

Analyzing the Influence of OTT Platforms over Movie Theatres

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms have emerged as significant disruptors in the entertainment industry, altering the landscape of film consumption and challenging the traditional dominance of movie theatres. This study investigates the multifaceted influence of OTT platforms on movie theatres, analyzing the shifts in consumer behavior, economic implications, and the overall cinematic experience. This study delves into how streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime Video are altering the landscape of the traditional movie theater industry. By investigating their impact on movie theater attendance, the research aims to uncover the reasons behind this shift. It will scrutinize various aspects like convenience, content accessibility, pricing, and the overall viewing experience to grasp the evolving relationship between OTT platforms and movie theaters. Ultimately, the findings will offer crucial insights into how movie theaters can navigate and evolve within this changing media environment shaped by the burgeoning popularity of OTT platforms.

Furthermore, the research scrutinizes the qualitative aspects of the cinematic experience, comparing the immersive nature of theatres with the comfort and convenience of home viewing through OTT platforms. Factors such as audiovisual quality, communal viewing, and technological advancements in both domains are examined to understand the strengths and limitations of each medium.

Keywords: *Over-The-Top (OTT), Cinematic experience, Streaming services, Movie theater attendance, Consumer behavior, Technological advancements*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the explosive surge in popularity of streaming giants like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video has sparked discussions about the fate of traditional movie theaters in an evolving entertainment landscape. These platforms boast convenience and an extensive array of content, available at the tap of a screen from the comfort of one's home. As a result, concerns have arisen regarding the future viability of movie theaters and the strategies they might adopt to thrive amidst this shifting paradigm.

Debates surrounding the influence of OTT platforms on movie theaters abound. Some assert that the rise of streaming services has precipitated a decline in movie theater attendance, while others contend that both can coexist, each offering distinct and complementary viewing experiences. Exploring pivotal factors such as pricing, ease of access, and the overall quality of the viewing experience holds the key to unraveling the true impact of OTT platforms on the traditional cinematic landscape.

Analyzing these factors presents a compelling opportunity to discern the intricate dynamics at play between OTT platforms and movie theaters. By scrutinizing elements like cost-effectiveness, the ease of content accessibility, and the immersive nature of the viewing experience, a clearer understanding of the symbiotic or competitive relationship between these mediums can be attained.

Ultimately, delving into these facets will shed light on how movie theaters might adapt and innovate in response to the ascent of OTT platforms. Unveiling insights into these dynamics not only delineates the current landscape but also equips the movie theater industry with the foresight needed to navigate this evolving terrain and potentially reinvent its offerings in tandem with the changing preferences of audiences.

OBJECTIVES

- 1) Assess and quantify the changes in movie theater attendance over a defined period, correlating them with the growth of OTT platforms.
- 2) Investigate and understand shifts in consumer behavior, preferences, and decision-making regarding movie theater visits vis-à-vis OTT platform usage.
- 3) Conduct surveys or focus groups to discern audience preferences, motivations, and satisfaction levels concerning OTT platforms and movie theaters.
- 4) Based on findings, propose actionable strategies for movie theaters to adapt and thrive in the context of the growing dominance of OTT platforms.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Chatterjee and Pal, 2020; says that cinema from the very first movie Raja Harishchandra has been a significant source of entertainment in India. (Chatterjee and Pal, 2020) says that traditional cinema viewing habit is gradually being replaced by watching cinema on over the top (OTT) media platforms like Amazon Prime, Netflix, etc.

