Adoption and Usage of Over-the-Top Entertainment Services: A Literature Review

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ABSTRACT

Over-the-top (OTT) is the name of media entertainment services delivered over the internet, bypassing traditional mediums. The consumer preference for OTT entertainment platforms is increasing at a fast rate and is showing promising signs for the future, so it is important to understand the extent of existing literature. This study is a thematic literature review undertaken to identify and highlight key themes related to the adoption and usage of OTT entertainment services. It includes a thorough literature review of 94 research articles sampled systematically. This study will highlight the widely researched themes and the lesser-focused areas of study within the realm of over-the-top entertainment adoption and usage. Adoption and usage of OTT entertainment services, the shift in the medium of consumption, and the impact of OTT entertainment services on related technologies are some of the primary themes identified in the study. This study will provide critical insights and valuable knowledge to industry players and guide academicians for future research opportunities.

KEYWORDS
Adoption, Literature Review, Over-the-Top Entertainment, Thematic Analysis, Usage, Video on Demand

INTRODUCTION

OTT is the name given to media entertainment services delivered over the internet. It is a premium content service typically offered by traditional broadcasters and production houses in addition to the content they provide to their regular television subscribers (Kokaram Anil, Crinon Regis, 2015). OTT bypasses traditional broadcast mediums such as television and is provided over the internet through a mobile app or other internet-backed electronic devices such as laptops, tablets, or even smart TVs (Chatterjee, 2020).

OTT entertainment began taking root in 2007 when Netflix started streaming movies and other shows over the internet for its subscribers in the US (Dhar, 2021). Since then, OTT entertainment has slowly and steadily grown to be a popular entertainment medium. Almost every major national
broadcaster in the US and Europe is supplying OTT services as an additional service to their traditional TV offering (Kokaram Anil, Crinon Regis, 2015). Netflix, followed by Amazon Prime, has emerged as the most popular SVOD platform. In contrast, Hotstar appears to be the clear leader in the hybrid model category of OTT platforms, followed by Voot, Zee5, and Sony Liv (Saha & Prasad, 2021).

Over 300 OTT service providers are in just the United States of America itself (Dasic, 2021). In January 2016, Netflix opened its operations in 130 new countries in addition to the 60 countries it has already serviced, taking its operations into over 190 countries (Russell, 2016).

The world went through the COVID-19 pandemic since December 2019, which significantly boosted the OTT segment globally (Research Dive, 2021). The total global OTT market was worth 121.69 billion dollars in 2019 and is expected to become a trillion-dollar segment by 2027 growing at a CAGR of 29.4% from 2020 to 2027 (Rachita Rake, 2020). The adoption of OTT platforms has increased, as suggested by the fact that 45% more people are watching OTT services in quarter 1 of 2021 compared to the previous year, with the global average viewing time rising 36% compared to last year (Conviva, 2021).

This rapid rise in the OTT segment could be attributed to increased penetration of broadband services, smartphones, and fast-paced mobile internet, advances in the media streaming technology, personalization in OTT apps, innovative pricing models offered by the service providers, and the growing demand for high-quality exclusive content (Hughes, 2020).

The consumer preference for OTT entertainment platforms is increasing at a fast rate and is showing promising signs for the future. However, a thorough literature review would help to get a real grasp of the situation. It still needs to be seen as what drives the consumers to opt for OTT platforms over traditional mediums or in addition to the traditional mediums of entertainment and which factors motivate them to continue using these services. Hence, the primary objective of this study is to identify the gaps and lacunae in the literature about the adoption and usage of over-the-top entertainment, which future researchers could exploit to produce quality academic work. This study is expected to highlight the widely researched themes and, subsequently, bring out the lesser-focused areas of study within the realm of over-the-top entertainment adoption and usage.

As the study progresses, it will bring out various factors influencing the adoption and usage of OTT entertainment services explored in the literature. Subsequently, the consumer preference shift from traditional mediums to OTT and VOD services will be analyzed. Related phenomena like cord-cutting and binge-watching would be examined too. The interaction of OTT with related technology and regulatory concerns, along with the business aspects of OTT entertainment services, will also be discussed in the paper. Willingness to pay for OTT entertainment services, the impact of demographic variables on the adoption of OTT entertainment services and the phenomenon of cord-cutting could be some of the research areas to be studied in the future as per the study.

The review paper is structured, beginning with an introduction section followed by a description of the methodology adopted. Further, the review of the sampled articles will be followed by an analysis and discussion of the same. Finally, the paper will be concluded by highlighting the managerial and theoretical implications of the study and will provide direction for research to be conducted in the future.

