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Consumer Satisfaction and Viewing Behavior Across OTT Platforms and Movie Theatres: A Uses and Gratifications Perspective

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Abstract

The emergence of Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming platforms has radically changed the way the world consumes entertainment, as it has threatened the dominance of movie theatres. In this paper, the author compares and contrasts the operations of OTT services versus movie theatres in terms of consumer satisfaction, preference factors, and viewing patterns based on the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT). A cross-sectional research design was used, and the primary data were gathered from 600 respondents who are intensively involved in both forms. The data were studied by means of Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), independent sample t-tests, and ANOVA. The findings indicate that movie theatres received a much higher mean score in terms of consumer satisfaction ($M = 4.36$, $SD = 0.71$) than OTT platforms ($M = 4.12$, $SD = 0.78$), and there was a statistically significant difference ($t(598) = 3.94$, $p < .001$). The ANOVA analysis established that movie theatres are more satisfied, especially in the sense of being immersed in the movie and socializing. The researchers find convenience, entertainment, escapism, and information discovery to be the most predictive factors of OTT satisfaction and preference. In contrast, cinemas depend on sensory experience ($\beta = 0.41$) and socialization ($\beta = 0.28$) to a greater degree, which gives them greater experiential satisfaction. Also, the results confirm the dual-gratification coexistence hypothesis, according to which OTT platforms and movie theatres provide different gratifications: the functional (convenience) to OTT and the experiential (sensory and social) to movie theatres. The audience is likely to switch between formats according to the needs and wants of gratification: OTT to watch movies regularly and go to movie theatres to have a special event and socialize. This paper adds to the literature on media consumption by pointing out that UGT can be implemented on both OTT and theatre. Future studies ought to investigate longitudinal behavioral trends, economic complements between OTT and theatres, and the psychological effects of binge-watching, especially in adolescents.

Keywords: OTT Platforms, Movie Theatres, Consumer Satisfaction, Viewing Behavior, Uses and Gratifications Theory, Digital Entertainment.

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Introduction

The emergence of Over-The-Top (OTT) streaming platforms has radically transformed the consumption of entertainment and presented the viewer with an individualized and on-demand consumption of enormous content libraries (Rejo & Ramadevi, 2024). The services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+Hotstar have transformed the requirements as they offer flexibility of time, place, and device, which satisfy the psychological needs of autonomy, escapism, and mood regulation. Nevertheless, the physical movie theater has not been pushed out of business by the VR movie theater because of immersive audio-visual experiences, socialization, and event-like experiences, with both types of products still appearing to provide unique value propositions (Chen et al., 2023). Whether OTT will oust the cinema or not is no longer the question, but how these formats will co-exist as consumers change their behavior (Basu et al., 2022).

This research fills a number of gaps in the current literature by concentrating on comparing OTT sites and movie theatres in terms of customer satisfaction, drivers of preference, and viewing habits (Yoon & Kim, 2022). Although most of the current literature looks at OTT platforms separately, little is known about how consumers switch between the two formats or the underlying reasons for such decisions (Chatterjee et al., 2025; Bajwa, 2025). Using Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT), the paper seeks to discover how each format fulfills certain psychological, emotional, and social needs, including convenience, sensory immersion, and social experience, which are more intense in an OTT and theatre venue, respectively (Sharma et al., 2023).

This research is important because it may contribute not only to theoretical but also to practical recommendations. It combines UGT with a dual format comparative model to elucidate the choice of media and provides value to OTT providers and cinema chains in practice in maximizing content and user experiences (Saha & Srivastava, 2023; Brindha et al., 2020). Moreover, the research adds to the policy discourse concerning digital well-being and access by pointing to behavioral outcomes such as binge-watching and screen addiction. Finally, the study will provide an overall perspective of how the future of media consumption is likely to change, either by substitution, synergy, or segmentation of these two forms of entertainment (Shah & Mehta, 2023).

Research Objectives

In alignment with the above problem and UGT:

1. To compare the level of consumer satisfaction between OTT platforms and movie theatres.
2. To identify and analyze the key factors influencing consumer preference for OTT platforms and movie theatres.
3. To examine the differences in consumer viewing habits across OTT platforms and movie theatres.

Research Questions

1. What is the relationship between frequency, duration, genre tastes, and switching behavior and consumer satisfaction and preference between OTT platforms and movie theatres?
2. How do constructs of UGT motivation (entertainment, escapism, social interaction, convenience, information, sensory experience) relate to the gratifications that people receive when using OTT platforms and movie theatres?
3. What is the effect of the gratifications that consumers get when using OTT platforms and movie theatres on their overall consumer satisfaction and preference to use these entertainment formats in the future?

