

## **Content Consumption in Streaming Frenzy Milieu: An Analysis Among College Students in Mysuru**

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### **Abstract**

Until 2010 when Netflix became a reality no one imagined that a DVD rental company would change the entire consumption pattern upside down (Shantharaju S & Vagdevi H S, 2021). The culture it created prompted many to follow the suit including Disney Plus (Disney +), e-commerce tycoon Amazon (Prime), homegrown Alt Balaji, and others. Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms offer everything from the Latin American Narco-history with an addictive dramatic plot, series of belongingness with subjects dealing with nationalism & patriotism, content on sex & lust, to the nauseating portrayal of chauvinism weave an everlasting TV series. Probably, without the infrastructure and user interface, OTT platforms wouldn't have been so popular (Michael Samuel, 2017). With the diverse content and available and affordable technology, thanks to the pandemic there have been a skyrocketing growth of OTT subscribers from 32 million in 2019 to 62 million in 2020 (exchange4media,2020), and still growing strong. The lockdown saw a clear shift from traditional media to OTT platforms (Gupta & Singharia, 2021). Today, India has 40 OTT platforms, and it is one of the fastest-growing OTT markets (PwC Report,2020). With government push to digitization coupled with cheap mobile data, increasing mobile population and most importantly rural penetration of the internet (business insider report, 2021) has all influenced the growth of OTT platforms as well. With two OTT providers in 2012 to 40 plus as of today, the OTT revolution has come a long way in India (NASSCOM, 2020). The induced growth of OTT due to the pandemic has also led to questions on the content that is been viewed on these platforms. A conflict that questions, the content vis-à-vis the crass outright representation of the subjects and their influence. According to industry reports in 2021, students have made the biggest contributions to OTT consumption. It is necessary to understand how these content influences aspects of the individual. Many recent studies (Gupta & Singharia, 2021; Nijahwan & Dahiya, 2021) concentrate the research on emerging consumer consumption patterns and changing behavior and habits. The current research is an empirical study on the growing influence of content among college students in the Mysuru region. The study analyses the psychographic influence of content consumption using a structured questionnaire.

**Keywords:** OTT, Content Consumption, Mysuru, Students

### **Introduction**

Digitization across the globe is constantly changing the way we consume the media. The increasing number of internet connections, better network facilities, technical advances, and

smart devices at affordable prices have ensued the rise of Over the Top (OTT) platforms that offers services to viewers via the internet. Probably, without the infrastructure and user interface, OTT platforms wouldn't have been so popular (Michael Samuel, 2017). Covid-19 acted as a perfect catalyst for this change. The lockdown saw a clear shift from traditional media to OTT platforms (Gupta & Singharia, 2021). People all over the world turned to digital screens for entertainment while confined to their homes. (YSWeeknder, Biswas & Mitter, 2021). Demand for subscription-based streaming services has surged as a result of rising at-home digital consumption patterns due to social isolation. As Biswas & Mitter points out, if the last decade was about PVRs and INOXs, 2020 turned out to be the year of OTT entertainment, with cineplexes and movie theatres being closed for the majority of the year (YSWeeknder, Biswas & Mitter, 2021). Today, young consumer in India favour over-the-top (OTT) platform with gamification of content over traditional Pay TV service (Cable TV/DTH) (Sadana & Sharma, 2021). India is predicted to become the second-largest OTT market (after the US) with a growth rate of 45%, with a market value of 138 billion by the end of fiscal 2023 (Gupta & Singharia, 2021). In comparison to messaging apps like WhatsApp, social networking apps like Facebook, and e-commerce apps like Amazon and Flipkart, OTT apps have been the most downloaded app category (Sundaravel E. and Elangovan N., 2020). India's streaming video market is in its second growth phase, according to a Media Partners Asia report, with revenue of \$3 billion in 2022 is expected to double to nearly \$7 billion by 2027 (Media Partners Asia, 2022).