**METHODOLOGY**

This being a literature review paper, the methodology would elaborate upon how the final sample of papers was determined. The article sampling methodology was adapted from (Ghosh & Vk, 2022). Databases such as Scopus and Web of Science (WoS) were relied upon primarily to retrieve the desired papers. Keywords such as “Over-the-top entertainment”, “online video”, “video on demand”, “OTT entertainment”, and “Online Streaming” were used to search relevant literature. The primary aim was an analysis of literature about adoption, usage, and related areas of study. The articles were limited to the fields of Business Management, Psychology, and Multi-Disciplinary to avoid scoping of unrelated research articles. The type of article was restricted to Articles and Reviews only. Additional keywords
such as Youtube, Netflix, Amazon Prime, VOD, VoD, Video Streaming, etc., were employed from the system. With these search commands, 162 papers from Scopus and 144 from Web of Science were retrieved. A total of 306 papers from both files were processed to remove the duplicates. 47 duplicates were eliminated. The remaining 259 papers are screened for relevance to the topic and theme based on the title and abstract. 164 papers were eliminated in the process. Of the remaining 85 articles, 5 were further eliminated as they did not fit the study’s objective, bringing the number down to 80. Additional 14 papers were identified from the references and were sourced from Google Scholar. The final sample size for the study thus accumulates to 94 research papers. Apart from the research papers, the study also includes other secondary resources and some research papers which may not be directly included for the analysis in the study. The inclusion criteria were formed upon the article’s relevance concerning the study’s objectives. The beginning of OTT entertainment services can be traced to 2007 when Netflix started streaming content over the internet (Dhar, 2021). As a result, research papers published after 2007 have been considered for the study. Also, only the papers published in the English language were included in the study due to language constraints.

As the study is based on the thematic review method, the emphasis was on identifying prominent themes in the existing literature on the topic. As a result, the five most prominent themes, such as a shift in the choice of medium of entertainment, adoption of OTT entertainment services, usage of OTT entertainment services, OTT and related technology, and business and regulatory aspects of OTT entertainment, have been identified and presented in the study. Article sampling methodology is explained in Fig.1 below.

**FINDINGS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

**The Shift in the Choice of Medium of Consumption**

Before OTT entertainment services, cable television, pay TV, and Internet Protocol Television (IPTV) were quite popular entertainment mediums in most parts of the world. TV viewership per person in countries like Brazil, India, the USA, Russia and South Korea etc. is still considerable (Knight, 2020). IPTV is a multimedia service such as television/video delivered over IP-based networks (C. S. Lee, 2007). The rise of an innovative entertainment medium after the stagnation of cable television and Pay TV was anticipated (Rangone & Turconi, 2003). A comparative study of OTT and traditional mediums on the niche theory suggests that OTT scores higher on all gratifications. However, relaxation,
amusement, social interaction, convenience, and specific content dimensions of gratification were significantly higher for OTT compared to traditional mediums (Puthiyakath & Goswami, 2021).

Traditional entertainment mediums were suggested to adopt forward integration by offering Video on Demand (VOD) and traditional services (Waldenor, 2013). Accordingly, the Pay TV operators started offering VOD services and their existing offerings as consumers preferred to watch content at their convenience and choice of time slot (Abreu et al., 2017).

The consumption of OTT services increased as people moved from traditional to innovative media. Such an act of moving from a traditional to a digital mode of entertainment is also referred to as cord-cutting or cord-shaving (Tefertiller, 2018). Households with more significant consumption of live sports and current affairs were less likely to cord shave than households with a more significant viewership of entertainment and VOD content (Fudurić et al., 2020). Also, from a demographic perspective, consumers from the younger and lower-income groups were most likely to cut the cord in favor of OTT services or cut the cord completely (H. Kim et al., 2021; Prince & Greenstein, 2017). Apart from cord-cutting or cord shaving, people started cord coupling, where traditional mediums and OTT services are complementary (H. Kim et al., 2021).

