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An Analysis of viewer Preference in OTT platforms

V. Kaviya
Ph.D. Research Scholar in Commerce, Dr. C. Amirtharani Associate Professor of Commerce,
PG and Research Department of Commerce, Chikkanna Government Arts College, Tiruppur.

ABSTRACT

The rise of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms has transformed the digital entertainment landscape by offering a diverse range of content catering to various viewer preferences. This study examines demographic profiles, usage patterns, subscription status and preferences towards OTT platforms. Using a descriptive research design, primary data was collected from 120 active OTT users in Tiruppur through a structured questionnaire. The study employed Chi-square tests to assess associations between demographic variables and OTT usage and subscription, and Weighted Average Ranking Method to determine the most and least preferred content platforms and genres. The findings reveal that platforms, Jio Hotstar, Amazon Prime, and Netflix emerged as the most favoured. Among genres movies, comedy and sports are the top-ranked content types, while talk shows and news are least preferred. A significant association was found between demographic profile, usage and the number of OTT subscriptions, indicating regional disparities in access and usage. These insights provide strategic direction for OTT providers to improve content offerings, user satisfaction, and market segmentation.

Keywords

Content Variety, User Preferences, Subscription Behaviour, Digital Streaming, User Engagement.

1. Introduction

The growing penetration of internet connectivity and smartphones has significantly altered media consumption habits, leading to the rapid rise of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms in India. These platforms provide on-demand access to a wide range of entertainment content, including movies, web series, sports, and more, catering to users' changing preferences and viewing behaviour. With numerous platforms available such as Jio Hotstar, Amazon Prime, Netflix, and others, viewers make choices based on a mix of convenience, content appeal, and subscription features. As competition intensifies among OTT providers, understanding how viewers engage with these platforms and what factors influence their platform preference has become crucial. This study focuses on analysing the usage patterns and platform preferences among OTT viewers, considering demographic variables. Using Chi-square analysis and Weighted Average Ranking analysis**,** the study aims to assess the association between viewer profiles and OTT usage and subscription behaviour, while identifying the most and least preferred platforms among respondents.

2. Statement of the Problem

With the increasing number of OTT platforms, users are often confused about which platform to choose and subscribe to. While price and accessibility matter, usage patterns and platform preferences vary widely across user groups. There is limited research focusing on how demographic factors influence OTT usage and preference. Understanding these patterns is crucial for platform developers and marketers. This study aims to explore the relationship between user profile, platform usage, and preference.

3. Objectives of the study

The following are the key objectives of the study

1. To examine the association between the viewer's demographic factors and OTT platform usage.
2. To investigate the association between demographic factors and OTT subscription behaviour.
3. To identify the viewers preferences towards different types of OTT platforms and content variety.

4. Research Methodology

The study adopted a descriptive research design to explore user behaviour and preferences related to OTT content variety and platform usage. Data was collected through a structured questionnaire that included demographic details, usage patterns and subscription status. Convenient sampling was employed to target active OTT viewers from various age groups and income levels. A total of 120 respondents participated in the study. For data analysis, Chi-square tests were used to examine the association between user profiles and OTT usage and subscription patterns, while weighted average ranking was applied to identify the most preferred OTT platform and content type among users.

5. Review of literature

Sonali Malewar and Dr. Shweta Bajaj (2020) identified key behavioural factors influencing OTT platform adoption using UTAUT2. Data from 277 respondents were analysed via SmartPLS revealed performance expectancy, price value, habit, and content availability as major factors. It suggested focusing on affordability, content, and usability, with limitations in geographic generalisability.

Garima Sharma Nijhawan and Surbhi Dahiya (2020) examined OTT adoption during the lockdown in Delhi NCR using surveys and secondary data. Findings showed increased screen time due to content availability and flexibility. Concerns included high costs and addiction. The study recommended exploring regional markets, monetization, psychological effects, and advertising strategies.

