

CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN OVER THE TOP (OTT) SERVICES IN THRISSUR DISTRICT DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

***Anaswara P.A. and Princy Francis**

M.E.S Asmabi College, P.Vemballur

* Corresponding author : anaswara1098@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Customer satisfaction is a measure of how products and services offered by a company meet or outperform the expectations of a customer. Customer satisfaction can be simply defined as a measurement of how happy the customers are with the products and services of a company.

OTT was an unfamiliar term a few years ago. But, now it is a highly popular term among people from all walks of life. The reason being manifold such as convenience, safety, cost effectiveness etc. offered by OTT services, especially during the pandemic. OTT services were the only available option for newly released contents like films and web series during the COVID-19 lockdown. So, it gained much popularity during the lockdown and the trend is on the rise. The popularity of smartphones led to the popularity of OTT services in India. COVID-19 brought relevance to OTT platforms. OTT is an exponentially growing industry that is a part of the majority of people's lives in the world. It was one of the alternatives to watch new movies safely in the pandemic period. So, the customer satisfaction of the people using it had to be studied. This study helped to find out the improvements people wish to be brought in OTT services to increase customer satisfaction. Hence, this study mainly focuses on the level of satisfaction of customers using OTT services.

Keywords: Customer Satisfaction, OTT, COVID- 19, Video streaming, Entertainment.

INTRODUCTION

After the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, people just wanted to stay out of the uncertainties and worries during the pandemic. They just wanted to stay happy along with staying healthy and safe. So they ended up depending on the internet. It is notable that the word 'comedy' was the most searched word in Google in Kerala during the lockdown and it was a relief that the word depression was not much searched.

Over The Top (OTT) refers to the video streaming services offered directly to the customers over the internet and no cable connection is needed for OTT services. OTT services were not a much-discussed topic till the outbreak of COVID-19. 40 video streaming services were functioning in India during the pandemic period and the demand for OTT services was at its peak from March 29 to April 4 (Jacob, 2020). The most popular among them are Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Disney+ Hotstar. This increased demand was the COVID-19 lockdown effect. The popularity of smartphones, 4G network & excellent optical fibre connectivity made this possible. During the lockdown associated with COVID-19, the film industry faced many difficulties to release films. So, OTT was chosen as an alternative option to release already shot movies. Initially, there were protests from movie theatre owners. But, people were pulled back from going to movie theatres due to the fear of the pandemic. Initially, the film producers were skeptical about

the profitability of new film releases through OTT platforms. But some films, for example, 'Soorai Potru' directed by Sudha Kongara ran successfully on Amazon Prime video and profits had crossed 50 crore rupees, according to Tamil Nadu's estimates. There is a fixed income from streaming films through OTT platforms and hence risks associated with it are lower. On the other hand, the big-budget ones may have a higher potential to earn more revenue if they were to be released through movie theatres.

According to a report by FICCI-EY 2019, Indians spent about 70% of their mobile data on entertainment. Estimates discovered that the millennials spent an average of 10 to 20 hours a week online (Clement, 2020) and it increased recently as stated before, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Major film production companies like Walt Disney and Sony Pictures prepared big budgets for online films and the future is likely to see the co-existence of both OTT and movie theatres.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The emergence of Over The Top (OTT) platforms like Amazon Prime video and Netflix has made remarkable changes in how people consume media and entertainment. Leisure time activities of people started changing across the world as the OTT platforms became a part of the daily schedules of people, especially in the urban areas. According to Bouten, Latré, Van De Meerssche, et al. (2013), in the beginning, OTT services only offered short videos with low quality, but now, high quality videos, films and live videos are also provided to the customers. It has become so popular also due to its 24 x 7 Video-on-Demand (VOD) feature, accessibility, automation and convenience. The sector began growing rapidly and it was fuelled by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic which completely changed people's life styles.

Studies also show that OTT services beat television contents. Actually, TV shows are a

part of OTT platforms and also there is no room for the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) while using OTT platforms. However being preferred more than TV shows does not mean that the customers are highly satisfied. The satisfaction level of customers in OTT services need to be studied and analyzed for knowing further about the problems faced by the customers.

