Factors affecting consumers' willingness to subscribe to over-the-top (OTT) video streaming services in Ireland.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

Master of Science in International Business

by

Jane Smitha Tauro

Student ID- X22169474

Under supervision of

Supervisor- Dr. Michelle Killian

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Abstract

In today's entertainment market, consumer behavior has remarkably altered due to the rising growth of the Over-the-Top (OTT) video streaming services, offered by various providers like Netflix and Amazon Prime. This study aims to explore main factors that motivate consumers to subscribe to, or to refrain from subscribing to OTT services. The main goal is to thoroughly investigate the elements that remarkably impact customers' decision-making processes when it comes to OTT subscriptions in Ireland. Data collection employed snowball sampling technique to gather a total of 90 responses. To understand subscription behavior, the study divided participants into three groups based on their preferred viewing platform: cable only, OTT only, or both. The study adopted a cross-sectional descriptive approach to generate the consumer preferences at a single point in time.

Top six reasons were ranked for motivations for subscribing to and abstaining from OTT services. Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) identified five underlying factors influencing these decisions being content, price, convenience, quality, and consumer behavior. A multiple linear and ordinal regression analysis was conducted to examine the impact of these factors, along with demographic variables on subscription choices and retention. The analysis revealed that all five factors somewhat influenced consumer decisions, though to varying degrees. Content and price emerged as the most critical determinants, highlighting their primacy in subscription preferences. Among demographic variables, household structure exhibited the strongest influence, followed closely by income.This study has made an exceptional contribution to understanding consumer subscription decisions within the competitive Irish OTT service market. Given the heterogeneous nature of the Irish market, this descriptive research offered valuable insights to OTT streaming service providers operating in this landscape. By understanding these core factors and their impact on consumer behavior, OTT providers can develop targeted strategies to attract and retain subscribers.

Keywords: Over The Top (OTT), User experience, Motivation to subscribe, Resistance to subscribe, Content preferences, Price sensitivity, Value perception, Consumer behavior, Technology adoption, Subscriber retention, Binge watching

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Abbreviations

AVOD: Advertising Video on Demand
EFA: Exploratory Factor Analysis
GDPR: General Data Protection Regulation
IoT: Internet of Things
M&E: Media and Entertainment
OTT: Over-the-Top
PEoU: Perceived Ease of Use
SEM: Structural Equation Modeling
SNS: Social Networking Sites
SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
SST: Self-Service Tools
SVOD: Subscription Video On Demand
TAM: Technology Acceptance Model
TRA: Theory of Reasoned Action
TVOD: Transactional Video on Demand
VoIP: Voice over Internet Protocol

Factors affecting consumers' willingness to subscribe to over-the-top (OTT) video streaming services in Ireland.

1. Introduction:

OTT platforms are increasingly dominating consumers' time, making the internet vital to everyday life. Over four years (2010-2014), the average US and UK adult's digital media use doubled, reflecting a massive shift in media consumption habits (Emarketer, 2021). OTT services primarily function through the broadband distribution of video and audio content.

OTT stands for 'Over the Top' streaming, which delivers streamed content via internet-connected devices. SVOD (Subscription Video On Demand), AVOD (Advertising Video on Demand), and TVOD (Transactional Video on Demand) are all subsets of OTT. SVOD being the most popular among all the OTT revenue models, OTT and SVOD are often used interchangeably (Hamm, 2023). This study will adopt that approach, focusing on SVOD platforms and using both terms interchangeably to reflect their dominance in online video viewing.

The increasing influence of SVOD platforms are taking over as the main way people watch videos online. OTT services bypass the involvement of traditional operators who would typically monitor and distribute such content (Murschetz, 2016). In today's world, OTT has become a major player in the media industry (Dasgupta and Grover, 2019). Cable TV is getting sidelined by streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney+, and Hulu. The rise of OTT streaming services has fundamentally transformed how people consume entertainment. Unlike traditional television with its fixed schedules, these services offer on-demand content, empowering viewers to watch what they want, whenever they want (Green, 2008). With faster internet, more smartphones, and consumers' instantiable appetite for online videos, the video streaming industry has experienced substantial growth in recent years. United States being the leading market, the over-the-top (OTT) video streaming market generated a significant revenue of $154 billion in 2022. With a constant stream of new streaming services and shows emerging around the globe, the number of people using OTT services is poised to escalate even further (Stoll, 2023). Global traditional television viewership and cable/satellite provider subscriptions are certainly declining, and this trend is mirrored in the fast-growing popularity of on-demand

video consumption enabled by Over-the-Top (OTT) services. Numerous causes probably contributed to the fall of the cable business. As OTT offers flexible subscription options that are both affordable and tailored to individual interests, as well as on-demand material, consumers are lured to it (Gilad, 2024). When picking an OTT platform or moving from cable to OTT services, users will be influenced by the aspects that this research will identify as being most significant.

Globally, more individuals are spending time online as a result of smartphones and reliable internet. According to projections made by Statista in 2021, individuals reportedly spent 2.3 hours a day on the internet (Statista, 2021). The SVoD market is anticipated to reach a valuation of US$108.5 billion by the end of 2024. By 2027, SVoD market is expected to experience strong annual growth of around 9%, with a projected user base of 3.4 billion, indicating the continued dominance of this trend (Statista, 2024).

The video streaming markets in Ireland that offer pay-per-view (TVOD) and monthly subscription (SVOD) options have experienced rapid growth in recent years. During COVID lockdowns, those who were stranded at home turned to OTT streaming for entertainment. Forecasts state that subscription-based video-on-demand (SVOD) services, such as Netflix and Disney+, will likely take the lead in the Irish VOD industry. These platforms have the potential to obtain about 97% of the total market share (Ryan, 2023).

This study will explore why people in Ireland subscribe to or avoid subscribing to SVoD platforms. It also explores the typical characteristics of OTT users in Ireland. The study highlights two main goals:

1. *What motivates consumers to subscribe or not subscribe to an OTT service?*
2. *Who are the common OTT users in Ireland, based on their reasons for subscribing?*

By uncovering these novel insights, the research aims to empower business managers in the sector to develop and implement effective strategies. Highlighting these essential components will equip OTT service providers to integrate them into their business models, ultimately enhancing customer retention and satisfaction.

The study begins with an overview, consisting of an abstract and introduction, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research scope and objectives. Following this, chapter 2 provides a critique of the existing literature highlighting key findings and gaps in research. This is followed by chapter 3, which discusses the methods and approach adopted to examine

the research questions. Chapter 4 focuses on presenting the findings from the study where the results are demonstrated using graphs and tables. Next, chapter 5 will examine the observations considering the theoretical framework providing a foundation for conclusion and recommendation which is shown in Chapter 6. Finally, chapter 7 provides a list of references used, ensuring the credibility and reliability of the study's findings.

1.1. Research Objectives

The purpose of this study is to investigate the factors that affect Irish consumers' decisions to subscribe to or not subscribe to over-the-top (OTT) video streaming services. The following study goals were created to look into the major topics found in the literature review.

i. **Motivations/Resistance for Subscribing to OTT Platforms:** Identify potential differences in motivations between subscribers and non-subscribers and explore the key reasons why users subscribe or not subscribe to OTT services.

ii. **Content Preferences:** Assess the importance of content library and variety in OTT subscription choices. Evaluate how user preferences for original content, locally produced content, and specific genres influence their selection of OTT platforms.

iii. **Price Sensitivity and Value Perception:** Gauge the impact of subscription price on user decisions. To explore user preferences for tiered subscription plans with varying content and price points, investigating how perceived value for money influences their willingness to subscribe.

iv. **User Experience and Technical Considerations:** To evaluate the technical aspects of user experience, including the importance of reliable internet connection, user satisfaction with service interfaces, and the impact of high-resolution video quality, while also investigating user concerns regarding potential downsides like limited internet connectivity or addiction.

v. **Viewing Habits and Social Aspects:** To investigate how OTT services compare to traditional TV in terms of user control, co-viewing experiences, and ad-free viewing, while also investigating potential links between OTT usage and binge-watching behavior.

2. Literature review:

This chapter establishes the groundwork for the study's theoretical framework. It will identify and critically evaluate relevant theories, concepts, and models that will serve as a foundation for analyzing the empirical data presented later. The goal is to leverage these theoretical perspectives, alongside subsequent discussions of the findings, to illuminate consumer satisfaction and preferences for video OTT service platforms and their associated business models. This enhanced understanding will contribute to the existing body of knowledge in this field.

This literature review examines the complexities of OTT streaming services, which offer internet-based alternatives to traditional cable tv. It explores the reasons behind the dominance of subscription models, user motivations compared to other online technologies, and potential resistance to adoption. Additionally, the review delves into consumer behavior within OTT streaming, including binge-watching. Finally, it analyzes challenges facing the industry, like piracy. This comprehensive overview provides insights into various aspects of the OTT landscape.

The over-the-top (OTT) streaming market, though nascent, faces a definitional challenge within academic discourse and industry expertise. This ambiguity arises from the increase of definitions tailored to specific platforms or research areas. Despite this definitional flux, a core consensus exists. OTT platforms function as an internet-based alternative to conventional Pay-Tv providers, offering a readily accessible method for content delivery, particularly television shows (ITU, 2019). The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) categorizes an OTT service as an online video distributor that transmits video programming content directly to consumers via the internet (FCC 2015). Some researchers see OTT new way to get video content to viewers, separate from cable and satellite TV (Gupta and Singharia, 2021). While OTT is currently defined as delivering video content online, bypassing traditional cableTv infrastructure and set-top boxes, this definition overlooks the expanding scope of OTT services. Existing academic literature focuses solely on video, neglecting the inclusion of music streaming, game distribution platforms, and Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) offerings. However, it is believed that the OTT will change and grow as it becomes more popular and is used in different areas. Over-the-top (OTT) media is defined more broadly in this study, including any media type that is directly distributed to consumers via digital means. These

channels encompass a variety of internet-connected gadgets, web browsers, and mobile applications, among others.

2.1. Subscription-based streaming

A huge amount of internet traffic comes from watching videos online, with video making up about 75% of all traffic. This is because there are so many websites and apps offering video content these days (Cisco Annual Internet Report, 2020). Online video is exploding in popularity, and a few big players like YouTube, Netflix, and Amazon are driving most of this growth (Global Internet Phenomena Report, 2013). These services, known as OTT commercial video or Subscription Video-on-Demand (SVoD), function as libraries for video content, allowing users to access a wide selection of shows and movies for a monthly or yearly fee, without ads or the need for cable or satellite subscriptions. Basically, they buy content from other companies and sell access to it as a package to viewers. Lately, to stay ahead of the competition, some SVoD services are even creating their own original shows and movies. This is because content creators are starting to see SVoD services as a threat and might stop selling their content to them in the future (Knee, 2011).

Subscription services have become a key business model innovation, allowing customers to opt for recurring payments instead of one-time purchases (Chen et al., 2018). The digital environment has facilitated the emergence of various subscription-based models across industries, offering businesses opportunities to attract customers with tailored offerings (Kim & Kim, 2020). The success of subscription-based models relies on providing consumers with continuous value and benefits, such as ongoing access or convenience. Aligning competitive strategies with the business model configuration enhances success factors based on market dynamics and consumer preferences (Choudury et al., 2020).

Overall, the above literature review emphasizes the growing significance of Subscription Video-on-Demand (SVoD) services in response to the escalating demand for online video content. It shows the necessity for businesses to adapt their business models to provide continuous value to consumers and align their strategies with the changing digital landscape.

2.2. Motivation for OTT video usage

Studies have looked at why people start using new online things such as social networking sites (SNS), smart devices (IoT), and self-service tools (SST). They've found that social media platforms are especially successful because they allow people to interact in real-time or on their own time. Social media is also rich with information because it can include pictures, videos, and text. Plus, it offers a wide variety of information for different needs. Lastly, users may access social media at any time and from any location, making it convenient. (Johnson and Ambrose, 2006).

The popularity of internet-connected devices (IoT) is driven by its potential to improve people's lives in several ways. People who are more comfortable with technology and open to new experiences are more likely to adopt them (Touzani et al., 2017). On the other hand, people who are anxious or skeptical about this technology might be less likely to use it. A study on airline self-service technology (SST) states that systems that are easy to use, enjoyable to interact with, and fast to perform tasks see greater user adoption (Gures et al., 2018).

The rise of OTT services has undeniably impacted the telecom industry. People are drawn to OTT for reasons like affordability, a wide variety of content, convenience, the growing use of smartphones and mobile internet, a smooth user experience, and the features offered by these platforms (Sujata et al., 2015). Interestingly, there's not enough research on why people specifically choose to pay for subscription-based OTT services.

From the literature review, it is understood that as technology advances, people gravitate towards online services that are user-friendly, offer diverse content, and provide convenient anytime, anywhere access. Those comfortable with technology and open to new experiences are early adopters. Conversely, people intimidated by technology or concerned about security might be more cautious.

2.3. Resistance to OTT video usage

Some studies in psychology, including Khatri et al., (2018), call into question the limitations of traditional technology adoption models. These models are criticized for their exclusive focus on conscious thought processes during technology adoption decisions. The study proposes an alternative framework that integrates the influence of subconscious attitudes towards

technology on user behavior. They posit that seemingly rational factors, such as perceived ease of use and social influence, might be influenced by these underlying implicit beliefs. This approach necessitates a more comprehensive understanding of technology adoption, acknowledging the complex interplay between conscious and subconscious influences (Khatri et al., 2018).

Existing research on consumer resistance to technology, acknowledges various barriers that independently influence technology adoption. Understanding these barriers is crucial for a comprehensive picture of consumer attitudes. Prior models examining resistance have focused on two main categories: practical barriers such as value which may include money, difficult to use, or risk such as privacy, and psychological barriers including the reputation of the technology and adherence to traditional methods (Talwar et al., 2020). However, like limitations of the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM), these resistance models neglect personal predispositions and factors specific to the new technology (Ram and Sheth., 1989). Recognizing this gap, recent studies have proposed a more encompassing framework for innovation resistance. This framework incorporates additional barriers such as technology vulnerability, personal ideology, and personality traits (Mani and Chouk, 2017). By integrating these additional dimensions, the proposed framework offers a richer understanding of resistance and facilitates a more complete analysis of technology adoption.

