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OTT Services and Intention to Continuous Subscription: A Moderated-Moderated Mediation Analysis

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Abstract

Drawing on the search experience, the study investigates the impact of Over-the-top Services on their intention to continuous subscription. It investigates the mediation of search experience on the linkage between Over-the-top Services (OTT) and intention to continuous subscription. Moreover, study examines the Moderated Mediation effect of screen watching time (first moderator) and device (second moderator) in the relationship of Over-the-top Services, Intention to Continuous Subscription, and Search Experience. An online survey was used to collect the responses and 405 responses were considered for the study. The analysis shows that OTT services has a significant impact on its user search experience which in turn also has strong and positive impact on the intention to continuous subscription by its users. It was also discovered that the screen watching time as its role of two way interaction has significant moderating effect between OTT service and search experience relationship and search experience and intention to continuous subscription relationship. The three-way interaction between device and screen watching time in the mediation model was analysed & found strong support in the relationship between OTT services and search experience and search experience & intention to continuous subscription. This is one of the few paper to check the inter-relationship between OTT services, intention to continuous subscription and search experience. The three-way interaction between mediation model and screen watching time (first moderator) and device (second moderator) is studied for the first time in the literature therefore the findings will originate the value with novelty and important implications to the OTT consumers, and content providers.

Keywords: OTT services, Search experience, Intention to continuous subscription, Uses and gratification theory

Introduction

Television and theatre were once the most traditional means of accessing various audio-visual content and films (Mikos, 2017).However, with the evolution of different technological progression such as DVD, dish rental services, Blu-ray's, VHS etc., the convenience in terms of any time availability developed (Wroot& Willis, 2017). Also co-axial cable and optical fibre cable attracted cable television to the general public (Singh et al., 2021). With time, other services such as Direct to home (DTH) emerged, oriented to facilitate high definition video quality and on-demand service to its customer by transmitting the data through DISH Network and satellite (Gelgoret al., 2020). Later, video on demand services have made movie/TV watching extremely convenient. Video content is loaded onto an Internet platform to be streamed using a Video on Demand application, popularly known as Over the Top (OTT) (Hutchins et al., 2019).These services can be accessed from a plethora of output media such as smart TV, desktops, tablets, smart phones etc., provided such devices have internet connectivity (Madnani et al., 2020). A major reason for its popularity is that it offers a wide variety of content that is usually not dependent on censors, demographic profiles or box office collections (Dasgupta& Grover, 2019).Effective OTT streaming customers need an internet connection and devices with the required OTT applications (Colbjørnsen, 2021). Producers of video content are now forced to match the tastes

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and preferences of customers (Governo, 2020).For this reason it is often said that the era of superstars ends and content is the new superstar (Palomba, 2020).

OTT services were once considered a luxury in India, but due to their widespread use, they have become common (Bhatt and Singhi, 2020). In the last 3 years, the market has seen the rise of around 40 OTT service providers (Nafees et al., 2021). OTT app category is the leading download category all over the world (Mäkinen et al., 2020).

The internet has brought significant changes in the current entertainment landscape and is now considered a contributing factor to the entertainment industry (Bajoudah et al., 2019). India's telecom industry has seen a change in the reach of the Internet due to the introduction of latest technology (Gupta et al., 2019). Bandwidth is now available at 98 percent cheaper rate in India due to entry of new players with latest technology (Talukdar & Choudhary, 2021), resulting in tremendous increase in screen time of rural and urban users. Ayaz, S. (2020) in his study found that around 55per cent of OTT traffic in India is supported by Reliance-Jio, which drives 65per cent of traffic on smart phones. Reliance-Jio's aggressive pricing strategy has forced other service providers to drop their tariff rates and bring more affordable plans in the market. Thus, the emergence of OTT technology backed by affordable internet services has shown tremendous growth in the OTT business market (Jirakasem & Mitomo, 2019).

India is second largest in world after China in Internet penetration (Tapashi, 2018), but the lower strata of Indian rural society are far from OTT services (Rani et al., 2020).Recent years have seen a meteoric rise in the use of over-the-top (OTT) platforms in India's urban areas, yet despite this growth, OTT subscription is still far from saturation. Due to cheaper internet access and expertise, urban Indian audiences are subscribing and using OTT services more than rural audiences, although a study on subscription and continuous subscription is needed. Thus, OTT services should be evaluated using continuous subscription as a dependent variable. Screen viewing time is also increasing in India today due to cheap internet (Mäkinen et al., 2020). Cheap internet, devices like smartphones, laptops, smart TVs, etc., and screen viewing time altered media consumption, which are other essential variables of the study. To address the issues of the literature, we will try to explore the below mentioned research questions (RQs) to ponder upon:

RQ1: What relationship does OTT services has with the customer's intention to continuous subscription?

RQ2: Does search experience mediates the relationship between OTT services and its intention to continuous subscription?

RQ3: How do the screen watching time (first moderator) and device (second moderator) influence the relationship between OTT services and its intention to continuous subscription mediated through search experience?

By addressing the key questions, the current study contributes significantly to the literature on OTT services. To our knowledge, no previous studies have looked into the interrelationships between OTT services, search experience and intention to continuous subscription. The rationale for studying the complex relationships is that every individual experience of OTT users affects consumer behaviour differently. Therefore, search experience, screen watching time and device provides an opportunity to explore the OTT contents effectively, which may lead to the intention for continuous behaviour.To sum the present study, contributes to marketing theory, policymakers, and marketers to develop effective marketing strategies for OTT service providers in Indian market.

An outline of the study is presented below. In Section 2, we have provided the theoretical framework, literature review, and hypotheses. Section 2 focuses on the study's methodology, while Section 4 presents the study's results. Discussion, theoretical, and managerial implications are presented in the final section of the study.

