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VIEWER'S PERCEPTION TOWARDS 'OTT' PLATFORM DURING PANDEMIC

(with special reference to Coimbatore city)

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ABSTRACT

Today we are going through a period of lock-down which the people of India have never seen before, for such a long time. In such a situation, in the era of this technology and the Internet, anyone likes to spend their free time in front of the digital screen, where they have many options to see. The ever-increasing viewership of the OTT video streaming services and the big star's inclination towards this platform justifies this. Today, the time we spent looking at our screens has increased immensely. As the cinema halls shut and film release has been suspended amid nationwide, this technological shift by internet has created a new kind of viewing experience and that might end up changing the collective movie watching experience in cinema hall which result in dent in the footfall whenever the screens open again. This change in viewing experience created by OTT has a greatest fear for cinema hall owners. This thesis explore tries to analyse the impact of increasing OTT video streaming services viewership in lockdown to assess the future of collective watching experience in India. It frames the attitude of Indian people towards cinema hall through assessing different vantage points that mark shift in watching experience. At the end it gives the, recommendation contextualized the immensely increasing OTT viewership during lock down and its resultant effects on the collective watching experience.

Key words: OTT platform and Viewers perception

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INTRODUCTION

According to the Global Web Index report, India's streaming market is one of the biggest and fastest-growing in the world with biggies like Voot, Alt Balaji, Zee5 and MX Player. The country's video market is valued at over $700 million and is expected to grow to $2.4 billion by 2023, with the OTT industry projected to have the highest growth. A trend of people viewing multiple content channels at the same time, along with demand for newer and more exclusive content will force the big budgets producers and directors to release movies directly onto the OTT channels rather than Cinema halls. In the lockdown period, quality content on OTT platforms is in great demand. This study is based on this research questions[1].

OTT stands for "Over-The-Top" and refers to the productized practice of streaming content to customers directly over the web. It represents the future of entertainment — one that is already unfolding. It, is also commonly applied to video-on-demand platforms, but also refers to audio streaming, messaging services, or internet-based voice calling solutions. OTT services are typically monetized via paid subscriptions, but there are exceptions. For example, some OTT platforms might offer in-app purchases or advertising. OTT clearly represents the future of media, representing the best way of entertainment in the present scenario and people getting access to OTT apps not only through subscriptions but also through freemium facilities and the Jio effect on the streaming culture. People also prefer watching regional shows but when it comes to teenagers, they prefer foreign shows more compared to the regional shows[2].

OTT (Over-The-Top) is a means of providing television and film content over the internet and to suit the requirements of the individual consumer. The term itself stands for "over-the-top", which implies that content provides is going over the top of existing internet services. An Over-The-Top (OTT) media service is a streaming media service offered directly to viewers via the internet. OTT by passes cable broadcast and satellite television platforms, the companies that traditionally act as a controller or distributor

[1] *Girish Menon, H. P. 2017, "The Digital First, How OTT platforms can be demand ready".*
[2] *Rajat Kathuria, M. k. 2019, Retrieved from https://think-asia.org/bitstream/handle/11540/9810/An_Analysis_of_Competition_and_Regulatory _Interventions.pdf?sequence=1.*

of such content. OTT does not mean free, as the encompasses services such as Netflix, amazon prime video. Over-the- top services are accessed via websites on computers as well as apps on mobile services[3].

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The advent of online streaming platform such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, etc., means children and teenagers now have access to uncensored content, since there is no law or autonomous body to monitor and manage the digital content's provided on these OTT platforms and it is made available to the public at large without any filter or screening. As it is the case, OTT platforms should be responsible to create digital awareness i.e., consumers should be made aware of the impacts of their streaming and realise if there's really a need to watching those videos. And it's also viewer's responsibility to ensure that kids in our home do not access to such contents can help fulfil the very purpose[4].

NEED OF THE STUDY

Today, as fast as technology is changing, the faster we are also changing our habits. Talking about television, there would have been a television in the entire locality and everyone used to sit and watch it at the same time, whereas today it is the age of OTT where every person has a smart phone in which he can watch any kind of content anytime. Amidst all this, the dominance of watching movies in the cinema hall has always remained. But now this domination is suspected. Most big-ticket movies in the USA have been pushed to later this year, some even to next year. Similarly, in India, the theatrical release of all major films has been indefinitely postponed. But OTT platforms are buzzing with activity. Especially after the lockdown in India, with the OTT channel gaining such a large number of viewers, people have gained a new kind of viewing experience, which can be said if it continues after this so there will be a lot of concern for cinema hall owners[5].