Swati Manoj Yeole and Lambodar Saha (2022) examined factors influencing OTT platform adoption through a survey of 200 participants. They found that ease of access, content variety, and cost sensitivity, particularly flexible subscription plans, influenced user preferences. The study emphasised mobile usage over television, with Netflix as a leading platform. Social factors were less significant, and future research was recommended on Gen Z's OTT usage and rural audience behaviours.

R. Sridevi and Tamilarasan T. (2023) conducted a comparative study on consumer preferences between Netflix and Hotstar, based on a survey of 102 respondents in Coimbatore. The findings showed Netflix's slight edge (54.9%) due to original content and foreign series, while Hotstar (45.1%) was favoured for live sports and regional content. The study emphasised affordability and digital convenience and suggested strategies for both

platforms to enhance their appeal in India's competitive OTT market.

Hena et al. (2024) examined OTT video streaming adoption during and after the COVID- 19 pandemic using the Health Belief Model and Expectation-Confirmation Model. The study found that perceived severity and susceptibility were key factors influencing continued OTT usage, mediated by satisfaction and perceived usefulness. It suggested improving service features to retain users post-pandemic and concluded that OTT platforms offer a crucial entertainment alternative during health crises.

Anusha and Kumar (2024) studied user preferences between Amazon Prime and Netflix, based on a survey of 100 respondents in Hyderabad. Findings revealed that 40% used both platforms, with Amazon Prime favoured for regional content and affordability, while Netflix was preferred for diverse content like stand-up shows. The study emphasised device compatibility and subscription models. It suggested tailoring notifications and user interfaces to engage different viewer types, noting Amazon Prime's local popularity over Netflix.

6. Analysis and Interpretation

In this study, an analysis was conducted to understand the relationship between demographic profile and OTT platform usage and subscription status, and the preference of the type of platform, and content variety**.** Chi-square test was used to test the association between demographic factors and usage patterns, while weighted average ranking analysis identified the most preferred OTT platform and content variety.

6.1 Profile of the respondents

Table 1

Profile of the respondents

Profile		Number of respondents	Percentage to total	Cumulative percentage
Gender	Male	69	57.50	57.50
	Female	51	42.50	100.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**	
Age (years)	15-25	55	45.80	45.80
	25-35	29	24.40	70.20
	35-45	13	10.80	81.00
	45-55	12	10.00	91.00
	Above55	11	**9.00**	100.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**	
Monthly Income (Rs)	Below 20,000	48	40.00	40.00
	20,000-40,000	43	35.80	75.80
	40,000-60,000	18	15.00	90.80
	Above 60,000	11	9.20	100.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**	
Area of living	Rural	34	28.00	28.00
	Urban	59	49.00	77.00
	Semi-Urban	27	23.00	100.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**	
Educational Qualification	SSLC	7	5.83	5.83
	HSC	11	9.13	14.96
	UG	58	48.34	66.3
	PG	44	36.70	100.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**	
Occupation	Business/profession	19	15.82	15.82
	Employed	50	41.67	57.49
	Students	43	35.84	93.33
	Home maker	8	6.67	100.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**	

Out of 120 respondents, 69 (57.50%) are male and 51 (42.50%) are female. This indicates that male participants slightly outnumber female participants, suggesting a marginally higher level of engagement or availability among men in the context of OTT platform usage. This gender distribution may reflect either increased interest or better accessibility among male viewers.

In terms of age, the largest group of respondents falls within the 15–25 years age bracket, comprising 55 individuals (45.80%), followed by the 25–35 age group with 29 respondents (24.40%). The remaining age categories include 35–45 years (10.80%), 45–55 years (10%), and above 55 years (9%). This pattern suggests that OTT platforms are more popular among the youth, particularly those aged 15 to 25, indicating a high digital consumption trend among younger users. The declining numbers with increasing age indicate lower OTT engagement among older adults, possibly due to differences in media preferences or digital adaptability.

