

Determinants of growth and sustained adoption of OTT platforms in India: a technology acceptance and uses and gratifications perspective

Tripti Kumari and Navjit Singh
Chandigarh University, Mohali, India

Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of this study was to understand the role of content localization, cross-platform availability, social media-driven content discovery, price sensitivity and user-generated content feedback in shaping consumer preferences and continuity of subscription.

Design/methodology/approach – This study employed a quantitative approach to examine over-the-top (OTT) platform usage among Indian users using convenience sampling through social media. A total of 635 valid responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics and structural equation modeling.

Findings – The study reveals that digital content localization (estimate = 0.221, C.R. = 6.121, $p < 0.001$), cross-platform accessibility (estimate = 0.411, C.R. = 8.772, $p < 0.001$) and pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling (estimate = 0.319, C.R. = 7.149, $p < 0.001$) are significant drivers of OTT platform subscription continuity. While social media influence and user-generated feedback enhance the perceived value of on-demand viewing, they do not directly impact long-term subscription continuity ($p > 0.05$). Perceived value does not mediate subscription continuity as it lacks a significant direct relationship with the outcome variable.

Research limitations/implications – Self-reported data carry systematic response biases, with an emphasis on the Indian market and Indian users, which is problematic in terms of external validity.

Originality/value – This study enhances current research literature by introducing a fusion of the technology acceptance model (TAM) and uses and gratifications theory (UGT) for analyzing OTT platform adoption and subscription longevity. Integrating social, economic, technological and content dimensions into a continuance model furthers our understanding of OTT platform adoption continuity in the Indian context. It combines technological, behavioral and content-related determinants into one framework and discloses that perceived value is not a mediator of subscription continuity, but rather functional and economic factors predominate over experiential perceptions in subscription continuity.

Keywords OTT platform, Digital content localization, Cross-platform accessibility, Subscription continuity, Technology acceptance model

Paper type Research article

1. Introduction

Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have transformed how audiences access and consume media content worldwide (Khanna *et al.*, 2025; Agarwal *et al.*, 2023). The growth of OTT platforms in India has been driven by internet expansion, smartphone penetration and changing media consumption habits (Bose, 2022). The Indian media and entertainment (M&E) industry has rebounded to pre-COVID levels and is projected to grow to US\$55–70bn by 2030 at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10–12%, driven by the expansion of OTT platforms, gaming, animation and visual effects (PTI, 2021). Alongside global giants like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Disney + Hotstar, regional players like Zee5, Sony Liv and MX Player have tailored their content for the Indian market to represent the linguistic and cultural diversity in the country (Ojha and Vaish, 2024). This digital transition is reshaping India's media landscape and consumer behavior (Lee *et al.*, 2021).



OTT viewership in India has grown rapidly, driven by a young population's preference for flexible, on-demand digital content over traditional television (Bhattacharjee (2022). KPMG's (2023) report suggests that the OTT sector in India is expected to grow by about 20% annually and is on the verge of becoming the largest in the world. The COVID-19 pandemic further accelerated OTT subscriptions and viewer engagement during periods of lockdown. OTT platforms continue to reshape traditional broadcasting through personalized viewing experiences. Younger audiences increasingly prefer OTT platforms because of their flexibility and multilingual content offerings (Nijhawan and Dahiya, 2020).

The OTT platforms in India, however, are a highly competitive market with global and regional players investing aggressively in original and localized content (Somani *et al.*, 2024). This sector serves a multilingual audience with diverse preferences, making digital content localization a key driver of growth (Tiwary, 2024). Platforms offer region-specific content in multiple Indian languages, enabling deeper market penetration across urban and rural audiences. They also leverage social media and user feedback to enhance content discovery and engagement (Koushik *et al.*, 2024). Cross-platform accessibility has become essential, enabling seamless viewing across multiple devices (Mao and Chang, 2023). However, pricing sensitivity and content discovery remain key challenges.

Recent OTT studies mainly rely on models such as technology acceptance model (TAM), Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT2) and Innovation Resistance Theory (IRT) to explain adoption behavior. Although these studies identify key predictors such as perceived usefulness and enjoyment, they primarily focus on isolated technological and behavioral factors. A major weakness in the current literature is its focus on initial adoption rather than how satisfaction and long-term engagement change over time. Moreover, content localization, social media discovery and user feedback are typically examined independently. Consequently, a significant gap exists in understanding the motivations behind long-term subscription continuity behavior, especially in diverse markets like India. Accordingly, this study integrates TAM and uses and gratifications theory (UGT) to explain both OTT adoption and subscription continuity.

Integrating TAM and UGT, this study proposes a model to account for both OTT adoption and subscription continuance in India. Unlike prior TAM–UGT studies that focused on adoption and short-term engagement, this study examines subscription continuance as a postadoption phenomenon in the Indian OTT market. The proposed model distinguishes technology acceptance and gratification factors to explain long-term subscription retention. It contrasts functional retention determinants with experiential engagement drivers, including access, pricing, content localization, social presence and entertainment preferences. The model extends technology acceptance research by explaining sustainable OTT subscription continuity in a competitive digital streaming environment.

Several studies have combined the TAM and UGT to clarify usage and behavioral intention toward OTT. However, these studies primarily explain initial adoption and short-term engagement. This study adopts a continuance framework that distinguishes functional retention determinants from experiential engagement drivers. It conceptualizes subscription continuity as a distinct postadoption construct influenced by technological, economic, content and social factors. The proposed model extends the TAM–UGT literature by explaining postadoption subscription continuity in the Indian OTT context.

