

LETTER TO EDITOR

Impact of OTT Platforms on Mental Health: A SWOT Analysis

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ABSTRACT

Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms have seen a significant rise in popularity, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. They offer convenience and a vast array of content, but their impact on mental health presents a complex picture. This SWOT analysis explores the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of OTT platforms in relation to mental health. The proliferation of digital streaming services has redefined entertainment consumption patterns, presenting both opportunities and challenges for societal norms and individual well-being. Through a multidimensional analysis, this study investigates the evolving dynamics of Indian culture in the context of OTT content, examining how it shapes societal values, interpersonal relationships, and traditional norms. Furthermore, the paper scrutinizes the potential effects of OTT content on mental health, considering factors such as content diversity, representation, and the psychological implications of binge-watching.

KEYWORDS

OTT Platforms; Indian Culture; Entertainment Consumption; Digital Streaming Services.

INTRODUCTION

OTT platforms have completely transformed the entertainment sector, introducing a new era of consuming material that goes beyond traditional broadcasting channels. OTT platforms, have experienced an unparalleled surge in popularity, fundamentally transforming the way users interact with digital media. Various factors, such as the widespread availability of high-speed internet and the increasing prevalence of smartphones, have contributed to the surge in user activity. These advancements have empowered users

to access information at any time and from any location, liberating them from the limitations of scheduled programming. The younger generation, specifically teenagers and young adults aged 18 to 30, 30-50, and older, is the primary target audience for web series and other internet-based material. Another drawback of OTT content lies in its potential to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and contribute to the reinforcement of societal bias. The content often tends to prioritize shock value over meaningful storytelling, fostering a culture of instant gratification at

the expense of substance. While OTT platforms offer a vast array of entertainment options, the absence of comprehensive content guidelines has given rise to legitimate concerns about the negative societal consequences of unchecked content proliferation.

Numerous studies have focused on the psychological and social repercussions of OTT platforms and web series on the youth in different Indian cities, revealing the impact of this expanding digital entertainment ecosystem. (1,2) explores the influence of OTT platforms on youngsters. The study likely delves into how the digital streaming landscape affects the behaviours and choices of young individuals in this urban setting. (2,3) enhanced our comprehension of the broader influence that web series and streaming entertainment have on the younger generation in India. Their study may encompass diverse perspectives and regional variations in the youth population. In the post-COVID era, (4) investigates the psychosocial impact of OTT platforms on the youth. This work is likely to consider the unique circumstances and challenges brought about by the pandemic.

Objective:

- To find out the change in mental health in youth due to OTT platforms.
- To investigate the psychosocial repercussions of OTT content of youth.
- To uncover underlying factors contributing to shifts in behaviour among youth resulting from their addiction to web series.

MATERIAL & METHODS

Study Type: A cross-sectional observational study was done to analyse the mental health impact of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms on users. **Study Design:** The study utilized a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis approach. **Study Setting:** SWOT analysis to assess the internal and external factors related to mental health. **Study Population:** The target population included OTT platform users aged 18–50 from diverse backgrounds during the post-COVID-19 period.

Working Definition

OTT Platforms: digital media services that offer streaming of video content via the internet, bypassing traditional cable or satellite TV. (e.g., Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hotstar).

Mental Health: A state of well-being encompassing emotional, psychological, and social well-being, with a focus on the impact of OTT consumption on stress, anxiety, and sleep patterns.

The SWOT analysis conducted in this study is grounded in an examination of various OTT platforms and their effect on mental health. Strength-Opportunity, Weakness-Opportunity, Strength-Challenge, and Weakness-Challenge techniques for the utilization of OTT and its influence on mental health applied. Two broad constructs of Mental Health are analysed by using the following parameters. Mental Illness is analysed by variables such as emotional problems, addiction, impact on physical health, Disconnected from peers and family, and Hostile Behaviour.