When it comes to monthly income, the majority of respondents (48 or 40%) earn below ₹20,000, while 43 (35.80%) fall in the ₹20,000–₹40,000 bracket. Smaller portions earn between ₹40,000–₹60,000 (15%), and only 11 respondents (9.20%) earn above ₹60,000. This shows that lower- to middle-income users are the primary consumers of OTT content, likely drawn by the affordability and flexible access OTT platforms offer, as compared to traditional cable or theatre- based entertainment.

Regarding area of living, urban respondents dominate with 59 individuals (49%), followed by 34 from rural areas (28%) and 27 from semi-urban areas (23%). This indicates that OTT usage is more prevalent in urban settings, possibly due to better internet access, greater digital awareness, and broader content exposure. However, the notable presence of rural users shows that OTT platforms steadily gaining attraction in even innless urbanised region, improving digital infrastructure and outreach.

Among the 120 respondents, the largest segment holds an undergraduate (UG) degree, comprising 58 individuals (48.34%)**,** followed by 44 respondents (36.70%) with a postgraduate (PG) qualification. Respondents with higher secondary education (HSC) account for 11 (9.13%)**,** while those with SSLC qualification form the smallest group with 7 respondents (5.83%)**.** This distribution suggests that a majority of OTT platform users are well-educated, with a strong presence of graduates and postgraduates, indicating that higher education levels may be associated with greater OTT platform engagement.

Regarding occupation, the highest proportion of respondents, 50 (41.67%)**,** are employed, followed closely by 43 respondents (35.84%) who are students. Respondents engaged in business or professional activities account for 19 (15.82%), while homemakers constitute the smallest group with 8 respondents (6.67%)**.** This occupational pattern indicates that working professionals and students form the primary audience for OTT platforms.

6.2 Usage of OTT platforms

Table 2
Usage of OTT platforms

S.No.	Usage of OTT platforms	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
1.	Daily	43	35.84	35.84
2.	Weekly	36	30.00	65.84
3.	Fortnightly	11	9.17	75.01
4.	Monthly	17	14.17	89.18
5.	Occasionally	13	10.82	100.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**	

The above table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents based on how often they use OTT platforms. It is found that the highest number of respondents, 35.84% (43 respondents), use OTT platforms daily, followed by 30% (36 respondents) who use them weekly. About 14.17% (17 respondents) use OTT platforms monthly, while 10.82% (13 respondents) use them occasionally. Only 9.17% (11 respondents) reported using OTT platforms fortnightly. This clearly indicates that daily and weekly usage are the most common patterns among respondents, showing frequent engagement with OTT content.

6.3 Subscription of OTT platforms

Table 3 Subscription of OTT platforms

S.No.	Subscription of OTT platforms	Frequency	Percentage	Cumulative percentage
1.	1	40	33.34	33.34
2.	2	39	32.50	65.84
3.	3	22	18.32	84.16
4.	More than 3	19	15.84	100.00
	Total	**120**	**100.00**	

The above table shows the frequency and percentage distribution of respondents based on the number of OTT platforms they use. It is observed that the highest proportion of respondents, 33.34% (40 respondents), are using only one OTT platform**,** followed closely by 32.50% (39 respondents) using two platforms. About 18.32% (22 respondents) are subscribed to three platforms, while 15.84% (19 respondents) are using more than three platforms**.** This indicates that the majority of respondents prefer using one or two OTT platforms, suggesting selective usage based on their preferences and needs.

6.4 Association between Profile, Usage and subscription

Chi-Square test has been applied at 5% level of significance to test the association between profile and usage and subscription of OTT platforms. The null hypothesis framed for testing is that there is no significant association between the profile and usage and subscription of OTT platforms.