According to Patwa (2020), the year 2019 witnessed a 140 % rise in demand of VOD (Video on Demand) platforms. Service quality acted as an indicator of customer satisfaction and it led to repurchase intentions & loyalty (Navjot et al., 2020). According to (Landis, 2020), gaining a new customer was five times more expensive than retaining a customer. According to Li, Spachos, Chignell et al. (2016), users differed in terms of their ratings of service quality. People have different perspectives on quality. According to Henderson, Zakia Brown (2016), ways of engaging customers beyond the point of transaction must be identified by the retailers for the customer satisfaction.

According to Cha (2013), the consumers were more likely to use online video platforms when they thought that the online video platforms differ from television in satisfying their needs. The comparative advantages of OTT platforms decrease the usage of television. According to Madnani, Fernandes & Madnani (2020), the satisfaction level of customers was directly related to providing the medium to watch with family, the duration and time to use OTT platforms, the cost and the quality of content on OTT platforms and their preference over television. Change in lifestyles, rise in income, growth of nuclear families and the impact of western culture drive the Indian markets. Also, yesterday's luxuries are today's necessities.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research design of the study is descriptive as well as analytical in nature. This study was conducted on 50 respondents from Thrissur district. The sampling technique adopted for the

study was convenience sampling, which is a non-probability sampling method. Primary data was used for data analysis. Secondary data was used for report writing. Primary data was collected through questionnaire, telephone interview etc. Secondary data was collected through websites, books, journals, newspapers etc. The tools used for the study are mean score, Kruskal Wallis test, Likert Scale, SPSS, Mendley etc.

Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis is a tentative statement which is to be tested to be true or false. The null hypothesis will either be accepted or rejected.

• H_{01} : There is no significant influence of Educational qualification on OTT usage during COVID-19.

Objectives

- To study the user practices of OTT services in Thrissur.
- To understand the influence of educational qualification on OTT service usage during COVID-19.
- To get awareness on the level of customer satisfaction of OTT services in Thrissur.

Data Analysis

Data analysis makes use of bar diagrams, pie diagrams and tables for the graphical representation of data. It helps in the better understanding of the data.

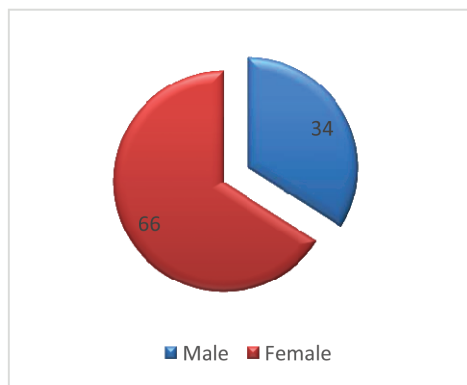


Figure 1.5.1: Gender wise classification
(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

Both males and females are covered under the study to analyse customer satisfaction. Out of

the 50 samples taken for the study, 17 people (34%) are males and 33 people (66%) are females.

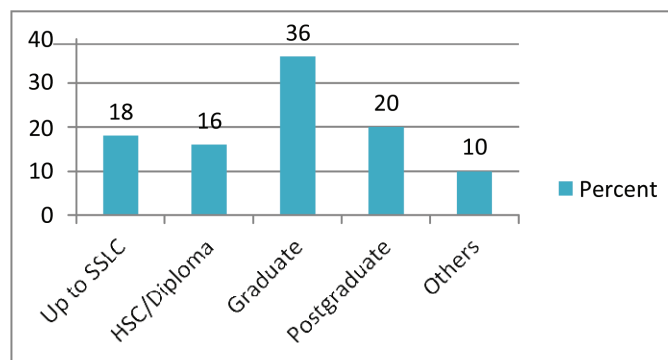


Figure 1.5.2 Classification according to Educational Qualification
(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

Out of the 50 people taken for the study, 18% people fall under the educational qualification of 'Up to SSLC', 16% people come under 'HSC/ Diploma',

36% people are graduates, 20% people are post graduates and 10% people opted the option 'others' (professional courses, Ph. D etc.)

