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HABIT FORMATION AND CONTINUOUS USAGE OF OTT PLATFORMS: AN EXTENDED UTAUT PERSPECTIVE

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Abstract

This study examines the behavioral factors that affect the intention to adopt and continue using Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms within the Indian context, utilizing an expanded framework of the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2). This study combines essential elements—content quality, hedonic motivation, personal innovativeness, and perceived value—with barriers like content overload and perceived complexity to elucidate users' engagement patterns with OTT platforms. The data collection involved a structured survey administered to 572 respondents, followed by analysis utilizing Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM). The results indicate that the intention to adopt serves as a significant predictor of ongoing usage, with content quality and personal innovativeness identified as the primary influencing factors. On the other hand, an excess of content greatly obstructs both the adoption and usage behaviors. This study advances theoretical understanding by expanding UTAUT2 into media-focused contexts and provides actionable insights for OTT providers looking to improve user retention via tailored content and optimized interfaces. The discussion includes implications, limitations, and potential directions for future inquiry.

Keywords: *OTT adoption, Intention to Adopt, Continuous usage of OTT. UTAUT-2*

INTRODUCTION:

The proliferation of Over-The-Top platforms has revolutionized media consumption, transitioning viewers from traditional broadcasting models to on-demand streaming services (Baig & Yadegaridehkordi, 2025). This shift has not only altered viewing habits but also introduced a new dynamic in how content is discovered, consumed, and continuously engaged with (Cardoso et al., 2022; Thurman et al., 2023). Understanding the factors driving the adoption and sustained usage of these platforms is crucial for both service providers and marketers aiming to optimize user engagement and subscription models (Dasgupta & Grover, 2019). The unified theory of acceptance and use of technology serves as a robust framework for examining technology acceptance and utilization, incorporating elements from eight earlier models to provide a comprehensive understanding of user behavior (Momani, 2020). The UTAUT model posits that behavioral intention significantly influences the actual acceptance and use of technology (Demsash et al., 2024). Subsequently, Venkatesh et al. adapted this model to better suit consumer contexts, introducing the UTAUT2 which includes additional constructs like hedonic motivation, price value, and habit (Chang et al., 2019).

The transition from initial adoption to habitual usage of OTT platforms is a multifaceted process influenced by a range of factors including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, and facilitating conditions, all of which are integral components of the UTAUT2 model (Alshehri et al., 2013)

LITEREATURE REVIEW:

Personal Innovativeness (PI)

Personal innovativeness denotes an individual's inclination to early embrace new technology and investigate innovative offerings. In the case of OTT, Bhattacharyya et al. (2022) determine that PI substantially influences both the desire to adopt and the ongoing usage. Individuals exhibiting strong innovativeness frequently see OTT platforms as innovative and valuable, enhancing both their initial and sustained participation. Nyarenda (2020) experimentally substantiates PI as a crucial precursor to both behavioral intention and prolonged digital media use.

H1: Personal innovativeness has a significant positive effect on users' intention to adopt OTT platforms.

Content Quality (CQ)

The content quality includes aspects such as its perceived richness, personalization, cultural relevance, and the diversity of media formats. This has become a key element in drawing users in and keeping them engaged. Lo et al. (2024) emphasize the importance of content quality as a vital factor in the S-O-R model that drives both adoption intention and continuance behavior.

Furthermore, Talwar et al. (2024) contend that platforms providing high-quality, varied content foster greater engagement and minimize churn, particularly during times of limited physical activity such as the COVID-19 pandemic.
H2: Content quality has a significant positive effect on intention to adopt OTT platforms.

Price Value (PV)

The price value involves assessing the benefits gained in comparison to the costs involved. In OTT services, this encompasses financial worth, ease of access, emotional fulfillment, and efficiency in time management. Sharma and Kushwah (2025) highlight that perceived value encompasses multiple dimensions, including functional, social, and emotional aspects, which positively influence both the intention to adopt and loyalty to the platform. In a similar vein, Park et al. (2022) provide empirical evidence that PV notably improves both satisfaction and continuance intentions within OTT environments.
H3: Price value has a significant positive effect on intention to adopt OTT platforms.