As per the survey conducted by Ormax Media Report, neither TV nor OTT has discouraged the audience from having the theatrical experience (**Karuna Sharma, 2020**). About 82 % of the respondents in the survey were missing the big screen experience and are willing to have it within 2 to 3 weeks of reopening (Ormax Report, 2020). Of course, the rules of SOP with respect to safety standards and parameters are going to be very steep and redefined in the light of the post-pandemic situation, and it is not going to fade away the future of the Movie Theatre Industry (Tandon, 2020). But regaining the trust of the audience is not that simple and is not going to be a cakewalk. Bigger chains like PVR, INOX and big cinemas might win the trust, but it is going to be a big challenge for the smaller chains and local cinemas / single screens (Gangal, 2021)

Towards achieving this new normal, it is also equally important to focus on phenomenal changes that are bound to take place towards distribution and pricing strategies. The lockdown had a palpable impact on the viewership patterns and habits of Indian audiences (Saini, 2020). On a parallel line, exhibitors are exploring every possible innovation to meet the new post Covid-19 requirement, Oma Cinemas a France Based Architecture company has come up with a unique pod-like design that mandates social distancing and ensures a better viewing experience (Thaker, 2020) Even the Indian scenario is no different from the rest, with a population of 1.3 billion, an estimated number of 100 million movie-goers, an under-screened market with around 9,500 screens, a growing number of smartphone users, over 600 million Internet subscribers, insatiable appetite for quality entertainment, an evolving digital payments infrastructure, and affordable OTT subscription costs, has emerged as a win-win for all associated stakeholders. A trend of people viewing multiple content channels at the same time, along with demand for new and exclusive content is forcing the big production houses and directors to release movies directly onto the OTT channels rather than Cinema halls (**Patel, 2020**)

This shifting landscape puts studios in a difficult position. They may be able to reach more people through streaming services, particularly during the pandemic, but doing so could undermine theatres and the large revenues they generate. It could also affect revenue from other windows—if they choose to use them. Such considerations impact the upfront financing of productions, existing distribution agreements, and licensing terms (**Westcott, 2020**).

On the other hand, few studies identified that there may be an increase in the preference for web series and other content streamed on OTT over television programs, but this effect may not be significantly adverse on the movie theatre industry (**Marne, 2021**). However, research on the comparison of individuals' perception towards OTT platforms and movie theatre industry post pandemic era is still in its nascent stage. Thus, a precise conclusion cannot be drawn on this perceptual difference and whether the growth of OTT platforms will affect the movie theatre industry, until and unless more rigorous and comprehensive research is carried out. This ascertains the need and significance of the present study.

An analysis to understand the consumer behavior towards OTT platforms during the lockdown period shows that there is a positive response towards it. There are numerous benefits of using an online platform to watch movies like economic benefit, easy access, better time management and so on however Post pandemic when the movie theatres reopen the OTT tycoons can still manage to keep their customers attracted towards the

OTT screens by coming up with innovative strategies like extended period offers, free subscription, multiple viewership feature and so on. This poses a risk for the movie theatre though (**Dastidar, 2020**).

The increased use of smartphones in India has ushered in a new era of video consumption on personal media devices. Smartphone penetration in India has reached about 520 million by 2020, with broadband coverage increasing from 14% today to 40% in 2020 (Usmani, 2020). This increase will play a significant role in the transition of media consumption from traditional to digital. Over the last year, the percentage of Indian consumers who prefer viewing TV shows has decreased from 47% to 10%. According to (**ASHITA KOTHARI, 2021, Hiremath, Suvarna; Panda, Dr.Ansumalini; C, Dr. Prashantha ; Pasumarti, 2022**).

Prasad, S S(2022) in his article suggests that film income is expected to climb moderately to roughly Rs 19,200 crore. **Sony Varghese & Chinnaiah, (2021)** in their article say that in India the number of theaters is way too low, and penetration of television and the internet is growing.

