



# Psychological Effects of OTT Platforms on Young Adults

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**Abstract:** The use of over-the-top (OTT) services as a source of entertainment by young adults has grown. Research indicates that excessive use of these platforms may have psychological impacts on young adults, including addiction, social isolation, and poor mental health, even while they provide ease and a diversity of information. Additionally, the algorithms employed by these platforms have the potential to amplify filter bubbles and promote prejudices and preconceived notions. To lessen these harmful consequences, it is crucial for young adults to be aware of their consumption and practice appropriate media practices.

**Keywords** - OTT platforms, Psychological Effects, Young Adults, Mental Health, Social Skills

## I. INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, entertainment has become more personalized and conveniently portable with the help of data. The introduction of OTT platforms has made a wide variety of programs in various genres, languages, and production styles freely available for the whole world to view. It has been increasingly used since the pandemic which started at the beginning of 2020. Shows like Money Heist, Mirzapur, November Story, Friends, etc. have been a constant source of entertainment for us to consume non-stop at any given time of the day. The quality of the content of this show doesn't necessarily match with their lifestyles and due to the sheer contrast of projections in the shows (like abusive language, violence, and mindless but wonderful cinematography), it has begun to affect the lives of the young adults who are predominantly biggest consumers of such platforms. Psychologically, the amount of fear such shows create is increasing un-natural mental health conditions not normal for the human body to experience like stress, anxiety, and depression. It also affects the quality of logical and analytical thinking the human mind can conceive, conceptualize and create with its capabilities nature has enabled mankind with evolutionary processes. (Anuradha Ishwaran, 2016).

## II. OBJECTIVES

- MAIN OBJECTIVE:
  1. This study aims to investigate the psychological effects of over-the-top (OTT) platforms on young adults and offer suggestions for encouraging positive media behaviors.
- SUB OBJECTIVE:
  1. To examine the research on young adults' OTT platform usage habits.
  2. To investigate the possible psychological consequences of heavy OTT platform use, including addiction, social isolation, and poor mental health.
  3. To investigate the function of algorithmic filtering on these platforms and how it may help to reinforce prejudices and create filter bubbles.
  4. To offer suggestions for encouraging young adults to develop healthy media habits, such as regulating usage, utilizing a variety of media, and participating in offline activities.

### III. LITERATURE REVIEW

India has had a media landscape that has undergone a technological transformation in the previous 10 years, promoting the mass market for specialty channels, content, and television technologies. Viewing habits and platform preferences have changed as a result of the new ways to interact with television media, primarily through smartphones, Internet TV, Video-On-Demand (VOD), and OTT platforms. (Punathambekar & Kumar, 2012; Tryon, 2015).

Moving forward, OTT platforms benefited from a large audience that has grown accustomed to watching entertainment content on smartphones. (Laghate, 2018). Now that they have entered the market, the online streaming services have seized their opportunity. This internet video streaming is sufficiently different from traditional TV in terms of its contents, features, and situations. It is still difficult to determine how much study on the evolving audience and their viewing habits can be informed by traditional media theories and approaches. (Livingstone, 2003, 2004, 2007).

It should be noted that Hotstar, launched in 2015 and owned by Star TV (India's largest private broadcaster), is the most well-liked OTT platform in the country, with a total loyal user base of 75 million people in both rural and urban areas, followed by Amazon Prime Video with 11 million subscribers. (Aadeetya, 2018). Netflix only ranks third with about 5 million members, but due to its various distinctions from other players and the more specialized clientele it caters to—niche, English-speaking, wealthy, urban youth—it still provides a more fascinating area of investigation. (Joglekar, 2018).

Numerous studies have demonstrated the negative consequences that binge viewing web series and other internet streaming entertainment has on young people. According to a study binge behaviour are believed to be directly associated with unpleasant emotions. The association between binge viewing, body dissatisfaction, academic loss, depressive symptoms, and low self-esteem has been shown in several studies. Examples include (Stickney et al., 1999) (Stice, Prensell, and Spangler, 2002) (Sung, et al., 2005).

They set aside time to binge-watch web series, rewarding themselves along the way. The participants downplayed or were unaware of the negative effects of this new viewing experience, which affected their grades, neglected their social lives, and somewhat determined their schedule. (Peterson, 2006).

This article discovered that among 316 respondents between the ages of 18 and 20, binge-watching was associated with sadness and loneliness. Studies show that binge watching web series and online video content on OTT platforms has changed people's attitudes, behaviors, and social lives in a number of ways. (Sung et al., 2015).