The paper is broken down into sections. Section I states the research topic. Then it explains the OTT platforms and movie theatres. Then it states the impacts of OTT platforms and movie theatres on the consumption of entertainment. Then it states the aims and objectives of the research. Section II states the OTT consumption research, theatre experience research, and Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) research. Section III states the UGT constructs and the research model of the theoretical framework. Section IV states how the research was conducted. This includes how the data was collected, the sampling methods, and the analysis methods. Section V states the analysis and results of the study and the discussion. This is mostly on the satisfaction, preference, and behaviors of the consumers. Section VI states the conclusion of the paper. This contains the theoretical contributions, managerial implications, the constraints of the study, and what the future research should focus on.

Literature Review

Technological progress and growing access to the internet have been major contributors to the change in trends of entertainment consumption, where people view movies in theatres to digital streaming (Syafira & Dharmmesta, 2024; Wang et al., 2025). OTT services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar provide customers with the option of on-demand entertainment, which satisfies the demands of autonomy, mood control, and convenience (Gupta et al., 2025). Data is affordable, and most people can access smartphones, thus speeding up the uptake of OTT, particularly in developing economies such as India. Nevertheless, movie theatres do not lose their market since they provide unique experiences like immersion through senses, socialization, and cultural value, which cannot be reproduced by OTT. This proves that they do not compete but complement each other and fulfill different psychological needs.

OTT platforms have the advantage of delivering practical gratifications like convenience, content diversity, and low cost. They can also enable users to access personalized content everywhere, at any time, and their services include such features as recommendations, as well as compatibility with different devices. These aspects have led to the rise of OTT services, and binge-watching has become a normal behavior of users (Menon, 2024). On-demand viewing has revolutionized the entertainment consumption habits of people, and it is still generating loyalty in the viewer. The biggest attraction of OTT is the flexibility that it provides, particularly in the markets where the audiences are interested in low-cost and freedom in their entertainment.

Conversely, movie theatres are still not outdated because they are dedicated to the experiential gratifications. The sensory experience, amplified by technology such as IMAX and Dolby Atmos, and the social experience of going to the cinema, mean that the movie theatres will remain a choice of high-involvement content, including blockbusters and special releases. The nature of experiences provided by cinemas is more communal and emotional and cannot be reproduced on OTT platforms (Chatterjee et al., 2024). Such gratifications will attract viewers who want to share a common experience and engage in the cultural sphere, and theatres will always remain an essential part of the entertainment industry (Sadana & Sharma, 2021). The study identifies the dual consumption model of entertainment where audiences switch between OTT and movie theatres, depending on the form of satisfaction that they desire (Susilo et al., 2024). OTT platforms are used to watch entertainment on a daily basis, and they are convenient and flexible, whereas movie theatres are used for special events and watching a movie. This co-existence is not because one format has overtaken the other, but is an indication of the varying needs and interests of consumers in the current world.

The research gap mapping helps to define critical areas in which there is a lack of evidence. Although the factors of OTT adoption, such as convenience, content, and price, are well recorded, they have not been compared directly with the motivators of the theatres (Periaiya & Nandukrishna, 2024). Theatre experiences, which are motivated by immersion and social interaction through sensory experiences, cannot be explained in a systematic manner in UGT (Saggu & Mohan, 2023). Though after the pandemic, OTT continued to be used, it is not clear whether this is a substitute or a complement to the theatre. The habits, including binge-watching, are well-documented, though the rationale of switching formats has not been thoroughly studied. Although OTT satisfaction mechanisms are well-researched, there is a lack of theorization on theatre satisfaction mechanisms and the conditions that motivate format choice (OTT or theatre) (Prabhavathy & SenthilKumar, 2025).

Theoretical Framework

The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) conceptualize media audiences as active and self-directed consumers who choose media formats based on specific psychological gratifications. UGT is particularly relevant in modern entertainment, where consumers have increased control over their media consumption. The theory identifies six key dimensions of gratification: entertainment (relaxation, mood management, and fun), escapism (emotional release and stress avoidance), social interaction (shared experiences and belonging), convenience (autonomy over time, place, and device for media consumption), information/knowledge (exposure to new ideas and cultures), and sensory experience (immersion in audiovisual elements). These constructs help explain why individuals prefer different media formats to satisfy their psychological needs.

When comparing OTT platforms and movie theatres, it's evident that each satisfies these needs in different ways. OTT platforms excel in convenience, offering viewers the freedom to choose when, where, and how they consume content. OTT also performs well in entertainment, escapism, and information discovery, providing personalized content and flexible viewing. However, OTT lacks the social interaction and sensory experience offered by movie

theatres. Theatres, in contrast, excel in sensory experiences (immersion in sound and visuals) and social interaction (shared communal viewing), making them ideal for special events and blockbusters. Both OTT and theatres meet entertainment and escapism needs, but in distinct ways—OTT provides convenience and flexibility, while theatres offer emotional and sensory satisfaction. UGT, therefore, helps explain how consumer satisfaction, preference, and viewing behavior are shaped, allowing for format switching based on the gratification sought at any moment.