Sundaravel and Elangovan (2020) say that OTT platforms which were once considered a luxury are now becoming commodity and are harming the presence of cable Television in India. Hence, traditional TV stations must be prepared to embrace the shift brought into the present world

Dhawan (2020) says OTT is becoming a major threat to movie halls than what it was as more and more people watching movies on OTTs. It was also found in his study that OTT platforms are thought to be cheaper and much more convenient for large gatherings. The absence of alternate media options at present has led to the growth of OTT platforms

Mishra, Rout, Kantha and Jha (2021) study says, the greatest advantage of digital platforms is that there is no problem of piracy and theft which on other hand is a major problem for film industry. **Varghese (2021)**, study reveals that the future of OTT platforms is promising in India but a few features of theaters such as size of screen, Quality of sound, experience of theatre and atmosphere cannot be provided by the OTT platforms. Further, for this reason, people will come back to theaters but it does will take time as theaters cannot be completely erased.

DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The research methodology adopted for this study is primarily descriptive in nature, aiming to understand and describe the factors influencing customers, to use Over-The-Top (OTT) services. The primary tool used for data collection was a questionnaire survey.

The survey questionnaire was meticulously designed to explore and gather insights into the diverse factors shaping customers' preferences and decisions regarding the utilization of OTT services.

DATA ANALYSIS:

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches to analysis should be used. For the purpose of assessing survey and clinical evaluation of data, statistical methods should be used. Utilized a questionnaire in order to get qualitative questionnaire data.

DEMOGRAPHIC FACTORS OF THE RESPONSES:

Frequency Table			
		Frequency	Percent %
AGE	Below 18	2	2.63
	18-21	10	13.16
	22-25	34	44.74
	Above 26	30	39.47
	Total	76	100.00
GENDER	Male	52	68.42

	Female	24	31.58
	Total	76	100.00
EDUCATION LEVEL	Under graduate	36	47.37
	Post graduate	38	50.00
	Other	2	2.63
	Total	76	100.00
PREFERENCE	OTT	28	36.84
	THEATRE	48	63.16
	TOTAL	76	100.00

The statistical information shown in the table above is derived from research on the Influence of OTT Platforms over Movie Theatres. The following is an interpretation of the findings.

Age Distribution: From the above table, it has been identified that 2.63% of the respondents belong to the age group of below 18 years, 13.16% of the respondents belong to the age group of 18-21 years, 44.74% of the respondents belong to the age group of 21-25 years, the above table shows 39.47% of the respondents belongs to the age group of above 26 years.

Gender distribution: From the above table, it has been identified that 68.42% of the respondents are male population and the female population sums up to 31.58%, From the above table it shows that majority of the respondents are belongs to male population.

Educational level: 50% of the respondents have a postgraduate degree, while 47.37% are enrolled as undergraduates and 2.63% have other educational qualification. Postgraduate has greater proportion of participation.

Preference: 36.84 % chooses OTT platforms and 63.16% chose theatres.

ANALYSIS

1) Respondent don't physically attend movie theatres, so there's no change in my movie going habits over the past few years

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	18	23.68
2	Agree	16	21.05
3	Neutral	15	19.74
4	Disagree	17	22.37
5	Strongly Disagree	10	13.16
		76	100

Interpretation:

It seems like a significant portion of respondents either strongly agree or agree that they don't physically attend movie theatres, accounting for about 44.74% collectively. About 19.74% remain neutral, and the rest, around 35.53%, either disagree or strongly disagree. It looks like a majority are leaning towards not attending movie theatres physically over the past few years.

2) Convenience plays a significant role in the preference for OTT platforms over movie theatres.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	24	31.58
2	Agree	34	44.74
3	Neutral	12	15.79
4	Disagree	5	6.58
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1.32

		76	100
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Interpretation:

It seems like the majority of respondents lean toward agreement regarding the significance of convenience in choosing OTT platforms over movie theatres. With 76 out of 100 respondents either strongly agreeing or agreeing, it suggests that convenience holds considerable weight in their preference for OTT platforms

3) Exclusive release windows still play a major role in the movies respondent want to watch there.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	29	38.16
2	Agree	27	35.53
3	Neutral	13	17.11
4	Disagree	5	6.58
5	Strongly Disagree	2	2.63
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It appears that a significant portion of respondents, around 73.68%, either strongly agree or agree that exclusive release windows continue to hold sway over their movie choices. Exclusive release windows might still create anticipation and impact the selection of movies among these respondents.