This literature review highlights that traditional tech adoption models overlook subconscious influences. A new framework considers these alongside conscious factors like ease of use for a more complete understanding of why people embrace or resist new technologies. For example, someone is hesitant about online banking. User might consciously know it is secure but subconsciously think that they will be bad at using the technology.

2.4. OTT's influence on consumer behavior

Netflix has established itself as the leader in both established and emerging markets, with projections exceeding 182.2 million paying subscribers in the US by 2024 (Stoll, 2021). Following closely behind are Amazon Prime Video and Disney+. These services have become integral to the M&E landscape, significantly impacting consumer purchasing decisions. Popular series like Narcos, The Queen's Gambit, Stranger Things, Game of Thrones, and House

of Cards have received significant commendations and fueled the adoption of various OTT platforms.

Additionally, traditional live television viewership is declining as consumers are drawn towards video-on-demand content offered by streaming services (Koul et al., 2020). The average television viewer utilizes a negligible portion of their cable package, watching only 0.09% of the total linear TV content available. Focus groups conducted with cord-cutters revealed a preference for circumventing the traditional cable system and enjoying television without the constraints of a cable subscription. Consumers are exhibiting greater price sensitivity towards expensive cable packages, leading to the trends of cord-cutting and cord-shaving (Tefertiller, 2020). Cord-cutting refers to the complete cancellation of traditional cable or satellite television subscriptions, with viewers relying solely on web-based streaming services for their entertainment needs. Conversely, cord-shavers reduce their Pay-Tv subscriptions while incorporating OTT services into their viewing experience (Fuduri´c et al., 2018).

It is clearly understood from above that the dominance of cable TV is fading as streaming services like Netflix take hold. With subscriber projections exceeding than expected, OTT services are offering on-demand content that consumers prefer. Popular shows like "Money Heist" is a prime example of how high-quality streaming content is appealing to viewers to abandon traditional cable packages during Covid 19. This trend, known as cord-cutting, is driven by a desire for more control and affordability.

2.5. Factors driving the adoption of OTT streaming services

The universal presence of digitalization has significantly impacted media consumption, particularly television. This shift in consumer behavior is characterized by "cord-cutting," the forgoing of traditional cable packages in favor of over-the-top (OTT) services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+. These services offer a diverse library of movies, series, and even live TV programming. In addition, technological progress has enabled the broader acceptance of gadgets that can play digital media, along with faster internet connections. This combination of elements gives users previously unheard-of flexibility and control over the information they choose, enabling them to access almost any content at any time or anywhere.

A study by Ambekar et al., (2020) states that most of the research on video streaming services has concentrated on content-related elements including exclusivity, diversity, and quality. According to the same study, the most important consideration when selecting a video streaming service is the content. However, it also suggests that attributes like price and platform design influence decision-making. Likewise study by Tumiwa et al., (2022) highlights that subscription-based video streaming services must enhance the quality and competitiveness of their content in terms of exclusivity, attractiveness, and overall quality to improve user retention. This literature review examines factors not only related to video streaming services but also to all types of OTT streaming services.

2.5.1. Price

With the rise of over-the-top (OTT) services, consumers navigate an increasingly intricate pricing landscape. This structure encompasses a range of options, including free tiers and subscription models with varying service levels. The pricing strategy significantly influences both adoption rates and engagement levels for these platforms (Bhullar and Chaudhary, 2020). In mature markets like the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom, the OTT landscape exhibits a heightened dynamism. Here, fierce competition compels service providers to offer a wider range of content options at price points tailored to consumer comfort. This translates to a multitude of content choices for consumers, often at a fraction of the cost associated with traditional cable television. As an illustrative example, Netflix's entry into markets like Spain and India employed low-cost subscription plans, effectively attracting a significant subscriber base (Lobato and Lotz, 2020). Furthermore, consumer behavior within the OTT landscape is characterized by service addition, sampling, and cancellation, driven by the pursuit of optimal value for both time and financial investment.

The escalating costs of cable subscriptions are a primary driver behind the consumer shift towards over-the-top (OTT) services. This trend is further fueled by the inherent flexibility of digital media options (Gupta and Singharia, 2021). OTT services give users control over their viewing experience by letting them choose the content they want, unlike bundled cable channels. The cost-effectiveness of OTT services, compared to ever-increasing cable TV prices, is a significant motivating factor for consumers. The relatively low monthly fees associated with OTT platforms encourage subscriptions, even for occasional users seeking specific shows or movies. Conversely, the high cost of cable discourages potential subscribers,

particularly those hesitant to commit to a contract service without a clear understanding of the available content library (Lee et al., 2016). In conclusion, while content remains paramount, affordability emerges as a powerful influencer in consumer decision-making regarding television service selection.

While cost remains a key driver of consumer adoption, the appeal of over-the-top (OTT) services extends beyond affordability compared to traditional cable television. Unlike cable services, OTT eliminates additional installation expenses associated with set-top boxes and deposit fees. Furthermore, OTT leverages existing internet connections, further reducing overall costs for end-users. However, the economic benefits of OTT come with distinct challenges for the media industry, particularly regarding subscriber churn.

While cable services models generate consistent revenue streams from each subscriber, SVoD models are inherently susceptible to subscriber cancellations. These cancellations can be triggered by factors such as changes in content offerings, price hikes, or a phenomenon known as "subscription fatigue." In essence, the affordability of OTT services presents a double-edged sword for the media industry, offering both advantages in attracting consumers and challenges in retaining them (Deloitte, 2018).

2.5.2. Content

Content is becoming a major component affecting viewer behaviour in the digital age. Nowadays, consumers have an unmatched ability to find media that speaks to their interests and way of life. The growth of streaming services, which provide huge content libraries and unique programming that isn't available anywhere else, has been spurred by this change. These tailored offerings cater to diverse tastes, making streaming services a dominant force in the media landscape (Westcott et al., 2019).

The outward expansion of digital media has ushered in a dynamic and multifaceted media consumption landscape. Consumers are presented with a plethora of content discovery options, empowering them to extract value within this evolving era. Recognizing the influence of genre on platform selection. A study by Cha (2013) investigated user preferences across eight distinct video content formats: comedy shows, dramas, reality shows, news, documentaries, educational content, and entertainment magazine formats. The findings suggest a correlation

between genre type and preferred viewing platform. However, further research is warranted to explore the impact of a broader range of content facets on OTT service adoption. This deeper understanding will provide valuable insights into consumer behavior and platform selection within the ever-evolving OTT landscape (Cha, 2013). Another recent study by Kim et al., 2020 explored user preferences within the television landscape. The study revealed a consumer aversion to channel surfing associated with traditional live television. In contrast, users display a preference for streaming services due to their intuitive content organization, allowing viewers to readily locate specific movies, shows, or clips. Furthermore, the study identified a correlation between content variety and user adoption of streaming services. Reality programming emerged as the most popular genre, with over 70% of viewers expressing a preference for accessing this content via OTT platforms. Conversely, educational, or "how-to" programs garnered the least interest, with only 16% of viewers favoring this genre on streaming services. The study discovered that consumers are more inclined to utilize streaming services when they have access to a wide range of content to retain consumers in a competitive market (Kim et al., 2020).

Coinciding with the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, there was a spike in streaming service subscriptions. However, this growth came alongside a decline in new content production due to pandemic-related disruptions. This presented a challenge for streaming services and their partner studios in maintaining audience engagement. Research by Chen (2019) suggests a positive correlation between viewer satisfaction and access to sports programming on streaming platforms. News shows, on the other hand, lacked a significant link with satisfaction. While movies and dramas didn't exhibit a strong correlation either, they appeared to be more influential on viewership compared to other genres besides sports. These findings highlight the complex relationship between content availability and user engagement for streaming services. The limitations imposed by the pandemic on content creation necessitate strategic content curation from existing libraries and potentially exploring alternative content acquisition methods. This ensures user satisfaction remains a priority during unforeseen circumstances (Chen, 2019). Speculation can be made that during the COVID-19 pandemic, sports programming on various OTT platforms likely provided greater satisfaction to consumers as platforms aimed to retain their customer base. Sports shows offered unique content not readily available elsewhere, particularly for users without access to traditional TV. With limited production of new shows and movies during the pandemic, users may have been exposed to repetitive or lower-quality content. Additionally, the one-time nature of movie or

series viewing may have contributed to diminishing interest. Regarding news programming, viewers may have experienced fatigue from the overwhelming coverage of COVID-19 across radio, TV, and social media platforms. OTT services offered an escape from this inundation, allowing users to have more control over their content consumption preferences.

2.5.3. Flexibility

Beyond cost-effectiveness, OTT services offer several compelling advantages. Users enjoy exceptional flexibility in terms of device selection and viewing schedules. The vast content libraries accessible on these platforms are virtually limitless and geographically unrestricted, allowing viewers to enjoy their favorite shows and movies anytime, anywhere. Furthermore, OTT services empower users to control their viewing experience through features like pausing, rewinding, and fast-forwarding, eliminating the inconvenience of commercials (Massad, 2018).

According to a study by Li (2020), over-the-top (OTT) services are projected to emerge as challenging competitors to traditional mass media due to their flexible scheduling and diverse range of content offerings. This incorporated with the multi-screen experience that allows users to access content on various devices, makes OTT services a highly attractive option for consumers seeking entertainment on the go. Cable companies are experiencing declining revenue as a result of this shift. Consumers are drawn to the flexibility and affordability of OTT services, where they can subscribe to specific channels or services that line with their interests, all while enjoying the freedom to access them from any location with an internet connection (Li, 2020). High cable subscription costs are driving consumer migration towards over-the-top (OTT) streaming services. OTT services offer a compelling alternative due to their affordability and ability to provide a quality viewing experience. However, the ability to play files simultaneously as they download is not a universally offered feature across all OTT platforms, and further research is needed to determine the prevalence of this specific functionality (Qiu and Cui, 2010).

2.5.4. Convenience

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) identifies Perceived Ease of Use (PEoU) as a critical factor influencing technology adoption. PEoU, as defined, refers to the degree of

perceived effortlessness associated with using a particular system (Davis,1989). This concept is especially relevant in the context of new technologies like mobile apps and social media, where complex interfaces can discourage user adoption. Similarly, OTT services benefit from user-friendly interfaces. Consumers, adapted to the convenience of smartphones and social media, expect a similar level of ease when navigating entertainment platforms. Intuitive interfaces on OTT services, like Netflix, minimize frustration and confusion, ultimately contributing to a positive user experience. This emphasizes convenience as a key factor influencing OTT service adoption, primarily focusing on the ease of access from subscription to content consumption. However, Bhullar and Chaudhary (2020) suggest a potential distinction – while convenience remains crucial for attracting new users, it may not be a significant factor in retaining existing subscribers. The findings indicate that streamlining the subscription process can potentially reduce early cancellations among new adopters (Bhullar and Chaudhary, 2020).

People don't want to struggle with confusing controls, no matter if it's a new phone, computer, or even a streaming service like Netflix. Luckily, technology has made it easier than ever to keep up with your favorite shows. The SVOD services have user-friendly interfaces to be able to be used by all age groups. Now users can watch them on all sorts of devices, whenever they want, without any annoying interruptions.

2.6. Binge watching

The phenomenon of binge-watching has witnessed a rapid rise in popularity among consumers, particularly millennials and Gen Z demographics. This trend corresponds with the dominance of streaming platforms like Netflix and YouTube, which have fundamentally reshaped traditional television viewing habits. Over the past decade, binge-watching has evolved into the preferred method of media consumption for a significant portion of the global audience. The expansion and easy accessibility of over-the-top (OTT) content has fostered a dedicated viewership, primarily comprised of millennials, who actively engage in marathoning their favorite shows (Yoo et al., 2021). Binge-watching goes beyond generations, with even baby boomers engaging occasionally. The video delivery ecosystem prioritizes optimal viewing, blurring the lines between creation and consumption. While tolerance for filler episodes rises, viewers display lower resumption rates after discontinuing shows, reflecting increased audience selectivity (Ganjoo, 2016). In the face of cord-cutting and intense competition,

traditional TV networks are increasingly resorting to on-demand content and subscription models in an attempt to retain viewers and reclaim their position in the evolving media landscape (istudios, 2024).

2.7. Challenges in OTT industry

Although Over-The-Top (OTT) industry has experienced phenomenal growth in recent years, this rapid expansion is accompanied by a multitude of challenges that demand attention. The high cost of subscriber acquisition presents a significant hurdle for OTT platforms. In the United States, studies suggest that acquiring a single subscriber can cost upwards of $200 annually, depending on the service. This cost often surpasses content acquisition expenses, placing a substantial financial burden on providers (Park, 2019).

Content, while not always perceived as the primary driver of viewership, lies at the heart of successful OTT networks. Extensive research demonstrates a clear correlation between subscriber churn and the network's ability to deliver content that resonates with its audience. Failure to provide a compelling content library ultimately leads to subscription cancellations. Subscriber retention is equally crucial for the long-term survival of OTT platforms. Achieving this objective requires a multifaceted approach. To retain subscribers, OTT providers must offer user-demanded content with flexible quality options and the ability to skip ads. (Hou and Choi, 2019).

The OTT landscape is becoming increasingly saturated, resulting in higher competition. To stand out in this crowded market, providers must actively differentiate themselves. Offering unique and engaging content is central to this strategy. By curating content that caters to specific audience niches or by investing in original productions, OTT services can attract and retain subscribers (Uniqcast, 2022).

The OTT industry must navigate a complex landscape of challenges alongside its rapid growth. By addressing issues related to subscriber acquisition costs, content strategy, and competitive distinctness, OTT providers can strive for a sustainable future. Ultimately, the success of OTT platforms depends on their ability to deliver a superior overall experience with a robust and user-centric content library. For example, HBO initially struggled to compete due to a smaller content library when compared to Netflix. However, by focusing on high-quality, exclusive

content like "Game of Thrones" and leveraging nostalgia with classic HBO shows and movies, they carved out a niche (Adalian, 2019).