Although OTT has proven to be a market disrupter in developed markets like the USA, where cord-cutting is common, the impact in Japan is much less where the traditional mode of watching cable TV is still very dominant (Park, 2017). Cord-cutting and cord-shaving are not very significant trends in some African markets, as the affordability of OTT services is still an important consideration (Udoakpan & Tengeh, 2020). The Korean cable and Pay TV markets have also been facing newer challenges with the rise of the OTT segment (J. Shin et al., 2016). IPTV, which came post cable and Pay TV, also gradually started losing ground with the advent of OTT in South Korea. Consumers with a more significant investment in the medium were less likely to cut the cord as the consumer would show a lesser churn-out rate with bundled services. In contrast, consumers with lesser views, lesser membership points, and greater Voice of Consumer (VOC) would show a more significant churning out behavior (M.-J. Kim et al., 2017). The quality of content on IPTV platforms still has a greater pull as the highly rated content would initially garner greater pull at an increasing rate, but the views would reduce at a diminishing rate over time (Jo et al., 2020). OTT media turns out to be the most competitive as users derive greater gratification in terms of content quality, ease of use, and interactivity, whereas both IPTV and digital cable are stiffer competitors of each other (S. C. S. Li, 2017). The traditional entertainment industry is expected to face challenges due to the increased need for interactivity, convenience, ease of use, and growing digital media convergence in India, too (Bhavsar, 2018). Convenience offered, the cost of availing the services, content quality, and consumption patterns could be critical in adopting OTT services over traditional services, especially among millennial consumers in the future (Sadana & Sharma, 2021).

Adoption of OTT Entertainment Services

There has been an uptrend in the viewership of OTT platforms in recent times (Saini, 2020). OTT media is seen as a change agent in developing OTT markets, and the spurt in viewership of content on OTT entertainment platforms could be attributed to low-cost internet charges and easy network availability coupled with the increasing per capita income to some extent (Singh, 2019; Srivastava, 2020; Yadav & Srivastava, 2020). From a behavioral perspective, consumers have shifted from traditional mediums to adopting OTT platforms due to the convenience facilitated and the superior content quality offered by the OTT platforms (P. Gupta, 2021; Kakkar & Kakkar, 2018).

Consumers prefer convenience from the observation that most prefer accessing their favorite content from OTT platforms through devices such as laptops and mobiles, while limited people opt for smart TVs (Gangwar et al., 2020).

The convenience offered adds to the usefulness and utility of OTT platforms. Perceived Usefulness (PU) has been explored to study the adoption of OTT entertainment services and the platform’s interactivity. It has been significantly associated with the switching behaviour of millennial students.
in opting for OTT services (Christopher Lee, Andrew Monsam, Pedro Falla, 2018). Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) is another construct of the Technology Adoption Model (TAM) is also a crucial factor in influencing online streaming subscriptions and is found significant in adopting OTT entertainment services (C. C. Lee et al., 2018; C. C. Lee & Lim, 2019b). Another study in Kenya also found PEOU to be positively correlated with adopting OTT platforms (Rono et al., n.d.) Netflix has become synonymous with OTT entertainment services. A study was undertaken to examine the adoption factors of Netflix especially. The extended TAM model with an additional perspective of self-efficacy and knowledge as external variables (Cebeci et al., 2019).

PEOU and PU are both considered to be extrinsic factors. Perceived Enjoyment (PE) which was added as an extension to the TAM, is an intrinsic factor and has also been found to be significant in influencing the adoption of OTT entertainment services in a study (Bhullar & Chaudhary, 2020). Enjoyment is likely to be one of the most crucial factors as viewers seek entertainment and spend over two hours daily on OTT platforms (Kantha, 2021). The quality of entertainment derived from OTT platforms is determined mainly by the quality and type of content offered by an OTT platform. As a result, quality content is a significant factor in the adoption and increasing viewership of OTT platforms (Raghuwanshi, 2020). When the content presentation format is considered, web series seems to be a preferred form of consumer content consumption (Srivastava, 2020). It could be because OTT platforms do not have to undergo a stringent censorship process for television content, allowing content creators greater freedom in presenting their stories ( Chattopadhyay, 2020). Incidentally, the viewers prefer original and uncensored content, along with live sports and music (Sharma & Kakkar, 2019). Content is a significant factor, and the convenience and mobility for adopting OTT entertainment services(Dasgupta & Grover, 2019). On the other hand, the Originality of the content and availability of regional content does not affect the behavioural intention among Indian students to use OTT platforms (Sharma & Kumar, 2022)

Selecting the content to watch is also crucial for a viewer’s choices. People seem to be persuaded by their peers as social media platforms have influenced consumers’ decision-making (Gangwar et al., 2020). Hence, Social influence could become another crucial factor when considering adopting OTT entertainment services (Van der Linden et al., 2020). The importance of Social influence or subjective norm was established in Fishbein’s theory of reasoned action in 1975. Based on the Theory of Reasoned Action, (Icek, 1991) came up with another crucial construct - Perceived Behavioural control in the Theory of Planned Behavior in 1991. Perceived Behavioural control could be understood as the person’s perception of his or her ability to perform a particular act or activity or use technology in this reference (Zolait, 2014). Mere intention to use a particular technology need not necessarily imply usage in every instance. The ability to use a particular technology could play a crucial role too. Perceived behavioural control is among the more robust predictors of Actual usage (Kulshrestha et al., 2021).