Theoretical Background, Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

The reason, why people prefer a particular media platform is substantially described by a social theory, known as uses and gratifications theory (UGT).People in general, and customers in particular, are aware of their needs as per this theory, and are very ambitious in their use of the broadcast platform (Camilleri et al., 2020). Moreover, such subscribers are enriched with the skill set and competency (Sahu et al., 2021). Further, it also helps in associating preference for any particular medium platform based on gratifications/needs. UGT was previously used to study media platforms such as TV, radio and news-paper (Isa et al., 2020).However, in recent times UGT is being used to study the competitions that exist between different platforms like OTT platforms, Pay TV platforms, Interpersonal media, Traditional television etc. (Yousaf et al., 2021). Since the scope of the present paper is to ascertain the experience of users/customers in OTT platform, UGT can be used to study the search experience and customer gratification for continuous subscription.

The UGT uses information content, entertainment features, ease of use, convenience and financial benefits in deciding why user/subscribers prefer any particular media platform.

Information content enhances the search experience of OTT platforms (Katz et al., 1974). Entertainment feature refers to the delight and happiness users derive by using different mediums of broadcasting (Luo et al., 2011). Users' convenience and capability when using various media platforms have been referred to as ease of use (Pai& Arnott, 2013).Convenience includes the methodology and convenience of handling such broadcasting devices (Kaur et al.,2020). Financial benefits refer to the affordability (Kaur et al., 2020).The rationale behind the use of uses and gratification theory in this study is, that the features of OTT services are full of information and entertainment. Whereas the ease of use and convenience are helpful in achieving a thriving search experience. In addition, the cost-effective search experience helps in driving continuous subscriptions to OTT services.

Review of the Literature: Search Experience

Every day, we come across words like user experience, customer experience, and search experience. Experience refers to what a person feels when using something (Albassam& Ruthven, 2019). Thus, a search experience is a person's thoughts and emotions of searching anything (Niu et al., 2021). People prefer pleasant experiences and avoid unpleasant ones. Experiences, on the other hand, are difficult to create. They are affected by a variety of variables. The two important characteristics in evaluating users' search experiences in any online service are "perceived diagnosticity" and "perceived serendipity".

Diagnosticity means finding what one is searching for (Niu et al., 2021) and how conveniently and effectively such search was made (Yi et al., 2017). Perceived diagnosticity is balanced by transparency features such as suggestion mechanism (Filieri et al., 2018), and it also arbitrates aging and experience aspects on the product performance (Cuong, P. H., 2020). The perceived diagnosticity is the degree to which an OTT platform helps its users/customers to find, evaluate and return suitable

videos/content that matches their search preferences as we are using this paradigm in our research.

Serendipity means amusingly finding what one was not searching (Albassam& Ruthven, 2019). It is *"an incident based, unexpected discovery of information"* (Agarwal, (2015, page 678). Kartiwi et al., (2018) said that the search of any content in OTT platform is very much similar to the search of any product in e-shopping. Serendipity is helpful in measuring the usability and usefulness of search experiences in e-commerce (Li et al., 2020; Chen et al., 2021), websites and user reviews (Kartiwi et al., 2018; Hwang et al., 2020). Serendipity has tremendous value and is considered important by various literatures (Zhang et al., 2012, Wilkinson &Weitkamp, 2013). Serendipity increases the time of users on Facebook and You Tube (Lu & Cheng, 2020). The unexpected pleasure of users in the form of video on social media site is also searched on OTT platforms (Kim et al., 2017, Uthaman, 2021).

Moreover, making serendipity better and implementable through different algorithm or artificial intelligence is evolving point of discussion. Continuous advancement through algorithms to match unexpected pleasure is one reason and increasing user activities on web platform is another reason.

Hypothesis Development

- OTT services and intention to continuous subscription

The most recent evolution in the field of screen broadcasting is internet TV (Spilker et al., 2020). Internet TV also known as streaming TV or Over the Top (OTT) services is the digital distribution of the television content over the internet (Hutchins et al., 2019). A customer subscribes OTT media service to gain access to the content (Scannell, 2019; Udoakpan et al., 2020). Various researchers have studied continuous subscription behaviour of customers in the field of e-retailing (Wang et al., 2020), online gaming (Oren et al., 2014), online music application (Li et al., 2020), DTH television (Mishra et al., 2017; Sadanaet al., 2021), high definition screen channels (Kapoor et al., 2017) etc. However, researches in OTT and its intention to continuous subscription are limited in numbers. According to Lemon et al., (2002), the level of satisfaction, influences the decision to continue with the services. Subscriptions to OTT services are based on a pay-per-view model (Udoakpan et al.,2020; Yousaf et al., 2021) and is more subscribed by those customers, who travels lot. Recommendation system, resolution and viewing of OTT (Kim et al., 2017), content quantity, content exclusivity, user experience and content genres of OTT services (Rose et al., 2020), subscription price, vast content spectrum, exclusive and unique content, live infotainment, popular content, and local language (Koulet al., 2020), and any time access, resuming, recording, local language (Nagaraj et al., 2021) are the important factors, which increases the OTT subscription.

According to the literature, studies related to intention to continuous subscription of OTT services are sparse. Consequently, we believe that if any user or customer is happy with the services provided by the OTT platform, they will continue to use them. Therefore, we have postulated below mentioned hypothesis:

H1: OTT services have a significant positive impact on the intention to continuous subscription.

- OTT services and Search experience

One of the key aspects of OTT services is searching the video content through search bar, since the home screen offers limited number of options to select. Search of content and search engine optimization are two factors that help OTT services

succeed, according to Dasgupta & Grover (2019).The OTT platform's search experience is influenced by different categories of movie genres, personalised recommendations, newly released, most watched, and so on. Research by Kapoor et al., (2015) suggests that the thumbnail image affects the search experience for users of over-the-top (OTT) platforms. Some OTT players such as Netflix provide match score accuracy data in order to enhance the search experience of its users (Rose et al., 2020). Moon et al., (2015), opined that matching the taste and preferences of the customer through search gives a good experience to a OTT subscriber. The search experience may differ depending on the OTT service used, as evidenced by anecdotal experience. The more services that are offered, the more convoluted the search experience becomes. Since there is a dearth of literature on OTT services and search behaviour on the Indian subcontinent, we propose the following hypothesis to fill the gap:

H2: OTT service has a positive significant impact on search experience.