2.8. Streaming challenges and piracy

This passage expands on the factors influencing OTT (Over-the-Top) subscription resistance, moving beyond the personal considerations mentioned previously. It highlights the readily available, freely downloadable pirated content as a significant deterrent.

Research on internet piracy explores the motivations behind content sharing and uploading. The findings suggest these actions may extend beyond purely economic gain and encompass more altruistic values. This emerging "content-sharing ecosystem" disrupts traditional perspectives on internet privacy. Individuals increasingly justify privacy on the grounds of altruistic or social content sharing, leading to a growing supply of pirated content not solely driven by financial motives (Thomson et al., 2018).

Further longitudinal studies delve deeper into the global content-sharing ecosystem. These studies reveal a significant user segment consistently relies on freely downloadable pirated content, even with privacy concerns (Mahanti et al., 2011). This growing preference for pirated content appears to be linked to the increasing popularity of exclusive OTT content (Agarwal, 2019). Consumers who lack access or cannot afford subscriptions to these streaming services are turning to pirated versions of the offered content (Lu et al., 2021).

The literature review highlights that freely available pirated content online is one of the reasons why people don't subscribe to OTT services. Studies above show that people share content online not just to save money, but also for seemingly selfless reasons. This creates a large amount of pirated content available online, even though people are worried about privacy. Additionally, as more OTT services offer exclusive content, people who can't afford subscriptions turn to piracy to watch what they want.

Overall, the above literature review shows that the rise of OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon has changed how people watch entertainment. While content variety is key, user preferences extend to factors like value and Perceived Ease of Use (PEoU) for tech adoption, similar to social media's success. Additionally, user decisions might be influenced by

subconscious factors and the easy availability of pirated content. Considering these trends, this review lays the groundwork for development of this research aimed at addressing the specific factors affecting OTT subscription decisions in the Irish market. By delving deeper into user preference and content consumption habits, researchers can gain valuable insights to inform the strategies of OTT service providers in Ireland. The next chapter will unveil the research methodology used to explore these factors in the Irish Market.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological approach chosen for this study. The chapter encompasses the chosen design, the nature and source of the data, the statistical tools employed, and reliability and validity testing to assess the quality of the measurement tool. Additionally, the chapter describes replicability and pilot testing procedures implemented to ensure the survey's efficiency and effectiveness. Finally, the chapter concludes by outlining the ethical considerations taken to uphold the integrity of the research.

Research methodology refers to the systematic framework that guides a research project towards addressing a specific challenge. It serves as the blueprint for the entire endeavor, outlining the research plan and the rationale behind the chosen methods. Crucially, research methodology goes beyond simply identifying the methods to be used. It delves deeper, providing the justification for those methods and ensuring their alignment with the research objectives.

A robust research design and strategy within a thesis depend on a firm grasp of the philosophical approaches guiding the inquiry. Two fundamental concepts in research are ontology and epistemology. While ontology philosophy seeks to answer the question of "what exists in the world?", epistemology, on the other hand, focuses on "what constitutes knowledge and its sources and limitations" (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008). The ontology view of positivism is concerned with the fundamental nature of reality and its influence on the study of the research subject. Different views of reality can lead to various outcomes in a study (Collis & Hussey, 2021). Constructivist epistemology deals with how knowledge is understood and gained. By recognizing this distinction, it can be determined which methods are most suitable for conducting the research, aligning it with own assumptions. (Saunders et al., 2019). Examining philosophical assumptions, such as ontology and epistemology, allows researchers to establish a cohesive research design by ensuring a clear alignment between the chosen methodology and the research goals. This research explores the factors influencing viewers' decisions to subscribe to or restrain subscriptions to Over-the-Top (OTT) streaming services. From an ontological perspective, the study focuses on measurable aspects of user behavior and preferences. Epistemologically, a quantitative approach can be employed, utilizing structured surveys to gather data on user demographics, motivation , and satisfaction levels.

3.1. Research Design

Selection of an appropriate research methodology is paramount as it dictates the practical steps involved in data collection, analysis, and theoretical interpretation. In this context, two primary approaches emerge: qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Given the research questions and the overall research purpose, a quantitative approach was deemed more suitable for this study. Quantitative research strives to generate generalizable findings based on quantifiable data. Furthermore, the reliance on quantitative data collection aligns well with the positivist philosophical framework adopted in this study. Positivism emphasizes the objectivity of knowledge and the discovery of underlying laws through systematic data collection and analysis.

This research employed a cross-sectional design, involving data collection from a diverse group of participants at a single point in time. To ensure generalizability, the study necessitated a heterogeneous respondent sample. This approach allowed for the examination of variation across all variables of interest. Data collection was facilitated through structured instruments such as online surveys, enabling efficient data gathering from a large sample. The cross-sectional design is particularly advantageous in this study due to time and resource constraints. This study emphasizes the importance of a sample that yields rich insights into video streaming consumer behavior in Ireland. To achieve this, the survey was developed in English, the primary language of the target population. Additionally, the survey was designed with clear and concise questions, incorporating examples where necessary, to minimize misinterpretations and enhance the reliability of the collected data. Focusing on users with video streaming experience was crucial to gather in-depth insights. While the video streaming demographic may be geographically and demographically broad (age, gender, income), no specific segment dominates. Therefore, the sample selection criteria included individuals in Ireland above 18 who have experience using video streaming services. The survey aimed to capture the perspectives of current users. This approach allowed for gathering insights into factors influencing customer satisfaction, service continuation, and reasons for discontinuing service. While the survey included a question to explore reasons for not subscribing to OTT platforms, this study prioritizes understanding factors that enhance customer retention. Therefore, the sample focused on existing users whose experiences can directly inform strategies to improve service offerings and encourage continued subscription.

To achieve a geographically diverse and age-inclusive sample within time and budget constraints, this study employed snowball sampling. In snowball sampling, researchers identify an initial group meeting the study criteria and ask them to recruit others from their social networks who also qualify. This technique is particularly useful for reaching broad or hard-to-access populations (Saunders et al., 2019). This study leveraged snowball sampling to target a representative sample of the video streaming market. The online survey was forwarded to close networks using social media platforms like WhatsApp, Facebook and LinkedIn, ensuring participants from various age categories and demographics. A personal request was sent to initial participants to share the survey with their contacts who also fit the target criteria, including a range of ages, genders, and income levels. This approach increased the likelihood of collecting a sample that reflected the actual customer demographics of the video streaming market.

3.2. Data Collection Method

Microsoft Forms was chosen for survey development due to its user-friendly interface and diverse question format options. This platform facilitated the creation of a clear and well-organized survey instrument comprised of 27 questions. The survey was published on 3rd of April 2024 and was initially planned to run for one week. However, to collect more responses and achieve a larger sample size for stronger data analysis, the survey period was extended by two days, closing on April 11th. A reminder during this time was sent to participants to encourage completion. After one week the survey had received 73 responses but adding two more days and reaching out to the potential participants the survey received a total of 90 responses. The survey incorporated a mix of question types to gather comprehensive data:

Demographic Questions (6): Gender, age, occupation, household structure, education, and income were assessed to understand the respondent population.

Ranking Questions (3): Respondents ranked 1-6, with 1 being most important being least important, their reasons for switching to a different OTT service provider, subscribing to OTT channels, and not subscribing to OTT channels.

Multiple Choice Question (1): Assessed whether respondents subscribed to traditional/cable television, OTT services, or both.

Likert Scale Questions (17): Drawing upon an in-depth literature review of OTT services, the survey included 17 questions addressing various factors influencing customer behavior. These factors included content, price, convenience, quality, etc. Some questions were altered from

published research by Nagaraj et al. (2021). These Likert-scale questions used a 1-5 response format, with 1 signifying "strongly agree" and 5 indicating "strongly disagree."

This study targeted participants aged 18 to 60+ who use Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms for entertainment purposes. The sample encompassed a diverse range of individuals, including students, employed and unemployed individuals, and homemakers.

3.2.1 Sample size

Sample size refers to the number of participants included in a study. A sufficient sample size is crucial for ensuring the applicability and validity of research findings. This report required three distinct statistical analyses: descriptive statistics, multiple/ordinal regression analysis, and exploratory factor analysis (EFA). While descriptive statistics can be performed with a relatively small sample, more robust methods were needed for regression and EFA. Hair et al., (2018) recommend a minimum of 50 observations for regression analysis, with 100 generally preferred. EFA is even more sensitive to sample size, with some studies suggesting a minimum of 50 (Memon et al., 2020). To achieve a balance between efficiency and accuracy across all analyses, we have opted for a sample size of 100. This provides enough data points for robust regression and a reasonable foundation for EFA. Based on these studies, we aimed to recruit a sample of 100 voluntary participants who utilize Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms in Ireland.

To gather data, the study utilized social media platforms and personal networks to engage potential participants. A survey was sent out to over 100 individuals with a one-week deadline for completion. While this timeframe was driven by limitations in time, budget, and accessibility, it yielded a satisfactory response rate of 90 complete surveys. This sample size effectively addresses the minimum threshold established by prior research, allowing for a comprehensive exploration of factors influencing Irish consumer decisions regarding OTT subscriptions.

3.2.2 Sample Design

Sample design employs probability which is random selection or non-probability which is a deliberate selection method. Probability sampling ensures equal selection chance for all population members, enabling generalizable findings. Non-probability methods prioritize ease or specific criteria, potentially limiting generalizability (Cozby & Bates, 2018).

To recruit participants for this study, a non-probability sampling technique in combination with a snowball approach was employed. Snowball sampling offers a strategic approach for researchers to recruit participants from populations with limited accessibility. This technique proves particularly advantageous due to its cost-effectiveness (Heath, 2023)

3.3. Methods and Procedure of Data Analysis.

This section explores the data analysis techniques employed to examine, clean, transform, and model the collected data. These procedures aim to extract valuable insights, inform research conclusions, and ultimately support data-driven decision-making.

In this study, the entire data was analysed using SPSS 28.0 software package. SPSS is a software tool that facilitates data cleaning, statistical analysis, and visualization, enabling researchers to extract meaningful patterns and draw data-driven conclusions.

The initial phase of the data analysis process involved scrutinizing the demographic profile of the respondents. This profile is presented in pie charts, reflecting the sample's heterogeneity as respondents are distributed across various demographic categories. Descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression to understand the customer retention significance were used within SPSS to effectively report and summarize these demographic characteristics.

The study then reported subscription trends, indicating the distribution of consumers into three groups: those with only cable, only OTT and hose with both. Furthermore, the graph examined participants' likelihood of renewing their current subscriptions services.

Further, the study explored the reasons behind subscribing to, not subscribing to, and switching between OTT platforms. As outlined previously, the survey instrument incorporates 10 reasons for subscribing, 9 reasons for not subscribing, and 6 reasons for switching providers. Participants ranked their top 6 reasons for each based on their preferences. Descriptive statistics was employed to analyze the data which will be shown in the next chapter.

To extract underlying significant factors from the identified reasons, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted. This analysis focused on the 17 Likert scale survey questions

about content, price, quality, convenience, and user behavior. In addition, to know the correlation between these factors and likeliness, an ordinal regression analysis was done.

3.4. Pilot Testing

To ensure the online survey's effectiveness in gathering relevant and accurate data, a pilot testing phase was implemented prior to full-scale deployment. The pilot group comprised five participants recruited from friends and family. This selection strategy aimed to obtain rapid and honest feedback while capturing diverse perspectives through a range of age and gender demographics. These individuals satisfied the survey's target population criteria.

Pilot testing revealed usability concerns with the Likert scale on mobile devices, where participants struggled to view all response options. To address this, a prompt instructing user to "swipe right for more options" was incorporated. Additionally, two participants identified limitations in the pre-defined reasons for choosing or not choosing Over-the-Top (OTT) streaming services, potentially leading to participant disengagement. Consequently, the questionnaire was revised to allow participants to rank their top six options 1 being most important and 6 being least important.

Following these refinements, the revised survey was distributed to the original pilot group along with two additional participants. This approach served two purposes: firstly, to compare responses between the initial and revised versions, and secondly, to introduce fresh perspectives unfamiliar with the prior iteration, gauging their initial comprehension.

The pilot testing phase proved instrumental in refining the survey instrument, enhancing participant understanding, and ultimately ensuring the collection of more accurate data regarding Irish video streaming consumer preferences. Feedback from the diverse age demographic represented within the pilot group played a critical role in identifying areas for improvement. By integrating these insights and simplifying the questionnaire, the survey was optimized for the main data collection stage, paving the way for a more precise assessment of customer satisfaction in the Irish video streaming market.

3.5. Validity test

This study emphasizes the importance of ensuring a survey measure what it intends to gather valid data (Ejlertsson, 2014). To achieve this in an online survey, careful consideration was given to question wording and response options to minimize the risk of capturing unintended data. A clear, concise, and visually appealing survey design was implemented. Furthermore, a pilot test was conducted to identify potential misunderstandings and refine question clarity, thereby strengthening the validity of the collected data.

In addition, the study used exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to check if the data was appropriate for this technique. It employed a measure called Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) to assess this. The KMO result of 0.693 indicates moderate data reliability, which falls within the typical range of 0.6 to 0.7. A KMO value higher than 0.8 would have been ideal.

3.6. Reliability Test

Reliability in research ensures consistent findings and dependable methods. It reflects the ability to draw clear conclusions based on the data collected, which depends on the study design, the questions asked, and the chosen measurement tools. Essentially, a reliable study uses appropriate methods to investigate the research question (Bryman & Bell, 2019). While the final sample size of 90 is smaller than ideal, the results reported could offer valuable insights into subscriber preferences, considering the constraints encountered. To assess the reliability of the main concept being measured, the study employed Cronbach's Alpha test. This test yielded a value of 0.718, which Shemwell, Chase, and Schwartz (2015) consider indicative of reliable data.