SWOT Analysis of OTT Platform from customer’s perception:

	Beneficial	Harmful
Internal	Strength Entertainment Variety Variety of global and original content access. Accessible from anywhere and at any time, one-time investment and unlimited choices. Different contemporary topics are not otherwise covered in big-screen movies. Specific series on unknown facts add knowledge about current happenings, Society, and different cultures being followed.	Weakness Highly addictive Sexual scenes, nudity, abusive languages Giving rise to Crime scenes to grab the attention of the audience Binge-watching at times

Beneficial	Harmful
<p data-bbox="268 389 405 421">Opportunity</p> <p data-bbox="268 423 884 546">There is awareness and vigilance about the content being served on their platform. However, more compelling content filtering or parental controls are needed.</p> <p data-bbox="268 548 884 678">There are stringent rules regarding age restrictions and their implications. At the time of login, they should ask for the user's age and provide a series according to that age.</p> <p data-bbox="268 712 884 775">They should restrict binge-watching to one episode per day and limit screen time for OTT platforms.</p> <p data-bbox="268 808 464 840">Better censorship</p> <p data-bbox="268 972 884 1162">OTT platforms must comply with local regulations governing content distribution, copyright, intellectual property rights, and data protection. Users may face legal risks if they engage in unauthorized content sharing, piracy, or other illegal activities on these platforms.</p>	<p data-bbox="906 226 1391 320">All age groups have access to content that is not meant for all to watch, which has a lousy impact on children's behaviour.</p> <p data-bbox="906 322 1391 385">Dependence on stable internet connectivity for streaming</p> <p data-bbox="906 387 983 418">Threat</p> <p data-bbox="906 421 1391 546">Concerns around data breaches, unauthorized access, or the abuse of personal information can undermine user trust and confidence.</p> <p data-bbox="906 548 1391 710">Subscribers may encounter issues with content quality, such as buffering, streaming errors, or playback interruptions, especially during peak usage times or in areas with poor internet connectivity.</p> <p data-bbox="906 712 1391 806">Subscribing to multiple platforms to access desired content may strain users' budgets and result in a financial burden.</p> <p data-bbox="906 808 1391 969">Over-the-top platforms exacerbate addictive behaviours and promote prolonged screen usage, resulting in detrimental effects on mental well-being, efficiency, and interpersonal connections.</p> <p data-bbox="906 972 1391 1066">Content consumed on these platforms shapes our perceptions, beliefs, and behaviours, impacting us in the long run.</p>

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the intricate relationship between OTT platforms, Indian culture, and the mental health of youth. OTT content plays a significant role in shaping cultural perceptions and norms among youth. From traditional values to modern ideologies, OTT platforms serve as powerful mediums for cultural dissemination, often reflecting and challenging societal norms. While OTT platforms offer entertainment and escapism, the study identified potential mental health implications associated with excessive usage. Factors such as binge-watching, exposure to sensitive content, and social comparison may contribute to stress, anxiety, and depression among young viewers. The study highlighted the diverse viewing patterns and preferences among youth, reflecting a nuanced relationship with OTT content. While some participants reported positive experiences and emotional connections with certain shows or genres, others expressed concerns about

content overload and its impact on well-being. Despite the challenges posed by OTT content, the study also underscored the resilience and adaptability of youth in navigating cultural influences and mental health concerns. Participants demonstrated a keen awareness of media influences and expressed a desire for balanced consumption habits.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, recommendations are proposed for various stakeholders, including OTT platforms, policymakers, mental health professionals, educators, and parents. These recommendations aim to promote responsible content creation, enhance mental health support services, and foster media literacy skills among youth. The results of the research and the changing scene of OTT platforms, the following advice is suggested for the young of today.

Young people should be encouraged to acquire media literacy and critical thinking ability, so they may separate good from harmful content. Teach young people about how OTT content could affect mental health, well-being, and cultural values, as well as regarding.

Advocate for balanced and mindful consumption of OTT content, emphasizing the importance of moderation and self-regulation. Encourage youth to prioritize offline activities, social interactions, and physical exercise alongside digital entertainment.

Encourage youth to explore a diverse range of content genres and formats to broaden their perspectives and cultural understanding.

Encourage open dialogue between youth, parents, educators, and mental health professionals about the challenges and opportunities of digital media consumption.

Advocate for robust privacy protections, data security measures, and age-appropriate content filters to safeguard youth from harmful or inappropriate content.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

This study is restricted to SWOT analysis, which lacks information on geographical locations and cultural backgrounds, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms cater to diverse audiences, and different populations may experience varied mental health impacts.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The study can offer practical recommendations on managing their media consumption to promote better mental health, encouraging a more mindful and balanced approach to engaging with OTT platforms.

AUTHORS CONTRIBUTION

AK: Conception and design, acquisition of data, or analysis and interpretation of data. AV: Conception and acquisition of the data and provided final approval for its publication. drafted or critically revised the article content final approval.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

DECLARATION OF GENERATIVE AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

The authors haven't used any generative AI or AI-assisted technologies in the writing process.

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