions

K: Concept and design of study, acquisition, analysis of data, drafting of manuscript.

FA, NF: Acquisition, analysis of data, drafting of manuscript, critical intellectual input.

FNT, SK: Critical revision of the manuscript, acquisition of data, drafting of manuscript.

ALL AUTHORS: Approval and responsibility of the final version of the manuscript to be published.

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