Hedonic Motivation (HM)

Hedonic motivation (HM) reflects the enjoyment, pleasure, and fun associated with engaging with OTT content. In platforms focused on leisure, HM holds significant importance. Chanda and Islam (2024) indicate that entertainment-seeking behavior serves as a significant motivator for OTT users, particularly within older demographics. Nyarenda (2020) further establishes that HM is positively linked to both the initial and ongoing use of OTT platforms, emphasizing its importance in media consumption patterns.
H4: Hedonic motivation has a significant positive effect on users' intention to adopt OTT platforms.

Perceived Complexity (PCM)

The perceived complexity of adopting OTT services pertains to the extent to which prospective consumers consider these platforms challenging to comprehend, access, or utilise, especially with price models, content navigation, subscription administration, and technology prerequisites. Studies demonstrate that ambiguity over concealed charges, data use, and compatibility with certain hardware or internet speeds can exacerbate this perceived challenge, particularly among novice users or individuals with restricted digital literacy (Park & Lee, 2022; Chen et al., 2023). In situations when platforms implement intricate pricing structures or provide promotional packages, users may encounter increased cognitive strain, hence exacerbating the perceived complexity (Nagaraj et al., 2021; Bhattacharyya et al., 2022).
The design and usability of OTT interfaces profoundly affect user impressions. Platforms that provide intuitive navigation and explicit instructions mitigate user hesitancy and provide a more seamless onboarding process (Polisetty et al., 2023). Poorly designed interfaces can exacerbate confusion and hinder adoption, especially among older or less technologically proficient audiences. Therefore, mitigating perceived complexity via clear pricing, user education, and streamlined user experience design is essential for improving OTT service acceptance and engagement (Arun et al., 2021; Kour & Chhabria, 2022).
H5: Perceived complecity has a significant negative effect on intention to adopt OTT platforms.

Content Overload (CO)

Content overload describes the daunting experience individuals encounter when sifting through an abundance of available material. Nandukrishna and SP (2024) illustrate that an excess of content markedly diminishes the intention to adopt and sustain usage, primarily as a result of decision fatigue. Individuals frequently lose interest when confronted with an overwhelming array of choices and ineffective recommendation systems. Lo et al. (2024) support these findings, contending that the cognitive load caused by an excess of content may result in user dissatisfaction and the abandonment of platforms.
H6: Content overload has a significant negative effect on intention to adopt OTT platforms.

Intention to adopt (INTAD)

The intention to embrace OTT services, frequently influenced by factors such as perceived utility, hedonic incentive, and performance anticipation, is a crucial precursor to user engagement. This purpose has been extensively examined through basic theories such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT). Chen et al. (2023) utilised an integrated TAM framework and established that perceived utility and simplicity of use positively influence users' propensity to embrace and pay for OTT services. Bhattacharyya et al. (2022) similarly discovered that attitude and trust substantially influence the uptake of OTT services in India, especially among technologically adept millennials.
H7: Intention to adopt OTT platforms has a significant positive effect on continuous usage behavior.