3.7. Replicability

Repeating a study and getting similar results strengthens the evidence for its findings. This builds confidence in the new knowledge it proposes (Popper,2005). Building upon prior research by Nagaraj et al. (2021) who investigated factors influencing Indian consumers' OTT video streaming subscriptions in 2021, this study adopts a similar approach but within the Irish context. While Nagaraj et al. employed an online survey with 468 respondents and analyzed data using descriptive statistics, exploratory factor analysis (EFA), and logistic regression, the current study utilizes a smaller sample of 90 participants. Due to the absence of binary

dependent variables, this research implemented multiple linear and ordinal regression analysis to explore the relationships between the adapted survey questions and subscription willingness. The study provides detailed explanations of the methodology throughout, making it clear how the study was conducted. Additionally, replicating this study was feasible because the survey method was inexpensive, and the resources used like the internet and social media were widely accessible. These factors together make this research design conducive to future replication.

3.8. Ethical consideration

This study adheres to ethical research principles outlined in Irish regulations, including General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) compliance. The research ensured informed consent, participant privacy, and anonymity. The voluntary nature of participation was emphasized in the survey introduction (Appendix A), which participants were required to read before commenting. This section also detailed principles of confidentiality and anonymity. The survey explicitly stated its anonymity and stressed the requirement for consent regarding data processing, specifically for personal questions. To fulfill the consent requirement, clicking "submit" after completing the survey signifies consent as described in the introduction. Without clicking "submit," responses would not be collected. By these measures, the research ensured participants understood the research goals, their rights, and any potential risks or benefits of participation.

After establishing the research technique, the next chapter delves into the analysis of data found, eventually exposing the study's primary conclusions.

4. Analysis and Findings

This chapter forms the core of the research, providing an in-depth analysis and interpretation of the survey data collected in Ireland. Here, the empirical findings are presented. Data analysis is crucial for extracting knowledge from data and driving informed decisions in research and business (Stephen, 2024). For ease of understanding, the data is visualized using individual graphs, diagrams, and table. For thorough examination, the data will go through different forms of analysis to understand the validity and reliability of data. The study employed descriptive statistics, multiple linear regression, ordinal regression, and exploratory factor analysis on a sample size of 90. As discussed in the previous chapter, a snowball sampling technique was used to gather data through a structured questionnaire. Data analysis was done with SPSS v.28, while Excel was used to create data visualizations. This chapter presents the analysis, presentation, and interpretation of the research findings. Finally, in the next section, a detailed discussion will explore the descriptive data collected in relation to the theoretical foundations of the research question.
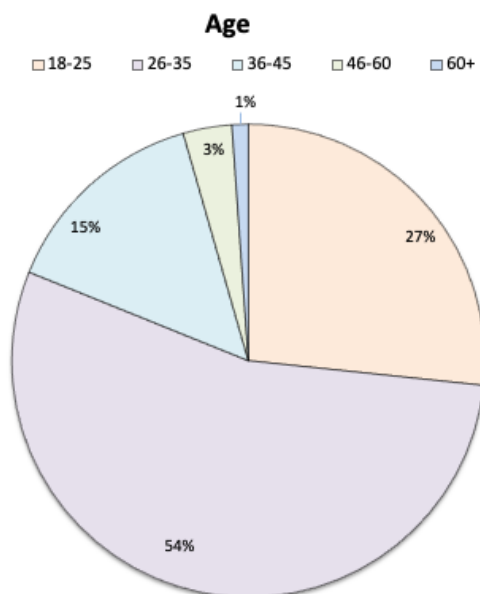
4.1. Demographics

4.1.1 Gender

Ninety individuals participated in the survey, achieving a near-equal gender distribution with 45 male, 44 female, and 1 not disclosing the identity. This balanced sample design aimed to enhance the generalizability of the findings to the target population. Although the research does not focus on gender comparisons or exploring answer variations based on self-identified gender, demographic data was collected to ensure the responses represent the perspectives of both males and females.

Gender

☐ Male   ☐ Female   ☐ Prefer not to say

1%

49%   50%
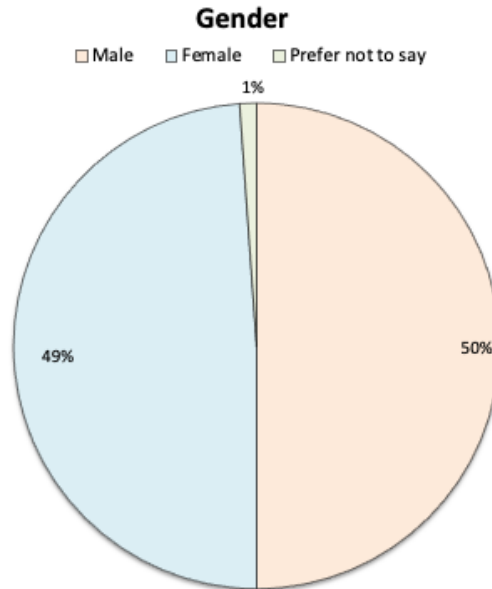
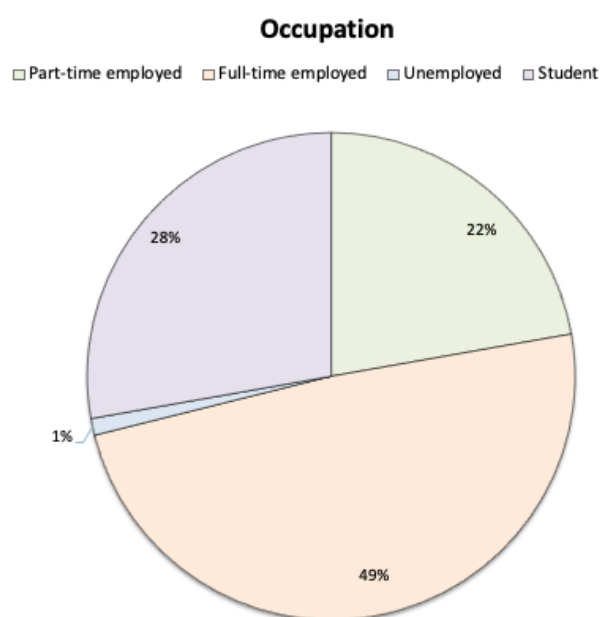*Figure 1-Diagram of Gender distribution*

4.1.2 Age

Age distribution provides a preliminary assessment of participant diversity, although it is insufficient for a comprehensive demographic understanding. This data can be utilized to explore potential preferences within specific target segments. Age data was collected in five categorical intervals. The 18-25 age group comprised 24 respondents, followed by 49 in the 26-35 age group. The 36-45, 46-60, and 60+ age groups included 13, 3, and 1 participant, respectively. Notably, the 18-24 and 26-35 age groups combined represent 81% of the sample, suggesting the results may be more generalizable to individuals between 18 and 35 years old.

Age

☐ 18-25   ☐ 26-35   ☐ 36-45   ☐ 46-60   ☐ 60+

1%

3%

15%   27%

54%

Figure 2-Diagram of Age distribution

4.1.3 Occupation

Analysis of occupational demographics within the survey data can reveal trends specific to professional groups and enhance the generalizability of the findings to the target population. The survey results demonstrate a distribution of employment statuses among the 90 Irish respondents. Full-time employment of 44 comprised the largest group followed by 25 students and 20 part-time employed individuals. Notably, only one respondent reported being unemployed.

Occupation

☐ Part-time employed ☐ Full-time employed ☐ Unemployed ☐ Student

Figure 3-Diagram of occupation distribution

4.1.4 Household Structure

Analysis of household structure within the survey data can offer valuable insights into consumption patterns. Understanding this demographic was crucial for developing targeted marketing strategies. Among the 90 respondents, 47 which is the largest group comprised single-person households. This was followed by 24 couples without children, then 17 couples with children and lastly, 2 single parents.

Household Structure

□ Single   □ Couple   □ Couple with children   □ Single parent
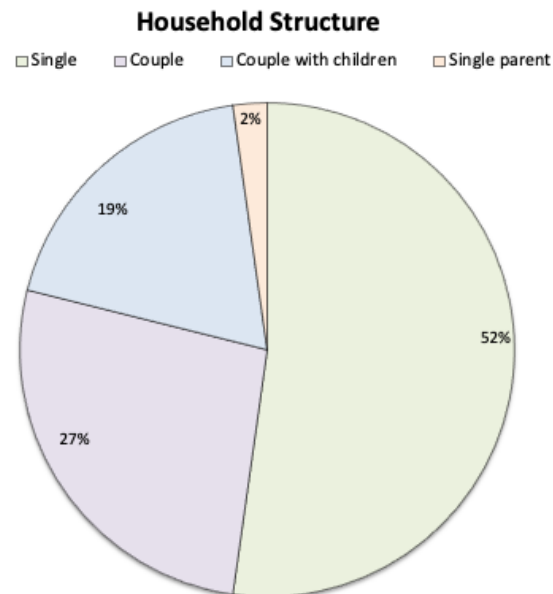
Figure 4-Diagram of Household structure distribution

4.1.5 Education

While education data cannot solely determine OTT subscription decisions, it can offer insights into content preferences, technological comfort, and value perception. The survey results revealed a distribution of educational attainment with the largest group of 49 holding master's degrees, followed by 28 of those with bachelor's degrees. 6 respondents had completed their senior year of school, and 7 preferred not to disclose their educational background.

Education

□ Senior year   □ Bachelors degree   □ Masters degree   □ Prefer not to say
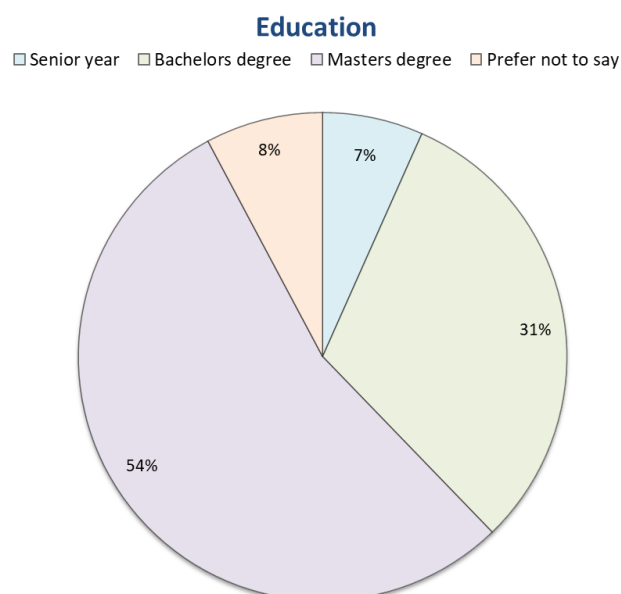
Figure 5-Diagram of Education distribution

4.1.6 Income

An analysis of income demographics, a significant factor influencing OTT subscription behaviors, revealed a distribution across five annual income ranges. The €13,001-30,000 range comprised the most prevalent income bracket having 32 respondents. The €1-13,000 and €30,001-45,000 ranges demonstrated comparable representation with 23 and 22 participants, respectively. Notably, the higher income brackets €45,001-60,000 and € > 60,000 exhibited the fewest respondents with 8 and 5, respectively.

Income (Per. Annum)

☐ 1-13000 ☐ 13001-30000 ☐ 30001-45000 ☐ 45001-60000 ☐ 60000+
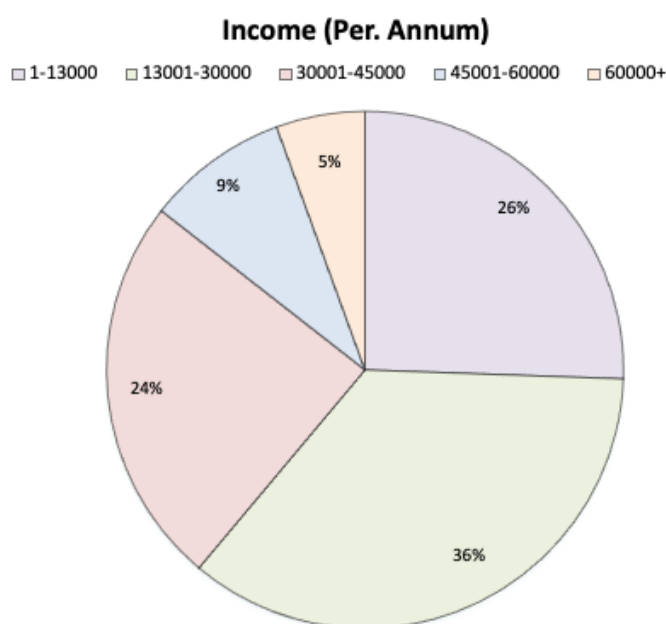
Figure 6-Income (Per. Annum) distribution