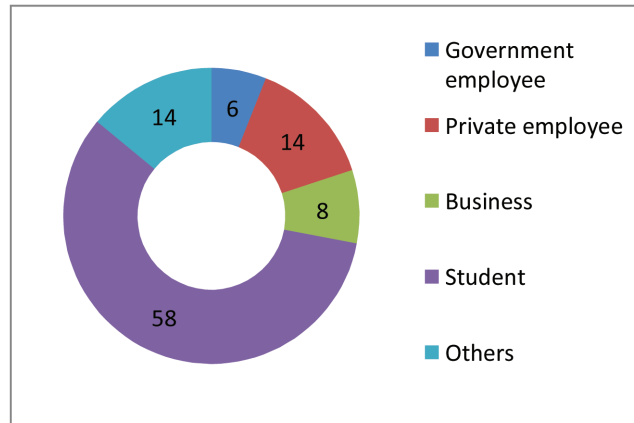


Figure 1.5.3: Classification according to Occupation
(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

6% people are Government employees, 40% people are private employees, 8% people are doing business, 58% people are students and

14% people fall under the 'Others' category. Majority of people fall under the 'Student' category.

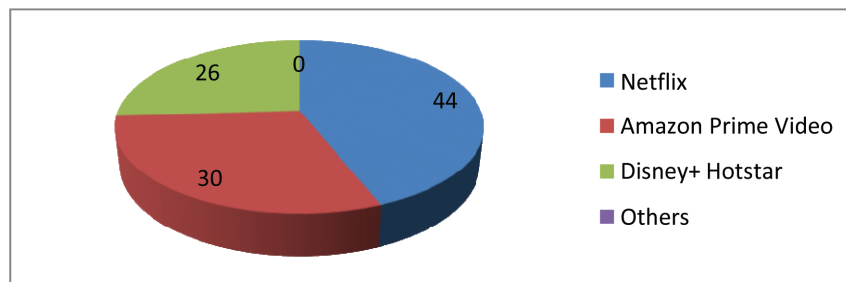


Figure 1.5.4: Most watched OTT platform
(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The most watched OTT platform of 44% people is Netflix, 30% people chose Amazon Prime Video and 26% people chose Disney+ Hotstar. No one chose the option 'Others'.

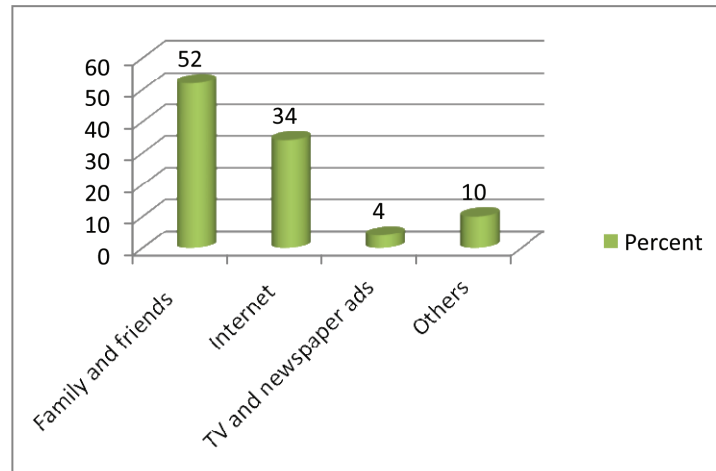


Figure 1.5.5: Source of knowledge about OTT platforms

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

As the source of knowledge about OTT platforms, 52% people chose family and friends, 34% people chose internet, 4% people chose TV

and newspaper ads and 10% people chose the option 'Others'. The greatest influence is from family and friends in this case.

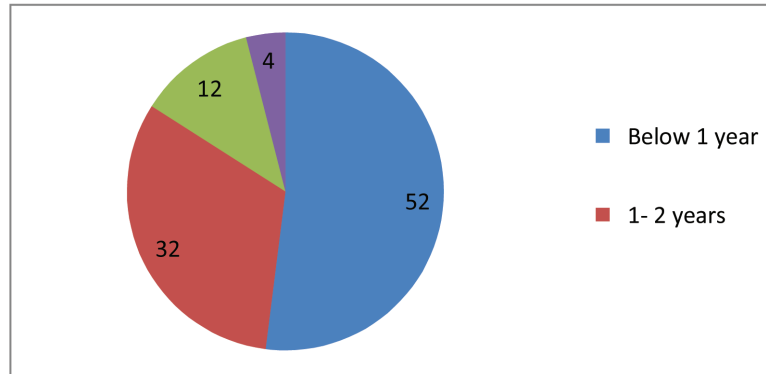


Figure 1.5.6: Time period of OTT usage

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

Majority of people (52%) have not completed one year since they started using OTT services. 32% people chose the option '1 to 2 years' as

their period of OTT usage, 12% people chose '3 to 5 years' and only 4% people have been using it for above 5 years.