Continuous Usage of OTT

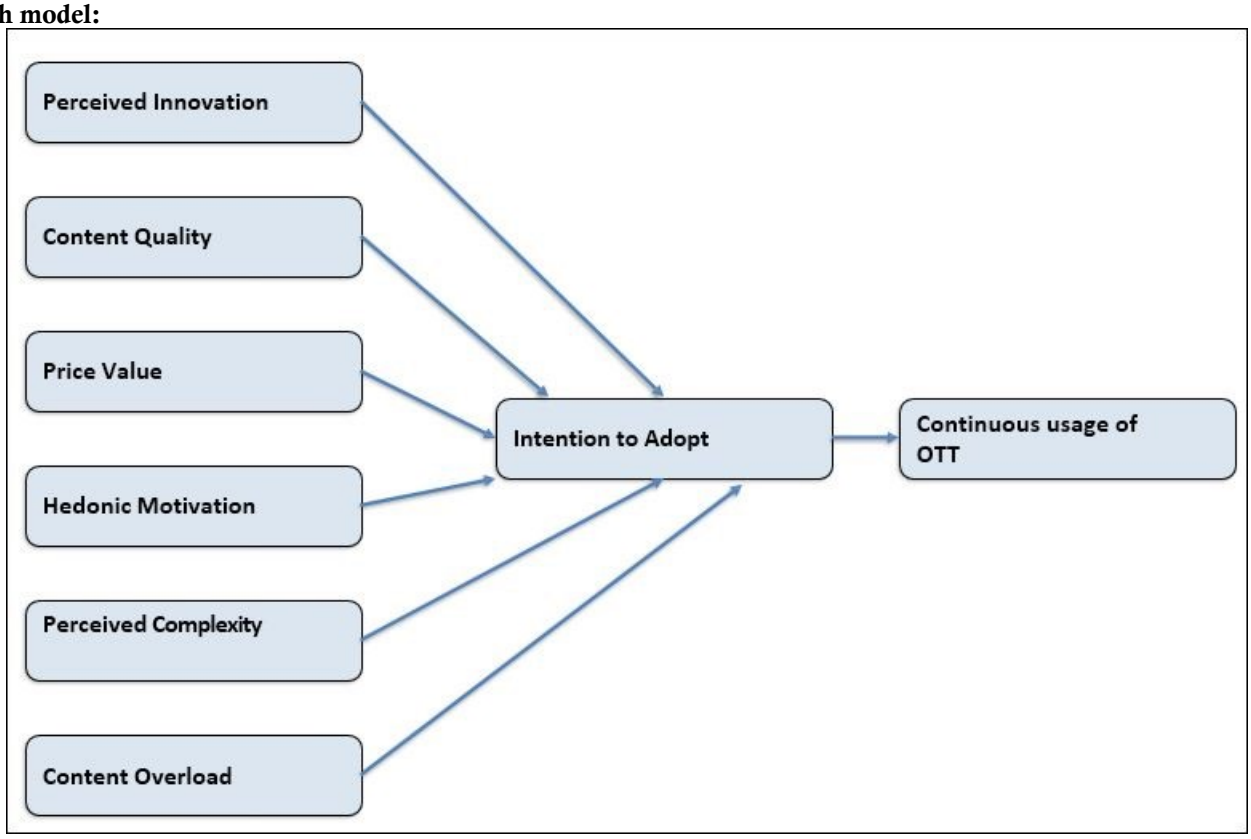
Conversely, continuation usage or post-adoption behaviour emphasises the user's aim to consistently utilise OTT platforms over time. This is affected by cognitive absorption, perceived flow, habit development, and satisfaction. Soren and Chakraborty (2024) examined the influence of beliefs, cognitive flow, and use habits on the persistence of OTT consumption, emphasising that mere enjoyment is insufficient; habit and platform immersion are essential. Similarly, Lo et al. (2024) utilised the stimulus-organism-response (SOR) paradigm to demonstrate that elements like as content quality, personalization, and trust substantialy affect users' emotional involvement and, consequently, their ongoing utilisation of OTT services.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK:

This study's conceptual framework is based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) and

enhanced with media-centric constructs to investigate the behavioural factors affecting the intention to adopt and the ongoing use of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms. The model proposes six primary antecedents that affect consumers' inclination to embrace OTT services: Perceived Innovation, Content Quality, Price Value, Hedonic Motivation, Perceived Complexity, and Content Overload. Perceived Innovation reflects an individual's willingness to engage with novel technology and platforms. It indicates the user's inclination to investigate and embrace novel digital services, which is anticipated to improve adoption intention. Content Quality includes the perceived relevance, diversity, and richness of the provided material, which is crucial for attracting and maintaining consumers. Price Value denotes users' evaluation of the cost-benefit ratio and is essential in price-sensitive markets. Hedonic Motivation denotes the pleasure and delight obtained by utilising OTT services, a crucial factor influencing media consumption behaviours. Conversely, Perceived Complexity and Content Overload are regarded as impediments. Perceived complexity denotes the user's evaluation of the platform's usability, whereas content overload pertains to cognitive weariness caused by an overwhelming amount of material and insufficient curation or recommendation algorithms.