The value derived from these services could be a consideration for consumers opting for OTT entertainment services. Hence, Perceived value (PV) has significantly impacted OTT adoption in this context (Shapiro et al., 2019). Demographic variables such as age, income, gender, types of personalities, etc., also can have a bearing on consumers’ decision-making. Demographic variations in the consumption of OTT media have been studied in Malaysia concerning age, gender, race, income, education, and marital status, where differences in OTT viewing among different races was found to be significant (Isa et al., 2021). Highly educated youngsters with greater spending capacity are likelier to adopt OTT platforms. People seek pleasure and an escape route to watch content on OTT platforms, whereas lesser privacy concerns would also ease the adoption of OTT platforms (Chang & Ko, n.d.). A similar line has shown that people with expansionism and pleasure-seeking lifestyles are more likely to adopt OTT services than those with ownership of related and complementary interpersonal technologies (Sarrina Li, 2020). 14 reasons to subscribe and 11 reasons to not subscribe were examined in a recent study, where convenience, content, quality, features and price emerged as critical deciding factors (Nagaraj et al., 2021).
Apart from the behavioural factors studied above, OTT entertainment services have benefitted from the pandemic, too (Mdnani et al., 2020; Nijhawan & Dahiya, 2020; Patel et al., 2020). Integrated Marketing Communication adopted by OTT platforms coupled with the catalyst impact of the lockdown has affected the growing population and adoption of OTT platforms in the country (Ghalawat et al., 2021; Sridhar & Phadtare, 2022). There have been doubts about the sustained hype around the OTT platforms post-pandemic (Mahendher et al., 2021). However, people who have subscribed to OTT platforms during the pandemic are very likely to continue their subscriptions post the pandemic, too (Revati Devaki PC, 2021). A sentiment analysis conducted with the help of web scraping of Tweets on Twitter regarding OTT platforms also suggests that the attitude and sentiment towards OTT platforms, in general, has moved more towards the positive side (Dastidar, 2021).

**Usage of OTT Entertainment Services**

Perceived Behavioural control could be understood as the person’s perception of his or her ability to perform a particular act or activity or use technology in this reference (Zolait, 2014). Perceived behavioural control is among the stronger predictors of Actual usage (Kulshreshtha et al., 2021). Theoretical constructs such as Perceived Value and Satisfaction from the Expectation Confirmation Theory (Bhattacherjee, 2001) are widely used to explore post-adoption behaviour projected through the usage and continuous usage of information technology-based products and services. Perceived value is a sum of benefits and sacrifices, with the price falling under the sacrifice category (Zeithaml, 1988). The perceived value associated with using OTT services is highly influenced by content interactivity, social interactivity, and, in particular, platform interactivity. Higher perceived value leads to greater satisfaction, deciding whether OTT services are used continuously (Chang & Chang, 2020). Perceived Enjoyment has also been discovered to be a critical factor in the continued use of OTT services (Van der Linden et al., 2020). The level of enjoyment resulting from a particular service depends upon the degree of engagement and the quality of service experienced. Hence, engagement and the quality of the service experience could be crucial in determining the level of satisfaction a consumer derives from the service, which may lead to the consumer continuation or discontinuation in the use of the OTT service. However, the influence of satisfaction derived from a service diminishes over time as increased commitment and time invested result in habitual viewing (G. Gupta & Singharia, 2021). With habitual viewing, consumers seek emotional gratification to distract themselves from the daily hassles of life in their leisure time (Camilleri & Falzon, 2020).

Due to the subjective nature of price, people with varying levels of viewing intensity are likely to have varying levels of willingness to pay (McKenzie et al., 2019). Age, education level, and income affect how much users spend on paid OTT services, as older users spend less on TVOD. Also, The lesser educational qualification and higher income result in more lavish spending on TVOD platforms (Tae et al., 2022).