SCOPE OF THE STUDY

This study is to highlight the scope of OTT platforms and the extent of their consumption amongst the people. This study will help to understand how OTT platforms have taken over the world of digital entertainment during a pandemic. It will help us understand how OTT has inorganically growing and gradually taking over other mediums of entertainment.

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[3] *Singh, D. 2020, "How is coronavirus impacting the streaming platforms with an increasing appetite of viewers". Retrieved from Financial express: https://www.financialexpress.com/brandwagon/how-is-coronavirus-impacting-the- streaming-platforms-with-an-increasing-appetite-of-viewers/1919916.*

[4] *Xiaobing Xu, R. C. 2015, "Competition, Cooperation, and Pricing: How Mobile Operators. International Journal of Marketing Studies; Vol. 7, No. 6; 2015".*

[5] *Dixit, D.2020, "The rise and 'desification' of Indian OTT". Retrieved from Television post: https://www.televisionpost.com/the-rise-and-desification-of-indian- ott/ .*

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

- To analyse viewer's perception towards OTT platform.
- To examine the factors influencing to prefer OTT platform.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Meghan McAdams 2019, "What is OTT- Understanding the Modern Media Streaming Landscape". The study revealed that the OTT apps clearly represent the future of India. In her study the major thing that was concluded that 50% of OTT customers, are experiencing "subscription fatigue", from engaging with so many platforms. It was also mentioned that the growth of large-scale platforms like Disney plus could impact the prospects for smaller niche services[6].

Sharma, 2020, the on-going COVID-19 crisis has forced the multiplexes to shut down. As a result, the production houses are now releasing the onto OTT platforms directly. This has become a topic of concern amongst the multiplexes as the users might ship the traditional windowing pattern. INOX and PVR both issued a public statement reacting to this issue. According to experts this is solution to a short term need of the film industry which getting by financial difficulties. It is a win-win situation for OTT players who needs fresh content and the filmmakers who had their production ready but unable to release. However, this will not be a paradigm shift, in the long term, once things return to normal. The cinema generates more revenue for the production houses compared to the OTT platforms. Being this a vital factor, the films will hit the cinemas as earlier, once the market if free from COVID-19 crisis. Matter of fact, there may be possibility to see a surge in multiplex services for few days after the returning the things to normal[7].

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Selection of the Sample	✓ Viewers in Coimbatore
Sampling method	✓ Random sampling method
Sample size	✓ 150
Formation of the Questions	✓ Interview schedule
Collection of Data	✓ Primary: Respondents
Consolidation of Data	✓ Master table – Ms-Excel ✓ Variable view - SPSS
Analysis of Data	▪ Simple percentage ▪ Weighted average score(WAS) ▪ Simple ranking ▪ Chi-square ▪ ANOVA

[6] *Meghan McAdams 2019, "What is OTT- Understanding the Modern Media Streaming Landscape". KPMG's annual cable & OTT report.*

[7] *Sharma, K. 2020, "Will movies releasing directly on OTT platforms become a norm post-Covid? Experts think otherwise", Retrieved from Business insider.*