Until 2010 when Netflix became a reality no one imagined that a DVD rental company would change the entire consumption pattern upside down (Shantharaju S & Vagdevi H S, 2021). The culture it created prompted many to follow the suit including Disney Plus (Disney +), e-commerce tycoon Amazon (Prime), homegrown Alt Balaji, and others. With government push to digitization coupled with cheap mobile data, increasing mobile population and most importantly rural penetration of the internet (business insider report, 2021) has all influenced the growth of OTT platforms as well. With two OTT providers in 2012 to 40 plus as of today, the OTT revolution has come a long way in India (NASSCOM, 2020). Over -the top (OTT) platform which was a luxury once has become common just like cell phones from being a luxury to a necessity today. Over a year and a half of the Covid-19 pandemic and two lockdowns, what we have learned is to adopt and embrace changing spheres of life. At the onset of Covid -19 pandemic probably none would have expected the magnitude of disruption it would herald. If one could say the 80's as the era of Doordarshan, the 90's as the era of satellite television, and the 2000s as the era of digital technologies, then one could easily say 2020 as the era of OTT platforms.

In the last couple of years OTT platforms are growing from strength to strength and in these last two years what we have witnessed was an unexpected boom in the OTT space. Probably, what would have taken another 5-7 years has been fast-tracked due to the pandemic (Shantharaju S & Vagdevi H S, 2021). With the space expanding, it is attracting an equal amount of investment in both infrastructure and content. Thereby, not only keeping back the existing consumer but also alluring newer audiences. As millennials, generation z, and Alpha are driving this digital market, what is clear is the paradigm shift. A shift not only in technology

but also in content space. The current study examines a few relevant factors that influence consumers against the backdrop of this altered consumption behavior.

### **Research Gap**

Numerous studies on OTT platforms examine the emergence, benefits, and future of Indian streaming services. Various OTT services, their growth factors, technological background, audience characteristics, and anticipated future developments in the industry are also the subject of a few studies. With Covid -19 changing the entertainment consumption landscape it is imperative to study the changing consumption behavior of the visual audience. With wider digital penetration, OTT is sooner or later going to replace conventional TV. Thus, as this medium becomes closer to us it is all the more necessary to study its implications on society. In this direction, the present study explores the consumption behavior among college students toward OTT platforms. It also tries to understand the influence of varied content available on streaming.

### **Review of Literature**

The digital mediatization has made the global communication societies as harbingers of change. The studies (Chang & Chen 2008; Gangvar et.al., 2020; Sundaravel & Elangoan, 2021, Sadana & Sharma, 2021, Gupta & Singharia,2021) talk about the user preferences and changing pattern from traditional conventional viewing to OTT. Some studies also look into the future of the industry in raltion to consumer preferences (Nagaraj & Singh, 2021). Audience adaptation and understanding consumer preferences have been of importance when we discuss OTT platforms and using Uses & Gratification theory for understanding the preferences and choices and consumer satisfaction (Dasgupta et al, 2019 & Karunakaran & Selvabaskar, 2022). Content consumption among digital natives (Nam & Jung, 2021) shows that, content is more or less snack and the content that are crisp, short are more favoured. This consumption of content like snacks also impacts on lifestyle and behaviour (Leung & Chen, 2017). The content consumption like that of snacks has resulted in binge watching (Matrix. 2014) which is gradually seen as mainstream media consumption. Where, people's watching habits have shifted as a result of technological advancements, allowing individuals to control when, what, where, and how they consume online material (Chattopadhyay,2020). It is thus seen that, Media consumers in the entertainment industry are demonstrating a substantial shift in their consuming habits (Chatterjee & Pal, 2020).

### **Methodology**

#### **Objectives of the Study**

- To identify the reasons for viewing OTT platforms
- To find the preferred genre of content
- To recognize the behavioural influences of consuming varied content on OTT among college students.

### Research Design

The present study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. It attempts to explore and describe the phenomenon being studied within the purview of OTT platforms.

Selection of the Sample	College Students from Mysore Urban Centre
Sampling method	The study uses non-probability convenient sampling
Sample Size	150
Research Tool	Structured Questionnaire
Data Collection	Primary Respondents

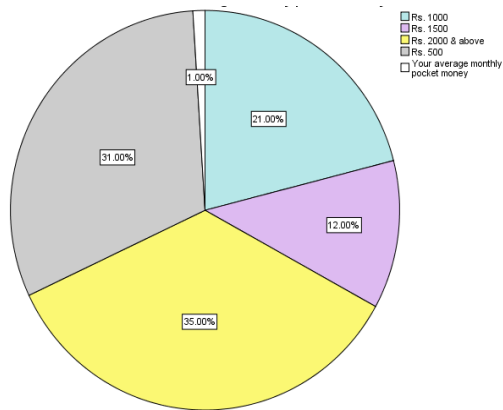
The validity and reliability of the questionnaire were examined through a pre-test. Based on the responses received, a few questions were modified. Descriptive analyses are used to understand the nature of data collected through the survey. Data collected will be analyzed on SPSS Statistics software and techniques of visualization & graphs are used.