Convenience and mobility offered by OTT platforms have pushed Indian consumers to pay for adopting OTT platforms to some extent (Waghmare et al., 2022). Chinese customers are willing to spend 3.4 USD per month on OTT services, whereas Korean consumers are willing to spend 3.1 USD per month (M. S. Kim et al., 2017). Also, consumers may consider varied attributes as price-worthy or valuable. The essential product attribute for Korean consumers was recommendation systems, whereas the most critical feature for Chinese consumers was resolution quality affecting their willingness to pay for OTT services (M. S. Kim et al., 2017). Even if the price is an essential factor in a consumer’s desire to pay for OTT services, films and series with better appeal can overcome the price barrier and persuade consumers to use the services (McKenzie et al., 2019). Recommendations have become an essential tool for deciding what content to view for consumers as the sheer volume and variety of content available on OTT platforms present a problem to users deciding what to watch (Mikos, 2016). Also, the thumbnail images significantly impact perceived diagnosticity and serendipity, leading to contentment and continuous usage of OTT entertainment services (Kwon et al., 2021).
The flexibility offered by OTT platforms distinguishes them from other traditional entertainment mediums as it offers complete control over viewing patterns and preferences (Frank Arthofer, 2016). These viewership patterns could be identified with the help of tracking the consumer’s video viewing behaviour (Moghaddam et al., 2019). Studies have revealed that 80 percent of video viewing sessions terminate in an early exit, and roughly 60 percent of videos have seeks (Chen et al., 2013). The peak in viewership begins in the evening and lasts until late at night (Tana et al., 2020).

Binge-watching can be defined as the act of watching two to six episodes of a series in one sitting (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020). Consumers may binge-watch for various reasons, including intriguing material, peer pressure, and comfort watching (Matrix, 2014). Students see Binge-watching as a stress reliever and a method to escape reality. However, binge-watching is also becoming an addiction or compulsive behaviour, particularly among younger viewers, and it can lead to significant problems such as insomnia, anxiety, limited social engagement, and other psychological consequences (Chattopadhyay, 2020). This emanates a feeling of guilt, which the binge-watchers try to deal with by engaging in another binge-watching session (Panda & Pandey, 2017). On the contrary, some people do not consider binge-watching terrible because of the high quality of the information consumed and the fact that they believe it does not have to be addictive as it can be controlled with self-control and moderation (De Keere et al., 2021). Consumers appreciate binge-watching to some extent, too, as it leads to social discussions and has become an outlet for couples to spend quality time together (Mikos, 2016).

**OTT and Related Technology**

The internet is one of the most frequently used services on a mobile phone (Kabusheva et al., 2016a). Mobile internet use has grown over the years, which can also be ascribed to the shift in consumption patterns towards VOD or TV on the internet (Martius, 2018). As a result, OTT services have resulted in a surge in demand for mobile internet, making it the most essential and desired telecom service (Kabusheva et al., 2016b). It has led to an increase in the revenue of the telecom companies on one side and the increase in the investment costs of the telecom companies on the other hand (Joshi et al., 2015). The advent of OTT platforms has emerged to be a massive challenge to Mobile Network Operators (MNO), and to tackle that, three strategies, viz. accept, partner, or compete, would be recommended, where the strategy to accept the advent of OTT platforms was considered to be the most holistic of the three (Awwad, 2022).

There is a growing affinity for watching TV material on mobile phones, which aids in developing a positive attitude toward watching TV content on mobile phones (Shin et al., 2021). The students in China who prefer to watch movies on a mobile app, or a website were found out during a university-sponsored film festival (Wong, 2012). Consumers have shown a preference for Fiber optic cables as it is the fastest transmitting device for high-speed internet (Rebecca Lee Armstrong, 2021). OTT entertainment services have encouraged consumers to switch to fiber optic cable for the internet when opting for fiber optic cable-connected internet networks. However, movies have a higher draw than web series when the content format is considered (Sudtasan & Mitomo, 2016).

As discussed earlier, since the costs have also increased for the telecom companies, Latin American telecom providers entered the Pay TV and IPTV sectors to diversify their businesses. However, as OTT gained traction, they lost ground (Ganuza & Viecens, 2014). Various strategies have been suggested to telecom operators to tackle this challenge. They would have to provide more and better service packaging, such as adding VOD in the package (Ganuza & Viecens, 2014). African telecom providers should embrace the arrival of OTT and make the required adjustments and treat consumers’ data requirements independently by giving them affordable data-only packages (Stork et al., 2017).

User-Generated content makes up a large portion of the live-streaming segment. There is very little literature on live streaming, with one study examining the impact of demographic variables such as gender on streamers’ source credibility (Todd & Melancon, 2018), on user experiences during
live streams (Wang, 2019), and on the motivation for creating live streaming content (Törhönen et al., 2019). (Hou et al., 2019).