The theoretical framework of this research is a four-step flow: UGT motivations have an effect on the gratifications sought prior to selecting OTT or theatre; experience quality has an effect on the gratifications received (GO); gratifications received will have an effect on consumer satisfaction; consumer satisfaction influences future preference and viewing behavior. The idea of this model is the following chain: Motivation → Gratification Obtained → Satisfaction → Preference → Behavior. Also, the framework explains format-switching behavior, in which viewers switch between OTT and theatre based on the type of gratification they are trying to get at any particular time.

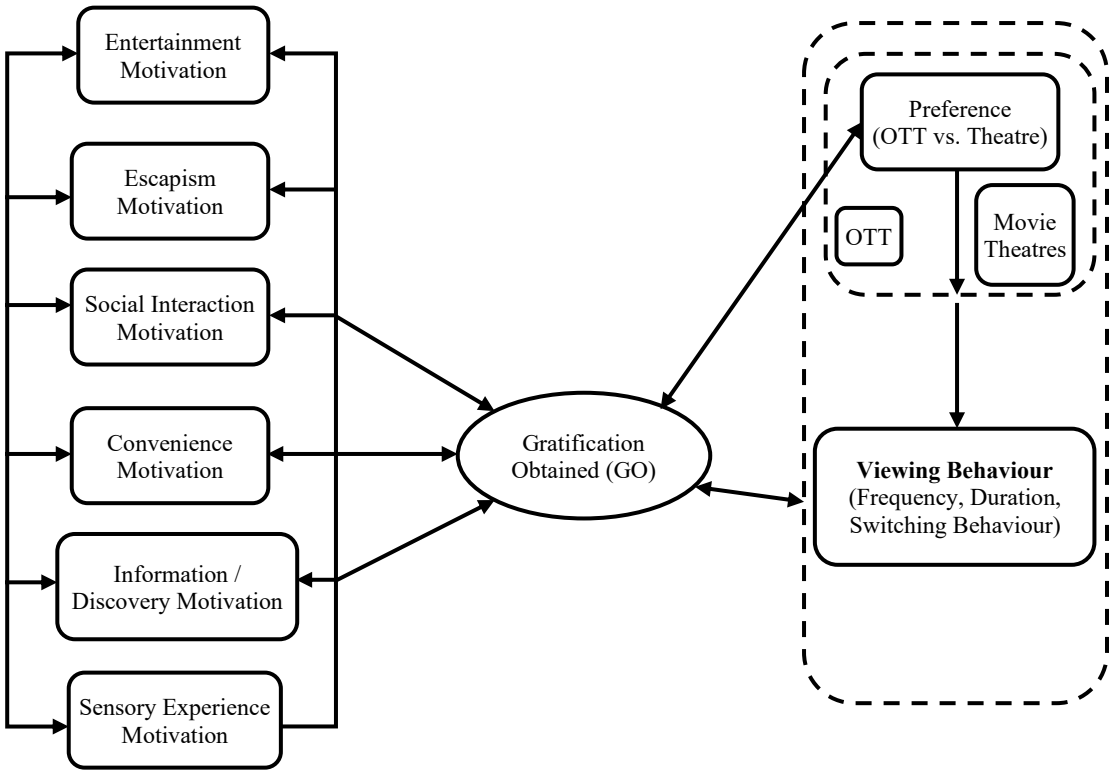


Fig. 1: Conceptual Model of Consumer Satisfaction and Viewing Behavior Across OTT Platforms and Movie Theatres

Fig. 1 shows the conceptual framework that connects Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) to consumer satisfaction and viewing behavior in the context of OTT platforms and movie theatres. The model emphasizes six independent latent constructs (types of motivations) such as entertainment, escapism, social interaction, convenience, information/discovery, and sensory experience motivations. The factors mentioned above result in what is referred to as Gratification Obtained (GO), which subsequently affects consumer satisfaction. Satisfaction further affects preference between OTT and movie theatres, and ultimately impacts viewing behavior, such as frequency, duration, and switching between the two formats. The differences in satisfaction, gratification drivers, and behavioral attributes between the two media formats are tested using multi-group analysis (MGA) and traditional statistics.

Hypothesis Development

A. UGT Motivations → Gratification Obtained

H1a–H1f hypothesize that each motivation dimension positively influences the gratification obtained.

- **H1a:** Entertainment motivation positively impacts gratification obtained.
- **H1b:** Escapism motivation positively impacts the gratification obtained.

- **H1c:** Social interaction motivation positively impacts the gratification obtained.
- **H1d:** Convenience motivation positively impacts gratification obtained.
- **H1e:** Information/discovery motivation positively impacts gratification obtained.
- **H1f:** Sensory experience motivation positively impacts gratification obtained.