4) Respondent watch more overall films and content now compared to before due to OTT platform that respondent may not always have viewed in theatres.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	23	30.26
2	Agree	33	43.42
3	Neutral	16	21.05
4	Disagree	4	5.26
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It seems that a majority of respondents, comprising 73.68% of the total, either strongly agree or agree that the availability of content on OTT platforms has increased their overall consumption of films and other content. This suggests that these platforms have expanded their viewing habits by offering content that might not have been accessible or watched in theatres previously. The convenience and variety provided by OTT platforms appear to have contributed to this shift in viewing habits.

5) The respondent prefer movie theatres typically offer superior audiovisual quality compared to OTT platforms

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	36	47.37
2	Agree	20	26.32
3	Neutral	14	18.42
4	Disagree	5	6.58
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1.32
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It's quite apparent from the data that a significant majority, constituting 73.68% of respondents, either strongly agree or agree that movie theatres typically offer superior audiovisual quality compared to OTT platforms. This

indicates a prevalent belief among the respondents that the cinematic experience in theatres provides better audio and visual quality compared to watching content on OTT platforms.

6) The excitement of the first-day-first-show for big movie releases still ranks higher for respondent than watching at home.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	28	36.84
2	Agree	13	17.11
3	Neutral	13	17.11
4	Disagree	17	22.37
5	Strongly Disagree	5	6.58
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It appears that opinions are divided on this matter. While a significant percentage, around 53.95%, either strongly agree or agree that the excitement of the first-day-first-show for big movie releases ranks higher than watching at home, there's also a considerable portion, around 39.48%, who either disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. This suggests a split in preferences, with some valuing the traditional theater experience for big releases while others find home viewing more appealing, possibly due to convenience or other factors.

7) The variety of content available on OTT platforms is highly important.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	32	42.11
2	Agree	29	38.16
3	Neutral	14	18.42
4	Disagree	1	1.32
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It's clear that a substantial majority, accounting for 80.26% of respondents, either strongly agree or agree that the variety of content available on OTT platforms holds high importance for them. This indicates that the diverse range of content offered by these platforms significantly influences their preferences.

8) The grandeur of the big-screen experience and the immersive atmosphere of movie theatres hold significant importance to respondent.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	22	28.95
2	Agree	33	43.42
3	Neutral	17	22.37
4	Disagree	3	3.95
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1.32
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It appears that a majority of respondents, totaling around 72.37%, either strongly agree or agree that the grandeur of the big-screen experience and the immersive atmosphere of movie theatres hold significant importance for them. Despite some neutral responses, the data indicates that a considerable portion of respondents values the unique experience that movie theaters offer, highlighting the significance of the cinematic ambiance and grandeur for their movie-watching preferences.

9) Respondent finds watching movies on OTT platform more cost-effective compared to going to theatres.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	28	36.84
2	Agree	28	36.84
3	Neutral	17	22.37
4	Disagree	3	3.95
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It seems that a significant majority of respondents, totaling 73.68%, either strongly agree or agree that watching movies on OTT platforms is more cost-effective compared to going to theatres. This indicates that the perceived cost-effectiveness of OTT platforms is a substantial factor influencing their preference for consuming content through these platforms rather than opting for the theatrical experience.

10) On the whole, I am generally satisfied with the experience of watching movies on OTT platforms in comparison to theatres

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	18	23.68
2	Agree	15	19.74
3	Neutral	27	35.53
4	Disagree	14	18.42
5	Strongly Disagree	2	2.63
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It seems opinions are quite divided on this matter. Around 43.42% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that they are generally satisfied with the experience of watching movies on OTT platforms compared to theatres. However, around 20.05% disagree or strongly disagree with this statement, indicating a substantial portion that doesn't find OTT platforms as satisfying as the theatrical experience. Additionally, around 35.53% provided a neutral response, suggesting uncertainty or an equal balance between the two experiences for these respondents.