**Business and Regulatory Aspects of OTT Entertainment**

Ownership, vertical integration, platforms, service type, and revenue models are the five most common and noticeable aspects in the corporate structures of OTT businesses (Park, 2019). The most prominent revenue methods are subscription-based VOD, advertising-funded VOD, rental-based VOD, and transaction-based VOD (Park, 2019). Advertisement-based VOD models are favoured over tiered subscription-based models, such as Netflix, which differentiates pricing based on technological advancements in some markets (Allam & Chan-Olmsted, 2020). Business strategies and tactics have developed over time to achieve better sustainability, apart from the business models. The business tactics of OTT platforms have shifted from competitive to co-opetitive, a hybrid form of competitive and cooperative approaches (Daidj & Egert, 2018). When entering new markets, Netflix has implemented strategies such as forming partnerships with local telecom service providers, production houses, and other businesses (S. Kim, 2020; Wayne & Castro, 2020).

OTT players are subject to stringent regulatory measures in Singapore and Saudi Arabia, whereas Netflix and Amazon are prohibited from operating in China. Netflix has been barred in Indonesia since 2016, whereas Thailand’s OTT business is also under threat of severe regulation (Kaewrot et al., n.d.). International firms may also encounter serious regulatory difficulties in India (Fitzgerald, 2019). Consequently, to mention a few, OTT players like Netflix and Hotstar have resorted to self-regulation to avoid legal wrangling (Kumar et al., 2020). As a result, OTT players cannot deliver the same service across geographical areas, despite being the same service provider. Regulatory frameworks also influence OTT platform performance. Compared to Australia, South Korea has a lower Netflix adoption rate as Netflix arrived in Australia earlier than it did in Korea (Dwyer et al., 2018). Also, due to legal and regulatory restrictions placed by South Korea, a significant amount of content available to Australian users is not available to Korean consumers (Dwyer et al., 2018).

However, there is no consensus on whether OTT services should be included in the regulatory framework that governs traditional television and film material. In 2015, an Australian study acknowledged the necessity for general policy consideration to deliver OTT services. However, it also argued that OTT platforms need not be included in the Universal Service Obligation (USO) plan to benefit from their freedom (G. Li, 2015).

If OTT platforms are regulated, there is a need to consider regulatory concerns in a broader context rather than from a single point of view. Price control, data protection, privacy, effective competition, and other facets of OTT legislation might all be considered (Bilbil, 2018). Apart from the usual regulatory modifications, there are other considerations too. Netflix in Brazil faces serious operational allegations such as tax evasion (Dias et al., 2018). Product placements are another source of revenue for OTT content creators (Dagnino, 2018). However, there are limitations on the products marketed through their content. The EU has a regulation prohibiting tobacco product placement and requiring viewers to be informed about product placements. Netflix violated such product placement restrictions (Dagnino, 2018).

**DISCUSSION**

Mediums of entertainment popular before the advent of OTT entertainment services faced severe challenges during the advent of OTT (Bhavsar, 2018; S. C. S. Li, 2014; Sadana & Sharma, 2021). The large-scale penetration of smartphones and mobile internet made it possible for consumers to access the content offered by OTT platforms on their palms (Singh, 2019; Srivastava, 2020). High-quality content and the convenience of watching content anytime and anywhere probably made the difference (Chattopadhyay, 2020; Gupta, 2021; Kakkar & Kakkar, 2018). It could affect the households to avail OTT services as an additional source of entertainment. Also, the content and
the benefits offered by the platforms are too lucrative to be missed. As a result, consumers started substituting their existing mediums of entertainment with OTT platforms at varying degrees (Abreu et al., 2017; Bhavsar, 2018; Sadana & Sharma, 2021; Waldenor, 2013). Hence, slowly but surely, OTT started taking root as the primary mainstream medium and source of entertainment. People moved away from the traditional mediums and closer to OTT. From cord-coupling, cord trimming, and even cord-cutting have become prevalent. The USA, being the starting point of this revolution, took the lead to cut the cord, and it slowly spread to other markets too at different levels of intensity. More price-conscious markets in Africa have taken more time to resort to cord-cutting, and many still have not cut the cord completely. In many markets, television broadcasters have embraced the OTT medium rather quickly. In a country like India, every leading television broadcaster has entered the market and also has gained popularity amongst the masses. They operate on a hybrid model, stream television content on their OTT platforms and exclusive original content. OTT as a medium is seen by consumers with many advantages over traditional mediums and is capable of fulfilling their entertainment needs to a greater extent.