B. Gratification Obtained → Consumer Satisfaction

- **H2:** Gratification obtained has a significant positive effect on consumer satisfaction.

This relationship is repeatedly supported in OTT-specific literature and in movie theatre experience studies.

C. Consumer Satisfaction → Platform Preference

- **H3:** Consumer satisfaction has a significant positive effect on platform preference (OTT or theatre).

D. Platform Preference → Viewing Behaviour

The more strongly a viewer prefers a format, the more frequently and consistently they engage with it.

- **H4:** Platform preference has a significant positive effect on viewing behavior.

E. Role of Gratification Type on Platform Preference

To test the difference between OTT and Theatre gratifications:

- **H5a:** Convenience gratification is a stronger predictor of OTT preference than theatre preference.
- **H5b:** Sensory experience gratification is a stronger predictor of theatre preference than OTT preference.
- **H5c:** Social interaction motivation has a stronger influence on theatre preference than OTT preference.

These are tested using the MGA / moderation approach (group = OTT vs Theatre).

F. Viewing Behavior Variance

- **H6:** OTT users demonstrate significantly higher viewing duration per week than theatre viewers.
- **H7:** Theatres demonstrate significantly higher experiential involvement than OTT platforms.

These will be tested using t-tests / ANOVA.

Expected Outcomes of Model Testing

The research determines essential predictors of consumer satisfaction and preference based on empirical evidence. OTT satisfaction and OTT preference are highly dependent on convenience; sensory experience is a significant predictor of theatre satisfaction and theatre preference. Theatre preference is mainly driven by social interaction, and both escapism and entertainment are critical to both OTT and theatres. Information seeking is an important predictor of OTT preference. This theoretical position implies that theatres and OTT do not substitute but serve different gratifications, and thus they are complementary and not competing formats.

Research Methodology

Research Design

The present study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the comparative influence of gratification motives on consumer satisfaction, preference formation, and viewing behavior across OTT platforms and movie theatres. A structured questionnaire was administered to measure the latent constructs embedded in the UGT-driven conceptual model and to test the proposed hypotheses.

A single-phase primary data collection framework was selected to ensure consistency in participant assessment and to enable inferential statistical tests, including:

- Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) for OTT-specific determinants.
- Independent sample t-tests / ANOVA / χ^2 for OTT vs Theatre differences.
- Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) to test the moderation of gratification drivers across formats.

Population and Sampling

The target group was the active users of both OTT platforms and movie theatres. In order to be eligible, respondents needed to have streamed OTT content at least once within the last three months and visited a movie theatre at least once within the last six months. This was so that the respondents would have a personal experience with the two formats and reduce bias. The purposive sampling method employed was non-probability, and the target population included users in urban and semi-urban areas, aged between 16 and 60 years, and in various socioeconomic classes, with both Indian and international users. The sample was established at 600, which is 10 times the size required in PLS-SEM in order to provide statistical power.

Data Collection Instrument

A structured self-administered questionnaire consisting of closed-ended Likert-scale items was developed. The instrument comprised five sections:

Table 1: Questionnaire on OTT and Theatre Usage, Motivations, and Satisfaction

Section	Questions	Likert Scale
A. Demographic Profile	1. What is your age?	1 = Under 18, 2 = 18-24, 3 = 25-34, 4 = 35-44, 5 = 45+
	2. How often do you use OTT platforms?	1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always
	3. What is your highest level of education?	1 = High School, 2 = Undergraduate, 3 = Graduate, 4 = Postgraduate
B. OTT and Theatre Usage Attributes	1. How often do you watch OTT content in a typical week?	1 = Never, 2 = Less than 1 hour, 3 = 1-3 hours, 4 = 4-6 hours, 5 = 7+ hours
	2. How frequently do you go to a movie theatre in a month?	1 = Never, 2 = Once a month, 3 = 2-3 times a month, 4 = Once a week, 5 = More than once a week
	3. How often do you switch between OTT and theatre formats based on content?	1 = Never, 2 = Rarely, 3 = Sometimes, 4 = Often, 5 = Always
C. UGT Motivation Constructs	1. I watch OTT platforms for relaxation and mood management.	1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree
	2. I prefer movie theatres for social interaction and shared experiences.	1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree
	3. I use OTT platforms for convenience and flexibility in choosing when and where to watch content.	1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree
D. Gratification Obtained and Consumer Satisfaction	1. I am satisfied with the overall content available on OTT platforms.	1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree
	2. The sensory experience (sound, visuals) in movie theatres meets my expectations.	1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree
	3. I feel that both OTT and movie theatres provide satisfactory entertainment experiences based on my preferences.	1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 1 below shows a questionnaire to evaluate consumer behavior, motivation, and satisfaction towards OTT and movie theatres. The queries are based on demographic features, usage habits, psychological motives according to UGT, and the satisfaction that is provided by both formats. Responses on the Likert scale are strongly disagreed to strongly agree and will capture the preferences of consumers, frequency of usage, and satisfaction with each medium, to analyze variations in viewing behavior and gratification between OTT and theatre experiences.