FRAMED HYPOTHESIS

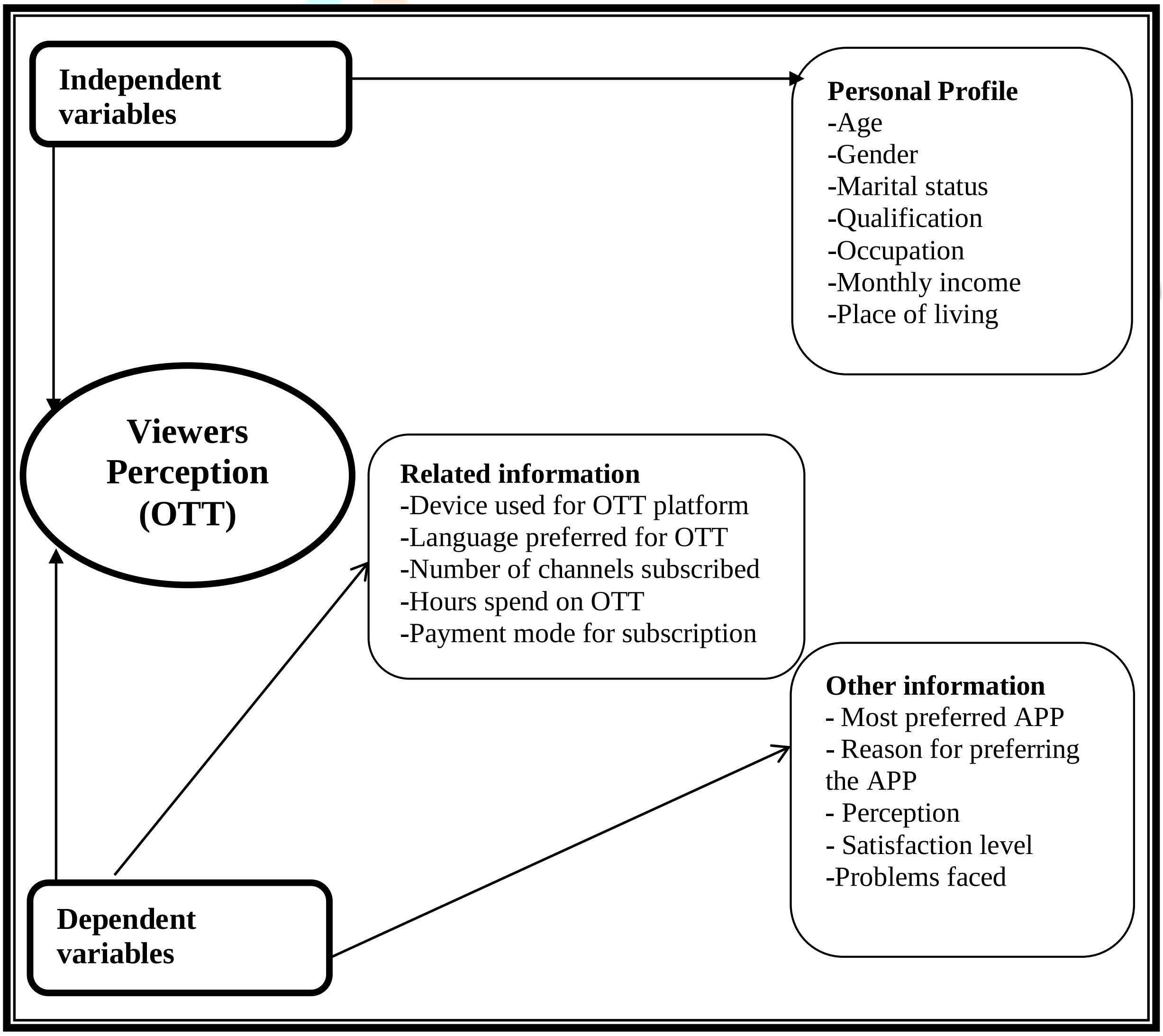
Ho1: There is no significant relationship between independent variable and dependent variable.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between dependent variables and dependent variables.

LIMITATIONS

- The total sample of study includes only college students in Coimbatore city, hence the results could not be generalised.
- The research has been restricted only to selected arts and science colleges, Coimbatore city which makes the sample size smaller.

FRAMEWORK OF THE STUDY



ANALYSIS OF DATA

Table 1

Distribution on overall result of Profile of respondents (Majority only)

Sl. no	Particulars	Variable	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Age	20-30	43	65
2	Gender	Male	57	85
3	Marital status	Unmarried	48	72
4	Educational qualification	UG	43	64
5.	Occupation	Professionals	47	71
6.	Income	20000-30000	46	69
7.	Place of living	Urban	46	69

Source: Primary Data

Table 2

Distribution of related information (Majority only)

Sl. No	Particulars	Variable	No. of respondents	Percentage
1	Device used for OTT platform	Mobile	35	52
2	Language preferred for OTT	English	37	58
3	Number of channels subscribed	More than 5	55	82
4	Hours spend on OTT	More than 6	42	63
5	Payment mode for subscription	Net banking	60	90

Source: Primary Data

Table 3

Most preferred APP

Sl.no	Particulars	Mean	S.D	Rank
1	Netflix	4.88	2.17	**1**
2	Amazon Prime	3.66	0.65	4
3	Hot star	3.66	0.65	4
4	ALT Balaji	4.81	1.76	2
5	VOOT	3.66	0.65	4
6	MX Player	4.40	1.79	3
7	HBO	3.45	2.43	8
8	Sony LIV	3.66	0.65	4
9.	AHA	3.32	0.45	9