Research model:



RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Design and Approach

This study employs a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to explore the factors that affect the intention to adopt and the ongoing usage of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms. The model is based on the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2), enhanced with extra variables like content overload and personal innovativeness to more accurately reflect the contextual dynamics of digital media consumption.

Instrument Development

A structured questionnaire served as the main tool for data collection. Measurement items for each latent construct, such as personal innovativeness, content quality, perceived value, hedonic motivation, perceived cost, content overload, intention to adopt, and continuous usage, were derived from established scales found in prior research (e.g., Venkatesh et al., 2012; Bhattacharyya et al., 2022; Lo et al., 2024). Each item was evaluated using a 5-point Likert scale, from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), to maintain consistency and facilitate comparability of responses.

Sample and Sampling Technique:

This study focused on a population of OTT users in Gujarat state of India, encompassing a wide range of age groups, income levels, and educational backgrounds. Majority four cities were targeted namely Ahmedabad, Baroda, Surat and Rajkot. A non-probability convenience sampling method was utilized owing to accessibility limitations and the exploratory aspect of the study. The final sample included 572 valid responses, providing sufficient statistical power for multivariate analysis (Hair et al., 2014).

The demographic composition includes a balanced distribution across gender (52.8% male, 47.2% female), age groups, income levels, and subscription preferences, thereby enhancing the generalizability of findings within the Indian OTT user context.

Demographic Variables	Particulars	No of respondents	%
Gender	Male	302	52.80%
	Female	270	47.20%
Age Group	15-18	125	21.85%
	19-25	204	35.66%
	26-35	101	17.66%
	36-50	99	17.31%
	Above 50 years	43	7.52%
Location	Urban	224	39.16%
	Rural	99	17.31%
	Semi Urban	249	43.53%
Annual Income in Rupees	0-3 lac	99	17.31%
	3-6 lac	135	23.60%
	6-8 lac	144	25.17%
	8-10 lac	96	16.78%
	Above 10 lac	98	17.13%
Education Qualification	Under Graduation	99	17.31%
	Graduation	190	33.22%
	Post-graduation	114	19.93%
	Doctorate	25	4.37%
	Professional	144	25.17%
Occupation	Student	130	22.73%
	Self-employed	105	18.36%
	Job	116	20.28%
	Business	115	20.10%
	Retired	106	18.53%
Proportion of annual income spent on OTT services	Less than 5%	301	52.62%
	5–10%	181	31.64%
	11–20%	90	15.73%
Weekly hours spent on OTT	Less than 3 hours	40	6.99%
	3–10 hours	398	69.58%
	More than 10 hours	134	23.43%
Type of Subscription	Monthly	77	13.46%
	Quarterly	34	5.94%
	Half-yearly	180	31.47%
	Annually	281	49.13%
Total		572	100.00%

Data Collection Procedure:

Data collection was conducted using online self-administered surveys distributed through social media platforms such as WhatsApp, Instagram, LinkedIn, and email. Screening questions guaranteed that only engaged OTT users took part in the study. Participation was voluntary, and anonymity was preserved to ensure adherence to ethical standards. The data collection phase lasted six weeks, yielding more than 600 responses, with 572 identified as complete and appropriate for analysis.

Data Analysis Tools and Techniques

The analysis of the data was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) through SmartPLS

4.0, which is appropriate for intricate models that incorporate latent constructs and non-normal data distributions. This method facilitated the concurrent evaluation of both the measurement model, focusing on reliability and validity, and the structural model, aimed at hypothesis testing and examining path relationships. The evaluation of reliability was conducted using Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. Additionally, convergent and discriminant validity were examined through Average Variance Extracted (AVE) and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Structural model evaluation included analysis of path coefficients, t-values, p-values, and Cohen's f² effect sizes, ensuring both statistical significance and practical relevance of findings.