A number of research studies have suggested that young people's mental health may suffer as a result of their excessive use of OTT platforms. For instance, an article discovered that problematic OTT platform use among Turkish university students was positively connected with depressive and anxiety symptoms. Similar findings were obtained in an article who discovered that Israeli teenagers who spend more time on OTT platforms had greater levels of anxiety and despair. (Kircaburun and Griffiths, 2018) (Lissak and Mekler, 2019).

An article has also looked into the connection between OTT platform use and young people's self-esteem and body image. According to a research teenagers' body satisfaction and self-esteem were found to be worse when they were exposed to idealized body pictures on social media (which frequently includes content from OTT platforms). Similar findings were made by Cohen and Blaszczynski (2015) who discovered teenage exposure to OTT platforms' advertising was linked to low self-esteem and unfavorable body image. (Fardouly et al., 2018) (Cohen and Blaszczynski, 2015).

The effect of OTT platform use on young people's academic results has also been studied in research. According to a research by Rosen et al. (2013), high school students who often multitask on OTT platforms—that is, use numerous devices at once to view videos—perform worse academically. Additionally, a research discovered that teenagers' excessive usage of OTT platforms was linked to worse academic attainment. (Rosen et al., 2013) (Rideout et al., 2019).

Several research studies have shown that the effect of OTT platform use on young people's socialization and interpersonal interactions has been the subject of various research. A study found that teens who used OTT platforms more frequently had worse face-to-face communication skills and were less likely to engage in prosocial behavior. On the other hand, a Lee and Kim (2018) study discovered that South Korean teenage use of OTT platforms may be a way for them to increase their social capital. (Uhls et al., 2014) (Lee and Kim, 2018).

### IV. RESEARCH GAP

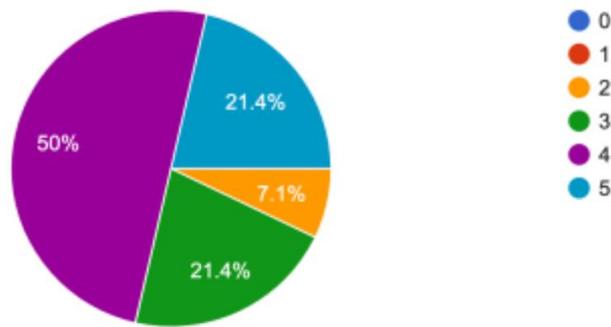
While there is a growing amount of study on the usage trends and psychological implications of OTT platforms, there is still a sizable knowledge vacuum regarding how these platforms' algorithms affect young adults. Additionally, additional empirical research is required to examine the connection between the use of OTT platforms and outcomes related to mental health, such as anxiety and depression. Additionally, more study is required to determine the best therapies and mitigation techniques for the detrimental psychological impacts of young adults' excessive OTT platform usage.

### V. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In the undertaken survey, the discovery was made that a lot of people have various opinions regarding OTT platforms. One realizes the platform has given access to such a wide range of information to many people, in multiple areas.

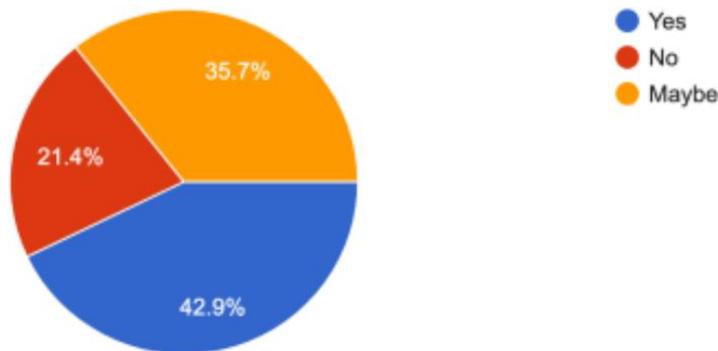
The analysis of our data has led us to find a few things, some pleasant and some startling, which require action to be taken to rectify and straighten these issues out.

**Pie chart 1.1: Indicates the scale of 0 to 5 rate your liking for OTT platforms 5 being the highest**



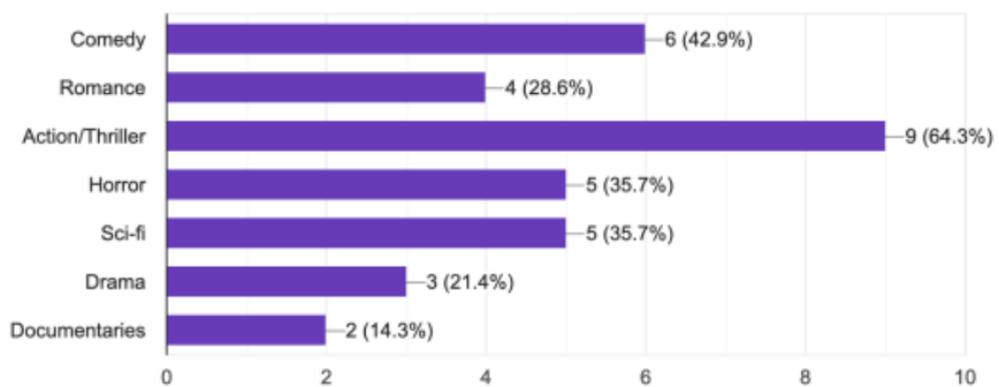
**Inference:** From the above chart 50% of users give the OTT platform a rating of 4 out of 5.