Source: Computed Data

Table 4

Reason for preferring the APP

Sl.no	Particulars	Mean score	Rank
1	Content	3.20	6
2	TV series	4.13	4
3	Subscription	3.83	5
4	Movies	4.32	3
5	Sports	4.89	2
6	Live streaming	5.02	**1**

Source: Computed Data

Table 5
Perception of viewers towards OTT

Sl.no	Factors	5	4	3	2	1	Total	WAS	Rank
1	P 1	1850	1012	246	13	8	3130	209	2
2	P 2	1666	964	307	47	20	3003	200	4
3	P 3	972	1152	382	171	25	2701	180	7
4	P 4	1111	1079	377	121	42	2730	182	6
5	P 5	1380	931	482	74	13	2881	192	5
6	P 6	871	977	652	134	17	2652	177	8
7	P 7	2527	778	35	10	4	3353	224	**1**
8	P 8	1692	1179	135	54	15	3075	205	3

Source: Computed Data

Table 6
Satisfaction level of viewers towards OTT

Sl.no	Satisfaction	5	4	3	2	1	Total	WAS	Rank
1	SL 1	703	1721	141	179	13	2757	184	5
2	SL 2	767	1908	128	68	13	2884	192	3
3	SL 3	660	1772	268	94	9	2803	187	4
4	SL 4	1001	1636	217	51	13	2918	194	2
5	SL 5	554	1449	268	247	34	2552	170	7
6	SL 6	788	409	805	196	94	2292	153	10
7	SL 7	447	1653	575	34	9	2718	181	6
8	SL 8	639	1312	345	204	47	2548	170	7
9	SL 9	682	972	690	162	30	2535	169	9
10	SL 10	1597	1022	281	60	21	2982	199	**1**

Source: Computed Data

Table 7
Problems faced viewers

Sl.no	Satisfaction	5	4	3	2	1	Total	WAS	Rank
1	PF 1	1278	1380	294	17	13	2982	199	**1**
2	PF 2	1108	1091	384	120	38	2739	182	4
3	PF 3	532	1602	204	281	4	2624	175	6
4	PF 4	384	1227	754	102	34	2501	167	8
5	PF 5	192	1517	524	188	34	2454	164	9
6	PF 6	234	1176	703	111	89	2314	154	10
7	PF 7	874	1465	332	120	9	2799	187	2
8	PF 8	1150	937	575	85	21	2769	185	3
9	PF 9	916	1193	384	162	30	2684	179	5
10	PF 10	192	1653	550	111	30	2535	169	7

Source: Computed Data

Chi-square

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between independent variable and dependent variable.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between dependent variables and dependent variables.

Table 8

Distribution on overall result of Chi-square @ 5% and 1% level of significance

Dependent variables	Independent variables	P-value	d.f		Result
Reason for preferring	Age	0.037	4	5	Significant
	Gender	0.022	4		
	Marital status	0.005	2		
	Educational qualification	0.041	4		
	Occupation	0.040	2		
	Income	0.013	4		
	Place of living	0.050	5		
Satisfaction level of viewers	Age	0.018	4	9	Significant
	Gender	0.034	4		
	Marital status	0.039	2		
	Educational qualification	0.047	4		
	Occupation	0.030	2		
	Income	0.036	4		
	Place of living	0.006	5		
Problems faced by viewers	Age	0.030	4	9	Significant
	Gender	0.031	4		
	Marital status	0.044	2		
	Educational qualification	0.072	4		
	Occupation	0.030	2		
	Income	0.023	4		
	Place of living	0.030	5		

Source: Computed Data

Table 9

Distribution on Most Preferred OTT and Perception ANOVA

Sl.no	Particulars	Source	D.f	MS	F
1	MP- 1	Between groups	8	90.59	
		Within groups	9	8.43	36.46
2	MP-2	Between groups	8	42.19	
		Within groups	9	3.10	39.98
3	MP-3	Between groups	8	35.44	
		Within groups	9	5.30	39.62
4	MP-4	Between groups	8	34.78	
		Within groups	9	8.44	41.84
5	MP-5	Between groups	8	62.94	
		Within groups	9	4.10	45.93
6	MP-6	Between groups	8	18.10	
		Within groups	9	6.02	44.27
7	MP-7	Between groups	8	56.70	
		Within groups	9	4.03	45.33
8	MP-8	Between groups	8	40.68	
		Within groups	9	8.21	42.40
9	MP-9	Between groups	8	42.76	
		Within groups	9	8.26	39.78