- Search experience and Intention to continuous subscription

Perceived diagnosticity and perceived serendipity are two important aspects of the search experience. Due to better product understanding, perceived diagnosticicity influence users/customers for continued membership in the digital ecosystem (Lu et al., 2020) and better decision-making quality (Deng &Gu, 2021).The user/subscriber intention of continued subscription, depends upon the pleasure of using search tool (Sanchiz et al., 2020). The perceived serendipity has also influenced the intention of continued subscription and/or first time subscription by assisting the user to discover novel and pleasant items. OTT services are also supported by the search experiences of a subscriber (Agarwal, 2015). Through algorithms and artificial intelligence makes the search experience better (Albó et al., 2019). The anecdotal evidence suggests that digital service providers facilitate the discovery of videos and content based on the customer's preferences and that they also provide unexpected videos and content, which is very helpful in providing a positive search experience and influencing the customer's decision to remain a subscriber. It is feasible for OTT services and continuous subscriptions to have a similar relationship. Based on literature evidence and available anecdotal evidence, the following hypotheses are proposed:

H3: Search experience has a significant and positive influence on the intention to continuous subscriptions.

- Search experience as the mediator:

Consumer marketing, service delivery, tourism, and commerce are just some of the areas of study that have expanded to include the search experience notion. The search experience also includes social networking for professional and personal reasons. It also includes online banking, airline and hotel reservations, and ticket purchases, among other online services.

Decision satisfaction is a crucial indicator of how happy a user is with the results of a search, according to studies on the user experience of searching (Ozkara et al., 2017). Being pleased with the choice made is a driving force in carrying out the next steps. Users' happiness with their choices is thought to be affected by the search experience's perceived diagnosticity and serendipity. Consumers' perceptions about a diagnostic capabilities of services influences the experience (Jiang and Benbasat, 2004). Anecdotal data suggests that if a user is pleased with the overall experience of utilising online services, he will continue to use those services in the future, which will result in a continuous subscription. Similarly, if users of OTT services are happy with the results of

their OTT search (the content they search via OTT), they are more likely to decide in favour of subscribing the service in future. This leads us to offer the following mediation hypothesis in absence of literature support:

H4: Search experience mediates the functional relationship between OTT services and intention to continuous subscriptions.

- Screen watching time as first order moderator

There are many studies, which try to find the impact of screen watching time on human behaviour. It was revealed that outdoor activities have better impact on the mental health of the respondents as compared to increased screen time (Hawi& Rupert, 2015). The study found that device user screen time leads to depression (Costigan et al. 2013).Bandyopadhyay et al. (2020), highlighted the potential adverse effects of excessive screen viewing time and its impact on intent to subscribe a service. There is a potential adverse consequence of increased screen time among the students (Nagata et al. 2020). Klein (2003) found that more screen time increases the control of the user and improves the search criteria. Despite the fact that screen watching time habit explains a substantial portion of media consumption patterns, it has long been overlooked (Podara et al., 2019).

Anecdotal evidence suggests that a person's interest in a certain medium increases the longer they spend exposing themselves to it. Time spent in front of a screen improves the search experience. It has also been shown that the longer a person spends in front of a screen, the more concerned they become about staying subscribed. When a positive search experience for a media channel is found, it changes how people feel about paying for access to that channel, i.e., continuous subscription. Based on our review of the literature and the gap in the literature, we believe that no study has used screen watching time as a moderating factor between OTT, search experience, and the intention to continuous subscription. As a result, we propose the following hypothesis:

H5: Screen watching time moderates the relationship between OTT services and intention to continuous subscriptions.

H6: Screen watching time moderates the relationship between OTT services and search experience.

H7: Screen watching time moderates the relationship between search experience and intention to continuous subscriptions.

- Device as a second order moderator

Experience of using different type of device was studied in online shopping. Wu & Wang, (2005) found that the product information seen on Mobile device is less convincing. Several technological factors make mobile devices a staple in purchase (Lim, 2015).While shopping online through mobile, consumer feels confident as compared to any other type of device (Chin et al., 2012).Moreover, the experience of watching video on different type of device was also studied. Bediou et al., (2018) collected responses from respondents after showing content on 46-inch and 12-inch devices and found that the device had an effect on responses across certain styles. Cadet and Chen (2020) studied arousal and attentiveness after showing a video on screen devices of various sizes and revealed that viewing content on a large screen could improve attention and enhance arousal. The visual experience on a TV and an iPod doesn't differ much, but the smaller device contributes to a better sense of immersion (Wallin, 2020). The type of device used in watching videos influences the entertainment (Lu & Su, 2009).

Some anecdotal data suggests that a better search experience can lead to a greater interest in consuming online content. Finding that the channel's internet search experience is appealing

can lead to more subscribers. There are many studies on the experiences of online purchasing watching video on different types of devices, but type of device has never been used as a moderator. Hence in view the above discussion we postulate the following hypothesis considering device as a moderating variable:

H8: Device moderates the moderated relationship between OTT services and intention to continuous subscriptions by screen watching time.