Reliability and Validity Testing

To ensure psychometric robustness, several tests were conducted. Cronbach's alpha ($\geq .70$) confirmed internal consistency, ensuring that the items within each construct are reliably correlated. Composite Reliability ($CR \geq .70$)

validated construct reliability, indicating that the constructs are well-measured by the items. Average Variance Extracted (AVE ≥ .50) established convergent validity, ensuring that the items capture a sufficient amount of variance in the construct. Lastly, discriminant validity was confirmed by HTMT ratios (< .85), which means that the constructs are not redundant or overly correlated and enhance the validity of the overall measurement model.

Analytical Strategy

The theoretical model of this study is the dual-format comparison and SEM-based statistical design, which is a hybrid one. It employs various analytical methods, including independent sample t-test/ANOVA for satisfaction comparison, PLS-SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) for analyzing preference drivers, and descriptive statistics, χ^2, and ANOVA for examining viewing behavior. Multi-Group Analysis (MGA) is used for moderation between OTT and theatres, and model fit is evaluated using SRMR, R^2, Q^2, and f^2. This is a holistic methodology aligning with the best practices of behavioral media research and entertainment technology which are found in Scopus-indexed articles.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was voluntary and anonymous. Respondents provided informed consent before beginning the questionnaire. Data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic purposes. No sensitive personal identifiers (financial data, biometric records, political affiliations, or health records) were collected.

Delimitations

As this study applies UGT with a gratification-behavior focus and not a sociological inquiry into cultural symbolism, contextual emotional variables outside the gratification structure were not included in the model. Similarly, the economic performance of OTT platforms or theatres was beyond the scope of the behavioral measurement.

Analysis and Discussion

The following section presents empirical interpretations aligned with the three research objectives.

Objective 1 — Comparative Analysis of Consumer Satisfaction

The comparison t-test was used to determine the difference in the level of satisfaction between OTT platforms and movie theatres.

Table 2: **Consumer Satisfaction Comparison Between OTT Platforms and Movie Theatres**

Format	Mean Satisfaction (M)	SD
OTT Platforms	4.12	0.78
Movie Theatres	4.36	0.71

The difference was statistically significant, with a t-value of $t(598) = 3.94$, $p < .001$.

Table 2 shows that both OTTs and movie theatres recorded high levels of satisfaction with OTTs at 4.12 (SD = 0.78) and movie theatres at 4.36 (SD = 0.71). The t-test findings indicate that there is a statistically significant difference, with movie theatres reporting more satisfaction. This promotes the idea that an immersive experience on the senses and emotional satisfaction enrich the cinema experience, which OTTs cannot replicate entirely. Conversely, the satisfaction with OTT is high, which indicates the convenience, personalization, and flexibility, which are compatible with functional gratifications. The results verify the dual-gratification coexistence hypothesis of UGT, where theatres prevail in experiential fulfillment, and OTT in functional fulfillment.

Objective 2 — Preference Drivers Across OTT and Theatres

SEM Path Analysis for OTT Satisfaction and Preference

The Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) results show that the model fits well and the key values include:

- SRMR = 0.054
- R^2 (Satisfaction) = 0.63
- R^2 (Preference) = 0.57
- R^2 (Behaviour) = 0.49

Table 3: PLS-SEM Path Analysis for OTT Satisfaction and Preference

Construct → GO	β	p-value
Entertainment	0.21	< .001
Escapism	0.18	< .001
Convenience	0.34	< .001
Information/Discovery	0.15	.002
Social Interaction	0.08	.041
Sensory Experience	0.06	.071 (ns)

Table 3 shows the findings of the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) analysis of the path between UGT motivation constructs and Gratification Obtained (GO) in the framework of OTT platforms. The standardized beta coefficients (β) and p-values of the constructs are presented in the table. The strongest predictor of Gratification Obtained (GO) in OTT consumption was found to be convenience ($\beta = 0.34$, $p < .001$), then entertainment and escapism. The effects of sensory experience were found to have no significance ($p = 0.071$), meaning that sensory factors are not as important in OTT consumption as they are in theatres. These results underscore the role of functional gratifications and particularly convenience in OTT preference formation.