4.2. Likeliness to renew the service provider

This study investigated the relationship between subscription types, OTT, Cable, or Both and subscriber propensity to renew their service using a cross-tabulation analysis. Among the 90 respondents, the majority of 72 subscribed to OTT video services. Within this group, 46 indicated a high likelihood of service renewal followed by 17 expressing moderate likelihood. 7 of the respondents were unsure about renewing the services. Only one respondent exhibited a low likelihood of renewal. Cable television subscriptions were less prevalent, with only 7 respondents subscribing. Among these subscribers, 4 expressed a high likelihood of renewal, while 1 indicated a moderate likelihood. Notably, 2 respondents exhibited a low likelihood of renewing their cable service. The analysis further revealed that 11 respondents subscribed to

both OTT and Cable services. Within this group, 4 expressed a high likelihood of renewing both subscriptions, while 5 indicated moderate renewal likelihood. Interestingly, only 2 respondents showed moderate unlikeliness to renew both services. These findings suggest a potential correlation between subscription type and renewal propensity.
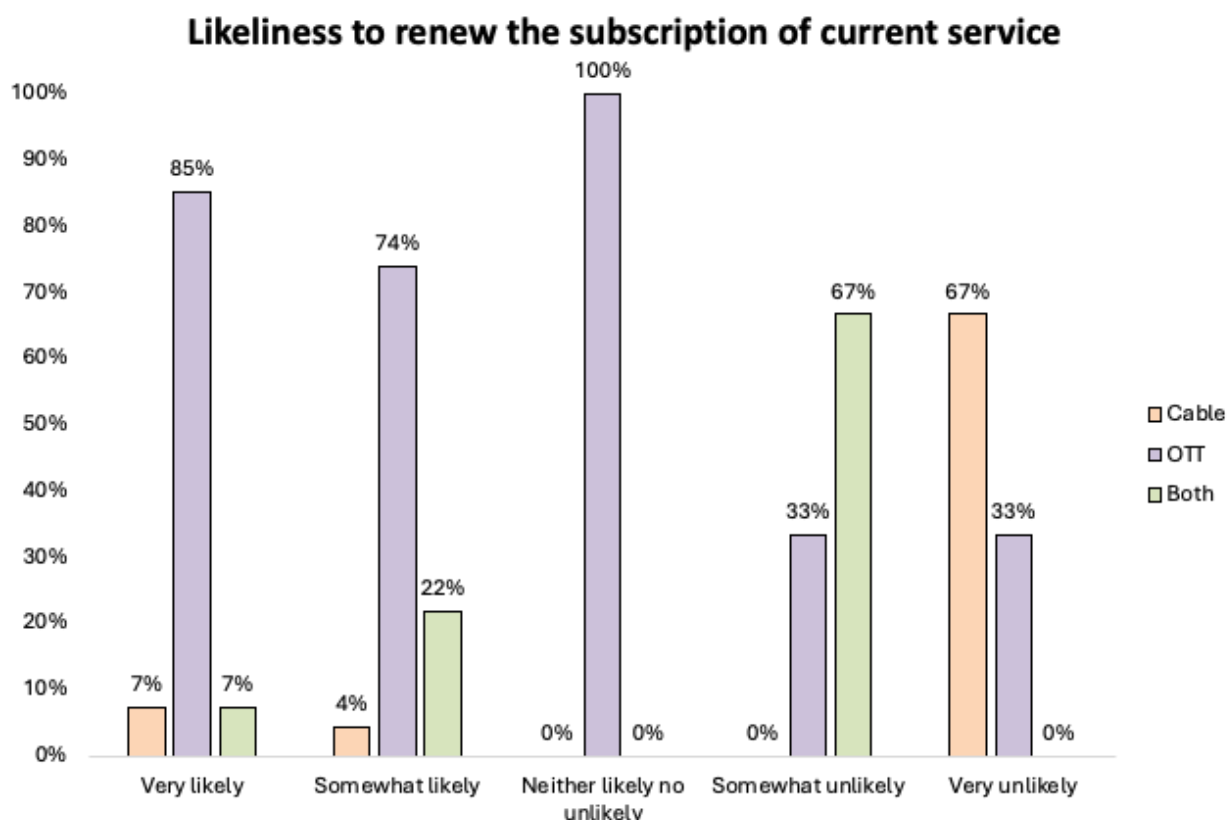
Figure 7-Cross Tabulation of service subscribed and their likeliness to renew

4.3. Reasons to move to another service provider

This study further explored reasons influencing customer decisions to switch to OTT subscription-based service providers. A key element of the research involved ranking the relative importance of various business model components impacting customer satisfaction and retention. The analysis revealed a clear preference for better content as the most critical factor. This is evidenced by 34 respondents ranking it as their most important, followed by a significant presence in secondary and tertiary rankings with 27 and 17 responses respectively. Notably, content received no "least important" respondents, further solidifying its primacy. Following the content in importance was the price. Price also emerges as a strong contender with 38 respondents placing it first. It maintains a consistent presence throughout the rankings, with 24, 10, and 10 respondents selecting it as second, third, and fourth most important,

respectively. Only two respondents considered the price to be the least important. The remaining components examined shared subscriptions with friends/family, multiple device access, promotional offers, and contract flexibility, all held less weight in decision-making. Shared subscription ranked third overall, with 10 respondents valuing it as most important and 8 considering it least important. Multiple device access ranked fourth, garnering 6 as most important and 10 as least important selections. Promotional offers ranked fifth with minimal influence. Only one respondent found it most important, while 19 ranked it least important. Contract flexibility was ranked last, receiving only one "most important" vote and a significant majority of 51 selecting it as least important. To statistically validate these rankings, a Friedman's test was conducted. The results supported the observed trends. Better content received the lowest mean rank 2.10, confirming its dominant position. Price followed closely with a mean rank of 2.20. Conversely, contract flexibility had the highest mean rank 5.18, solidifying its position as the least influential factor.
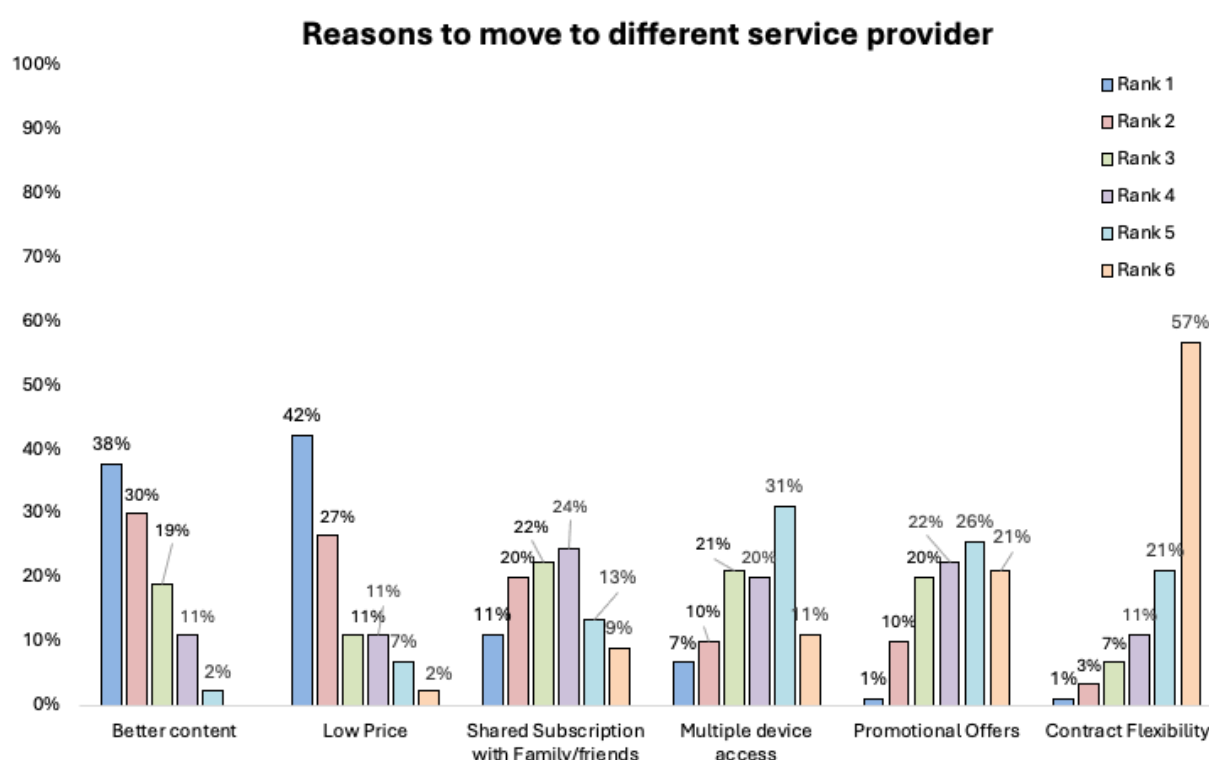

Figure 8-Ranking factors to move to different service

4.4. Reasons to subscribe to OTT channel

Figure 9. investigates the key factors influencing user decisions to subscribe to OTT video channels. Following the identification of ten potential motivators, participants were asked to rank their top six most important reasons for subscribing. Low subscription fees emerged as the most significant factor, with a majority of 33 respondents ranking it as the most important, 18 as moderately important, and only 4 as least important. This was followed by anytime access, where 23 ranked it as most important, 17 as important and 5 respondents found it least important. These findings suggest that users highly value cost-effectiveness and the flexibility to access content whenever they desire. Multiple device access (mobile, TV, or laptop) secured the third place, with 9 of the participants finding it to be a critical factor and 13 to be least important factor. Interestingly, ad-free experience received fourth ranking, with 6 considered to be most important and 11 considered it as least significant. Similarly, personal consumption and technological enthusiasm were placed as fifth and sixth rank which shows that these factors played a minimal role in subscription decisions. While 5 respondents considered personal consumption the most important, only 8 thought it was the least important. Only 2 respondents chose being a technology enthusiast as the most important, while 11 considered it the least important. Perhaps the most surprising finding was the lack of emphasis on content-related factors. Original/global/local content did not rank among the top six motivators. Additionally, HD video quality and unlimited content access were not considered significant drivers of subscription choices. These findings offer valuable insights for OTT service providers. While content libraries remain important, the emphasis on affordability and accessibility suggests that users prioritize value for money and flexible viewing options.
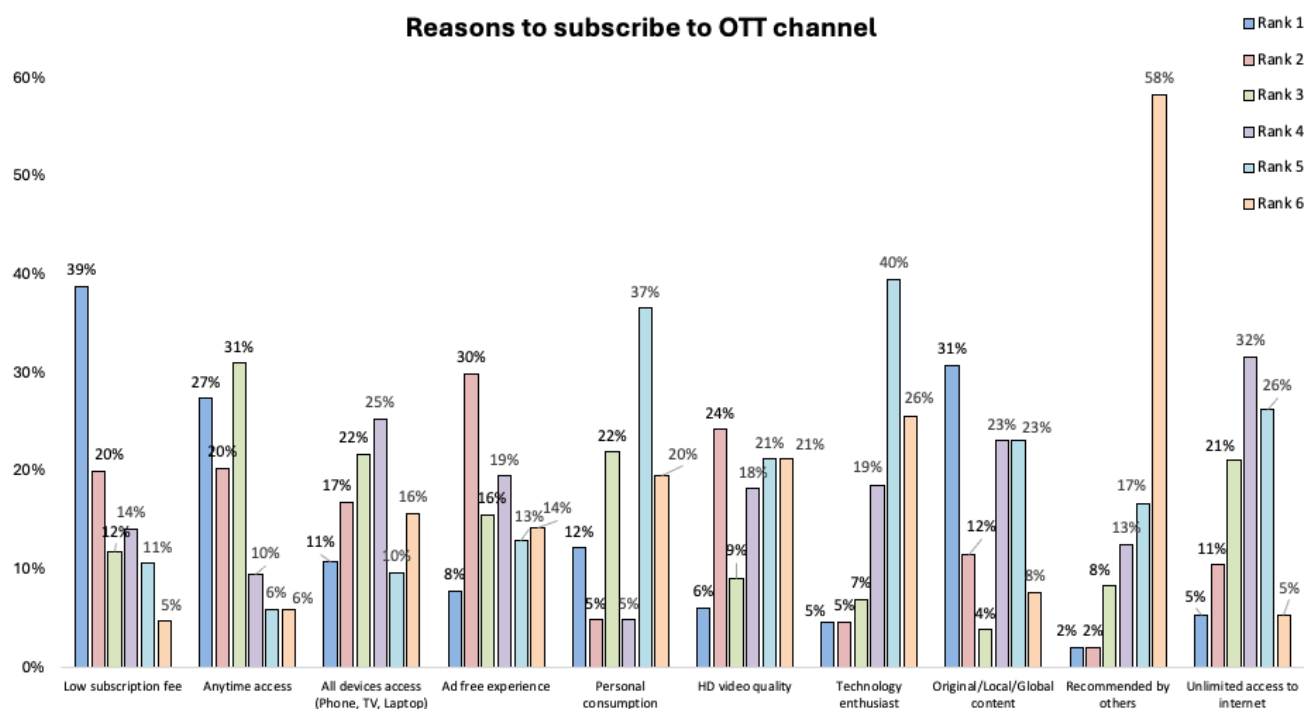
Figure 9- Ranking factors to subscribe OTT channels

4.5 Reasons to NOT subscribe to OTT channel

Figure 10 explores the factors that deter users from subscribing to OTT video channels. The analysis reinforces the significance of cost as a major obstacle. Price emerged as the most crucial factor by a significant margin, with 57 out of 90 participants identifying it as the primary reason for not subscribing. This highlights the price sensitivity within the consumer market. While cost remained a concern for some, 17 participants ranked it the second most important factor, and only one respondent considered it the least important factor. Lack of local content emerged as the second-ranked deterrent. 9 participants found it the most significant barrier, and a substantial number of 45 ranked it as the second most important factor. Only a small group 6 viewed a lack of overall content as a minor deterrent. Limited or poor internet connection rounded out the top three deterrents, with 6 participants considering it the most critical factor and only 3 finding it insignificant. Interestingly, hindering shared viewing experiences emerged as a noteworthy barrier. While not the most significant concern, only 3 respondents ranked it most important, it did hold some weight as four respondents found it least important. OTT addiction and time constraints followed as the fifth and sixth most concerning factors, with a very limited number of participants ranking them as the top deterrents 2 and 3, respectively.