This study extends TAM and UGT by explaining postadoption subscription continuity within the Indian OTT ecosystem. The proposed framework distinguishes functional retention drivers from experiential engagement drivers to explain long-term subscription continuity. The findings also indicate that perceived value does not mediate the relationship between these determinants and subscription continuity. By integrating technological, economic, social and content-related determinants, the study provides a broader explanation of digital service continuance in emerging markets.

1.1 Theoretical framework

This study integrates TAM (Davis *et al.*, 1989) and UGT (Ruggiero, 2000) to explain OTT adoption and subscription continuity. Perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) explain how consumers evaluate OTT platforms based on accessibility and perceived value (Mathieson, 1991). In the Indian context, PU reflects the value of diverse on-demand content, whereas PEOU reflects the ease of platform navigation across devices. UGT explains media use based on users' information, entertainment and social interaction needs. It emphasizes that users actively select media aligned with their preferences and cultural interests (Shao, 2009). Accordingly, culturally and linguistically relevant content enhances user engagement with OTT platforms in India.

Integrating TAM and UGT explains OTT usage through usefulness, ease of use and user gratification. Content localization fulfills the PU by giving users content that culturally resonates with them, improving engagement and retention. It has a direct positive effect on the user's desire to continue their OTT subscription. Because Indian consumers prefer culturally familiar media in a variety of languages, localization caters to these demands, leading to satisfaction and subscription continuity. Cross-platform accessibility is another critical driver based on the PEOU principle (Shin and Biocca, 2017). Users prefer seamless access across multiple devices. Multiplatform capability enhances subscription continuity by allowing easy switching between devices, complementing utility and retention. With flexible compatibility, OTT platforms cater to the changing viewing habits of Indian users who use multiple devices for media consumption.

The use of social media for content discovery falls under the social gratification aspect of UGT, stressing the importance of social validation in media consumption (Zolkepli *et al.*, 2018). Platforms like Instagram, Twitter and YouTube facilitate discovery while contributing to the visibility of OTT content. Social media induces content adoption since it resonates with users, creating an entertaining feedback loop. Because trending OTT shows and movies become popular topics online, users are likely to subscribe to view those (Yawalkar *et al.*, 2022). This hypothesis recognizes social media as a formidable medium for building OTT awareness, especially in India, where social media reporting is highly active.

Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling give rise to financial gratification, which is particularly pertinent in price-conscious markets like India. By offering valuable pricing options and bundling OTT subscriptions with internet or telecom plans, affordable pricing models attend to the PU concept of TAM by providing value and accessibility. Flexible pricing and bundling positively influence continuance, allowing users to subscribe affordably, attracting a wider audience and paving the way for sustained subscriptions.

Besides TAM, UGT and expectation confirmation theory (ECT), frameworks like UTAUT2 and customer loyalty models are widely used to explain technology continuance behavior. UTAUT2 emphasizes that habit, hedonic motivation, facilitating conditions and price value significantly influence continuance intentions in digital services. Similarly, customer loyalty models show that satisfaction, trust, switching barriers and relational commitment motivate long-term subscription continuity. While these approaches shed light on general technology continuance and retention, limited research applies these determinants to OTT services in individual or integrated contexts. Furthermore, they remain adoption-focused; few studies have developed an integrated model distinguishing short-term continuance from long-term subscription continuity in a digital environment. Thus, this study takes a continuance-oriented perspective, applying functional utilities and experiential engagement to explain OTT subscription continuity in a developing digital entertainment market.

The results also show that the functionally and utilitarian motivated variables affect continuation intention more than socially induced participation variables. That is, sustained usage intentions are related more to whether OTT providers provide continued convenience, value and access to more and diverse programs rather than merely momentary entertainment

satisfaction. This also found differences in factors affecting initial usage intentions from subscription continuity and supports the continuance perspective in technology usage. The results indicate that the lack of the mediating effect of perceived value implies that users give more emphasis to utility and functional watching experience on the platform, but not to the evaluation of the OTT service more broadly, when intending to continue their subscription. The results add to the extant debates over experiential satisfaction and functional utility as dominant antecedents in continuous OTT usage.

Based on the theoretical framework and conceptual diagram (Figure 1), the following hypotheses were proposed:

- H1.* Digital content localization positively influences OTT platform subscription continuity in India.
- H2.* Cross-platform accessibility has a positive impact on OTT platform subscription continuity.
- H3.* Social media influence on content discovery positively affects the adoption and continued use of OTT platforms.
- H4.* Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling significantly influence user decisions to maintain OTT platform subscriptions.
- H5.* User-generated content feedback positively impacts users' satisfaction with and continuity of OTT subscriptions.
- H6.* Perceived value of on-demand viewing mediates the relationship between cross-platform accessibility and OTT platform subscription continuity.
- H7.* Perceived value of on-demand viewing mediates the impact of social media influence on content discovery and OTT platform subscription continuity.
- H8.* Perceived value of on-demand viewing mediates the relationship between user-generated content feedback and OTT platform subscription continuity.