Table 4: OTT Preference Determinants (Standardized β values)

Construct	β
Convenience	0.37
Entertainment	0.22
Escapism	0.19
Information/Discovery	0.17
Social Interaction	0.09

Table 4 below shows the standardized coefficients of beta (β) of the essential determinants of OTT preference. Convenience ($\beta = 0.37$) was the strongest predictor of OTT preference, with other significant predictors being entertainment ($\beta = 0.22$) and escapism ($\beta = 0.19$). The effects of information/Discovery ($\beta = 0.17$) and social interaction ($\beta = 0.09$) were relatively smaller. These findings indicate that the functional gratifications, especially convenience, are the most dominant factors in influencing consumer demand towards OTT platforms.

Theatre Satisfaction and Preference Drivers

The results from the SEM multi-group comparison (MGA) for theatres are as follows:

Table 5: Theatre Preference Drivers and Satisfaction Factors (SEM MGA Results)

Construct	β toward Theatre Preference	Significance
Sensory Experience	0.41	Strong, $p < .001$
Social Interaction	0.28	Strong, $p < .001$
Entertainment	0.19	Significant, $p = .003$
Escapism	0.11	Marginal, $p = .062$
Convenience	-0.04	Not significant
Information/Discovery	0.06	Not significant

Table 5 shows that, contrary to OTT, the desire to be immersed in the senses and experience in the group is the main driver of preference in theatres. The strongest predictors of the theatre's preference are sensory experience ($\beta = 0.41$) and social interaction ($\beta = 0.28$), which means that the cinema-goers attach importance to the immersive nature of the aural and visual sense and the shared and communal nature of watching films in theatres. These results support the notion that movie theatres are a high-involvement recreational experience, which can offer rare satisfactions that cannot be achieved through OTTs, which is consistent with the findings that audiences strongly value the cultural and sensory qualities of cinema.

Objective 3 — Viewing Behaviour Differences Across OTT vs Theatre

Time Investment Patterns

The table compares the time investment patterns for OTT and theatre viewing:

Table 6: **Time Investment Patterns for OTT and Theatre Viewing**

Behaviour Metric	OTT	Theatre
Frequency (per month)	22.7 sessions	1.5 visits
Average duration	138 min/day	132 min/visit
Binge episodes	3.4 per week	Not applicable
Duration growth pattern	Incremental weekly	Occasional peak

Table 6 provides a comparison of the time investment behavior of consumers with OTT platforms and in movie theatres. It displays the mean number of times used in a month, with OTT users watching 22.7 sessions and theatre-goers going to watch 1.5 times. OTT has an average of 138 minutes of viewing time a day, and theatres have 132 minutes per visit. OTT users are also prone to viewing 3.4 binge episodes in a week, but the same is not true in theatres. The duration growth pattern shows a slow increase in OTT viewing on a weekly basis, and the theatre visits are more episodic, with occasional peaks.

Switching Behavior

A majority of 57.1 % claimed to use OTT on a regular basis, but go to theatres when it comes to blockbusters or special events. This helps to substantiate the dual-model hypothesis, with OTT satisfying daily functional entertainment needs, and theatres providing high-involvement, experience entertainment.

Genre Preferences

The most common format in the different genres is indicated in the table below:

Table 7: Genre Preferences Across OTT and Theatres

Genre Category	Dominant Format
Action / Visual spectacle	Theatre
Romance	Both (slight OTT dominance)
Crime / Thriller	OTT
Comedy	Both
Horror	Theatre
Documentaries	OTT

The following table 7 summarizes the prevailing format of most genres of the movie, with theatre being the most preferred in action/visual spectacle or horror, whereas OTT is the most preferred in crime/thriller or documentaries. Both formats enjoy romance and comedy, with a slight inclination towards OTT in romance. Here, the impact of genre on platform selection can be seen, with some genres being oriented towards the more immersive and event-driven platform of theatres, and others having an advantage in the convenience and flexibility of the OTT platform.

Social Consumption Patterns

The social consumption behaviors indicate that OTT platforms are largely consumed in solitary consumption, with a considerable number of consumers viewing alone. Movie theatres, on the contrary, are more social as most spectators go to watch movies with their friends or family. This shows the distinction between the two formats and their support of individual autonomy and social interaction, with OTT being used to fulfill individual entertainment purposes and theatres offering a social viewing experience.

Table 8: Social Consumption Patterns for OTT and Theatres

Indicator	OTT	Theatre
Viewed alone	76%	18%
Viewed with friends/family	24%	82%

Table 8 will compare the social consumption of OTT and movie theatre viewing. It demonstrates that OTT is more of a solitary experience, with 76% of users viewing content by themselves, whereas 82% of movie theatre users watch movies with friends or family, which underscores the high level of socialization in the cinema experiences. This difference highlights the various gratifications that each medium satisfies: personal independence in the case of OTT and socialization in the case of movie theatres.

Psychological Reinforcement Patterns

OTT platforms help to regulate mood and moderate escapism, but at a greater risk of addiction since the audience watches a lot of content. Movie theatres, on the contrary, offer higher degrees of escapism and anticipation/excitement

build-up and are more immersive with a moderate mood-regulating response. Theatres are high-impact, episodic, and OTT is more routine and habitual.