However, 5 of them for OTT addiction and 6 of them for time constraints were found to be of minimal concern. The data further reveals that a majority of respondents did not consider factors like technological aversion, lack of general entertainment interest, or existing cable/satellite subscriptions as significant deterrents. Only two respondents cited existing cable/satellite subscriptions as a reason for not subscribing, suggesting a potential trend towards "cord-cutting" within a substantial portion of the user base.
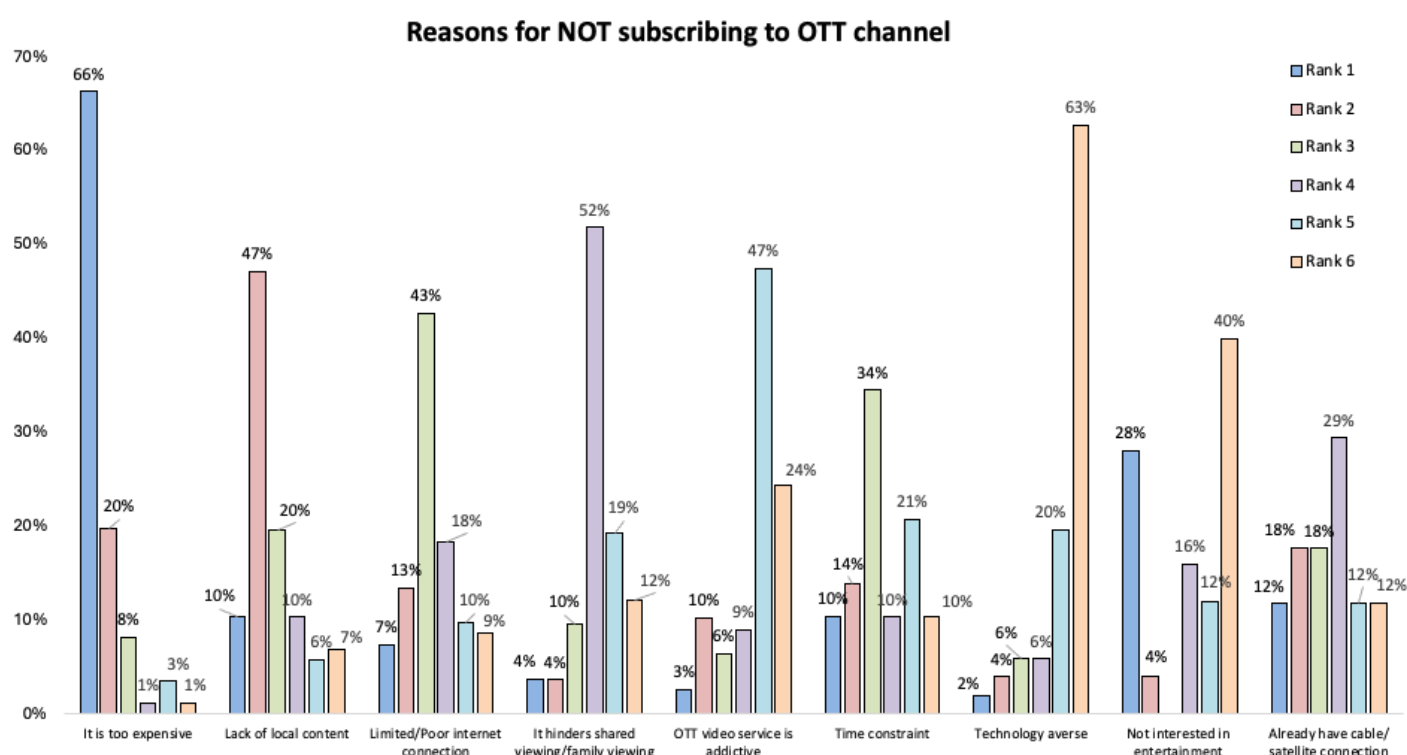

Figure 10- Ranking factors to NOT subscribe to OTT channels

4.6. Exploratory factor analysis

To further identify the underlying factors influencing OTT subscription decisions, the study employed an Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) that explains relationships between multiple variables. Sixteen Likert-scale questionnaire items about content, price, quality, convenience, and consumer behavior were subjected to the EFA. The analysis utilized principal component analysis with a varimax rotation method within SPSS 28.0 to have a clearer interpretation. The average variance extracted (AVE) of 60.67% further strengthens the analysis' robustness by

demonstrating that, on average, the factors extracted from the EFA explain a substantial amount of the variance in the original variables. The EFA successfully extracted five distinct factors with factor loadings exceeding the recommended cut-off of 0.4. These factors were subsequently designated as Content, Price, Quality, Convenience, and Consumer Behavior, aligning with the initial thematic categories (Table 1). The first factor- Content Preferences (Items 1, 2, 3, & 4), highlights the importance users place on the type of content offered by streaming services. Price also plays a significant role, with Price Sensitivity (Items 5, 6, & 7) gauging how much cost impacts users' choices. Convenience (Items 8, 9, & 10) emphasizes the importance of aspects like reliable internet connection and user-friendly interfaces. High-resolution video and overall streaming quality are captured by Quality Perception (Items 11 & 12). Lastly, Behavioral Aspects (Items 13, 14, 15, & 16) explore how users' viewing habits, such as watching content with others, influence their selection of OTT service. These refined constructs were then employed in subsequent analyses to explore their influence on the willingness to subscribe to OTT services.

The communalities, provide insights into the factors that influence subscription decisions for streaming services. The communalities ranged from 0.33 to 0.80/ Notably, the communalities for questions regarding the importance of content offerings (0.809), original shows/movies (0.710), and varying subscription price tiers (0.684) highlight the preference of content variety and price in attracting subscribers. Additionally, the communalities relating to binge-watching (0.611) and accessibility and flexibility (0.592) were moderate but significant to some degree in shaping user experiences. Conversely, factors such as smooth and uninterrupted streaming (0.336) and high-resolution video (0.520) show relatively lower communalities. These findings emphasize the multifaceted nature of subscriber preferences, where content diversity, price and convenience play crucial roles in driving subscription decisions.

To ensure the adequacy of the sample, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity was run. The KMO value of 0.693 for the data suggests acceptable sampling adequacy for factor analysis (Hoque et al., 2017). While a higher KMO value would be ideal, it is still possible to proceed with factor analysis. Bartlett's Test has an approximate chi-square value of 340.241 with 120 degrees of freedom, and the significance level is 0.000 ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the correlations between variables are significantly different from zero, and factor analysis is likely appropriate. All items in the group reported commonalities of 1, indicating that extracted factors fully explained the variability in the factors.

Pattern Factor Loadings for EFA (N = 90)

Table 1

Exploratory Factor Analysis	Component					Communalities
	1	2	3	4	5	
Would content offered by a streaming service be a major factor in your decision to subscribe (Content)	0.882					0.809
Are specific genres (e.g., comedy, drama, horror) more important to you than other content? (Content)	0.432					0.556
Are original shows and movies a major factor in your decision to subscribe to a streaming service? (Content)	0.810					0.710
Does the origin of the content (Ireland or Irish creators) influence your viewing choices on streaming services? (Content)	0.682					0.641
Is price an important factor when choosing an OTT subscription service? (Price)		0.758				0.611
How likely are you to subscribe to a streaming service that offers different subscription tiers with varying content libraries at different price points? (Price)		0.793				0.684
Do you think quality of content have a positive impact on your decision even if the subscription price is high? (Price)		0.586				0.560
How important is it to have reliable internet connection for your enjoyment of streaming services? (Convinience)			0.577			0.594
Do you agree OTT services are highly convenient as you can watch shows on any of your devices anytime and anywhere (Convinience)			0.579			0.592
Is it easy to navigate and use the interface of your current streaming service ? (Convinience)			0.617			0.607
Is it important to have high resolution (HD) video for a good OTT viewing experience? (Quality)				0.451		0.520
Is it important for you to have consistently smooth and uninterrupted video streaming? (Quality)				0.470		0.336
Does OTT services give you more control on your viewing experience compared to traditional TV? (Behavioral)					0.687	0.567
Do you agree OTT services provide flexibility to watch shows or movies together with family and friends? (Behavioral)					0.701	0.566
Do you prefer OTT services as they allow you to watch shows and movies without any advertisements? (Behavioral)					0.673	0.545
Are you increasingly reliant on OTT services for entertainment, leading to binge watching? (Behavioral)					0.566	0.611

Table 1-Output of EFA. Extraction method: Principal Component Analysis, Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization including communalities.
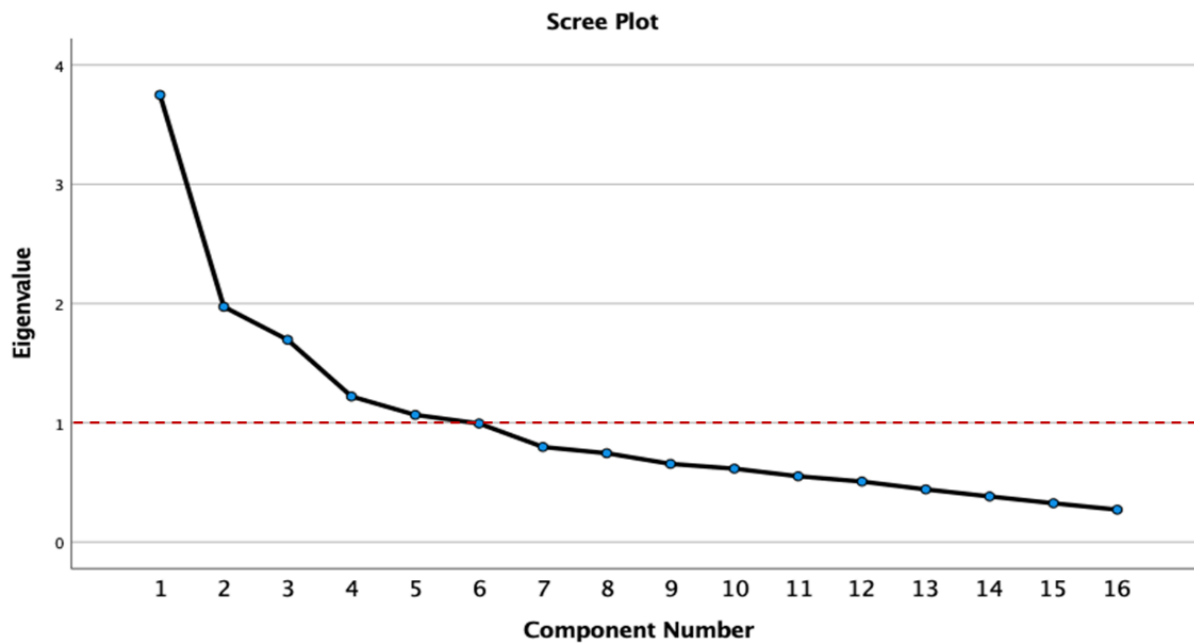
Scree Plot

Figure 11-Screen plot for EFA (N = 90)

4.7. Multiple Linear regression

This part of the study leverages multiple linear regression to explore how demographic characteristics influence user decisions to renew streaming service subscriptions. This approach is well-suited because demographic details are typically categorical (nominal) variables (Field, 2013). Multiple linear regression addresses these categories by transforming them into dummy variables. This allows us to analyze the combined effect of all demographics on subscription renewal, while also pinpointing the strength of each factor's influence. Table 2 shows the findings revealed.

Gender: Gender has little to no effect on OTT subscription renewals in this study. Both the coefficient and P value (coefficient -0.071, P = 0.491) were statistically insignificant, meaning gender played a negligible role in customer decisions to renew their subscriptions.

Age: Similarly, age exhibited a minimal and statistically non-significant effect on renewal likelihood (coefficient: -0.036, p = 0.765). While the negative coefficient hints at a potential trend where older individuals might be slightly less likely to renew, this association lacks statistical support.

Occupation: Occupation also displayed a limited influence on subscription renewal behavior. The coefficient (-0.116, p = 0.237) indicated a small negative effect, but the p-value suggests this relationship is not statistically significant. Therefore, occupation appears to be an extraneous factor in predicting renewal decisions for this customer group.

Household Structure: In contrast, household structure emerged as the most impactful demographic factor. The positive and statistically significant coefficient (0.282, p = 0.024) implies that customers from larger households are significantly more likely to renew their subscriptions. This finding suggests a potential link between family dynamics and subscription decisions.

Education: Education exhibited a negligible effect on renewal likelihood (coefficient: -0.006, p = 0.959). The small negative coefficient and non-significant p-value indicate that education level is not a strong predictor of renewal behavior within this context.

Annual Income: Finally, annual income displayed a positive association with subscription renewal (coefficient: 0.131, p = 0.258). However, the non-significant p-value suggests that this relationship may not be statistically robust. While higher income levels are associated with a slightly higher likelihood of renewal, this relationship is not strong enough to be considered significant.

How likely are you to renew your subscription				
Factor	Unstanderdised B	Standardised B	t	Sig
Gender	-0.135	-0.071	-0.691	0.491
Age	-0.045	-0.036	-0.300	0.765
Occupation	-0.116	-0.129	-1.191	0.237
Household_Structure	0.330	0.282	2.295	0.024
Educaion	-0.008	-0.006	-0.051	0.959
Per anum	0.117	0.131	1.140	0.258

Table 2-Results of Multiple Linear Regression

The analysis reveals a significant influence of household structure on subscription renewal decisions. A one-unit increase in household structure (holding other factors constant) is associated with a 0.330 unit increase in the likelihood of renewal. Furthermore, the standardized coefficient (Beta) of 0.282 indicates the household structure is a relatively strong predictor compared to other variables. This is further supported by the t-value (2.295) and p-value (0.024), which confirm a statistically significant effect (at the 0.05 level) on the dependent variable (subscription renewal). In simpler terms, household structure emerged as the most impactful demographic factor. Interestingly, gender, age, education, and occupation showed minimal and statistically insignificant effects, suggesting they may not be strong predictors of subscription renewal within this sample.

4.8. Ordinal Linear regression

An original logistic regression was conducted to determine which factors among the five components have the highest predictive value for willingness to continue with a subscription. This approach is particularly appropriate because the independent variables, reflecting these user preferences, are typically ordinal in nature (Menard, 2002). Ordinal logistic regression effectively handles these ordered categories, allowing us to assess how variations in user preferences regarding content, price, and other factors influence their subscription choices. Table 3. shows the revealed findings.

Content: The analysis revealed that within the content component, three sections showed positive coefficients: content offered (0.263), specific genres (0.095), and original shows and movies indicating a positive relationship between content and subscription renewal. However, the origin of content showed a negligible negative relationship (-0.003) with subscription renewal. Analysis of content factors reveals that original shows and movies significantly influence subscription decisions ($p < 0.05$), whereas other sections did not have statistical significance. Users valuing originals are more likely to subscribe, with a one-unit increase in their importance leading to a 0.239 increase in subscription likelihood.