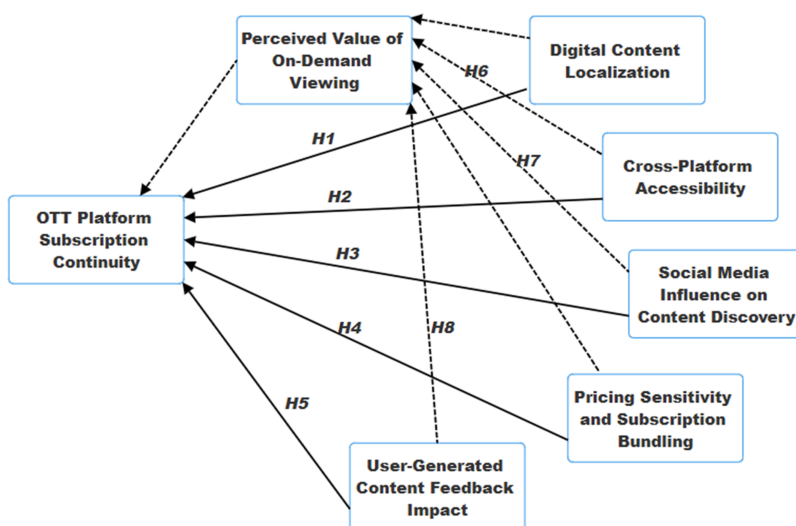


Figure 1. Conceptual framework

2. Literature review

Recent literature often treats initial adoption, subscription continuity and sustained retention as similar behaviors despite their theoretical differences. [Bhattacharyya et al. \(2022\)](#) and [Arora et al. \(2025\)](#) mainly focus on factors influencing initial OTT adoption. [Sujatha et al. \(2025\)](#) found that postpandemic subscription continuity is influenced more by service quality than adoption-related utilities. Researchers examining psychological motivation often confuse engagement with retention. [Sharma et al. \(2023\)](#) emphasized emotional gratification, while [Santos and Schlesinger \(2026\)](#) highlighted brand love and engagement. [Permana et al. \(2025\)](#) linked user sentiment with Quality of Experience (QoE) and satisfaction, but not with subscription continuity.

Existing OTT literature examines technological, emotional, social and economic factors separately, with adoption studies emphasizing usefulness and ease of use, while engagement studies focus on entertainment gratification and social interaction. Consequently, a unified explanation of continued OTT subscription remains limited, and distinct behaviors like adoption intention, engagement, satisfaction, loyalty and retention are often treated as synonymous constructs, causing theoretical ambiguity and weakening predictive power. As a result, current literature lacks a consensus on whether continuing subscriptions are ultimately driven by functional utility (such as convenience, cost and access) or entertainment-driven and socially driven experiential gratification. To address this, this study explicitly distinguishes functional retention factors from experiential engagement factors within a unified continuance framework.

In addition to conceptualizing OTT platforms from a technology acceptance and media consumption standpoint, research in business and management has started regarding OTT platforms as digital service ecosystems. In this approach, it becomes essential that customer relationships, competitiveness and co-creation of value are important elements of sustainable success. Companies resort to strategies like differentiated content portfolios, subscriptions and personalized recommendations as causes of market success. Moreover, recent research indicates that successful growth of the platform is dependent on users who continuously use services and derive satisfaction, as well as firms that keep the same users through innovative activities. Thus, the need to understand why people continue subscribing to OTT platforms requires a combination of theories of technology adoption and strategies of management. The mentioned wider business and management view makes the basis for the present study possible through the definition of the continuation of OTT watching as two concepts – one is the aspect of consumer behavior and the second one is the strategic business outcome ([Kour and Chhabria, 2022](#); [Sharma et al., 2023](#); [Khanna et al., 2025](#); [Kim et al., 2024](#); [Santos and Schlesinger, 2026](#)).

Recent studies emphasize the importance of continuance behavior and postadoption engagement in the OTT ecosystem. For example, [Menon \(2022\)](#) found that convenience, amusement and customization influence subscription continuity. Likewise, [Kour and Chhabria \(2022\)](#) found that platform stickiness is closely correlated with user experience design, recommendation systems and retention processes. Furthermore, [Chen et al. \(2023\)](#) suggested that combining behavioral and technological variables improves the explanation of OTT continuance behavior.

Existing OTT literature has had contradictory results concerning factors influencing the continued intention of long-term adoption. Some studies emphasize social influence and entertainment gratification, while others highlight convenience, accessibility and pricing. The role of local content remains debated between cultural engagement and market differentiation. Most previous studies approach techno, social, experiential and economic antecedents independently without offering insight into the dynamics of continuous long-term subscription to OTT. Therefore, an integrative continuance framework is needed to distinguish engagement factors from retention factors.

International researchers have, in recent years, been moving their research focus away from explaining initial technology adoption and towards postadoption continuance behavior. ECT

maintains that continued technology usage will be determined by whether users can validate their expectations for a technology product after its adoption, and continued technology usage is also explained by satisfaction with system attributes within a larger IS continuance. Likewise, customer loyalty research also points to trust, cost of switching and commitment as drivers of continued customer retention, while the study into habit formation would suggest that continued use of the technology becomes automatic and decreases reliance on the cognitive decision-making process. While they have advanced a long way toward the analysis of continuance in the context of digital services, these three perspectives seem to have rarely been addressed concurrently within OTT platforms, particularly in emerging economies. Furthermore, prior research appears to have focused on antecedents belonging to either the technological, psychological or behavioral domain instead of combining economic, social, functional and content-based perspectives within one model of continued usage.