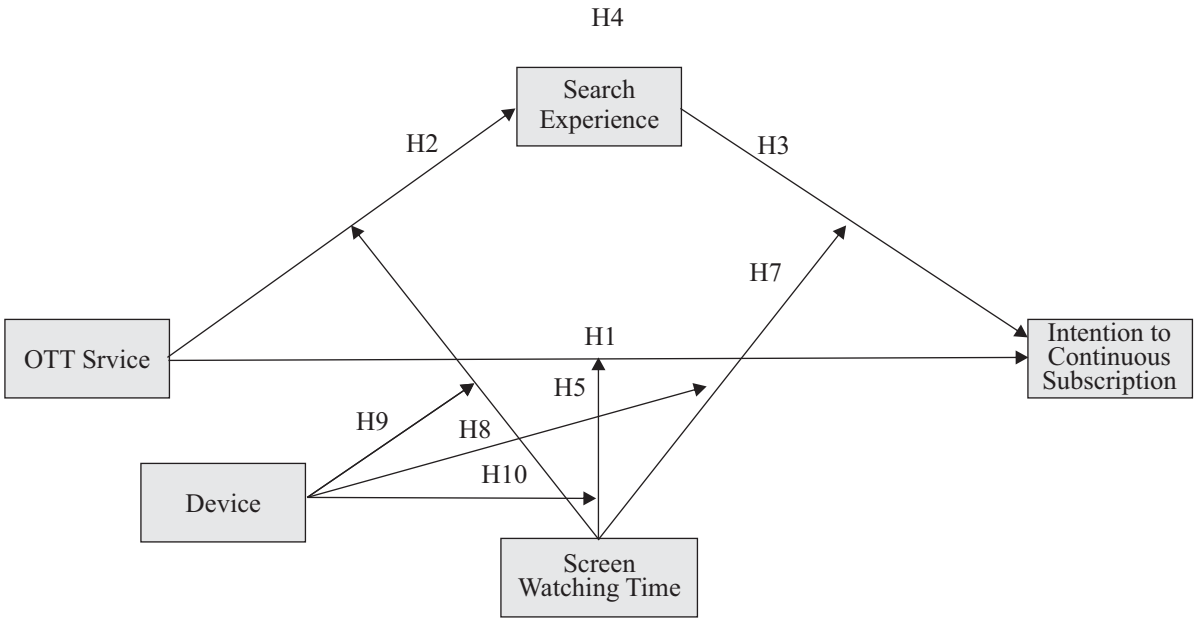
H9: Device moderates the moderated relationship between OTT services and search experience by screen watching time.

H10: Device moderates the moderated relationship between search experience and intention to continuous subscriptions by screen watching time.

Conceptual Model

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual model.

Figure 1: Conceptual Model



Method:

Sample and procedure:

Snowball sampling technique has been used to collect the responses as the OTT platform user base in India is still in its initial stages. Google survey form was circulated among the users of OTT platforms during August 2022 and September 2022 and 468 responses were obtained initially. After cleaning the data and removing incomplete responses, 405 responses were taken into consideration for doing the analysis. The appendix contains all measuring items.

Demographic profile:

Out of 405 people 254 (62.7 per cent) were male and 151 (37.3 per cent) were female respondents. The majority of responses were from the 25-35 years (45.1 per cent) followed by 18-25 (27.8 per cent), 35-45(17.7 per cent), 45-55 (8.6 per cent) and 55 & above (0.5 per cent). Most of the respondents are under-graduation i.e. 201 (49.5per cent), the second highest degree respondents hold is gradation,137 (33.7per cent) followed by masters or doctoral

degree holders 61(15per cent) and lastly intermediate degree holder 6 (1.5per cent). The frequency statistics also reveals that smart phone, 200 users (49.3per cent) is the most popular method of accessing OTT platforms, followed by tablet, 108 users (26,6per cent); PC & laptop, 80 users (19.7per cent) and smartscreen,13 users (3.2per cent). The screen watching time (per week) and the OTT platform watch time (per week) follows a descending pattern i.e., with the increase in watch time hours the number of respondents decreases. The subscription duration for 1-3 months was the most popular among the respondents owing to 169(41.9per cent). The second most popular subscription duration was 12 months or more standing at 105 (25.9per cent) followed by 9-12 months 92(22.7per cent); 3-6 months 30(7.4per cent). per cent). Table 1 shows the demographic profile of respondents.

Table 1: Profile of survey respondents

Variables	Details	Frequency(N=405)	Percentage
Gender	Male	151	37.3
	Female	254	62.7
Age	18-25	113	27.8
	25-35	183	45.1
	35-45	72	17.7
	45-55	35	8.6
	55 & above	2	.5
Education	Intermediate	6	1.5
	Under-graduation	137	33.7
	Graduate	201	49.5
	Masters or doctoral	61	15.0
Devices	PC and laptop	80	19.7
	Smartphone	200	49.3
	Tablet	108	26.6
	smart TV	13	3.2
	Any other	4	1.0
Screen watching time(per week)	less than 2 hours	197	48.5
	2 to 4 hrs	86	21.2
	4 to 6 hrs	38	9.4
	6 to 8 hrs	28	6.9
	8 to 10 hrs	21	5.2
	Longer than 10 hrs	35	8.6
Movies watch time (per month)	less than once	103	25.4
	1 to 2 occasions	152	37.4
	3 to 4 occasions	87	21.4
	5 to 6 occasions	33	8.1
	7 occasions or more	30	7.4

Watching OTT platform (per week)	less than 2 hrs	143	35.2
	2 to 4 hrs	105	25.9
	4 to 6 hrs	46	11.3
	6 to 8 hrs	41	10.1
	8 to 10 hrs	29	7.1
	Longer than 10 hrs	41	10.1
OTT subscription duration (months)	3 to 6	30	7.4
	6 to	9	2.2
	1 to 3	169	41.6
	9 to 12	92	22.7
	more than 12	105	25.9

Measures:

We have used the 5-pt. Likert scale with 1 representing "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree." The first order construct for OTT services consists of five variables namely Convenience, Entertainment features, Financial benefits, Ease of use and Information content. The OTT services items were adapted from Nagaraj et al., (2021). The sample item for convenience is "OTT services are extremely convenient because I don't have to worry about missing out on any of my favourite shows ". The AVE for convenience is 0.657 and CR coefficient is 0.882. The sample item for ease of use is "OTT services provide the most engaging watch experience". The AVE for ease of use is 0.682 and CR coefficient is 0.862. The sample item for entertainment features is "OTT services provide me more control over my viewing experience". The AVE for entertainment features is 0.547 and CR coefficient is 0.823. The sample item for information content is "OTT services provide access to a diverse range of international video content ". The AVE for information content is 0.685 and Composite reliability coefficient is 0.896. The sample item for financial benefits is " Netflix, Amazon prime, Hot star etc., provides excellent worth for money". The AVE for financial benefits is 0.566 and Composite reliability coefficient is 0.721.