6.4.1 Profile of respondents and usage of OTT platforms

Table 4

Results of chi square analysis

Profile and usage	Calculated value	Table value	Degrees of freedom	Null Hypothesis accepted or Rejected	Inference
Gender and usage	90.446	9.488	4	Rejected	Significant

Age and usage	2.784	26.296	16	Accepted	Insignificant
Income and usage	2.986	21.026	12	Accepted	Insignificant
Area and usage	1.844	15.507	8	Accepted	Insignificant
Educational qualification and Usage	1.354	21.026	12	Accepted	Insignificant
Occupation and usage	1.753	21.026	12	Accepted	Insignificant

Source: Computed data

The above table presents the results of the Chi-square analysis conducted to examine the association between demographic profile variables and the usage of OTT platforms at a 0.05 level of significance. The calculated Chi-square value for gender and usage is 90.446, which is higher than the table value of 9.488 with 4 degrees of freedom, indicating a significant association. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected in this case. In contrast, the other demographic variables show calculated values lower than their respective table values, indicating no significant association.

The Chi-square value for age and usage is 2.784, which is lower than the table value of 26.296 with 16 degrees of freedom. The value for income and usage is 2.986, which is lower than the table value of 21.026 with 12 degrees of freedom. For area and usage, the calculated value is 1.844, while the table value is 15.507 with 8 degrees of freedom. In the case of educational qualification and usage, the value is 1.354 and for occupation and usage, it is 1.753, both of which are less than the table value of 21.026 at 12 degrees of freedom. Therefore, while the null hypothesis is rejected for gender, the null hypothesis is accepted for all other demographic variables, indicating no significant association between those variables and OTT usage.

6.4.2 Profile of respondents and Number of OTT platforms subscribed

Table 5

Results of chi square analysis

Profile and number of OTT platforms subscribed	Calculate d value	Table value	Degrees of freedom	Null Hypothesis accepted or Rejected	Inference
Gender and number of OTT platforms subscribed	89.572	7.815	3	Rejected	Significant
Age and number of OTT platforms subscribed	2.270	21.026	12	Accepted	Insignificant
Income and number of OTT platforms subscribed	1.934	16.919	9	Accepted	Insignificant
Area and number of OTT platforms subscribed	1.786	12.592	6	Accepted	Insignificant
Educational qualification and number of OTT platforms subscribed	1.402	16.919	9	Accepted	Insignificant
Occupation and number of OTT platforms subscribed	1.521	16.919	9	Accepted	Insignificant

Source: Computed data

The table shows the results of the chi-square analysis conducted to examine the association between the demographic profile of respondents and the number of OTT platforms subscribed to, at a 0.05 level of significance. The calculated chi-square value for gender and number of OTT platforms subscribed is 89.572, which is higher than the table value of 7.815 with 3 degrees of freedom, indicating a significant association. Hence, the null hypothesis is rejected for gender. However, the calculated values for other demographic variables are lower than their respective table values, showing no significant association. For age, the calculated value is 2.270 compared to a table value of 21.026 with 12 degrees of freedom. For income, the value is 1.934 against the

table value of 16.919 with 9 degrees of freedom. The value for area is 1.786, which is below the table value of 12.592 with 6 degrees of freedom. Similarly, for educational qualification and occupation, the values are 1.402 and 1.521 respectively, both below the table value of 16.919 with 9 degrees of freedom. Thus, while the null hypothesis is rejected for gender, it is accepted for all other demographic factors, indicating that gender alone shows a significant association with the number of OTT platforms subscribed.

7. Weighted Average Ranking Analysis

Weighted average ranking analysis method was used to determine the preference levels of various OTT platforms among respondents. For this method, weights were assigned in descending order from 10 to 1, where Rank I was assigned a weight of 10, Rank II a weight of 9, Rank III a weight of 8, and so on, until Rank X, which was assigned a weight of 1. Each respondent's ranking for a particular platform and content variety was multiplied by its corresponding weight, and the total weighted and mean score was calculated for each platform. This method helps to provide a more accurate reflection of user preferences by considering both frequency and priority of rankings given.