### Data Analysis

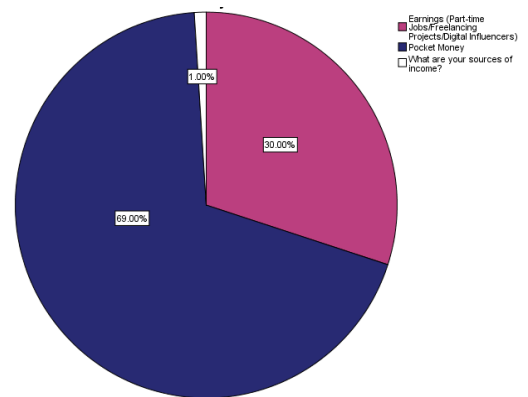
The age group that comes under the purview of the study is 18 – 25 years, where 18-20 years form 10% followed by 28% of 21-23 years, 49% of 24-26 years and 12% of 26 years and above. The study saw female respondents at 54% and the male respondents at 45%. 55% of the participants were Postgraduates followed by 39% of Graduates, 5% of Others. The various stream of students belonged to include Science department at 37% followed by 22% of Arts, 18% of Commerce and 14% of Engineering and the remaining said others.

The average time spent on OTT Platform shows that majority spends 2-4 hours a day, followed by 4-6 hours and the rest being on a smaller scale of 1-2 hours and finally 6-8 hours. Majority of the respondents said evening & night as their preferred time to watch. When students spend time on OTT platforms they also invest money and when quizzed about their pocket money or source of their money, the responses were, 35% of the participants have an average of Rs. 2,000 and above followed by 31% with Rs. 500, 21% with Rs. 1,000 and finally 12% with Rs. 1,500 as their monthly pocket money which they use for subscription among other things. When further asked whether this pocket money was the only means, respondents have mentioned their sources of income to pay for the OTT Platform Subscriptions. Here 69% of them have their Pocket Money and 30% of them earn their money through Part-time Jobs, Freelance Projects and or working as Digital Influencers.

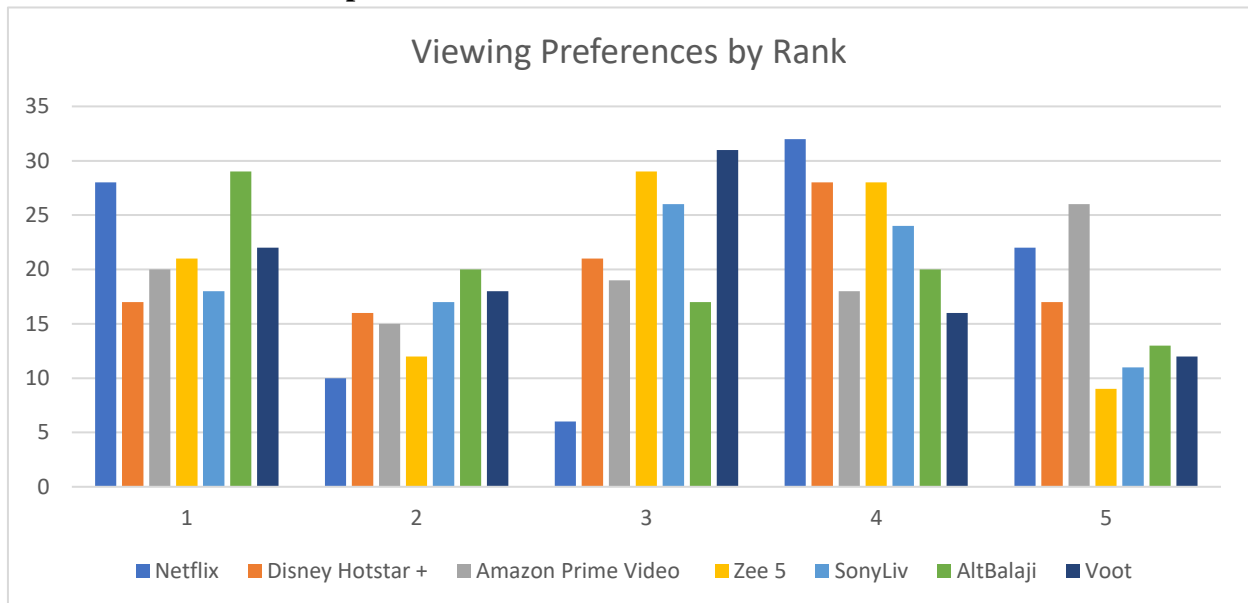
**Graph 1: Average Monthly Pocket Allowance Subscription**