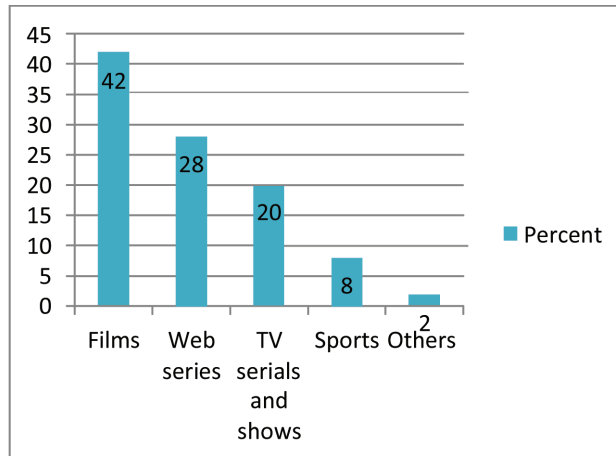


Table 1.5.7: Most watched content on OTT

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

The most watched content on OTT of 42% people is films. 28% people chose web series, 20% people chose TV serials and shows, 8%

people chose sports and only 2% people chose the option 'others'. The most watched program on OTT platforms by the majority of people are films.

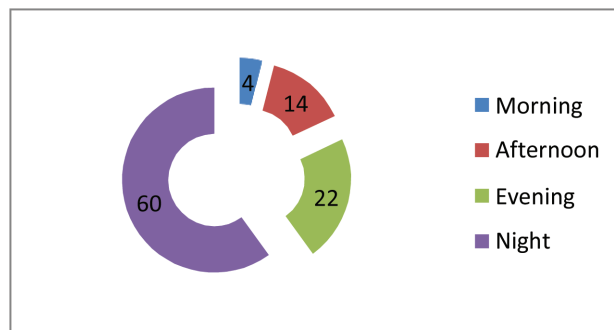


Figure 1.5.8: Time of mostly watching OTT content

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

4% people watch OTT mostly during morning time, 14% people watch mostly during afternoon time, 22% people watch mostly during evening

time, 60% people watch mostly during night. Majority of the people like to watch OTT content during night time.

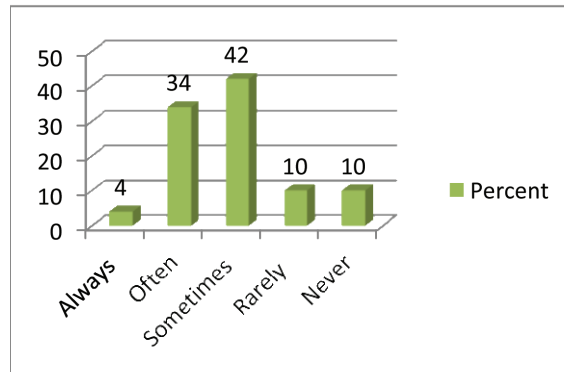


Figure 1.5.9: Frequency of Internet Connectivity problems
(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

4% people face internet connectivity problems always, 34% people face the problems often, 42% people face internet connectivity problems sometimes, 10% people face the internet

problems rarely and the remaining 10% people never face such problems. Majority of the people face internet connectivity problems sometimes only.

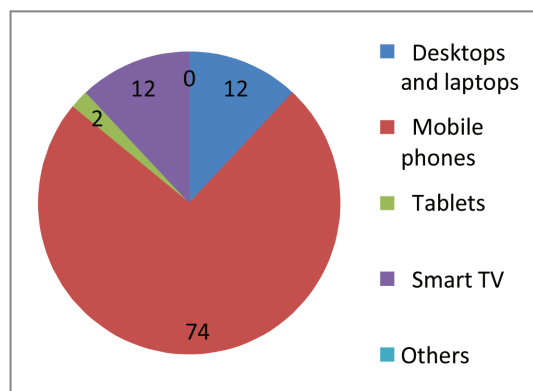


Figure 1.5.10: Most used device for watching OTT contents
(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

12% people mostly watch OTT contents on desktops and laptops, 74% people on mobile phones, only 2% people on tablets, 12% people

on smart TV and nobody chose the option 'Others'. Majority of the people watch OTT contents on mobile phones.