11) The ascent of OTT platforms has significantly impacted the entire movie industry, altering distribution models, consumption habits, and creative strategies.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	23	30.26
2	Agree	38	50.00
3	Neutral	11	14.47
4	Disagree	3	3.95
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1.32
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It's quite evident from the responses that a vast majority, approximately 80.26%, either strongly agree or agree that the ascent of OTT platforms has significantly impacted the entire movie industry. This impact has been seen across various facets, including distribution models, consumption habits, and creative strategies. The data underscores the widespread recognition of how OTT platforms have transformed the movie industry in multiple dimensions.

12) The respondent believe that OTT platforms offer a wider variety and range of movies compared to theatres, providing more diverse options for viewers.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	25	32.89
2	Agree	40	52.63
3	Neutral	7	9.21
4	Disagree	3	3.95
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1.32
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It's apparent that a significant majority, totaling around 85.53%, either strongly agree or agree that OTT platforms offer a wider variety and range of movies compared to theatres. This suggests that respondents perceive OTT platforms as providing a more diverse array of options for viewers compared to traditional theaters. The availability of a broader range of movies seems to be a significant factor influencing their preference for OTT platforms over theatres.

13) Watching movies at single-screen theatres with lively local crowds still offers an unmatched lively experience.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	25	32.89
2	Agree	24	31.58
3	Neutral	16	21.05
4	Disagree	10	13.16
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1.32
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It appears that a combined 64.47% of respondents either strongly agree or agree that watching movies at single-screen theaters with lively local crowds offers an unmatched lively experience. This suggests that for a majority of respondents, the ambiance and liveliness of such theaters with local crowds hold significant value and create a unique and engaging movie-watching atmosphere. However, there's also a notable portion, around 34.21%, who either disagree or are neutral about this statement, indicating a divergence in preferences regarding the theater experience.

14) Theatrical event films with stars, music, and mass appeal can still draw audiences from OTT in India.

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	13	17.11
2	Agree	36	47.37
3	Neutral	19	25.00
4	Disagree	8	10.53
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

The data suggests that a majority of respondents, comprising 64.47%, either strongly agree or agree that theatrical event films with stars, music, and mass appeal still possess the capacity to draw audiences from OTT platforms in India. This indicates that despite the rise of OTT platforms, there remains a belief among respondents that certain blockbuster-style theatrical releases with star power and wide appeal can still attract audiences away from OTT platforms for a cinematic experience. However, it's noteworthy that a notable

portion, around 35.53%, either disagrees or is neutral on this matter, indicating a level of uncertainty or dissenting opinion among respondents.

15) The respondent is very likely to recommend my favourite OTT platform to others based on my positive experience

SL.NO	RESPONSES	FREQUENCY	PERCENT
1	Strongly Agree	18	23.68
2	Agree	26	34.21
3	Neutral	24	31.58
4	Disagree	7	9.21
5	Strongly Disagree	1	1.32
		76	100.00

Interpretation:

It seems that while a considerable portion, approximately 57.89%, either strongly agree or agree that they're likely to recommend their favorite OTT platform to others based on their positive experience, there's also a substantial number, around 40.79%, who either disagree or are neutral about recommending their favorite OTT platform. This indicates a split in willingness among respondents to advocate for their preferred OTT platform based on their personal experiences.