Search experience item were adopted from Kwon et al., (2020). The first order construct of search experience has 2 variables; perceived diagnosticity and perceived serendipity. The sample item for perceived diagnosticity is " OTT services enables me to search and compare a range of different contents in a systematic and efficient manner to choose the most appropriate one". The AVE for perceived diagnosticity is 0.675 and Composite reliability is 0.862. The sample item for perceived serendipity is "My OTT content search yielded some surprising yet interesting results". The AVE for perceived serendipity is 0.692 and Composite reliability is 0.900.

Intention to continuous subscription(ICS) was taken from Kwon et al., (2020) consisting of three items. The sample item is " I aim to keep using OTT services rather than stop doing so in the coming months". The AVE for intention to continuous subscription is 0.709 and Composite reliability coefficient is 0.875.

Analysis and findings:

Confirmatory factor analysis:

The measurement model is evaluated to determine the adequacy of the constructs in the study. The OTT services as well as Search experience parameters evaluation begins with the factor loadings, which is followed by the determination of

validity and reliability of the constructs.

Factor loading could fluctuate between -1.0 to +1.0, with larger relative levels implying a stronger relationship between the item and the underlying factor" (Pettet al.,2003). None of the values in this investigation had factor loadings lower than.50, which is the recommended value (F. Hair et al., 2014). As a result, no more items were eliminated.

The two most commonly used approaches for determining reliability are Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability. Cronbach's Alpha values in this research lie from 0.714 to 0.896, while CR values ranged from 0.72 to 0.90. Both reliability metrics have figures that are higher than threshold value .70 (Hair et al., 2011). As a result, the construct's reliability is validated. The result is mentioned in table 2a, namely measurement properties and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of first-order constructs using Fornell and Larcker criterion. In table 2b we have mentioned the factor loadings, CR and AVE of Second-order Latent Variable (Search Experience).

Table 2A: Measurement properties and confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) of first-order constructs

Constructs	**Alpha**	**Composite Reliability**	**Standardized Loadings** (λyi)	**Reliability (λ2 yi)**	**Variance (Var(εi))**	**Average Variance Extracted Estimate Σ (λ2 yi)/ [(λ2 yi) + (Var(εi))]**
Convenience	0.879	0.88				0.66
I can use OTT services since I have limitless internet access on my smartphone/system			0.89	0.80	0.20	
OTT services are really useful because they allow me to view screen on any of my devices, from any location.			0.90	0.80	0.20	
OTT services are extremely convenient because I don't have to worry about missing out on any of my favourite shows.			0.80	0.64	0.36	
For tech enthusiasts like myself, the OTT service is a blessing.			0.62	0.38	0.62	
Ease of use	0.849	0.86				0.68
Due to my weak internet connection, I am unable to access OTT services.			0.93	0.87	0.13	
Due to the sheer poor video quality, OTT services give a terrible user experience.			0.90	0.80	0.20	
Over-the-top (OTT) services provide the most engaging watch experience.			0.61	0.38	0.62	
Information Content	0.891	0.90				0.69
Regional and local video content is limited on OTT platforms.			0.90	0.81	0.19	

OTT services aren't highly popular among my peers when it comes to content watching.			0.91	0.83	0.17	
OTT services provide access to a diverse range of international video content.			0.82	0.68	0.32	
OTT services offer unique video material that is both entertaining and educational.			0.65	0.43	0.57	
Entertainment Features	0.816	0.82				0.55
Over-the-top (OTT) services provide me more control over my viewing experience.			0.76	0.57	0.43	
OTT services make it difficult for me to view video content with my family or peers.			0.91	0.82	0.18	
I don't have to watch commercials because of OTT services.			0.74	0.54	0.46	
OTT services leaves me feeling totally reliant on them as well glued to them.			0.50	0.25	0.75	
Financial benefits	0.714	0.72				0.57
Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hot star, and other OTT platforms are economical since they offer a modest monthly price.			0.68	0.46	0.54	
Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hot star etc, provide excellent worth for money.			0.82	0.67	0.33	
Perceived diagnosticity	0.86	0.86				0.68
OTT services enables me to search and compare a range of different contents in a systematic and efficient manner to choose the most appropriate one.			0.84	0.70	0.30	
OTT services allows me to browse through and evaluate a large number of different types of content in a logical and efficient manner.			0.85	0.72	0.28	
I can quickly gain a decent knowledge of the essential characteristics of the items that I browsed during the search process on OTT platform.			0.77	0.60	0.40	
Perceived serendipity	0.896	0.90				0.69
My recent content search experience assisted me in discovering some content that met my interests that I've never anticipated.			0.87	0.75	0.25	
My OTT content search yielded some surprising yet interesting results.			0.85	0.73	0.27	
During the search, I came across a number of interesting articles content that were worth checking out but were outside of my initial search parameters.			0.87	0.76	0.24	

The OTT experience led to some unexpected, but intriguing, discoveries about content during the search process.			0.73	0.53	0.47	
Intention to continuous subscription	0.856	0.88				0.71
I aim to keep using OTT services rather than stop doing so in the coming months.			0.93	0.87	0.13	
In the months to come, I plan to continue streaming OTT services			0.96	0.93	0.07	
If feasible, I'd like to continue using OTT services in the following months.			0.58	0.33	0.67	

Table 2B: CFA of Second-order Latent Variable (Search Experience)

	Alpha	**Composite** Reliability	**Standardized Loadings (λyi)**	**Reliability (λ2 yi)**	**Variance (Var(εi))**	**Average VarianceExtracted Estimate Σ (λ2 yi)/ [(λ2 yi) + (Var(εi))]**
Search Experience	0.78	0.88				0.786
Perceived diagnosticity			0.886	0.784	0.215	
Perceived serendipity			0.888	0.788	0.211	

Descriptive statistics and Multicollinearity:

Multicollinearity was investigated in this study by looking at the correlations between the variables; we noticed that they were between 0.52 and 0.021. There is no evidence of multicollinearity in the data since correlations were less than 0.75. We have checked the Discriminant validity using Fornell-Larcker criterion and have presented it in Table 3 along with correlation, mean and standard deviations.