Source: Computed data **NB**: (**) Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

Table 10
Distribution on correlation

Sl.no	Independent variables (Related information)	Reason for preferring	Satisfaction level	Problems faced
1	Device used for OTT platform	0.582	0.367	0.249
2	Language preferred for OTT	0.450	0.260	0.066
3	Number of channels subscribed	0.520	0.532	0.251
4	Hours spend on OTT	0.509	0.171	0.085
5	Payment mode for subscription	0.511	0.474	0.430

Source: Computed data **NB: significance @ 1% level of significance**

Variables	RFP	SL	PF
RFP	1.000	0.636	0.631
SL		1.000	0.625
PF			1.000

FINDINGS and SUGGESTIONS OF THE STUDY

Current generation doesn't have the patience to wait for a show or movie to air on a linear platform like television. This viewer wants the content instant and on-demand. That is what our study reveals that due to some such reasons the growth of OTT will only increase in India. All the reports and articles that we have read and go through, the only thing understood is that in India, the OTT video streaming service will continue to spread its feet and it is going to have a huge impact on our traditional medium like television and Cinema Hall. The strong attachment of OTT to the audience in the lockdown period has further confirmed this fact. Smartphone penetration, International collaborations between media moguls and digital quality of the medium, cost effectiveness and access liberty (anywhere at any time) is also one of the reasons behind growth of streaming media in India.

In other findings about the viewer's dynamic watching habits may change the collective watching experience and it also effect the future footfalls of cinema hall. As per study shows viewers have equal way of thinking about the future of cinema hall. There may be decrease or may be not in the future footfalls of cinema hall after this lockdown period, it all depends on the viewers who are still in dilemma about this. It can be suggested that the cinema hall owners should think of more comfort and offers and also it must be cost worthy. It is found that OTT spreading very fast, its effect is going to be very deep on other traditional medium.

CONCLUSION

OTT in the modern computerized era has become a life essential tool. It helps the users to update information now and then though, it has many positive aspects it has its own drawbacks. Adults, specifically students spend majority of their time surfing through OTT platforms. The hypothesis that during pandemic there has been a significant rise in consumption of OTT platforms has been proven right. Since people have started consuming OTT more and more in the lockdown the research as identified it is the right time to study, "Viewer's perception towards OTT platform during pandemic – with special reference to selected arts & science colleges in Coimbatore city" has been conducted among 150 respondents in Coimbatore city by using primary data[8].

The future of OTT platforms will be very bright and video consumption will be more and increasing internet and mobile penetration every day. The present study says about users' profiles and preferences are different towards content. There has been a lot of investment in OTT platforms it is very hard to say that OTT platforms will replace traditional TV systems. The pricing strategy of the OTT platforms in India is far higher for Indian consumers. The main fuel for the OTT platforms was the internet so many telecom companies are struggling to compete with the data plans in India due to Jio but the cost of OTT platforms are remaining identical but therefore the average cost of the users has to access content on the platform. The millennium is the most concerned of consumption of data. OTT platforms always look for a way to produce more attractive content that is not available. The main problem is that every OTT platform is not having the financial ability to produce more video content for a new generation, specifically OTT platforms and devices for newer and small OTT platforms. The millennium is attracted towards the OTT platforms due to foreign content and video on demand. The emergence of JIO and giving 4G services for free helps a lot for OTT platforms to grow immensely. The media and entertainment found a new home for online streaming services. The responses are who are in my study all are aware of OTT platforms and some of them are using as an alternative to cable broadcast and DTH[9].

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[8] *Alpana Kakkar, K.N, 2019, "Analysis of Product Placement in Web Series and Its Influence on Consumer Buying Behavior". Retrieved from https://journalofbusiness.org/index.php/GJMBR/article/view/2755.*
[9] *Kohli, D. 2019. "Looking into the future - OTT trends". Retrieved from https://yourstory.com/2019/02/looking-into-future-top-ott-trends-2019.*

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