Despite continuance theories such as the expectation confirmation model (ECM), IS continuance theory, customer loyalty theory, switching cost theory and habit form, they have made a substantial impact on the understanding of postadoption behavior; nonetheless, research thus far has applied theories typically in isolation. ECM and IS continuance research focus on satisfaction, confirmation and usefulness as predictor variables, while customer loyalty and switching cost theory focus on maintenance via trust, commitment and obstacles to switching. In contrast, research on the acquisition of habits suggests that the reason for continuation is an automatic behavioral process due to repetition of a behavior. Due to the different perspectives, contradictory findings as to what ultimately leads people to continue an OTT subscription have already been produced, as either psychological and relational drivers or functional benefits and economic utility gain importance. Accordingly, the existing literature has no unifying mechanism to differentiate determinants of functional retention from determinants of experiential usage. Thus, this paper applies both technology acceptance and uses and gratifications theories while adopting subscription continuity as a separate postadoption construct to offer a more complete rationale for sustained OTT service usage.

3. Research methodology

The quantitative research method is used for studying the usage, attitude, satisfaction and subscription continuity of subscribers in the Indian context. The respondents used were actual OTT users, with a focus on user behavioral patterns and subscription continuity. The sampling method used was a nonprobability convenience sampling method, primarily through online and social media channels, since there is no comprehensive sampling frame for OTT users in India. An active OTT user, Indian and aged over 18 was an inclusion criterion for a respondent. An initial screening question was asked of the respondents before moving on to the question, "Have you actively used an OTT platform within the last month?" "Yes" was selected by the respondents. To overcome the potential issue of methodological limitations and diversity of the samples, the survey link was broadcast through various online platforms, such as regional entertainment communities on Facebook and Instagram, and through professional sites like LinkedIn, to have respondents from metro, semi-urban and tier 2/tier 3 regions. Procedural remedies were used to reduce common method bias. These include anonymity of respondents, guarantee of confidentiality and psychological separation of measures. Furthermore, a single-factor Harman test was conducted where the first factor explains less than 50% of the total variance, and common method bias is not a critical concern.

Furthermore, nonresponse bias was explored by comparing early and late responses across the main measurement constructs. Since no statistically significant difference between these groups was found, nonresponse bias was not a major issue in the results. While convenience sampling limits generalizability to the whole population, it is widely used in technology adoption and digital consumption research due to its practicality in reaching active platform users. To mitigate potential sampling bias and increase diversity, responses were obtained from Indian OTT users of diverse demographic, occupational and geographical backgrounds.

Multicollinearity was evaluated using variance inflation factor (VIF) values, which fell within the accepted range. Although these checks improve methodological robustness, potential self-selection bias remains and generalization to the wider population cannot be fully guaranteed.

Although the choice of this convenience sampling technique limits the statistical generalizability of the findings due to the absence of an appropriate sampling frame, it has been in popular use in technological adoption studies where the target population does not possess the facility of enumerating each individual of the universe of that population to determine the sample. We used a diverse range of respondents who varied on demographic variables such as age, education, occupation, locale and extent of OTT use to enrich the diversity of the sample.

Procedural remedies, including ensuring respondent anonymity and confidentiality, were implemented to minimize common method bias, with Harman's single-factor test confirming that the first unrotated factor accounted for less than 50% of the total variance. An online questionnaire, covering constructs such as PU, PEOU and social media influence, was distributed via platforms including Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

In addition to Harman's single-factor test, procedural safeguards were imposed to reduce common method variance. The questionnaire questions were designed to minimize vagueness; respondents were notified that no right or wrong answers existed in the survey, and the promise was made that answers were secured anonymously. Confidentiality guarantees also reduced apprehension about evaluation by instructors and the need to give socially acceptable responses on the survey. Procedures should protect the confidentiality of the collected responses.

The questionnaire items were modified based on the scales that are known to be validated in the previous literature so that they would be content valid. In particular, the questions on PU and PEOU were modified after [Davis et al. \(1989\)](#), whereas the gratification-related constructs were based on the previous research on UGT. A pilot study that involved 50 respondents was conducted to determine the clarity, reliability and construct relevance. The pilot data provided Cronbach's alpha values that were greater than 0.70 across all constructs, which suggests preliminary internal consistency. According to pilot feedback, the wording of the items relating to pricing underwent minor changes to better fit the semantics of Indian consumers (e.g. explaining the examples of such bundling as subscription). Construct validity was also studied by confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), whereas reliability was studied by the use of Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. The final questionnaire is a closed-ended survey with Likert scale items with a five-point scale, where the first one (strongly disagree) is rated 1 and the last one (strongly agree) is rated 5.

This measurement was developed by modifying earlier established scales and adapting them to the context of the Indian OTT platform by retaining the theoretical meaning of the items. Only negligible word modifications were made to ensure better readability, appropriate cultural nuances and a better fit within the specific context of the research, but not in the meaning of the variables. The developed questionnaire was content-validated by three experts academically specializing in digital media and technology adoption. The results of the pilot study provided confidence in understanding and clarity of the items for the final administration.