OTT platforms offer convenience on our palms, where we can comfortably spend time watching content for hours (Gangwar et al., 2020; Waghmare et al., 2022). It has picked up in the pandemic and has continued to be popular post-pandemic People subscribing to OTT platforms during the lockdown are willing to continue their subscription past the pandemic (Devaki & Dinesh, 2021).

Perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use have been among the primary influential factors in adopting OTT entertainment services (Bhullar & Chaudhary, 2020; C. C. Lee & Lim, 2019a). The content offered on OTT platforms has also captured the imagination of consumers. One reason could be the greater freedom available to content creators on OTT platforms (Chattopadhyay, 2020). It allows content presentation in various formats, whether web series, documentaries, limited series, or movies. OTT platforms have lesser regulatory interventions from authorities and thus can take a little more liberty in their content offering (G. Li, 2015). Consumers appreciate the realistic, exclusive, uncensored content available on OTT platforms, which would not be the case with traditional mediums. Also, the unprecedented variety of content, be it indigenous or international, or regional, in the case of countries like India, has attracted consumers to a greater extent. This adds to the hedonistic pleasures of watching content on OTT platforms. OTT platforms also allow binge-watching or bingeing for the audience. It is another phenomenon gaining popularity and acts as an advantage to OTT. Quality content is intriguing, and it even could turn out to be addictive and would compel one to consume larger chunks of content in a single session (Matrix, 2014). It could be fraught with post-session guilt, but it would be a pleasurable experience while the session lasts (Panda & Pandey, 2017). So not just the extrinsic motivations like usefulness or ease of use, OTT platforms score higher on intrinsic motivations such as perceived enjoyment or engagement. The OTT platforms’ simplistic and uncomplicated user interfaces could also be credited for bringing a greater sense of control in using the services for the consumers.

The differences in adopting OTT services could be due to varied factors and must be studied with keen interest. It could be the availability of quality content, the purchasing power of the consumers, the hold of the other mediums of entertainment, and more. However, every market could throw varied insights and needs to be studied accordingly. Demographics could directly or indirectly affect consumer behavior toward OTT entertainment services. People of various age groups and from varied socio-economic backgrounds could react differently to OTT services and thus needs to be studied too.

Since OTT is in the early stages of diffusion, maximum talk has been around the adoption of OTT. However, in older markets like the USA, it has already assumed mainstream importance and is no more niche. As a result, it becomes vital to understand the intricacies of the post-adoption stage for OTT services. In such markets, factors affecting the continuous usage of OTT entertainment services have been studied too. Perceived monetary value, perceived value, satisfaction, niche theory, uses, and gratifications theory have been explored. Similar studies would soon be conducted in other markets where OTT will continue to gain prominence.
OTT has impacted related industries, not just other mediums of entertainment. Telecom industries of the world have been greatly affected by OTT platforms. In many countries, telecom service providers would also provide some or other video entertainment services. With the rise of OTT, the market got divided, and telecom players started losing ground. OTT platforms also increased the burden for telecom service providers, with increased demand for mobile internet. Hence even though the revenues would rise initially, it would still result in the added burden of expenses to meet the consumers’ demand. Also, internet service providers had to be on their toes to fulfill the needs of internet availability. Fast-paced internet became a basic necessity, propelling the demand for fiber optic cable internet in some markets.

Overall, OTT entertainment services have taken the industry by storm and are not showing signs of slowing down.

CONCLUSION

This paper includes a comprehensive review of 94 studies from the last 15 years on the adoption and usage of Over-the-Top Entertainment services and related themes. The study was conducted using a theme-based approach. Studies were identified systematically with a sound methodology. The study provides critical theoretical and managerial implications. The gaps identified in the paper could be exploited to bring out new knowledge and insights in the future.

Theoretical Implications

As discussed, various theories have been explored concerning OTT entertainment services in the literature. The adoption of OTT entertainment has been studied from the purview of popular consumer behavior theories and models such as the Technology Acceptance Model, Theory of Planned Behaviour, Theory of Reasoned Action, Value-Based Acceptance Model, Niche theory, Uses and Gratification Theory, etc. However, there still seems to be room for more such attempts to test and validate existing theories. Multiple theoretical constructs could be examined together from different perspectives to understand the adoption of OTT entertainment services from all possibilities. The market disruptive ability of OTT entertainment services could see a tough challenge in the commercial nature of the services. Hence, the monetary value aspect of OTT could be studied with keen interest. Variability of adoption of OTT services due to the demographic variations within the global markets could also be an area of curious interest.

