Chapter 3
Users' Adoption of Over–the–Top (OTT) Streaming Platforms:
A Study With Special Reference to Kerala

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of smartphones, increasing internet penetration, and affordable data plans have played a crucial role in driving the growth of OTT platforms in India. The aims this study is to understand the users' adoption of OTT streaming platforms in Kerala using the UTAUT model as a theoretical framework. To achieve the research objectives the researcher used a descriptive and exploratory research design. The researcher developed a well-structured questionnaire and administered 180 OTT users in Kerala, collecting quantitative data on their usage patterns, preferences, and adoption factors. The researcher validate the UTAUT model along with impact of COVID-19 for measuring the users' adoption behaviour. The study concluded that the factors such as Performance expectancy, Effort expectancy, Social influence, Facilitating conditions, and COVID-19 influence the adoption of OTT video streaming platforms.

INTRODUCTION

The availability of high-speed internet connections, coupled with affordable data plans, has made OTT platforms accessible to a large segment of the Indian population. The advent of Over-the-Top (OTT) streaming platforms has revolutionized the entertainment industry, providing users with on-demand access to a vast array of media content. The expansion of 4G networks and the impending rollout of 5G technology expected to boost OTT adoption. Internet Penetration and Smartphone Usage, Variety of OTT Platforms, Content Diversity, Original Content and Exclusive Releases, Affordability and Flexible Pricing Models, Regional and Localized Content, Convenience and Flexibility, Integration with Smart TVs and Streaming Devices has contributed to the widespread adoption of OTT platforms in India, making them a dominant player in the entertainment landscape. This trend expected to continue as more users embrace digital platforms for their entertainment needs.

In recent years, these platforms have witnessed widespread adoption globally, including in the state of Kerala, known for its tech-savvy population and high literacy rates. Over-the-Top (OTT) streaming platforms refer to digital services that provide video content directly to users over the internet, bypassing traditional broadcast and cable television networks. Platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hot star, and others, provide on-demand access to a wide range of movies, TV shows, documentaries, and original content through internet-connected devices. These platforms enable users to consume content anytime, anywhere, on various devices such as smartphones, tablets, smart TVs, and gaming consoles. OTT platforms refer to digital content distribution services that deliver media content, such as movies, TV shows, and web series, directly to viewers via the internet, bypassing traditional cable or satellite providers. These platforms have gained immense popularity in Kerala due to their convenience, diverse content offerings, and accessibility on various devices, such as smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs.

Several Factors Contribute to The Increasing Popularity and Widespread Adoption of OTT Streaming Platforms by Users in Kerala

1. **Diverse Content Offerings:** One of the key drivers of OTT adoption in Kerala is the diverse range of content available on these platforms. With an extensive library of movies, TV shows, web series, documentaries, and regional content, OTT platforms cater to the varied preferences and interests of Kerala consumers. Local language content, especially Malayalam-language content, holds a special appeal, allowing viewers to connect with familiar stories and cultural nuances.
2. **Convenience and Flexibility:** OTT platforms offer unmatched convenience and flexibility to viewers in Kerala. Users can access their favourite content at any time and from any location, as long as they have an internet connection. The availability of these platforms on various devices, including smartphones, tablets, and smart TVs, further enhances accessibility and enables users to watch content on their terms.
3. **Cost-Effectiveness:** For many consumers in Kerala, OTT platforms offer a cost-effective alternative to traditional cable or satellite TV subscriptions. With affordable subscription plans and the option to choose from various pricing tiers, users can tailor their viewing experience to suit their budget and preferences. Additionally, the absence of advertisements in premium subscriptions is a significant draw for viewers seeking an uninterrupted and immersive viewing experience.
4. **Original Content and Exclusive Releases:** OTT platforms have become a hub for original content production, including web series and movies. The presence of exclusive releases and highly acclaimed originals attracts viewers to subscribe to these platforms, fostering customer loyalty and retention.
5. **High Internet Penetration:** Kerala boasts a high rate of internet penetration, making it an ideal market for OTT platforms. With a significant portion of the population having access to high-speed internet, streaming content seamlessly has become a reality for many consumers in the region.
6. **Time Flexibility:** Kerala, like any other state, has a diverse population with different schedules and lifestyles. OTT platforms allow users to watch content at their preferred time, enabling them to balance their work and personal commitments without missing their favourite shows and movies.
7. **Multi-Device Usage:** The prevalence of multiple internet-enabled devices in households further contributes to the adoption of OTT platforms. Users can seamlessly switch between devices, making it convenient to continue watching their favourite content from where they left off.

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