Eight hundred questionnaires were given out, and 800 responses were obtained. Of these, 635 valid answers were included in the final analysis, having filtered 165 answers using predefined data cleaning criteria: incomplete submissions (missed more than 10% of data), straight-lining patterns (rated all items the same) or completion in an unrealistically brief time (less than two minutes). The response rate was found to be valid at 79.4%. This is considered an adequate sample size that is used in determining statistical reliability and validity, especially in structural equation modeling (SEM) analysis. Data were collected over four weeks.

Data analysis utilized descriptive statistics to profile respondents, followed by a two-step SEM approach to test hypotheses, covering measurement and structural assessments. Before SEM, data were validated for normality, multicollinearity and outliers, with mediation effects tested via bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples.

Demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, country and frequency of OTT usage were used as control variables in an initial analysis to examine demographic disparities

in continuity. Inclusion of controls strengthens the structural model by confirming that relationships found primarily represented theoretically driven constructs, not demographics.

4. Results

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of OTT platform users. Most respondents belonged to the 18–24 and 25–34 age groups, indicating higher OTT usage among younger users. Gender distribution was nearly balanced. Most respondents were from semiurban and urban areas. This suggests greater OTT adoption in developed regions. Most respondents were undergraduate or postgraduate users. Smart TVs and laptops were the preferred devices for OTT consumption. Most users subscribed to multiple OTT platforms. Most respondents spent 6–15 h weekly on OTT platforms.

Table 2 presents Cronbach's alpha values of 0.845 for personal innovativeness, 0.863 for use intention, 0.876 for perceived use value and 0.870 for technology readiness. All values exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70. Composite reliability values also confirmed construct reliability. AVE values above 0.50 confirmed convergent validity. Therefore, the constructs were suitable for SEM analysis. Furthermore, Harman's single-factor test showed that no more than 50% of the total variance was explained by the first unrotated factor. So, common method bias is not an issue here.

Discriminant validity in Table 3 was additionally assessed using the heterotrait–monotrait ratio (HTMT). All HTMT values were below 0.85, confirming satisfactory discriminant validity.

Table 1. Frequency distribution of sociodemographic characteristics of study participants

Demographic factors		Frequency %	Variance	<i>t</i>
Age	18–24	42.8	1.507	40.909
	25–34	32.0		
	35–44	9.8		
	45–54	8.0		
	55 and above	7.3		
Gender	Male	51.7	0.250	72.648
	Female	48.3		
Geographic location	Urban	38.5	0.552	59.855
	Semi-urban	41.5		
	Rural	20.0		
Education level	High school	5.8	0.431	91.138
	Undergraduate	47.5		
	Postgraduate	43.3		
	Others	3.3		
Device preference for OTT consumption	Smartphone	11.7	0.985	74.465
	Tablet	13.3		
	Laptop/Computer	36.7		
	Smart TV	38.3		
Current subscription status	Subscribed to 1 OTT platform	18.3	0.721	63.140
	Subscribed to 2–3 OTT platforms	54.5		
	Subscribed to 4 or more	17.2		
	Not subscribed	10.0		
Average weekly screen time on OTT platforms	Less than 3 h	6.8	0.991	81.366
	3–6 h	9.3		
	6–10 h	39.2		
	10–15 h	35.7		
	More than 15 h	9.0		

Table 2. Reliability and validity

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (CR)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
OTT platform subscription continuity	0.876	0.891	0.621
Digital content localization	0.862	0.884	0.604
Cross-platform accessibility	0.871	0.889	0.615
Social media influence on content discovery	0.845	0.872	0.583
Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling	0.859	0.882	0.598
User-generated content feedback impact	0.868	0.886	0.610
Perceived value of on-demand viewing	0.874	0.893	0.625

Table 3. Discriminant validity assessment using HTMT ratio

Constructs	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. OTT platform subscription continuity						
2. Digital content localization	0.741					
3. Cross-platform accessibility	0.768	0.702				
4. Social media influence on content discovery	0.683	0.654	0.711			
5. Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling	0.734	0.698	0.726	0.682		
6. User-generated content feedback impact	0.671	0.648	0.694	0.744	0.703	
7. Perceived value of on-demand viewing	0.722	0.701	0.738	0.756	0.719	0.774

Table 4 displays the most prominent growth and adoption variables that have an impact on user engagement with the OTT platform, with the mean scores representing the user perceptions and standard deviations representing the variability of responses. All constructs showed positive mean scores. The close mean values suggest limited descriptive variation across constructs. OTT platform subscription continuity achieved a mean value of 3.85 (± 0.89), which is considered a moderate to high tendency among the users to continue subscriptions over time. Likewise, digital content localization (3.76 ± 0.89) and cross-platform accessibility (3.84 ± 0.85) indicate that the relevance of culturally sensitive content and the ability to access devices are also important in the process of creating user experiences. The influence of social media on content discovery (3.82 ± 0.79) and user-generated content feedback (3.85 ± 0.83) indicates that interactive and social factors have a strong effect on the perceptions of users, but the exact effect needs to be studied based on inferential analysis. Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling (3.81 ± 0.86) emphasize the importance of affordability in subscription choices. Standardized estimates are also insightful in that they show statistically significant differences in the magnitude of effects across predictors. Cross-

Table 4. Descriptive statistics of key constructs

Growth and adoption factors	Mean $\pm$ SD	<i>t</i>
OTT platform subscription continuity	3.85 $\pm$ 0.89	105.194
Digital content localization	3.76 $\pm$ 0.89	103.175
Cross-platform accessibility	3.84 $\pm$ 0.85	110.775
Social media influence on content discovery	3.82 $\pm$ 0.79	117.035
Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling	3.81 $\pm$ 0.86	108.400
User-generated content feedback impact	3.85 $\pm$ 0.83	112.839
Perceived value of on-demand viewing	3.86 $\pm$ 0.88	106.745

platform accessibility showed the strongest impact on subscription continuity. While it still held significant meaning in terms of impact size, digital content localization was clearly overshadowed. Utility-driven features influenced retention more strongly than engagement variables. However, structural relationships provided stronger insights than descriptive comparisons.