Most markets could be considered to be still nascent concerning OTT entertainment services diffusion. However, certain markets have evolved to a stage where OTT services are a primary form of entertainment. Incidentally, there have been very few studies that have investigated the post-adoption stage of OTT entertainment services. Key constructs such as perceived value and satisfaction could be explored to study the continuance intention towards OTT entertainment services or the factors that could be influential in the continuous usage or subscription of OTT entertainment services.

Managerial Implications

A literature review is primarily academic and provides critical theoretical implications. However, this study intends to offer crucial insights into the industry too. It has been seen in the study that there is a great degree of variability in the adoption of OTT entertainment services throughout the world (Fudurić et al., 2020; M.-J. Kim et al., 2017; Udoakpan & Tengeh, 2020). Regulatory considerations, as well as the socio-economic background of the markets, have affected the take-up of OTT platforms at varying degrees in different parts of the world (Dwyer et al., 2018). The availability of regional content, too, has played a significant role in the acceptance of OTT platforms in some markets. The industry players could use
this insight and provide consumers a balanced plate of content. With growing internet and smartphone penetration, the mobile phone has become the primary device for most consumers. Consumers have shown an equal or even greater affinity towards mobile phones than other devices. The market players should consider mobile optimization a key strategy when designing their offerings. Hence, market players should develop user-friendly and easily accessible mobile apps facilitating content consumption. Cable TV, IPTV service providers, and telecom service providers have been largely affected by the advent of OTT entertainment platforms (Ganuza & Viecens, 2014; Joshi et al., 2015; Kabusheva et al., 2016, 2016). OTT has weathered the opposition from other mediums and emerged as a winner in most countries (Abreu et al., 2017; J. Kim et al., 2016; Prince & Greenstein, 2017; Waldenor, 2013). These market players must recognize the pull the OTT platforms possess and should embrace the new wave rather than being washed away by its force (Waldenor, 2013). Content creators, too, need to consider the change in the consumption pattern of content very keenly. The OTT platforms, especially after the pandemic, have affected the business of movie theater houses. Audiences now prefer larger-than-life, technologically and visually rich cinema to be consumed in movie theaters as compared to other genres of cinema. OTT has offered a new avenue for movies to reach audiences (Revati Devaki PC, 2021). People are showing greater affinity to new age web series (Srivastava, 2020). Hence, content creators and the movie theater industry must be aware and judicious about the content they produce, promote and project.

Future Research Directions

Older OTT markets such as the USA and certain European countries have seen greater research on the phenomenon (Fuduric et al., 2018, 2020; Prince & Greenstein, 2017; Tefertiller, 2018, 2020). However, it could be interesting to see similar research studies in other world markets. It could help us get a clearer perspective on the advancement a particular market has made when it comes to embracing newer alternatives to content consumption. OTT entertainment services could be studied in comparative parlance with similar or preceding technologies such as cable TV, IPTV, OTT Tv, etc. This could help us to identify and analyse the causes behind the rising success of OTT entertainment services in most markets.

The commercial nature of OTT entertainment apps cannot be neglected. Consumers’ willingness to pay for additional video entertainment services depends on multiple factors. Willingness to pay for OTT services would go a long way in determining the success of OTT platforms, especially SVOD platforms. Factors influencing consumers’ increased willingness to pay or to subscribe to OTT platforms could be studied in greater detail. It could give critical insights into the offering and its pricing, especially in price-sensitive markets. The impact of piracy on the take up of OTT platforms is another greatly unexplored area. The challenges OTT players face due to the availability of illegal or pirated options for content consumption could be another curious case of interest for future researchers.

Demographic variables have been found to alter the impact of various factors on the adoption of OTT entertainment services (Isa et al., 2021). Research could be undertaken to examine if demographic variables directly impact the decision-making towards adoption or if they play a moderating or mediating role in the adoption process.

Constructs and variables available in the existing literary frameworks, such as perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, perceived enjoyment, personal innovativeness, perceived behavioural control, perceived monetary value, subjective norm, and functional constructs such as content quality, video quality, quality of experience, etc. could be studied under various contexts to bring out new information. The majority of the studies conducted based on primary research have been quantitative (Bhullar & Chaudhary, 2020; DASGUPTA & GROVER, 2019; Kwon et al., 2021; Van der Linden et al., 2020). Research studies with a qualitative approach could bring a different perspective, allowing a more detailed investigation for every sample under study.
COMPETING INTEREST

Authors of this manuscript declare no competing interest for this publication.

FUNDING AGENCY

The research received no specific grant for publication in the public, commercial or not for profit sectors. Funding for this research was covered by the authors of this article.
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