Table 1.5.1: Kruskal-Wallis Test showing the influence of Educational Qualification on OTT watching during COVID-19

• H_{01} : There is no significant influence of Educational qualification on OTT usage during COVID-19.

	Influence
Chi-Square	10.805
df	4
Asymp. Sig.	0.029

(Source: Primary Data)

a. Kruskal Wallis Test

b. Grouping Variable: Educational Qualification

Interpretation

From table 1.5.1, it can be inferred that the p value is 0.029 and p value < than 0.05. Hence,

the null hypothesis is rejected at 5% level of significance. So, there is a significant influence of educational qualification on OTT watching during COVID-19.

Table 1.5.2: Summary of COVID Influence

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
COVID Influence	50	2.00	5.00	3.632 (72.64%)	0.67171

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

73% people (3.632/5*100) agree that COVID-19 has a significant influence on their OTT watching. Table 1.5.2 shows the summary of the number of people who chose the options

‘Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree & Strongly disagree’ for the various statements related to the influence of COVID-19 on their OTT watching behaviour.

Table 1.5.3: Summary of Customer Satisfaction of OTT

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Customer Satisfaction	50	2.25	5.00	3.5550 (71%)	0.54875

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation

71% people ($3.555/5 \times 100$) agree that they are satisfied with OTT services. Table 1.5.3 shows the summary of the number of people who chose

the options ‘Strongly agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree & Strongly disagree’ for various statements regarding customer satisfaction in OTT services.

Table 1.5.4: Number of people in each Level of Satisfaction

Level of Customer Satisfaction		
	Frequency	Percent
Low Level	15	30.0
Medium Level	23	46.0
High Level	12	24.0
Total	50	100.0

(Source: Primary Data)

Interpretation:

30% people have low level satisfaction, 46% people have medium level satisfaction and 24% people have high level satisfaction. Majority of people have medium level satisfaction.

CONCLUSION

The study was conducted among 50 OTT users in Thrissur district to study about the satisfaction of customers. The study shows that COVID-19 has a significant impact on the OTT watching of people and majority of people are satisfied with the OTT services used by them. The most popular OTT services are Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and Disney+ Hotstar. Majority of people has only medium level satisfaction in OTT services. Educational qualification has a significant impact on the OTT watching during COVID-

19. The major suggestions are to make OTT platforms more common among people with lower educational qualifications and to make more people willing to pay for it through the

introduction of more affordable plans.

Coming years will definitely witness an exponential growth in both the number of users and the revenue generated from the sector, especially in the COVID-19 scenario. If the current trend follows, the OTT platforms will surely become an integral part of people's lives.

REFERENCE

- Bouten, N., Latré, S., Van De Meerssche, W., De Vleeschauwer, B., De Schepper, K., Van Leekwijck, W., & De Turck, F. (2013). A multicast-enabled delivery framework for QoE assurance of over-the-top services in multimedia access networks. *Journal of Network and Systems Management*, 21(4), 677–706.
- Madnani, D., Fernandes, S., & Madnani, N. (2020). Analyzing the impact of COVID-19 on over-the-top media platforms in India. *International Journal of Pervasive Computing and Communications*, 16(5), 457–475.

Kaur Navjot, Goyal Pratibha, K. M. (2020). Employee Satisfaction and Client Satisfaction in the Banking Sector. *Indian Journal of Economics and Development*, 16(3).

Henderson-Brown, Zakia. (2016). Cha-Ching. *African American Review*, 49(1), 59

Cha, J. (2013). Predictors of television and online video platform use: A coexistence model of old and new video platforms. *Telematics and Informatics*, 30(4), 296–310.

Li, W., Spachos, P., Chignell, M., Leon-Garcia, A., Jiang, J., & Zucherman, L. (2016). Capturing user behavior in subjective quality assessment of OTT video service.

Landis, T. (2020). *Customer Retention Marketing vs. Customer Acquisition Marketing*. <https://www.outboundengine.com/blog/customer-retention-marketing-vs-customer-acquisition-marketing/#:~:text=Acquiring a new customer can,customer is 5-20%25>.

Patwa, P. (2020). *How Covid-19 Increased Viewer's Appetite for OTT Content*. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/350318#:~:text=As per recent reports%2C the,consumers' inclination towards online content>.