RESULT DISCUSSIONS:

Construct	Construct Reliability	Convergent Validity
	Cronbach's alpha(α)	**Average variance extracted (AVE)**
INTAD	0.9196	0.6965
PI	0.9113	0.6707
CQ	0.8475	0.5886
PV	0.8032	0.5057
HM	0.8681	0.6206
PCM	0.8857	0.6024
CO	0.855	0.5339
CUSG	0.7079	0.5278

The analysis of reliability and validity for the measurement model demonstrates that all constructs show robust internal consistency and satisfactory convergent validity. The Cronbach's alpha values for all variables surpass the suggested threshold of 0.70, with INTAD at 0.9196, PI at 0.9113, and PCM at 0.8857, indicating notably high reliability. The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceed the 0.50 threshold, thereby affirming sufficient convergent validity. It is important to highlight that constructs like INTAD (0.6965) and PI (0.6707) demonstrate robust item convergence, whereas the lowest AVE values—PV (0.5057) and CUSG (0.5278)—still fall within acceptable thresholds. The findings validate that the measurement model demonstrates both reliability and validity, paving the way for subsequent structural analysis.

Effect	Beta	Indirect effects	Total effect	Cohen's f2
INTAD -> CUSG	0.7334		0.7334	1.1639
PI -> INTAD	0.2799		0.2799	0.2293
PI -> CUSG		0.2052	0.2052	
CQ -> INTAD	0.3311		0.3311	0.2991
CQ -> CUSG		0.2428	0.2428	
PV -> INTAD	0.1641		0.1641	0.0661
PV -> CUSG		0.1204	0.1204	
HM -> INTAD	0.195		0.195	0.1127
HM -> CUSG		0.143	0.143	
PCM -> INTAD	-0.0241		-0.0241	0.0012
PCM -> CUSG		-0.0177	-0.0177	
CO -> INTAD	-0.3433		-0.3433	0.2099
CO -> CUSG		-0.2518	-0.2518	

The structural model was assessed to analyse the direct, indirect, and total impacts of the antecedent variables on continuous usage behaviour (CUSG) and adoption behaviour (INTAD) concerning OTT platforms. Furthermore, Cohen's f² values were calculated to evaluate the effect size of each exogenous construct on its corresponding endogenous variable, with thresholds interpreted as follows: 0.02 (small), 0.15 (medium), and 0.35 (large) (Cohen, 1988).

The direct effect of INTAD on CUSG (β = 0.7334) was determined to be statistically significant and substantively strong, as evidenced by a Cohen's f² value of 1.1639, which indicates an exceptionally large effect size. This finding establishes that the intention to adopt serves as the primary predictor of continuance behaviour, explaining a significant portion of its variance.

Among the factors influencing INTAD, content quality (CQ) (β = 0.3311, f² = 0.2991) and personal innovativeness (PI) (β = 0.2799, f² = 0.2293) showed the most significant positive impacts, with both constructs displaying medium to large effect sizes. Hedonic motivation (HM) (β = 0.195, f² = 0.1127) and perceived value (PV) (β = 0.1641, f² = 0.0661) demonstrated significant positive correlations with INTAD, albeit with small to moderate effect sizes. On the other hand, content overload (CO) significantly detrimentally affected INTAD (β = –0.3433, f² = 0.2099), suggesting that cognitive fatigue resulting from an

abundance of content adversely influences users' readiness to embrace OTT platforms. The perceived cost of media (PCM) exhibited a minimal and negative impact on INTAD (β = –0.0241, f^2 = 0.0012), indicating that it does not serve as a significant barrier in this scenario. In terms of total effects on continuous usage (CUSG), PI (total effect = 0.2052) and CQ (0.2428) emerged as influential antecedents, indicating that their impacts are not fully mediated through INTAD but also partially direct. HM (0.143) and PV (0.1204) followed a similar pattern. On the contrary, CO (–0.2518) was observed to have a notable total negative effect on CUSG, reflecting its role as a usage deterrent. The impact of PCM on CUSG remained marginal and statistically insignificant (total effect = –0.0177).