Table 3: Means, Standard Deviations, and Discriminant validity [Fornell-Larcker Criterion]

	Mean	**SD**	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**	**8**
1. Perceived serendipity	3.89	0.832	**0.832**							
2. Convenience	4.28	0.755	0.435	**0.810**						
3. Ease of use	4.3	0.832	-0.029	0.050	**0.826**					
4. Information content	4.3	0.785	0.064	0.060	0.093	**0.828**				
5. entertainment features	4.04	0.799	0.188	0.096	0.081	0.304	**0.739**			
6. Financial benefits	3.82	0.818	0.809	0.485	-0.005	0.040	0.154	**0.752**		
7. Perceived diagnosticity	3.91	0.804	0.784	0.456	-0.040	0.099	0.227	0.927	**0.822**	
8. Intention to continuous subscription	4	0.934	0.523**	0.392**	0.021	0.135**	0.126*	0.379**	0.383**	**0.842**

Common method variance (CMV)

Since CMV is inherent in all survey-based studies, testing for it is crucial. Keeping in mind, we ran a standard Harman's single-factor analysis and found that it explained 28.87% of the variation; this is below the 30% threshold, indicating that the data does not have multicollinearity.

Hypothesis testing:

We used model number 4 in Hayes (2018) PROCESS macros for testing the hypotheses H1, H2, and H3. The results are presented below.

H1 evaluates, the significant influence of OTT services on intention to continuous subscription. The result found the values (β=0.626, t=7.812, p<.001). The 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was 0.468 (LLCI) and 0.784 (ULCI). The model was found to be statistically significant, explaining 13.2 percent of the variation in intention to continue subscription [R 2 = 0.132; F (1,453) = 61.023; p < .001]. These results support H1 that there is significant and positive impact of OTT services on intention to continuous subscription. Hence H1 was supported.

H2 investigates whether over-the-top (OTT) services have an influence on the search experience. The result revealed that OTT services has a significant impact on its user search experience (β=0.811, t=12.580, p<.001). The 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was 0.684 (LLCI) and 0.937 (ULCI). The model was found to be significant, explaining 28.2 percent of the variation in search results, and it is statistically significant [R 2 = 0.282 F (1,453) = 158.260; p < .001]. These results support H2 that there is significant and positive impact of OTT services on search experience. Hence H2 was supported.

The H3 is focused to find the impact of search experience on intention to continuous subscription. The result revealed that search experience has a significant impact on its user intention to continuous subscription (β=1.064, t=33.163, p<.001). The 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was 1.001(LLCI) and 1.127 (ULCI). The model has a high statistical significance [R 2 = 0.768; F (1,453) = 663.580; p < .001], and it explains 76.8 percent of the variance in the intention to continue subscription. These results support H3 that there is significant and positive impact of search experience on intention to continuous subscription. Hence H3 was supported. The result is summarised in table 4.

Mediation Analysis:

The total effect, as shown in table 5, is (-0.626) was consisting of direct effect of OTT services on intention to continuous subscription (0.237) and indirect effect through search experience (0.863). The indirect effect was calculated by multiplying regression coefficient of OTT services on search experience (0.811) with regression coefficient of search experience on intention to continuous subscription (1.064) [i.e.,0.811x1.064=0.863]. Therefore, the total effect of OTT services on intention to continuous subscription was 0.237-0.863= -0.626. To check the mediating effect of search experience on intention to continuous subscription, we checked the significance level of the indirect effect. The indirect effect of OTT services→Search experience→Intention to continuous subscription as significant (β=0.863; Boot S.E.=0.075) and the bootstrapping values in Hayes (2018) PROCESS macros, based on 20,000 bootstrap samples, suggest that 95 per cent confidence interval (CI) range between 0.719 and 1.1013. Because confidence interval values do not contain zero, it was established that search experience mediates the relation link between OTT services and intention to continuous subscription.

Table 4: Test of H1, H2, H3 AND H4

	DV=ICS				DV=Search Experience **(H2)**				DV=ICS			
	Model1				**Model 2**				**Model 3**			
	βcoeff	**se**	**t**	**p**	**βcoeff**	**se**	**t**	**p**	**βcoeff**	**se**	**t**	**p**
Constant	3.975	0.045	87.998	0.0000	1.988	0.036	54.724	0.0000	1.860	0.068	27.369	0.0000
OTT Services **(H1)**	0.626	0.080	7.812	0.0000	0.811	0.064	12.580	0.0000	-0.237	0.049	-4.832	0.0000
Search Experience **(H3)**									1.064	0.032	33.163	0.0000
R-square	0.132				0.282				0.768			
F	61.023				158.26				663.580			
df1	1				1				2			
df2	403				403				402			
P	.0000				.0000				0.0000			

Total Effect						
	Total Effect	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
	-0.626	0.080	7.812	0.0000	0.468	0.784

Direct Effect						
	Direct Effect	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
OTT Services→ICS	0.237	0.049	4.832	0.0000	-0.333	-0.140

Bootstrapping Indirect Effect (To verify mediation) (H4)				
	Indirect Effect	BOOT se	BOOT LLCI	BOOT ULCI
Ottservices→Search experience→Intention to continuous subscription	0.863 = (0.811 x 1.064)	0.075	0.719	1.013

Notes: The total number of people in this study is 405. Lower bound bootstrapping confidence intervals are referred to as Boot LLCI. The upper bound bootstrapping confidence intervals are referred to as boot ULCL. For this bias corrected bootstrapping confidence intervals, there are 20,000 bootstrapping samples. All confidence intervals in the output have a level of confidence of 0.95. Because some numbers may be very near to zero, we utilise three decimal digits for bootstrap results.

Moderation analysis:

In Hypothesis 5, we assumed that screen watching time moderates the relationship between OTT services and intention to continuous subscriptions. Hayes (2018) PROCESS macro (Model 73) was used to test the moderated mediation hypothesis. The result revealed (Table 5) that the interaction effect between OTT services and screen watching time does not have a significant impact on its user intention to continuous subscription (β=-0.0170, t=-0.1725, p=0.8632). The 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was -0.2114 (LLCI) and 1.773 (ULCI). Since zero was contained in the CI result, therefore this hypothesis is rejected.