Table 9: Psychological Reinforcement Patterns for OTT and Theatres

Behaviour	OTT	Theatre
Mood regulation	Strong	Moderate
Escapism intensity	Moderate	Strong
Anticipation/excitement buildup	Low	High
Addiction risk	High (due to binge cycles)	Low

Table 9 compares the psychological reinforcement patterns of OTT and movie theatre viewing. It demonstrates that OTT viewing is highly conducive to mood regulation and moderate escapism, but has a high risk of addiction because of binge-watching behaviors. Conversely, movie theatres offer high levels of escapism, anticipation/excitement build-up, and more moderate levels of mood-regulating experience, focusing on intense, event-related action. This shows how the various media affect viewers emotionally.

Summary of Key Findings

Table 10 shows that the main results of the research indicate that movie theatres are more satisfying in terms of their immersive and social experience, whereas the OTT platforms are motivated by convenience. OTT viewing tends to be common and routine and fulfills functional needs in contrast to the theatre visits that are both episodic and high involvement, and aim at sensory and social satisfaction. Such findings underscore the complementary nature of OTT and theatres, which serve different purposes for the viewers.

Table 10: Summary of Key Findings

Research Objective	Key Results
RO1 - Satisfaction	Theatres scored higher satisfaction due to immersion and social presence
RO2 - Preference Drivers	OTT → convenience-led; Theatre → sensory + social gratification
RO3 – Viewing Behavior	OTT → frequent / habitual; Theatre → rare / high involvement

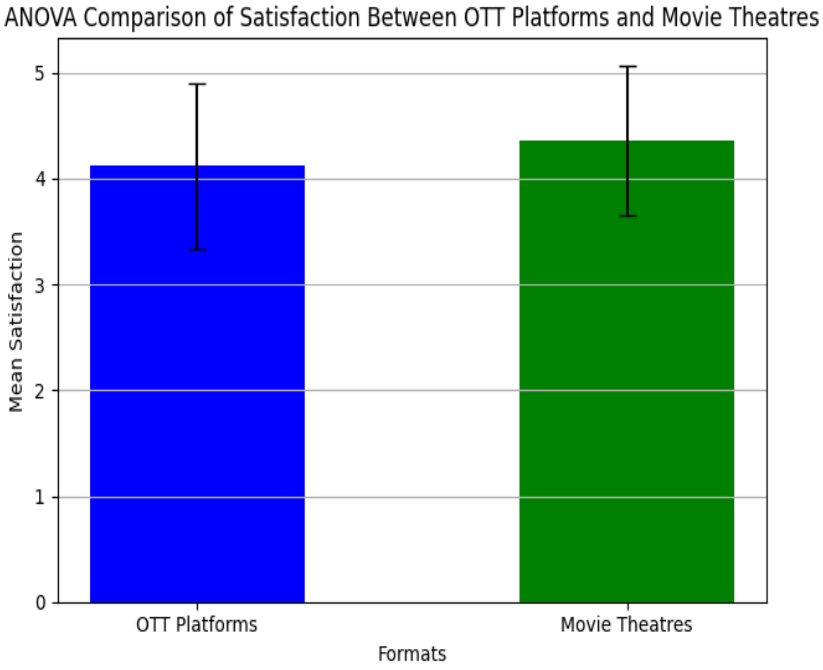


Fig. 2: ANOVA Comparison of Satisfaction Between OTT Platforms and Movie Theatres

Fig. 2 will compare the average level of satisfaction with OTT platforms and movie theatres, and the error bars will be used to indicate the standard deviation of each group. The OTT platforms bar has a blue color with a mean satisfaction of 4.12 (SD = 0.78) and the movie theatres bar is in green with a higher mean satisfaction of 4.36 (SD = 0.71). The chart visually depicts the high level of variation of satisfaction with movie theatres having more satisfaction because of the immersion of the senses and socialization as it has been confirmed through ANOVA test.

Findings, Implications, Limitations & Conclusion

Theoretical Contribution

The present study contributes to the field of media consumption in four aspects: First, it uses UGT to juxtapose OTT platforms and movie theatres as parallel forms of gratification instead of alternatives to confirm that the type of gratification affects format selection. Second, it combines satisfaction and preference with behavior under one construct, which introduces a gratification chain that is comprehensive. Third, it elucidates switching behavior, demonstrating that consumers switch between formats depending on the situation, e.g., daily entertainment and in-depth social interaction. Finally, the cross-regional view of the study (India + Global) enhances external validity, that is, similar gratifications are observed in different regions regardless of the differences in pricing, content, and infrastructure.