**Pie Chart 1.2: Indicates the people being scared/anxious/disturbed post a show or movie because of a plot or visuals?**



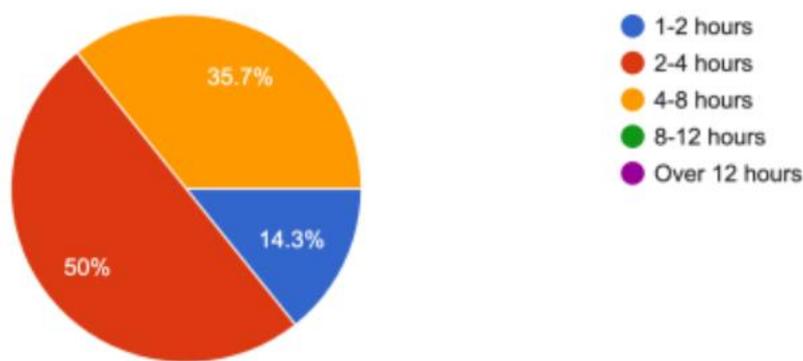
**Inference:** From the above chart we can infer that 42.9% of the people feel anxious while watching any show or movie.

**Pie Chart 1.3: Indicates favorite genre of shows/movie**



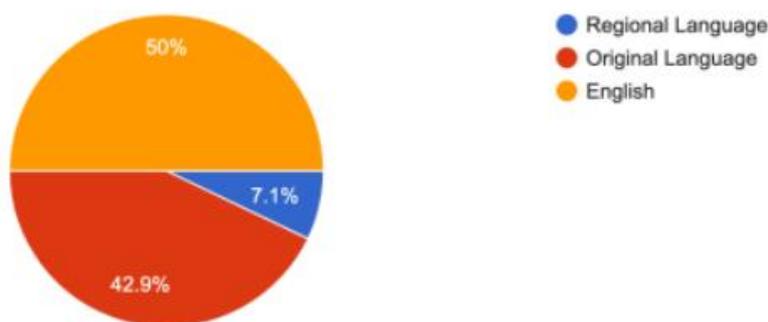
**Inference:** From the above chart we can infer that 64.3% of the people prefer Action/Thriller as a favorite genre of show or movie.

**Pie Chart 1.4: Indicates what is the average screen time when using OTT platforms**



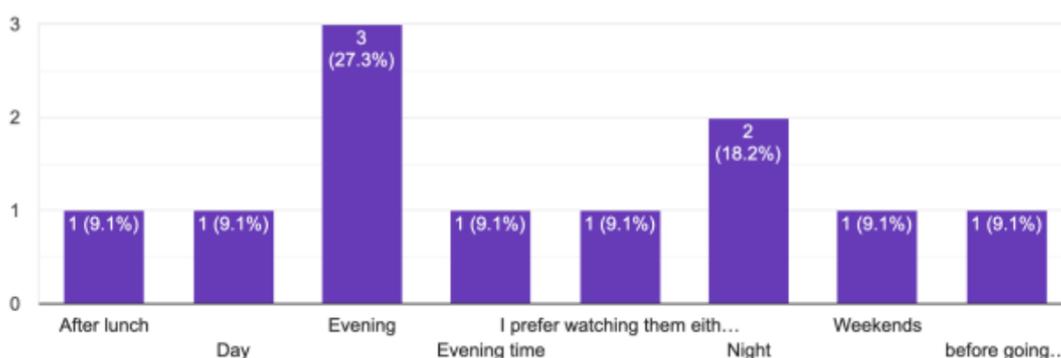
**Inference:** From the chart we can infer that 2-4 hours is the typical amount of time per day that users spend watching content on OTT platforms.