FINDINGS:

- 1. Preference for OTT Platforms Over Theatres:** Convenience is a significant factor driving the preference for OTT platforms over traditional movie theatres, with a majority favouring the accessibility and flexibility offered by OTT services.
- 2. Impact of Exclusive Release Windows:** Exclusive release windows continue to influence movie choices, indicating that timing and availability play a role in the decision-making process for viewers.
- 3. Increased Consumption due to OTT Platforms:** The availability of diverse content on OTT platforms has led to an increase in overall consumption of films and content, expanding viewers' habits beyond what they might have watched in theatres previously.
- 4. Quality Perception:** There's a prevalent belief among respondents that movie theatres offer superior audiovisual quality compared to OTT platforms, contributing to the allure of the cinematic experience.
- 5. Content Variety and Importance:** Respondents highly value the variety of content available on OTT platforms, which significantly influences their preferences and viewing habits.
- 6. Impact of OTT Platforms on Movie Industry:** The ascent of OTT platforms has had a profound impact on the entire movie industry, altering distribution models, consumption habits, and creative strategies.
- 7. Divergence in Satisfaction:** Opinions vary regarding satisfaction levels between watching movies on OTT platforms and in theatres, indicating a split in preferences and experiences.
- 8. Theatre Experience:** While some respondents value the grandeur and immersive atmosphere of movie theatres, others find excitement in the convenience of OTT platforms, suggesting differing preferences.
- 9. Recommendations Based on Experience:** A divided stance exists regarding recommending favourite OTT platforms to others based on personal positive experiences, with a significant portion either neutral or disagreeing with the notion.

Overall, the data highlights the significant influence of convenience, content variety, quality perception, and shifting consumption habits due to the rise of OTT platforms, while also showcasing the continued appeal of the traditional cinematic experience offered by movie theatres for some respondents.

SUGGESTIONS:

- 1. Enhance Audiovisual Quality:** While respondents generally perceive movie theatres to offer superior audiovisual quality, improving the quality of content streaming on OTT platforms can attract more viewers. Investing in better streaming resolutions, sound quality, and compatible devices can bridge this gap.

2. **Curate Diverse and Exclusive Content:** Continuously expanding the library of content on OTT platforms, including exclusive releases or originals, can further engage audiences. Collaborating with filmmakers for exclusive releases on OTT platforms might reduce the impact of exclusive theatrical release windows.
3. **Improve User Interface and Navigation:** Streamlining the user interface, making it more intuitive and personalized, can enhance user experience. Customized recommendations based on viewing history and preferences could increase engagement.
4. **Enhance Accessibility and Flexibility:** Continuously improving accessibility across various devices and offering flexible subscription plans can cater to diverse viewer preferences. Including features like offline viewing can add value, especially for audiences in regions with limited internet connectivity.
5. **Host Virtual Premieres and Events:** To recreate the excitement of first-day-first-show experiences, hosting virtual premieres or events for major releases on OTT platforms might attract enthusiasts seeking that 'big release' feeling.
6. **Engagement and Community Building:** Encouraging user engagement through forums, live discussions, or interactive features related to content can foster a sense of community among viewers, akin to the lively atmosphere in movie theatres.
7. **Collect Feedback and Adapt:** Regularly gathering feedback from users regarding their experiences, preferences, and suggestions for improvement can guide the evolution of OTT platforms to better meet audience expectations.

By focusing on these areas, OTT platforms can aim to further bridge the gap between the traditional cinematic experience offered by movie theatres and the convenience and variety they provide. This approach might cater to a wider audience base and address the varying preferences highlighted in the data.

CONCLUSION:

The data collected and analysed showcases a shifting landscape in movie consumption, driven by the rise of OTT platforms. Convenience, content variety, and altered consumption habits have emerged as significant influencers in viewers' preferences. While OTT platforms offer flexibility and diverse content, traditional movie theatres continue to hold appeal due to superior audiovisual quality and immersive experiences.

The influence of exclusive release windows, perceptions about content quality, and the overall cinematic experience varies among respondents, signalling a divergence in preferences and satisfaction levels. Despite the impact of OTT platforms on the movie industry's distribution models and consumption patterns, there's a recognition of the enduring allure of theatres, especially for certain experiences and events.

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