Price: Price and subscription tiers show positive correlations (0.081, 0.034) with renewal, suggesting users might be open to paying more or choosing higher tiers with extra features. However, these positive correlations aren't statistically significant (p-values > 0.5). In other words, the data doesn't conclusively show price or tiers as major factors influencing subscription decisions. There's also a negative coefficient (-0.078) for the interaction between

high-quality content and price, hinting at potential price sensitivity for premium content. People might be less willing to pay a premium for high-quality content compared to standard offerings.

Convenience: The data highlights a key factor for OTT subscription renewal under convenience is a reliable internet connection. With a p-value of 0.019, it has a statistically significant positive impact. A coefficient of 0.538 suggests that people who value a strong connection are more likely to renew. Conversely, convenience factors like general agreement with OTT ease (p-value = 0.239) and user interface ease of use (p-value = 0.188) don't show a statistically significant influence (coefficients of -0.262 and 0.232 respectively)

Quality: Both high-resolution video (p-value = 0.608) and smooth streaming (p-value = 0.852) lack a statistically significant impact on subscribing or renewing an OTT service according to this analysis. While the coefficients are negative (-0.078 and -0.042 respectively), meaning users who value these features might be slightly less likely to subscribe, the p-values well above 0.05 indicate this connection isn't statistically relevant.

Consumer Behavior: Under the consumer behavior factor, the study found that ad-free content is the most important factor for users (coefficient: 0.488, p-value = 0.005). Users who value watching shows and movies without commercials are significantly more likely to renew their subscriptions. In contrast, features like control over viewing experience (coefficient: -0.157, p-value = 0.261), the ability to watch with others (coefficient: -0.193, p-value = 0.257), and reliance on OTT services in general (coefficient: 0.102, p-value = 0.331) don't have a statistically significant impact on decisions to renew.

The ordinal logistic regression model shows a good fit for the data. This model appears to be a good fit based on two metrics: -2 Log-Likelihood which is very close to zero and Pseudo R-Square (0.874, explaining 87.4% of the data variation). This suggests the model effectively captures the connection between features like content, price, and user behavior, and the likelihood of subscription renewal.

From this analysis, it is found that content plays a major role, with original shows and movies being the most significant factor. Surprisingly, price and quality didn't significantly influence renewals, although users might be sensitive to high prices for premium content. A reliable internet connection, however, emerged as a key factor for user retention. Interestingly, features like control over the viewing experience or watching with others didn't have much impact on subscriber renewals.

No	Factors	Unstanderdised B	Standerdised B	t	Sig
	How likely are you to renew your subscription				
1	Content offered by streaming service	0.263	0.214	1.873	0.065
2	Importance of specific genres (comedy, drama, etc.)	0.095	0.099	0.905	0.369
3	Importance of original shows and movies	0.239	0.250	2.038	0.045
4	Origin of content (Ireland or Irish Creators)	-0.003	-0.004	-0.033	0.974
5	Subscription Price	0.081	0.054	0.537	0.593
6	Subscription tiers with varying content libraries	0.034	0.038	0.362	0.718
7	Positive impact on content for high price	-0.190	-0.144	-1.216	0.228
8	Reliable internet connection	0.538	0.277	2.402	0.019
9	Convenience and ease of use	-0.262	-0.144	-1.187	0.239
10	Easy interface of current streaming service	0.232	0.156	1.329	0.188
11	Importance of high-resolution video	-0.078	-0.062	-0.515	0.608
12	Consistent, uninterrupted streaming	-0.042	-0.020	-0.187	0.852
13	Control over viewing experience	-0.157	-0.130	-1.134	0.261
14	Ability to watch shows or movies together with family a	-0.193	-0.133	-1.143	0.257
15	Availability of ad-free content	0.488	0.333	2.905	0.005
16	Reliance on OTT services for entertainment	0.102	0.115	0.979	0.331

Table 3- Results of Ordinal regression

The analysis chapter revealed some surprising trends. While demographics played a role, the household structure was the most impactful factor. Content and price emerged as the key driver for users, followed by the importance of a reliable internet connection. However, some of the sub factors did not show statistical significance. These findings offer valuable insights for OTT service providers in Ireland. For more understanding of these results and insights into user behavior, the next chapter will connect these findings with existing research.

5. Discussions

This chapter discusses the research questions by analyzing the observations through the established theoretical framework. This analysis will form the foundation for the conclusions and recommendations presented later. The discussion will focus on relevant theories that directly connect to the research question and objectives outlined in the introduction.

The growth of OTT streaming services has significantly reshaped the media landscape, empowering consumers with unprecedented access to a vast and convenient content library (Watts, 2024). Understanding the factors influencing subscription behaviors within the Irish OTT market is critical for both academics and industry professionals. This chapter synthesizes existing research with the results of our analysis, which examined demographics, service renewal likelihood, reasons for subscribing/unsubscribing, and the underlying drivers of OTT subscription decisions. Our primary objective is to gain a deeper understanding of the attributes valued by Irish consumers when subscribing to OTT video services. By combining observational evidence with theoretical frameworks, this discussion aims to provide a comprehensive picture of OTT consumption patterns and their broader implications within the Irish market.

5.1. Cord cutting trend

The study revealed a marked preference towards OTT video services compared to traditional cable. A majority of respondents were already subscribed to OTT platforms, and many expressed a high likelihood of renewing their subscriptions. Conversely, cable subscriptions were far less prevalent, with a very low intention to renew among those who did subscribe. This data suggests a potential cord-cutting trend, aligning with research by (Koul et al, 2020) who highlight the rising consumer preference for OTT offerings. While participants ranked price as one of the most important factors, the regression analysis revealed a positive and statistically insignificant coefficient for price. As (Tefertiller, 2020) points out, viewers are increasingly cost-conscious. OTT services often cater to this by offering flexible subscription options and a pay-per-view approach, potentially eliminating costs associated with unused channels in traditional cable packages.

5.2. Customer retention

Through this investigation, the study contributed to provide valuable insights to businesses, enabling them to refine their customer retention strategies and enhance overall customer satisfaction. The findings from the analysis underscore the dominance of OTT subscriptions and the high likelihood of renewal among OTT subscribers. This is supported by the significant association found between subscription status and renewal likelihood in the chi-square tests conducted in the previous chapter, indicating statistical significance. Consistent with these findings, prior research by Sujata et al., (2015) suggests that OTT services have gained popularity due to their convenience, affordability, and diverse content offerings, aligning with the observation of consumers renewing their subscriptions. Therefore, the study aimed to uncover the specific attributes that contribute to this positive attitude towards subscription renewal. By doing so, businesses can better understand the factors driving consumer engagement and satisfaction, ultimately enabling them to develop effective customer retention strategies. As highlighted by (Uniqcast ,2022), OTT businesses must distinguish themselves by offering high-quality content at an affordable price. Consequently, businesses must identify and prioritize attributes like pricing, content, and flexibility that enhance engagement and satisfaction to develop robust customer retention strategies, as emphasized by (Bhullar and Chaudhary,2020).

5.3. Customer switching behavior

The analysis focused on the relative importance of various business model components in influencing satisfaction and retention. Participants were then asked to rank the reasons why they would switch to a different OTT provider. The findings revealed a clear hierarchy of customer priorities. Unsurprisingly, access to superior content emerged as the key driver influencing customer decisions to switch OTT service providers (Westcott et al., 2019). This aligns with research emphasizing the importance of content curation in the OTT landscape. Delving deeper, our analysis revealed that original shows and movies significantly influenced subscription decisions ($p < 0.05$), suggesting a strong consumer preference for unique content offered by specific platforms. Consumers now enjoy an extraordinary ability to discover media that resonates with their personal preferences and lifestyles. This finding focuses the critical role of investing in high-quality, engaging content to attract and retain subscribers. OTT platforms should prioritize providing a diverse range of content that caters to the varying tastes and preferences of their audience. While content quality takes superiority, the analysis also

revealed that price remained a significant consideration for customers when choosing an OTT subscription. As study supports (Lee et al., 2016) who highlight the role of pricing strategies in attracting and retaining subscribers. OTT providers must carefully balance between offering competitive pricing and maintaining profitability to remain attractive to their target audience.

5.4. Motivation to OTT subscription

While examining the motivations behind subscribing to OTT channels, the study identified the top six reasons, with the most prevalent being the low subscription fee, followed by the availability of any-time viewing. These findings indicate a prioritization of affordability and accessibility among consumers. Moreover, the convenience of accessing content across various devices, as well as the availability of diverse content options such as Original/Global/Local, also played significant roles in subscription decisions. OTT subscribers were found to be avid consumers of diverse content, indicating a preference for constantly expanding and upgrading their viewing experiences, making SVoD services highly suitable. These findings voice the insights of previous research suggesting that viewers are attracted to affordability, accessibility, and the flexibility to use multiple devices anytime and anywhere (Li, 2020). The desire for an ad-free experience emerged as another significant factor influencing consumer decisions. This is further supported by our survey data, where over 41% of respondents ranked it among the top three priorities. This aligns with broader consumer preferences for convenience, as evidenced by YouTube's recent decision to reduce ad interruptions by nearly 40% (Roth, 2023). Reinforcing this point, the regression analysis identified ad-free content as the most influential factor within the consumer behavior category (coefficient: 0.488, p-value = 0.005)

5.5. Reluctance to OTT subscription

While exploring the potential reasons for resistance to OTT subscription, identifying nine factors, with the most common being the perceived high cost of OTT services followed by a lack of content variety. This brings out the importance of pricing and content offerings. An existing study by Deloitte (2018) highlights the susceptibility of SVoD models to subscriber cancellations due to changes in content or price increases. Additionally, some respondents cited poor internet connectivity as a barrier to subscribing, consistent with (Lee et al. 2016), who reinforce the importance of reliable internet access for accessing content. Concerns about shared viewing experiences were raised, particularly among households with multiple members preferring to watch together. Binge-watching habits which is common among Gen Z

and Millennials in the sample, were also another reason for not subscribing to SVOD services. This reflects a tolerance for filler content but also a propensity to discontinue subscriptions if the content is uninteresting, as observed by Ganjoo (2016). Furthermore, time-constrained, and value-conscious consumers expressed doubts about the value for money offered by SVoD services, possibly due to their inability to fully utilize the service given their busy schedules, thereby diminishing perceived value.

5.6. Demographics and Subscription Propensity

Demographic analysis found that participants' willingness to subscribe declined as age increased which reveals younger generation were more willing to subscribe to SVoD services. This aligned with the notion that younger generations are generally more receptive to use of OTT video services (Yoo et al., 2021). Whereas education was negatively related to willingness to subscribe. People with higher academic backgrounds were more familiar with and knowledgeable about advancement and technology. With the growing need for convenience, interactive features, and popular worldwide content, OTT services are particularly appealing to society's educated elite. This suggests a positive correlation between educational attainment and familiarity with technological advancements, including OTT services. This finding is consistent with (Touzani et al.,2017) who posit that individuals comfortable with technology are more likely to embrace new experiences like OTT subscriptions. Occupation also showed some affects on subscription rates, with individuals who had more free time subscribing more. The working class gets personal entertainment on their devices saving a lot of time in their already busy schedules. As identified by (Johnson and Ambrose, 2006), it may find that OTT services are appealing due to the convenience and time-saving features offered, particularly for accessing entertainment on their personal devices amidst busy schedules. Despite popular perception that gender influences viewing habits, this study revealed no significant effect of gender on subscription willingness. However, Household structure followed by income had positive coefficients, with household structure being statistically significant. This implies that customers from larger households are significantly more likely to renew their subscriptions as there may be more individuals in a household sharing the cost of the subscription, making it more affordable on a per-person basis. This finding supports prior research by (Massad , 2018) which highlighted that a key advantage of OTT services is the increased control users have over their viewing experience. Also, a person with a higher income was more likely to subscribe to an OTT service. This factor likely

contributes to their willingness to subscribe to OTT channels, as pricing strategies significantly influence both user adoption and engagement within these platforms (Bhullar & Chaudhary, 2020).

5.7. Key drivers to OTT subscription

The study identified five significant predictive factors influencing consumer subscription behavior, namely content, price, convenience, quality, and consumer behavior, which were consistent with a previous study on subscription decision factors in India conducted by (Nagaraj et al., 2019). Global personalized content emerged as a highly predictive factor for initiating or retaining SVoD services, as supported by (Cha, 2013), who found a correlation between customer preferences and content. Additionally, the convenience and flexibility offered by SVoD services, such as anytime, anywhere access, were identified as major determinants for time-constrained working populations, in line with (Li,2020) emphasis on consumer attraction to convenienceThe cost of SVOD subscriptions has a considerable influence on customer decisions to start new subscriptions and renew current ones. This is consistent with the importance of pricing to value-conscious customers which supports with research by (Bhullar and Chaudhary, 2020). However, this study did not find quality to have a high predictive value for subscription behavior in terms of video quality and uninterrupted streaming, in contrast to (Qiu and Cui's, 2010) emphasis on video quality for customer retention. Despite the predictive significance of other factors, the overall study suggests that overall, content and price remain the most important determinants in subscription decisions.

5.8. Preferences in different markets

Consistent with prior research by Nagaraj et al., (2021) on the Indian market in 2021, this study finds price, content, and convenience to be the key determinants of OTT video streaming subscription. Notably, Nagaraj et al. reported a sample with an even distribution of respondents subscribed to both OTT and cable services. In contrast, our study in Ireland (2024) finds a significantly higher proportion (70%) of respondents subscribing solely to OTT platforms. This disparity might be attributed to the increased consumer awareness of OTT services between 2021 and 2024. Additionally, the persistence of cable subscriptions in India likely stems from cultural factors, such as the communal viewing experience it facilitates, and the availability of regional content not yet readily available on OTT platforms.