**Graph 2: Source of Income for OTT**

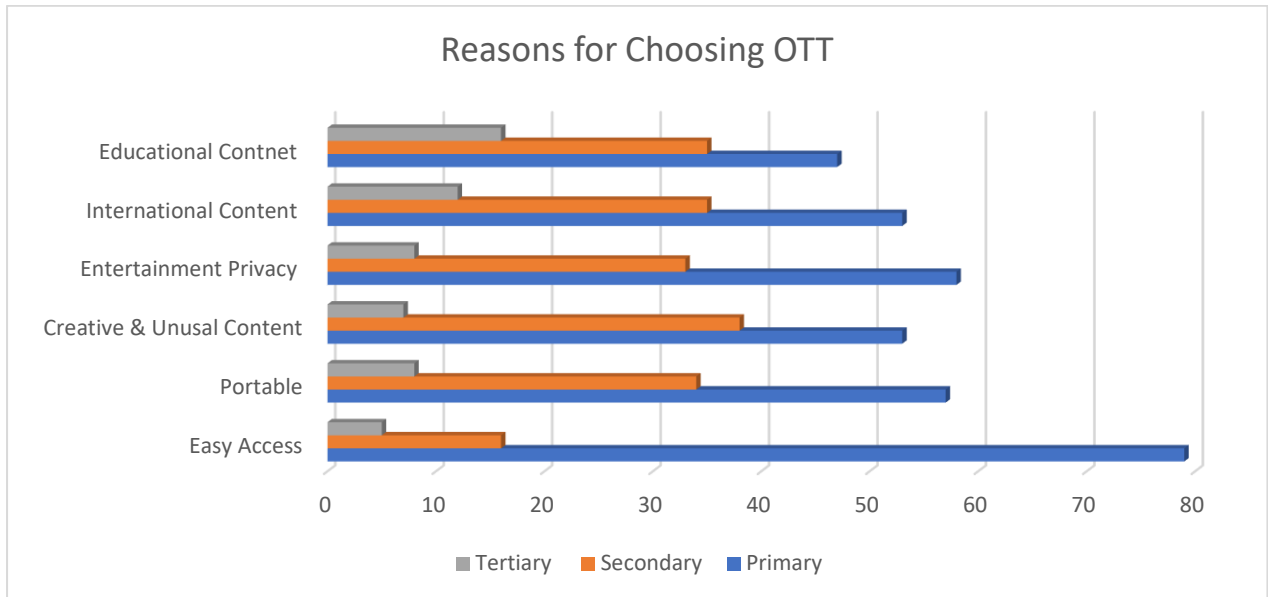


**Graph 3: Preference of Various OTT Platform**



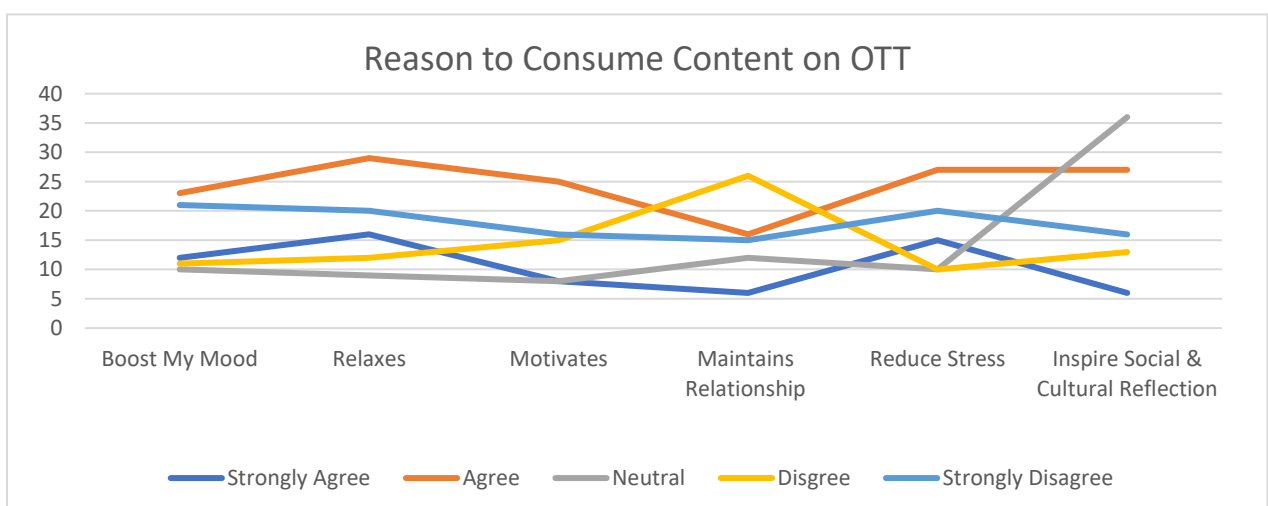
The above graph shows the viewing preferences of various OTT platforms. When asked to rank them based on the respondents preferences it is seen that Netflix is preferred choice and what is surprising is regional home grown networks like that of Altbalaji and Voot as being the growing preferences which echos with the online platforms have recorded the highest growth during the peak of pandemic irrespective of Global OTT platforms like Netflix or the region specific one such as Hoichoi (livemint, 2020). This also points to the trend in growing regional content consumption as well.

**Graph 4: Reasons for Choosing OTT**



It is clear from the above graph that the primary reason for choosing or shifting to OTT platform is easy accessibility which is followed by its nature of portable. What is interesting to note is that respondents leaning towards privacy which is also major reason for choosing OTT platforms. With varied content available and creating private space thereby breaking down the barrier of conventional TV viewing which once was a family affair. This question was supplemented with question on how did the respondents preferred watching? Whether with friends, family, alone, partner or others and to which majority respondents said watching alone, followed by partner followed by friends and that of family at the last. This also points to the trend of increasing foci viewing patterns.