In Hypothesis 6, we assumed that screen watching time is the moderator in the link of OTT services and search experience. The moderation analysis (Table 5) revealed that the 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was -0.5147 (LLCI) and -.0319(ULCI). Thus screen watching time moderates the relationship between OTT services and search experience (β=-.2733, t=-2.2257, p=0.0266)

In Hypothesis 7, we hypothesised that screen watching time moderates the relationship between search experience and intention to continuous subscriptions. The result revealed (Table 5) that the interaction effect between search experience and screen watching time have a significant impact on its user intention to continuous subscription (β.1685, t=2.0860, p=0.0376). The 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was .0097 (LLCI) and .3273 (ULCI). Since zero is not contained in the CI result therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

In Hypothesis 8, we hypothesised that device moderates the moderated relationship between

OTT services and intention to continuous subscriptions by screen watching time. The result revealed (Table 5) that the interaction effect between OTT services, screen watching time and device does not have a significant impact on its user intention to continuous subscription (β.0096, t=.2364, p=0.8133). The 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was.-.0705 (LLCI) and .08983 (ULCI). Since zero is contained in the CI result therefore this hypothesis is rejected.

In Hypothesis 9, we hypothesised that device moderates the moderated relationship between OTT services and search experience by screen watching time. The result revealed (Table 5) that the interaction effect between OTT services, screen watching time and devices have a significant impact on its user search experience (β=.1353, t=2.6984, p=0.00736). The 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was .0367 (LLCI) and .2339 (ULCI). Since zero is not contained in the CI result therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

In Hypothesis 10, we hypothesised that device moderates the moderated relationship between search experience and intention to continuous subscriptions by screen watching time. The result revealed (Table 5) that the interaction effect between search experience, screen watching time and devices have a significant impact on intention to continuous subscriptions (β=-.0702, t=-2.1413, p=0.0329). The 95 percent bias-corrected confidence interval (BCCI) was -.1347 (LLCI) and -.0057 (ULCI). Since zero is not contained in the CI result therefore this hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5: Testing of Hypothesis 5-10 (two way and three-way interaction)
(Results of moderated moderated-mediation model)

DV=Search experience						
	βcoeff	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
constant	2.0864	1765	11.8193	.0000	1.7393	2.4334
ott	1.6595	.3016	5.5022	.0000	1.0666	2.2525
Screen	-.0752	.0737	-1.0211	.3078	-.2201	0696
OTT x Screen **(H6)**	**-.2733**	**1228**	**-2.2257**	**.0266**	**-.5147**	**-.0319**
Device	-.0942	0782	-1.2042	.229	.2480	.0596
OTT x SCR x Device **(H9)**	**.1353**	**.0501**	**2.6984**	**.0073**	**.0367**	**.2339**
R	**R-sq**	**MSE**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
.5608	.3145	.5178	26.0177	7.0000	397.0000	.0000
DV=Intention to continuous subscription						
	βcoeff	**se**	**t**	**p**	**LLCI**	**ULCI**
constant	2.4078	.3149	7.6452	.0000	1.7886	3.0270
OTT	-.2731	.2306	-1.1844	.2370	-.7265	.1802
SE	.7833	.1567	4.9971	.0000	.4751	1.0914
Screen	-.3652	.1650	-2.2131	.0275	-.6896	-.0408
OTT x Screen **(H6)**	**-.0170**	**.0988**	**-.1725**	**.8632**	**-.2114**	**.1773**
SE x Screen **(H7)**	**.1685**	**.0808**	**2.0860**	**.0376**	**.0097**	**.3273**
Device	-.2527	.1444	-1.7504	.0808	-.5366	.0311
OTT x Screen x Device **(H8)**	.0096	.0408	.2364	.8133	-.0705	.0898
SE x Screen x Device **(H10)**	-.0702	.0328	-2.1413	.0329	-.1347	-.0057
Model Summery						
R	**R-sq**	**MSE**	**F**	**df1**	**df2**	**p**
.8790	.7726	.2219	121.3899	11.0000	393.0000	.0000

Discussion:

Using, "uses and gratification theory" in the study, we can say that the continuous subscription of OTT depends on the satisfactory search experience of a OTT subscriber. Hence the prime aim of the current research is to check the impact of OTT services on the subscriber intention to continuous subscriptions. Another, objective of the research is to see whether search experience is a mediating factor. Further the study checks, whether screen watching time (first moderator) and device (second moderator) moderates the indirect relations between OTT platform services and intention to continuous subscriptions via search experience. The result obtained through this study, provides valuable insights in the area of OTT subscription. This study will usher new perspectives in examining major factors influencing intention to continuous subscriptions of OTT platforms. H1 is supported by the findings. This finding is consistent with earlier outcomes of Rose et al., (2020), in a way that the key determinants of OTT service are convenience, content and financial benefits. The result of the study supported the findings of Nagaraj et al., (2021), relating to the major factors that derive the continuous subscription i.e., entertainment features, ease of use and convenience of the users. In our study, convenience emerges as the most influential among the five dimension of

OTT service, followed by ease of use, information content, entertainment features and financial benefits (the least influential) amongst the five factors. This finding, however, contradicts the findings of Koul et al., (2020), where he found that subscription fee is the significant determinant in deciding the OTT users' sustained behaviour.

The hypothesis 2 i.e., OTT services has a significant impact on the users search experience was found significant in the study. In the absence of the literature in Indian subcontinent, the findings of our study can be corroborated with the findings of search experience (Rose et al., 2020; Moon et al., 2015). The hypothesis 3 (H3) i.e., search experience has a significant impact on its user intention to continuous subscription was found significant in the study. The literature is sparse in OTT services. However, considering that the search experience of OTT services renders similar experience as internet, we can say that our findings are consistent with the findings of Sanchiz et al., (2020).