**Pie chart 1.5: Indicates the preference for language when you watch shows/movies?**



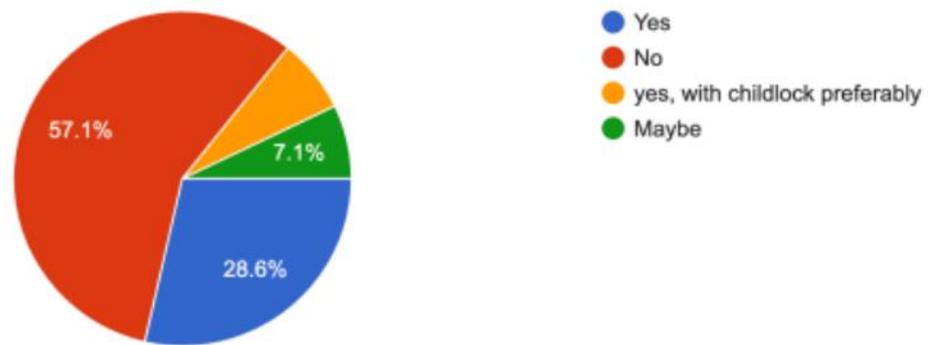
**Inference:** From the chart we can infer that 50% of the people prefer English as their primary language while watching any show or movie.

**Pie chart 1.6: During the day. When do you prefer watching?**



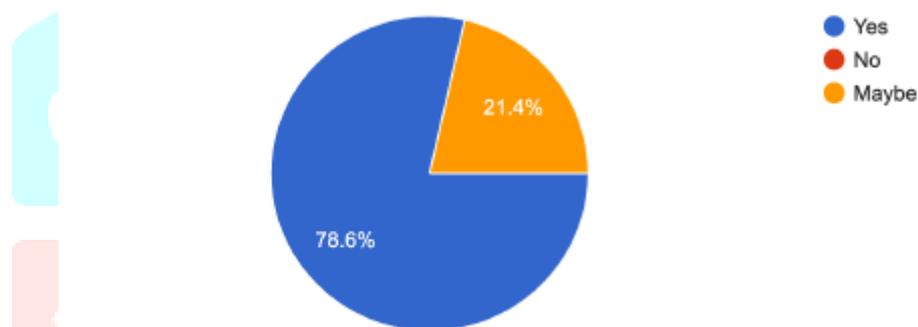
**Inference:** From the chart we can see that 27.3% of people prefer to watch OTT in the evening during the day.

**Pie chart 1.7: Shows suggestions from the audience regarding whether children under the age of 13 should have access to OTT platforms**



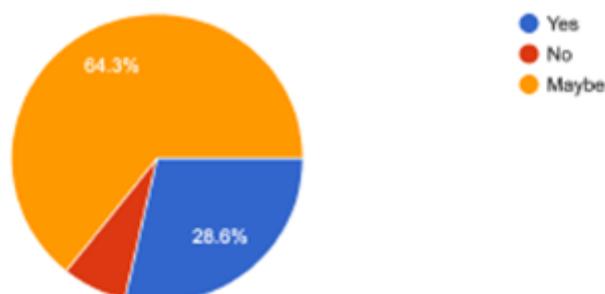
**Inference:** From the above chart we can infer that 57.1% of the majority of individuals oppose allowing young children under the age of 13 to use the OTT platform.

**Pie chart 1.8: Do you think you can go without OTT entertainment platforms for more than a few days or a week?**



**Inference:** From the above pie chart we can notice that 78.6% of the audience can go a few days or weeks without using OTT platforms.

**Pie chart 1.9: Do you think the drastic rise in mental health cases is related to OTT platform content?**



**Inference:** From the above pie chart we can infer that 64.3% of people believe that OTT negatively affects their mental health.

## VI. CONCLUSION

OTT platforms have completely changed how young people now consume media and entertainment. These platforms provide unmatched accessibility to other cultures, viewpoints, and genres. On-demand content's convenience has raised questions about young people's excessive screen time, though. According to research, excessive screen time may have a detrimental psychological impact on a person's sleep, physical activity, anxiety, and sadness.

Furthermore, the individualized nature of OTT algorithms may perpetuate societal biases and produce filter bubbles that block access to other viewpoints. Another issue is that watching TV and movies alone by young people, as opposed to engaging in social activities with friends and family, might result in a feeling of loneliness and detachment.

Encouragement of a variety of media use and the development of media literacy skills are crucial for promoting a healthy media balance and minimizing any harmful impacts. Parents and guardians can restrict screen time, promote outdoor physical activity, and encourage social interactions. The critical media literacy abilities that equip young people to successfully traverse the intricacies of the contemporary media world are something that educators can significantly contribute to.

Therefore, while OTT platforms provide numerous benefits, it is important to be aware of and take steps to mitigate any possible harm to young people's mental health and socialization. We can make sure that young people may benefit from OTT platforms while reducing dangers by boosting media literacy skills and supporting balanced media use habits.

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