**Graph 5: Reasons for Continued Viewing on OTT**

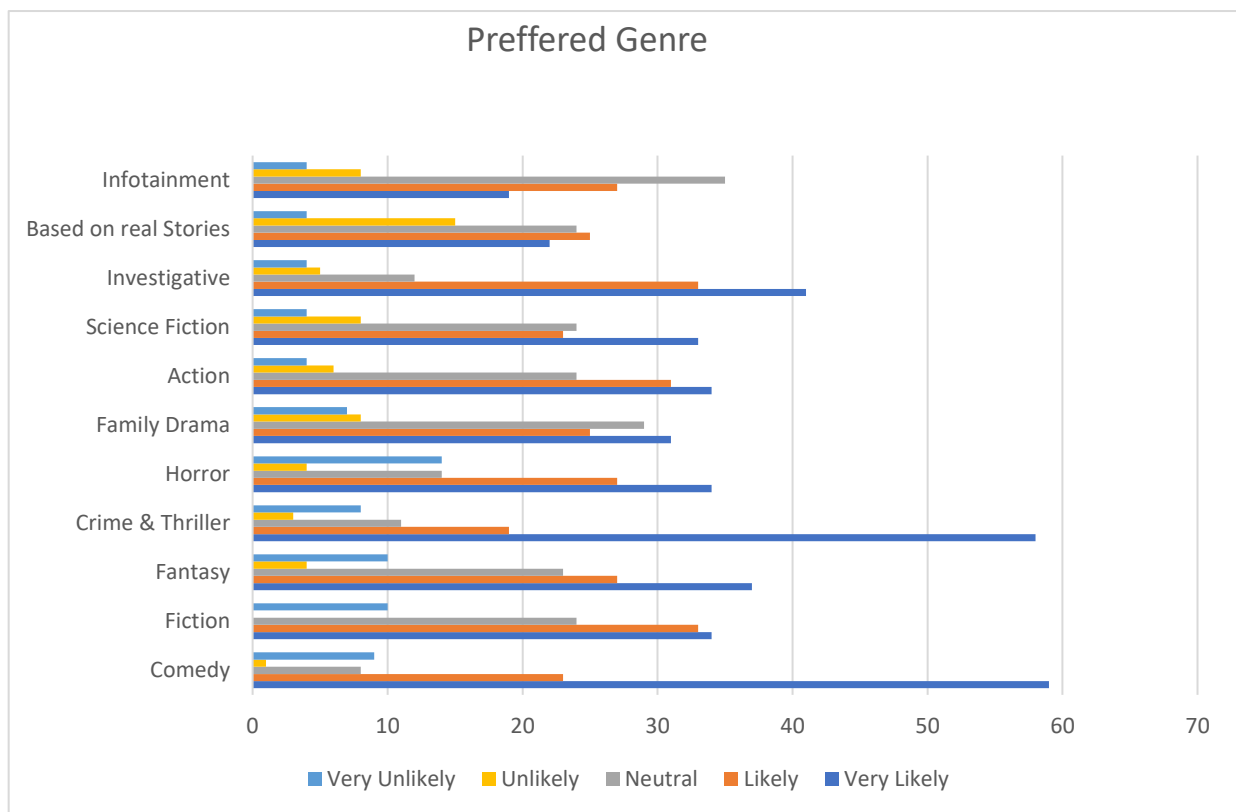


It is seen from the above graph that, respondents agree and strongly agree that watching OTT boost their mood and relaxes accompanied by de stressing them. Although the respondents are

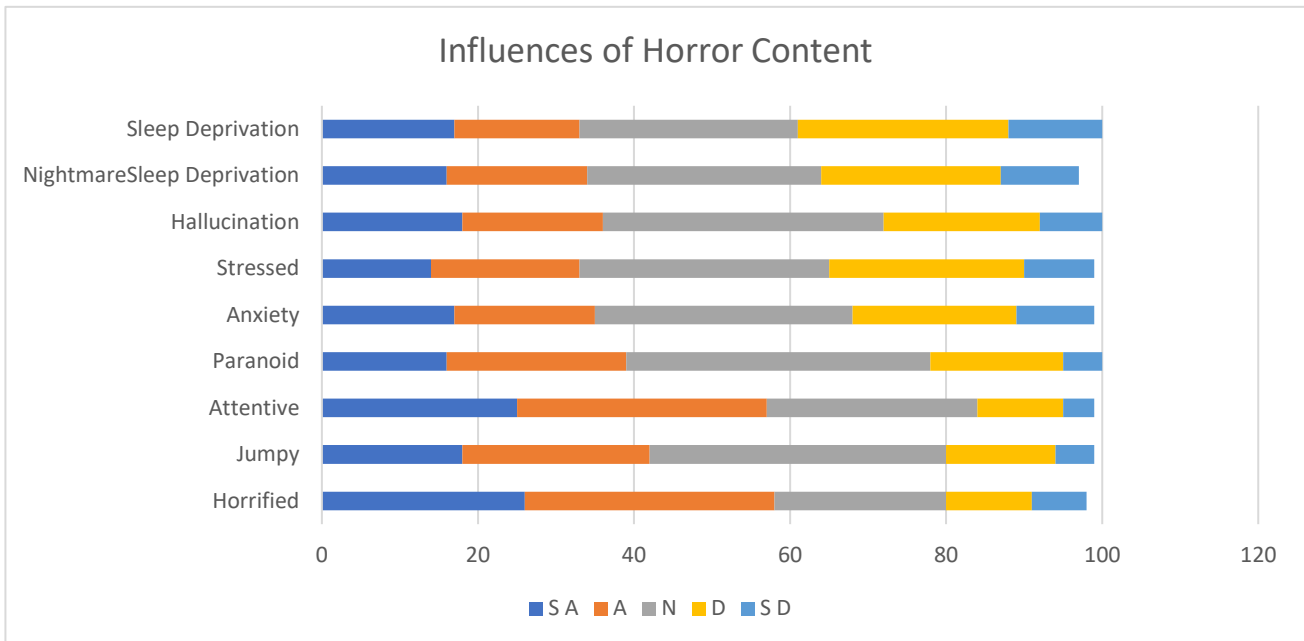
neutral over maintaining social relationship, where the responses should have been disagree as it is noted in the above graph that, OTT is consumed more for privacy it brings in.

It is seen from the graph below that, the two favourite genre among the respondents are Thriller, Crime, Investigative and Comedy. Infotainment, family drama are among the least favourites. As Stone (2017) says, while we enjoy and have fun watching thrillers and crime investigative stories, there is also a problem of being obsessed and that could also lead to addiction in some cases says the study published in the Journal of the American Heart Association (2017). The cliffhangers are so enticing for the majority of respondents that, even when doing other activities there are instances when they think of what they are watching, or any things related to it.