As presented in Table 5, the resulting SEM fit indices demonstrate compliance with the accepted criterion, thereby providing evidence of good fit and validity of the structural model.

In Table 6, the SEM demonstrated acceptable fit. All fit indices satisfied the recommended thresholds. Multicollinearity was also tested with VIF values reported for all relevant constructs and was accepted with values less than acceptable limits. The SEM yielded significant findings for variables that influence OTT subscription continuity and perceived value of on-demand viewing (Table 6, Figure 2). With R^2 values of 0.58 for OTT platform subscription continuity and 0.62 for perceived value of on-demand viewing, the model possessed strong explanatory power. Digital content localization significantly improved subscription continuity (estimate = 0.221, C.R. = 6.121, $p < 0.001$), lending support to H1. Cross-platform accessibility showed the strongest effect on subscription continuity (estimate = 0.411, C.R. = 8.772, $p < 0.001$), thus supporting H2. Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling also positively influenced continuity (estimate = 0.319, C.R. = 7.149, $p < 0.001$), supporting H4.

Further analysis on standardized estimates highlights the relative effect sizes; for instance, cross-platform accessibility had the largest effect on subscription continuity,

Table 5. Structural equation model fit indices

Fit index	Recommended threshold	Obtained value
CFI	>0.90	0.948
TLI	>0.90	0.941
RMSEA	<0.08	0.048
SRMR	<0.08	0.042

Table 6. Pathway analysis through SEM

Pathway		Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	<i>p</i>
Perceived value of on-demand viewing	← Digital content localization	0.093	0.039	2.374	0.018
	← Cross-platform accessibility	-0.022	0.051	-0.424	0.671
	← Social media influence on content discovery	0.412	0.045	9.074	***
	← Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling	-0.203	0.048	-4.261	***
	← User-generated content feedback impact	0.644	0.038	16.886	***
OTT platform subscription continuity	← Digital content localization	0.221	0.036	6.121	***
	← Cross-platform accessibility	0.411	0.047	8.772	***
	← Social media influence on content discovery	0.037	0.045	0.822	0.411
	← Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling	0.319	0.045	7.149	***
	← User-generated content feedback impact	-0.023	0.043	-0.533	0.594
	← Perceived value of on-demand viewing	-0.001	0.038	-0.027	0.979

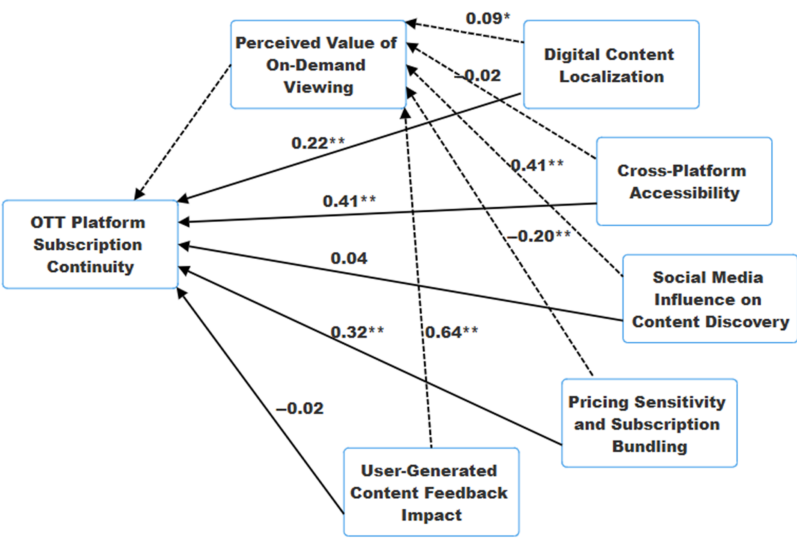


Figure 2. Pathway coefficients of the decomposed constructs

followed by pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling, whereas digital content localization had only a moderately significant impact. The effect size results seem to indicate that utility features outweigh engagement features as primary drivers of long-term retention behaviors. In contrast, there was no significant impact on subscription continuity from social media influence on content discovery (C.R. = 0.822, $p = 0.411$), therefore rejecting H3. The significant positive impact on the perceived value of on-demand viewing (estimate = 0.412, $p < 0.001$) demonstrates social media's indirect impact. Similarly, user-generated content feedback has no significant impact on subscription continuity (estimate = -0.023, $p = 0.594$), yet it strongly impacts perceived value of on-demand viewing (estimate = 0.644, $p < 0.001$). Social interactions influenced perceived experience rather than retention.