Managerial Implications

A. For OTT Platforms

According to path modeling, convenience, entertainment, escapism, and discovery of information are the predictors of OTT satisfaction and preference. Streaming services need to address the needs of users by focusing on a personalized content recommendation system, an increased amount of multilingual and international content, and adaptive subscription pricing to attract users across various income levels. Moreover, the encouragement of binge-watching and offline usage, and the simplification of the user interface and enhancement of compatibility with devices will also increase user satisfaction. OTTs are successful when the content is diversified, customized, and constantly accessible, which fits the tendency of streaming services to continue to grow in the post-pandemic era.

B. For Movie Theatres

Cinema theatres have a competitive advantage in the sensory experience and social interaction, and tactics must be aimed at enhancing these areas. These can be achieved through upgrading to IMAX/Dolby/premium auditoriums, themed screenings, fan events, and community-based premieres, as well as including food and beverage with the purchase of the ticket as an added convenience. Also, dynamic pricing (weekday/weekend/special events) and exclusive theatrical windows to premium releases will make theatres more attractive. According to the findings of the surveys, audiences have revisited the immersive social experiences that theatres offer even after several months of streaming, which confirms that the theatrical model will work.

C. Policy Implications

Digital wellbeing policies should be considered by government, regulatory agencies and cultural commissions to combat the behavioral health consequences of binge-watching, particularly among young people. They must also develop content classification and censorship policies on the OTT platforms to help curtail the dangers of allowing uncontrolled exposures to content. Protective measures are to be put in place to embrace the sustainability of the theatrical industry in the face of digital disruption. Also, it is essential to provide incentives to create regional and cultural content to keep cultural diversity intact and encourage local content on both OTT platforms and theatres to create a balanced and inclusive media environment.

D. Limitations of the Study

Although the study was designed in a rigorous conceptual and analytical manner, it has a number of limitations. The cross-sectional design does not allow for monitoring changes in behavior over time. Also, self-reported viewing behavior can create biases in recall, which can influence the accuracy of the answers. The distribution of the sample in the global and Indian regions might not be the best representation of all the demographic groups. Regional differences in premium screens and infrastructure might influence results because of variation in the intensity of the theatre and OTT experience. Finally, the conceptual model concentrates only on the determinants based on gratification, without considering other motivations like economic and social identity.

E. Future Research Directions

Future studies may extend the findings of this study by analyzing the changes in the format preference with time through a process called long-term behavior modeling. A neuro-cognitive study may be performed to determine the difference in emotional responses to OTT and theatrical. There could be revenue synergies between theatrical windows and OTT platforms, which could be analyzed through economic modelling. Moreover, research on the psychological effects of binge-watching, especially in adolescents, and the ethics of AI-based content suggestions and exposure bias may be potentially informative. It can also be done through qualitative research that explores the deeper meaning of

the behavior of going to the cinema in terms of emotional symbolism and cultural value to gain a more profound insight into the underlying effects of this behavior on society.

Conclusion

This analysis offers some valuable information on the comparative dynamics between OTT platforms and movie theatres by providing a better understanding of how the two formats meet various consumer needs. The findings show that movie theatres have a greater level of satisfaction, with the mean satisfaction of 4.36 (SD = 0.71) than OTT platforms with a mean satisfaction of 4.12 (SD = 0.78). The t-test outcomes ($t(598) = 3.94$, $p < .001$) reveal that movie theatres offer much more satisfaction because of their sensory immersion and social presence to be used as a high-involvement and experience-oriented entertainment type. In contrast, OTT platforms excel in providing functional gratifications such as convenience, personalized content, and flexibility, with OTT preference being strongly driven by convenience ($\beta = 0.37$) and entertainment ($\beta = 0.22$). OTT satisfaction is an indicator of its capability to fulfill the daily entertainment requirements with greater adaptability, especially in the post-pandemic environment.

The analysis contributes to the hypothesis of the dual-gratification coexistence, which implies that the movie theatres and OTTs do not substitute each other but complement each other, depending on the form of gratification pursued. OTT platforms are used for routine and personalized entertainment, with convenience ($\beta = 0.37$) and escapism ($\beta = 0.19$) being key drivers. In contrast, movie theatres cater to episodic, social, and sensory experiences, with sensory experience ($\beta = 0.41$) and social interaction ($\beta = 0.28$) being the strongest predictors of theatre preference. ANOVA ($F(1, 598) = 3.94$, $p < .001$) validates the and proves theatres have more satisfaction levels and proves that immersive, communal experience in a cinema is more satisfying than in OTT. The study fills a gap in the literature by addressing motivation-based format choice and discussing the switching between OTT and theatres. The results demonstrate how the two formats are complementary to each other, which can give the content providers and theatre operators an important implication. Further studies can also investigate how behavioral patterns of OTT and theatrical formats evolve over time and whether these two media types have economic synergies.

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