7.1 OTT platform Preferred

Table 6

S.No.	Platforms	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	Total score	Mean score	Rank
1	Netflix	18 (180)	18 (162)	17 (136)	16 (112)	13 (78)	18 (90)	6 (24)	7 (21)	3 (6)	4 (4)	813	6.77	III
2	Amazon	25 (250)	12 (108)	19 (152)	21 (147)	15 (90)	8(40)	12 (48)	5 (15)	1 (2)	2 (2)	854	7.11	II
3	Jio hotstar	33 (330)	15 (135)	12 (96)	19 (133)	12 (72)	11 (55)	9 (36)	4 (12)	2 (4)	3 (3)	876	7.30	I
4	Hulu	19 (190)	21 (189)	5 (40)	2(14)	18 (108)	3 (15)	4 (16)	13 (39)	21 (42)	14 (14)	667	5.56	VI
5	SunNXT	15 (150)	23 (207)	2 (16)	1 (7)	11 (66)	18 (90)	1 (4)	12 (36)	19 (38)	18 (18)	497	4.14	X
6	Zee 5	21 (210)	12 (108)	7 (56)	14 (98)	11 (114)	18 (90)	10 (40)	17 (51)	5 (10)	5 (5)	782	6.51	IV
7	Mxplayer	23 (230)	19 (171)	18 (144)	15 (105)	19 (30)	5 (25)	7 (28)	6 (18)	2 (4)	6 (6)	761	6.34	V
8	Alt Balaji	11 (110)	1 (117)	5 (40)	2 (14)	5 (30)	9 (45)	10 (40)	14 (42)	31 (62)	20 (20)	520	4.33	IX
9	Voot	16 (160)	1 (9)	2 (16)	15 (105)	16 (96)	3 (15)	3 (12)	21 (63)	30 (60)	13 (13)	549	4.57	VIII
10	Sony Liv	17 (170)	4 (36)	5 (40)	8 (56)	1 (6)	21 (105)	2 (8)	29 (87)	18 (36)	15 (15)	559	4.65	VII

Source: Primary data

Based on the total mean scores, Jio Hotstar emerged as the most preferred OTT platform with the highest mean score of 7.30, followed by Amazon Prime with 7.11, and Netflix with 6.77, securing the second and third positions respectively. Zee5 ranks fourth with a total score of 6.51, while MX Player holds the fifth position with 6.34. The platforms ranked lower in preference include Hulu 5.56 at sixth, Sony Liv 4.65 at seventh, Voot 4.57 at eighth, Alt Balaji 4.33 at ninth, and SunNXT is the least preferred with a score of 4.14, placing it at the tenth rank. This analysis indicates that Jio Hotstar, Amazon Prime, and Netflix are the top three choices among users, whereas SunNXT is the least favored platform.