**Graph 6: Preferred Genre**



**Graph 7: Influences of Horror Content among the Respondents**



It is seen from the above graph that, respondents barely like to answer that questions behavioural pattern changes. They are reluctant and most of the time assume neutrality. Majority respondents have agreed and strongly agreed to the fact that, watching horror content not only horrifies them but makes them attentive and paranoid.

**Hypotheses**

H0: Female and male respondents' perceptions of content on OTT platforms are not significantly different.

H1: Female and male respondents' perceptions of content on OTT platforms differ significantly.

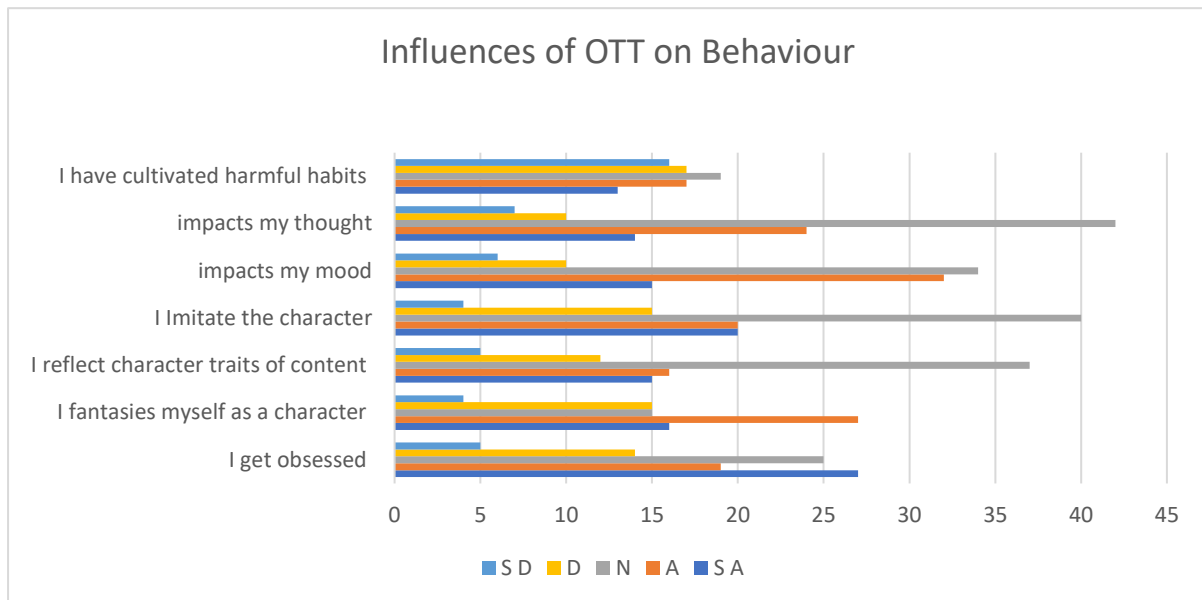
Independent Sample T - test						
Levene's Test for Equality of Variances						
Variable		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Level of perception towards OTT Platform among gender	Equal variances assumed	.078	.780	.220	103	.826
	Equal variances not assumed			.234	41.679	.816
P value >.05						
P Value>.05						

The Levene's test for equality of variance in female and male respondents' perceptions of OTT platform content is depicted in the table. The equality of variance was tested using SPSS, and the analysis shows that female and male respondents' perceptions of content on OTT platforms



are not significantly different as the P value (.826) is higher than the significance level of .05, so the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference is accepted.

**Graph 8: Influences of OTT on Behaviour**



### Conclusion

There is no stopping for the juggernaut that is rolling. The future of OTT platforms will see an increased consumption with increasing mobile & internet penetration (Gangwar et,al, 2020). Viewers now have the freedom to select and watch from a wide range of genres from a variety of OTT platforms, all at their leisure. The linear, conventional method is for sure giving way to more binge-watching and cliff hangers. It is seen through the study that there is an overarching influence of programming & content among the audience. With generation Millennials, Gen Z and Alpha driving the digital market there is definitely a paradigm shift. The content consumption is becoming an intimate affair. There is an emergence of new trend which needs to be studied and unravelled. The nuances of the content consumptions across various variables of time, age, duration and its impact needs a thorough investigation.

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