The findings show that over-the-top (OTT) services have a significant impact on intention to continuous subscription through users' search experiences, thus supports the hypothesis no. 4.-For screen watching time, potential moderating influence in the mediation model, found that the screen watching time has significant interaction between OTT service and search experience relationship and search experience and intention to continuous subscription relationship, thus supporting hypothesis 6 and 7. However, screen watching time did not moderate the direct relationship between OTT services and intention to continuous subscription, thus hypothesis 5 is rejected. Since previous studies have not checked the moderating effect of screen watching time on OTT services, search experience and intention to continuous subscription, therefore we cannot vouch for the result from the literature. Lastly the three-way moderation between device and screen watching time in the mediation model was analysed. Hypothesis 8 was not supported by the findings, which postulate that device moderates the moderated relationship between OTT services and intention to continuous subscriptions by screen watching time. The study found strong support for hypothesis 9 wherein the relationship between OTT services and search experience by screen watching time was moderated through device. The study also found strong support for hypothesis 10 wherein device moderates the moderated relationship between search experience and intention to continuous subscriptions by screen watching time. As we mentioned before, the three-way interaction is studied for the first time to the best of our knowledge, thus the results can't be corroborated with any past findings.

Theoretical Implications:

Individuals use media to meet various desires and needs, according to the "uses and gratifications theory." People/customers, according to this view, are aware of what they require and how they use the media platform. These users also learn new skills and get better at what they already know. The results of the study support the theory and adds the knowledge in new way.

First, the OTT service, which are useful for the OTT users supports the intention to continuous subscription by adding the knowledge to this theory. *Second*, OTT services if are according to the expectations of the users it can help in influencing the search experience. This finding also adds the value to UGT. *Third,* If the search experience is able to fulfil the needs of the OTT users, it will help in influence the intention to continuous subscription adds the knowledge to the UGT. *Fourth*, the search experience-which fulfils the needs of the user, mediates the relationship between OTT services and Intention to continues subscription also adds the value to UGT. *Fifth*, since screen watching time does not interact with OTT services and intention to

continuous subscription, hence adding the knowledge to the theory, we can say that screen watching time does not draw any benefits for the users of OTT media. Whereas, *sixth,* screen watching time interacts the OTT service and search experience relationship and *seventh*, search experience and intention to continuous subscription relationship, therefore, we can say that the findings add the knowledge to the UGT. *Eighth*, since device and screen watching time does not moderate the relationship between OTT services and intention to continuous subscriptions, we can draw the conclusion that the user does not draw the benefit from the device use and screen watching time. Whereas finding the interacting effect of device and screen watching time in OTT services and search experience relationship *(ninth),* and search experience and intention to continuous subscriptions *(tenth)* we can say that these results adds the knowledge to the theory.

Managerial Implications:

The findings of the study are critical for managerial decisions. OTT service providers and newcomers to the OTT field can use the results of factor assessments to help them design better penetration in market and client acquisition practices. The study show that these OTT service platforms are particularly famous in young generation and therefore such OTT service providers should consider young people as their primary audience and therefore should provide content to the liking of their taste.

This study has important implications for OTT platform service providers in India. Firstly, Considering the cultural richness and diversity of our country these service providers should increase the diversity of videos and content on their platforms so that every stratum as well as every region has something to view thus increasing the perceived serendipity which in turn will lead to increased traffic as well as revenue for such OTT service providers. The more any service provider understands it, the more market share the service provider will eventually able to capture. Secondly, the study further showed that OTT service platforms are particularly famous in young generation and therefore such OTT service providers should consider young people as their primary audience and therefore should provide content to the liking of their taste. However, this study nowhere suggests that other age groups are to be ignored because eventually the target of such OTT service providers is to bring every age group on board. Thirdly, OTT service providers should also focus to divert other customers such as customers of set top box or cable providers by following two pronged strategy of cheaper subscription packages and tie ups with different Internet Service Providers (ISP's) so that a win-win situation for both OTT service providers and ISP's can be created. Many internet service providers have come up with suitable internet package to accommodate all the OTT subscriber, thus capitalizing on the package and bringing synergies for both telecom company and OTT company. Fourthly, OTT service providers should invest substantially in recommendation agents so as to increase perceived serendipity value which may lead to increased traffic as well as subscription. For this these service providers may sign an MoU with different data mining companies as well as software research companies to develop better algorithms and artificial intelligence for better recommendation agents. Fifthly, the OTT service providers may also introduce loyalty scheme to attract customers to enjoy their platform and derive satisfaction from it in turn materializing them to become regular customers and subscribers.

Limitations and future research:

Because this research was performed during the COVID pandemic, we noticed a few deficiencies that need to be investigated further. Firstly, in the current pandemic period, where people have

subscribed to various OTT platform services merely to kill their boredom and when normalcy returns, such people may revert to their previous habits and the current subscription may not be solely purchased because of components derived from UGT theory. However, such subscription has been purchased in pandemic, therefore their renewal may depend upon the components derived from UGT theory and search experience. Secondly, due to pandemic, the date was collected online and the field visit was avoided, therefore the majority of the data is tilted towards younger age group. However, due to preference of OTT platform by younger generation, their participation will be valuable to the present research. Third, the data was collected digitally, so the responses given by respondents in the questionnaire are based solely on their information, which may have an inherent bias. Although there have been efforts to address such bias using the Common Method Variance Bias approach, there is still scope for future research based on other survey techniques to examine the user/customer for OTT services. Fourthly, many other variables which are critical in understanding users/subscribers continuous and renewed subscriptions behaviour, such as design (navigation/visual), information provision (evaluation/rating and reviews/content description), etc. has not been taken up in this study. Therefore, considering these variable in OTT service and other related fields, such as OTT gaming and/or music/audio platforms is a subject matter of research for future investigation.

Conclusion:

Through the present study, we have sought to understand how user/customer search experiences affect the ongoing and renewed subscription of OTT platform services. We use the described research model to assess the relationship between the following variables, using current and potential OTT platform service subscribers. Our findings show, that intention to continuous and renewed subscriptions is definitely related to factors, such as search experience which includes perceived diagnosticity and also perceived serendipity. In addition, the search experience also mediates the relationship that exists between the OTT platform services and the intention to continue and renew the subscription. Also, it was found that screen time and device type also have a role in OTT services and intention to continuous and renewed subscriptions via search experience.

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