7.2 Content variety preferred

Table 7

S.no	Content	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII	IX	X	XI	Total score	Mean score	Rank
1	Movies	39 (429)	12 (120)	16 (144)	15 (140)	13 (91)	11 (66)	2 (10)	3 (12)	2 (6)	4 (8)	3 (3)	1029	8.57	**I**
2	Tv series	21 (231)	19 (190)	12 (108)	18 (144)	8 (56)	2 (12)	2 (10)	3 (12)	14 (42)	3 (6)	18 (18)	829	6.90	**V**
3	Documentaries	31 (341)	14 (140)	11 (99)	9 (72)	15 (105)	12 (72)	13 (65)	4 (16)	5 (15)	5(10)	1 (1)	936	7.8	**IV**
4	Reality shows	15 (165)	9(90)	6(54)	7 (56)	12 (84)	3 (18)	10 (50)	13 (52)	18 (54)	15 (30)	12 (12)	665	5.54	**VIII**
5	Sports	29 (319)	22 (220)	13 (117)	7 (56)	17 (119)	11 (66)	3 (15)	2 (8)	2 (6)	5 (10)	9 (9)	945	7.87	**III**
6	Comedy	27 (297)	18 (180)	16 (144)	9 (72)	7 (49)	11 (66)	8 (40)	13 (52)	18 (54)	15 (30)	12 (12)	996	8.30	**II**
7	Crime shows	11 (121)	5 (50)	12 (108)	4 (32)	8 (56)	12 (72)	7 (35)	22 (88)	13 (39)	15 (30)	11 (11)	642	5.35	**X**
8	Food	15 (165)	9 (90)	4 (36)	10 (80)	2 (14)	4 (24)	20 (100)	17 (68)	12 (36)	18(36)	9 (9)	658	5.48	**IX**
9	Kids	12 (132)	11 (110)	4(36)	19 (152)	6 (42)	12 (72)	7 (35)	15 (60)	7 (21)	14 (28)	13 (13)	701	5.84	**VII**
10	News	8 (88)	7 (70)	5 (45)	12 (96)	8 (56)	7 (42)	24 (120)	4 (16)	17 (51)	15 (30)	13 (13)	624	5.2	**XI**
11	Talk shows	3 (33)	9 (90)	9 (171)	25 (200)	10 (70)	3 (18)	8 (40)	7 (28)	15 (45)	7 (14)	14 (14)	723	6.02	**VI**

Source: Primary data

The above table shows the preferred content variety on OTT platforms among respondents. Reveals that Movies hold the top position with the highest mean score of 8.57, securing Rank I, indicating they are the most preferred content type among viewers. This is followed closely by Comedy with a mean score of 8.30 (Rank II) and Sports with 7.87 (Rank III). Documentaries ranked IV with a mean score of 7.8, while TV Series followed at Rank V with 6.90. Talk Shows, despite their niche appeal, stood at Rank VI with a mean score of 6.02. Kids' content and Reality Shows were placed at Ranks VII and VIII, with mean scores of 5.84 and 5.54, respectively. Food Shows and Crime Shows held Ranks IX and X, scoring 5.48 and 5.35. News, with the lowest mean score of 5.2, ranked last (Rank XI), suggesting it is the least favored content type on OTT platforms.

8. Suggestions

The following are the major suggestions based on the study

- OTT platform users will be more engaged if their favourite content genres such as movies, sports, and comedy are made more accessible and frequently updated.
- Viewers from urban and semi-urban areas are more likely to subscribe to multiple platforms. Hence, location-specific marketing strategies can be implemented to boost subscriptions in rural regions as well.
- Viewers will enjoy OTT platforms more if a wide variety of content is offered, including regional, language-specific, and age-appropriate options.
- Subscription plans should be made more flexible and affordable to attract a wider range of income groups, since no strong income-based difference in usage was found.
- Even though content variety is important, platform features like user interface, streaming quality, and device compatibility also play a role in satisfaction and should be given proper attention.

9. Conclusion

This study highlights the significant influence of content variety on the selection and usage of OTT platforms among viewers. With the growing demand for digital entertainment, users prioritize platforms offering diverse and engaging content that aligns with their interests and lifestyles. The research findings indicate that genres like movies, sports, and comedy top the preference list, whereas talk shows and news are least favoured. JioHotstar, Amazon Prime, and MX Player emerged as the most preferred platforms, reflecting their ability to meet audience expectations in content delivery. The association between demographic variables and OTT usage further reveals how age, gender, income, occupation, income and area of residence shape user behavior and subscription patterns. For instance, urban and higher-income users are more inclined to subscribe to multiple platforms, whereas rural users show limited engagement, emphasising the need for targeted content and pricing strategies. Overall, content variety remains a critical factor driving user satisfaction, platform loyalty, and competitive advantage in the OTT space. Service providers should continually update and diversify content offerings to cater to evolving viewer

preferences. Additionally, enhancing user experience through improved interface, affordability, and regional content customization can further strengthen user engagement and market reach.

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