The perceived value of on-demand viewing does not significantly influence subscription continuity, with bootstrap analysis revealing no indirect mediation effects. This indicates that OTT users increasingly treat streaming as a utility, where practical factors like cost and accessibility impact retention more than specific content preferences. For more details, visit the study's findings. These findings provide theoretical contributions to TAM, UGT and expectation confirmation theory, with cross-platform accessibility and pricing flexibility reinforcing TAM's validity regarding perceived utility and ease of use in mature platforms. Furthermore, digital content localization extends UGT by showing that user gratification is heavily influenced by the cultural and linguistic relevance of content.

Social media discovery and user-generated content feedback influence the perceived value of on-demand viewing, but not directly subscription continuity, playing only a partial supporting role for UGT. Furthermore, the lack of significant mediation by perceived value suggests that users are increasingly viewing streaming services as interchangeable digital commodities rather than forging long-term loyalty. Research indicates a strong distinction between experiential engagement factors and the drivers of user retention, with utilitarian factors like accessibility, localization and pricing acting as direct predictors for continued OTT viewing. While user-generated content and social media influence the perceived experience, companies must prioritize functional features for successful user retention.

5. Discussion

The study suggests that in linguistically diverse markets, digital content localization extends the PU of OTT subscriptions beyond functional utility to include cultural relevance. This synthesis of technology acceptance and uses and gratifications theory indicates that aligning content with user identity drives engagement and subscription continuity.

Similarly, PEOU is critical, as demonstrated by cross-platform accessibility. Seamless device transition decreases the friction and mental effort required to consume content, thus serving as a powerful facilitator of long-term behavior. This observation refines the TAM framework by showing that in a mobile-first economy, ease of use extends beyond interface user-friendliness to include ubiquitous access. While [Sindagimath et al. \(2023\)](#) and [Kumari \(2020\)](#) point out the accessibility of local content, this study explains that technological ease of access and cultural relevancy are the factors that secure retention, combining functional efficiency (TAM) and convenience gratifications (UGT).

Pricing sensitivity and subscription bundling became one of the leading causes of continuity by introducing economic constraints as an essential factor of behavioral intention into the TAM framework. The relevance of this factor implies that in the case of price-sensitive demographics, the cost-value evaluation prevails over the other motivational factors. Affordability acts as an important facilitating condition for continued OTT usage. This result confirms [Gupta et al. \(2021\)](#) but introduces a theoretical dimension: pricing is not only a marketing instrument but also an organizational precondition to the perceived utility of committing to the long term.

These findings are consistent with other international research reporting that functional value, platform ease of use and affordability are more dominant drivers for continuance behavior than social presence. Although prior TAM- and UGT-based studies focus predominantly on perceived usefulness, amusement value and behavioral intention, these findings show that the persistence of long-term subscription continuity depends more on practical service aspects than on experience-seeking motives, according to the authors of the study. This is another facet that expands the continuance literature to propose that the factors that maintain user continuance vary from those of technology adoption.

The insignificant direct relationships between social media influence and user-generated content feedback generate a critical theoretical implication. Although these factors have a strong impact on perceived value, their lack of a direct effect on continuity implies a theoretical difference between the factors that lead to discovery and those that lead to retention. Social media acts as an external stimulus that initiates initial adoption and trial usage but does not maintain long-term loyalty. UGT elaborates on this by distinguishing social integrative gratification from content gratification, showing that while social validation increases the perceived value of the viewing experience, it does not substitute intrinsic content utility.

The insignificant mediation of perceived value of on-demand viewing suggests that in mature streaming markets, perceived value operates as a hygiene factor rather than a driver of subscription loyalty. As the industry shifts from a novelty-seeking to a utility-driven model, users make subscription decisions based on practical, functional utility (TAM) rather than mere experiential satisfaction. Therefore, high quality of use no longer guarantees retention as once assumed by traditional satisfaction-loyalty models.

In this context, the absence of a mediating role might arise from the fact that OTT platforms have matured into sophisticated digital platforms in which, to some extent, perceived value may be treated more as a baseline requirement instead of a key determinant factor. Hence, while acceptable content and viewing experience might be construed as prerequisite service attributes for subscriptions for which good experiences and, subsequently, perceived value are expected to contribute towards subscription renewal decisions, more predominantly, they become more contingent on more tangible and concrete drivers such as price (cost accessibility) and cultural sensitivity of content (localized preferences). Hence, perceived value might not seem to influence user intention to subscribe to OTT.

6. Theoretical implications

The study offers an integrative continuance-oriented view by developing a combined technology-based and user-oriented approach to OTT usage behavior, shifting the focus from initial adoption to long-term subscription continuation and sustained user retention. The results reveal that utilitarian and function-based variables such as cross-platform availability, subscription flexibility and content localization have a greater impact on subscription continuity than gratification-based factors. Ultimately, this research extends the TAM and UGT frameworks by explicitly disentangling the specific factors that drive platform engagement from those that secure user retention.

In the Indian market, OTT subscription continuity is driven by tangible benefits, convenience and culturally appropriate content, rather than perceived pleasure, with value acting as a hygiene factor. Research indicates that factors for initial content discovery differ from those for long-term retention, suggesting that gratification-based perceptions do not fully explain behavior in competitive markets. For more details, visit the source.