The findings collectively affirm the pivotal function of INTAD as both a mediator and a direct predictor of CUSG. Content quality and personal innovativeness stand out as the most significant positive factors influencing adoption and usage, whereas content overload is identified as the most powerful barrier. The values of Cohen's f^2 provide additional evidence for the practical significance of these effects, affirming strong model explanatory power and predictive relevance within the context of OTT continuance.

THEORETICAL IMPLICATIONS:

This study offers significant theoretical advancements by enhancing the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology 2 (UTAUT2) with media-focused elements—namely, content quality, content overload, and personal innovativeness—to better understand user behaviour in the OTT sector. The notable impact of the intention to adopt on ongoing usage reinforces the core premise of behavioral intention in frameworks such as TAM, UTAUT, and TCT. Furthermore, the study enhances understanding by confirming that content overload serves as a significant barrier in content-rich digital environments, an area that has been insufficiently examined in previous technology acceptance models. This study highlights the importance of hedonic motivation and perceived value in shaping adoption behaviour, indicating the necessity to incorporate emotional and gratification-based aspects in forthcoming behavioral intention frameworks. The findings collectively enhance the understanding of technology acceptance theory by examining the psychological mechanisms, both positive and negative, that affect user retention.

PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS:

The results offer practical implications for OTT service providers, digital marketers, and platform designers. The significant influence of content quality on the intention to adopt and ongoing usage highlights the importance of maintaining consistent, diverse, and localized content strategies. Furthermore, the significant adverse impact of content overload highlights the immediate need for the development of more intelligent recommendation algorithms, streamlined content discovery options, and personalized interfaces to alleviate decision fatigue. Third, the lack of statistical significance regarding perceived cost suggests that OTT providers ought to priorities value-based differentiation over pricing competition. The impact of personal innovativeness suggests that campaigns highlighting exclusivity, interactivity, or innovation can effectively reach early adopters and tech-savvy users.

FUTURE SCOPE AND LIMITATION

This study opens up several avenues for future exploration. A longitudinal study design would facilitate the temporal tracking of adoption-to-habit pathways and user lifecycle patterns. Furthermore, conducting a moderation analysis may uncover the extent to which demographic factors like age, education, or digital literacy affect the intensity of the proposed relationships. Third, future frameworks might integrate emerging variables like algorithmic trust, privacy concerns, or platform switching behaviour, which are becoming increasingly significant in competitive OTT ecosystems. Comparative studies across regions, countries, or OTT platforms may provide valuable cross-cultural insights into streaming behaviour. While this study offers valuable insights, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. Initially, it utilizes non-probability convenience sampling focused on four major cities in Gujarat, which could limit the generalizability to other areas or demographic groups. Secondly, the investigation depends on self-reported data, which could be influenced by response biases like social desirability or recall bias. Third, while PLS-SEM serves as a strong method for prediction and exploratory analysis, its ability to draw causal inferences is constrained by the cross-sectional nature of the data. Ultimately, elements such as social influence, platform usability, and technological self-efficacy were omitted, yet they hold the potential to enhance the model in subsequent studies.

CONCLUSION:

This study explored the factors that affect the adoption and ongoing use of OTT platforms by utilizing an expanded UTAUT2 framework. The structural model indicated that the intention to adopt (INTAD) serves as a significant predictor of continuous usage behaviour (CUSG), with content quality (CQ) and personal innovativeness (PI) identified as key positive influences. On the other hand, content overload (CO) greatly hinders both adoption and usage, highlighting the contradiction of having too many digital options. The minimal impact of perceived cost (PCM) underscores the evolving user perceptions in the context of

freemium models and bundled OTT packages. The results enhance our theoretical insights and practical approaches, providing a comprehensive perspective on behavioral intention and post-adoption usage in OTT environments.

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