In addition, our results offer insights into the technology continuance stream of technology adoption literature and reveal that postadoption behavior is determined by multiple interacting and reinforcing continuance mechanisms, rather than by technology acceptance alone. Finally, functional attributes on platforms gain influence over time and accordingly extend TAM and UGT to address continued usage. These offer theoretical grounding for the incorporation of the continuance construct in technology adoption research, such as trust in the platform, habit, switches and customer loyalty.

7. Practical implications

From a managerial perspective, these findings suggest that OTT providers should prioritize long-term utility over short-term engagement strategies. The empirical results reveal that accessibility across platforms, pricing flexibility and content localization has a greater impact on subscription continuation than social-driven engagement attributes. Hence, OTT service providers entering emerging markets must focus on optimizing technology infrastructure, multidevice seamless accessibility, low-bandwidth streaming capabilities and adaptive pricing architectures to retain users long-term. Particularly, subscription affordability, bundling plans and an unhindered viewing experience across mobile phones, tablets and smart televisions are significant attributes affecting continued usage among Indian users. Moreover, the significant impact of content localization implies that investments in multilingual recommendation systems, culturally adaptive user interfaces and localized storytelling – rather than generic worldwide content expansion – will achieve greater success in facilitating long-term subscription continuity.

The results further indicate that building localized and culturally relevant content ecosystems is highly effective for retaining users. Regionalized content libraries and multilingual entertainment content help service providers differentiate themselves from the competition and increase audience reliance on the platforms. Hence, to achieve sustained subscription continuity in emerging markets, service providers must build and enhance cultural relevance alongside technological convenience.

From our empirical evidence, it can be suggested that OTT services ought to invest in multilingual media libraries, income-based pricing packages, synchronization among different platforms and low-bandwidth optimized media streams. Given that pricing and accessibility explained more subscription retention than those relating to social interaction attributes, for the attention of managers, resources should be placed more into aspects such as service availability, economic factors and personalized media options to strengthen long-term subscriptions.

Social media integration boosts content discovery and perceived engagement, yet these experiential factors do not directly drive long-term OTT subscription retention. Continued subscription behaviors are more strongly influenced by functional utility, affordability and service consistency than by generic experience enhancements.

These findings offer significant practical implications for OTT managers in emerging markets. First, platforms improve retention by offering localized subscription bundles tailored to income segments across metro, tier 2 and tier 3 areas. Second, they enhance convenience and cultural relevance through AI-powered multilingual recommendation systems and localized UI customization. Third, they must guarantee consistent service functionality across various devices and low-bandwidth capabilities. Fourth, managers should separate acquisition from retention strategies; social media integration suits content discovery and initial adoption, while retention must focus on pricing flexibility, usability and service reliability. Ultimately, service utility rather than temporary engagement drives sustainable growth.

Overall, the results offer useful guidance for industry practitioners and government decision-makers who want to ensure the long-term sustainability of the OTT industry. OTT companies must focus on usability, strategies related to the development of multilingual content, flexible pricing policies and interdevice communications in order to achieve higher levels of subscriber retention and gain a competitive advantage in their sectors. On a governmental level, investing in the development of telecom infrastructure, supporting the production of regional content, creating multilingual digital products through the use of innovative digital technology and establishing transparent regulations for consumer protection, preventing unfair competition and keeping the internet secure can ensure the sustainable growth of the OTT industry.

8. Conclusion

The results suggest that functional benefits of the OTT platforms and economic viability strongly correlate with long-term OTT subscription persistence for Indian users, while perceived value and social benefits have a more significant influence on user experience and less on long-term OTT subscription continuity behavior.

9. Limitations and future research

Some of the limitations of this study include the presence of possible systematic response bias due to the reliance on self-reports and the limited generalization of results as the study exclusively concentrates on the Indian OTT market. While it is possible to acquire invaluable knowledge regarding the behavior of OTT subscribers in India, the implications of the findings should be contextualized within the Indian digital ecosystem with its specific features such as a huge variety of dialects, relatively cheap mobile Internet, very fast penetration of smartphones into the Indian market and the developing subscription economy. Therefore, it is necessary to understand that these relationships cannot be transferred to developed markets or to regions with other cultural and technological, regulatory and competitive environments. Besides, the study is designed as a cross-sectional study, which means that it cannot examine the process of changes in user behavior over time and study causal relations between variables. Further work should be conducted to validate the proposed framework in different countries and cultures with the use of continuance-oriented theories such as ECT, UTAUT2, diffusion of innovation and customer loyalty theories.

Longitudinal designs differentiate between transient engagement, continued subscription adherence and habitual use in longitudinal studies. Future theories should include novel concepts such as digital weariness, viewing bingeing, belief in the algorithm, transparency of recommendations, costs of switching, dependency on vehicles, augmented virtuality and habit development. The exploration of unique markets shall enhance the understanding of the manner in which local distinctiveness, cultural patterns of consumption, economic instability and preference inclination determine the long-term continuity of subscriptions. Research should pay attention to

mediating and moderating the effects of satisfaction, trust, perceived risks, loyalty and connection with the platform. Finally, the combination of qualitative and quantitative methods would allow a more complete understanding of psychological and causal factors behind the decisions of users concerning retention. Future research could elaborate on the impact of artificial intelligence on personalized recommendations, trust in platforms, protection of privacy and transparency of algorithms. Cross-cultural studies would generalize the conclusions of the theory and prove or disprove their applicability across different contexts.

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Corresponding author

Tripti Kumari can be contacted at: jtripti21@gmail.com