To conclude, this chapter investigated the factors influencing consumer subscription behavior, focusing on cable users, OTT users, and those who subscribe to both. It revealed that subscription decisions are multifaceted, extending beyond mere content preference and convenience. Personal viewing habits and the desire for anytime access also emerged as prominent motivators, alongside demographic factors like household structure. While content, price, and convenience remain crucial in this analysis, it was found that catering to individual viewing habits and offering flexible viewing schedules can enhance user satisfaction and retention. Overall, understanding the diverse needs and preferences of consumers is key to developing sustainable and competitive strategies in the OTT market.

6. Managerial Implications

By grasping the connection between user behavior and satisfaction, companies can craft financially sound customer retention strategies, fostering long-term customer relationships for a competitive edge in Ireland. This newfound knowledge empowers informed decision-making and targeted strategies aligned with consumer preferences, ultimately leading to higher satisfaction and long-term success.

 The observed preference in this study for OTT services presents an opportunity. As price and content indicated as the main factors, providers can capitalize on this by continuing to offer flexible pricing and personalized or original content. Also, to build long-term customer relationships, implementing strategies such as loyalty programs and excellent customer service can be implemented.

Traditional cable companies, facing shifting consumer preferences, need to adapt. This may involve exploring flexible subscription models and potentially investing in or partnering with OTT platforms. Regardless of the approach, prioritizing customer engagement and retention strategies is crucial for all players in this evolving media landscape. The growing trend of cord-cutting and viewer price sensitivity underscores the need to stay competitive.

7. Limitations and recommendations

This study represents a pioneering effort in investigating consumer subscription behavior towards OTT services within the Irish context. Given the lack of existing research in this area, the study design necessitates a sample population with heterogeneous characteristics. This heterogeneity is crucial for capturing the diverse range of factors and motivations that influence consumer decisions regarding OTT subscriptions.

The study acknowledges limitations in the generalizability of its findings due to sample size. While (Riserbato, 2023) suggest that sample size of 100 provide meaningful results, survey precision increases significantly with each additional 50 respondents, up to a sample size of 1,000. Due to time and resource constraints the current research was limited to 91 unique responses though the preferred sample was 100.

The non-probability sampling technique in this research, used also limits the ability to calculate margins of error or generalize the results to the entire population. The study adopted snowball sampling technique to approach potential participants due to time constraint. This method relies on the existing network of researchers and their ability to disseminate the survey further. Access to a broader range of channels for distribution could have potentially yielded a larger pool of participants and increased the number of responses. Furthermore, potential social desirability bias, inherent in self-reported surveys, may have influenced the accuracy of responses. Future research efforts could address this limitation by exploring alternative recruitment strategies. These might include utilizing online survey platforms with pre-existing participant pools or collaborating with relevant organizations to reach a wider audience.

While the current study employed a multiple logistic regression, ordinal logistic regression and exploratory factor analysis, future research could benefit from the application of a more theoretical grounded approach. By including established theories such as the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) or the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) into a structural equation modeling (SEM) framework, researchers can develop a more robust understanding of the factors influencing consumer subscription behavior.

The geographical scope of the study was restricted to data collection in Dublin, Cork, and Limerick, further limiting validity. Future studies could expand data collection efforts to encompass a broader geographical range within Ireland.

Finally, the study relied solely on a quantitative survey approach. While valuable insights were obtained in quantitative surveys, comprising qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews with a smaller sample could provide a richer understanding of consumer decision-making processes and motivation. The limitation of time and participant accessibility may have precluded this approach in the current study, but future research could explore the benefits of a mixed-methods approach.

As a recommendation, future research could examine how different demographic groups perceive the various attributes of video streaming services. This could provide valuable insights for companies to tailor their strategies and offerings to specific demographics. Understanding these variations can help streaming services attract and retain customers with diverse preferences. A future study could investigate how the influence of service attributes on consumer behavior and customer retention varies based on subscription tenure and customer activity level. Analyzing data from both long-term subscribers and newer subscribers could offer valuable insights on how to effectively engage new customers and foster long-term loyalty. By understanding how the importance of specific attributes changes over time, streaming services can develop targeted strategies to retain customers at different stages of their subscription journey. Upon reflection, it was clear that the survey procedure was greatly impacted by temporal factors. It is essential to allow sufficient time for data gathering in future research projects. This will enable a larger pool of participants by starting the survey well in advance.

8. Conclusion

A significant rise in OTT adoption has been observed over the past decade, as evidenced by the literature review. This study enhances the understanding of what attributes and factors influence subscription and retention within the Irish market. The research aims to provide insights into the motivations behind technology and behavioral adoption. Ultimately, this knowledge can empower marketers and technology providers to better cater to user needs in the Irish market.

This study investigates factors influencing adoption of subscription and their likeliness to renew within the video streaming service industry. While content remains the most crucial component of the business model, as recognized in literature review and analysis, the research highlights the growing importance of other attributes due to rising content production costs. The study emphasizes a valuable strategy for customer retention, focusing on attributes associated with content, price, convenience, quality, and customer behavior. These attributes were found to be highly valued by customers in Ireland. This research underscores the critical need for video streaming services to develop targeted strategies around specific business model attributes like price, user experience, and customer service to improve customer retention. The findings reveal that Irish consumers place high value on these attributes beyond content when choosing and staying subscribed to a streaming service. This challenges the traditional emphasis solely on content and suggests a broader customer-centric approach.

Users are increasingly turning to OTT platforms for entertainment, drawn in by user-friendly interfaces and a wealth of content to choose from. However, price also remains a key deciding factor, with competitive pricing significantly impacting user adoption. OTT services cater to this by offering convenience through mobile access and flexible viewing options, giving users control over their viewing experience. Interestingly, social pressure seems to have less influence on younger generations like Millennials and Gen Z when it comes to OTT usage. This trend is reflected in the rise of popular services like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+ which offer both ease of use and high-quality content, making them almost essential for many viewers. Overall, user satisfaction with OTT services is high, with factors like pricing, customization options, service quality, and user-friendliness playing a major role.

This study acknowledges limitations in the generalizability of its findings due to sample size. A larger sample with a more diverse spread of attribute categorization would have strengthened the ability to generalize the results to a broader population. However, the core objective of the study remains achieved. While the methodological aspects could have been improved to enhance data precision, the consistency of results across the two empirical tests conducted despite demographic segmentation provides a degree of reliability. These findings can serve as valuable inspiration for developing customer retention strategies within the video streaming service industry.

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10. Appendices

Survey

Studying factors to subscribe to over-the-top (OTT) video streaming services in Ireland.

I would like to invite you to take a quick survey about your experiences with online streaming services. This study will help me learn more about the motives for choosing a streaming service and how it might give ideas for the OTT companies to improve the viewing experience for users living in Ireland. The survey is short and simple and should take you no more than 5 minutes to complete. Hence if you have subscribed to any OTT platform, you meet the requirements to take this survey.

Before you begin, please read the below information carefully.

Your participation in this survey is completely voluntary. You may choose not to participate at all, or you may withdraw from the survey anytime. All your responses will be kept anonymous and confidential.

By clicking 'submit', you indicate your understanding of the information above and your consent to participate in this survey.

1. Gender
    Male
    Female
    Prefer not to say

2. Age
    18-25
    25-35
    35-45
    45-60
    60+

3. Occupation
    Part-time employed
    Full-time employed
    Unemployed
    Student
    Homemaker

4. Household Structure
    Single

Couple
Couple with children
Single parent

5. Education
Junior year
Senior year
Bachelor's degree
Master's degree
Prefer not to say

6. Income (Per Annum)
1-13000
13001-30000
30001-45000
45001-60000
60000+

7. Are you currently subscribed to any of the below?
Cable(Sky/ Virgin Media)
OTT(Prime/ Netflix)
Both

8. How likely are you to renew your subscription with your current service provider?

Very likely
Likely
Neutral
Unlikely
Very unlikely

9. What are the possible reasons for you to move to another service provider? Please rank the below options based on your preference from (1) being most important to (6) being least important.
1. Lower price
2. Better content
3. Shared subscription with friends/family
4. Promotional offer
5. Multiple device access
6. Contract flexibility

10. What are the reasons for you to subscribe to any OTT platform? Please rank with your top 6 preferences, (1) being most important.

1. Low subscription fee
2. Anytime Access
3. All devices access (Phone, TV, Laptop).
4. Ad free experience
5. Technology enthusiast
6. Recommended by Others

7. Personal consumption
8. HD video quality
9. Unlimited access to internet
10. All time access.
11. Original/Local/Global content

11. What are the reasons for you to **NOT** subscribe to any OTT platform? Please rank with your top 6 preferences, (1) being most important.

    1. It is too expensive.
    2. Lack of local content
    3. Limited/Poor internet connection
    4. OTT video service is addictive.
    5. It hinders shared viewing/family viewing.
    6. Technology averse
    7. Not interested in entertainment
    8. Time constraint
    9. Already have cable connection

12. Would content offered by a streaming service be a major factor in your decision to subscribe?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

13. Are specific genres (e.g., comedy, drama, horror) more important to you than other content?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

14. Are original shows and movies a major factor in your decision to subscribe to a streaming service?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

15. Does the origin of the content (Ireland or Irish creators) influence your viewing choices on streaming services?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree

Strongly disagree

16. Is price an important factor when choosing an OTT subscription service?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

17. How likely are you to subscribe to a streaming service that offers different subscription tiers with varying content libraries at different price points?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

18. Do you think quality of content have a positive impact on your decision even if the subscription price is high?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

19. How important is it to have reliable internet connection for your enjoyment of streaming services?
    Very important
    Important
    Neutral
    Not important
    Not at all important

20. Do you agree OTT services are highly convenient as you can watch shows on any of your devices anytime and anywhere?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

21. Is it easy to navigate and use the interface of your current streaming service (or the most recent service you used)?
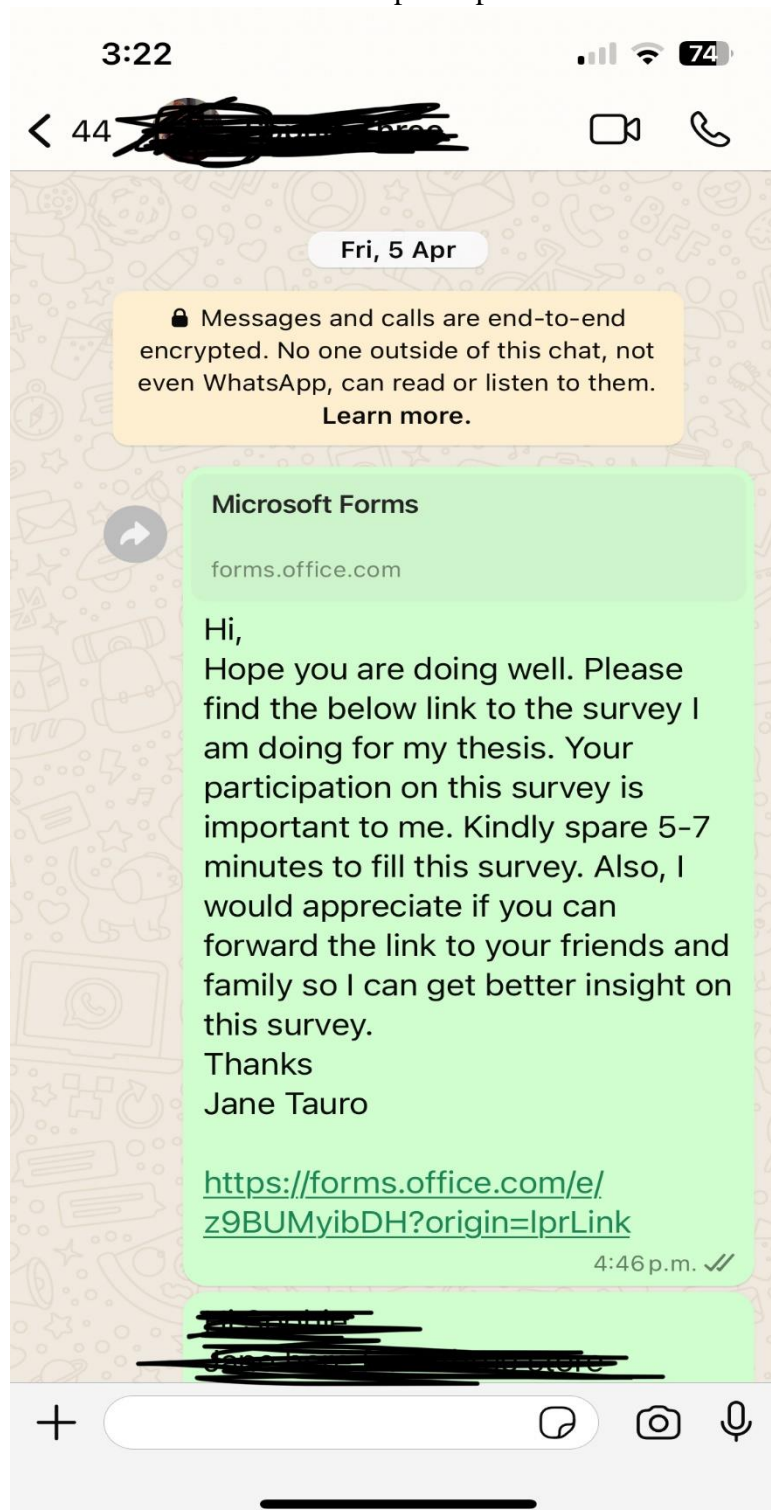   Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

22. Is it important to have high resolution (HD) video for a good OTT viewing experience**?**
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

23. Is it important for you to have consistently smooth and uninterrupted video streaming?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

24. Does OTT services give you more control on your viewing experience compared to traditional TV?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

25. Do you agree OTT services provide flexibility to watch shows or movies together with family and friends?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

26. Do you prefer OTT services as they allow you to watch shows and movies without any advertisements?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

27. Are you increasingly reliant on OTT services for entertainment, leading to binge watching?
    Strongly agree
    Agree
    Neutral
    Disagree
    Strongly disagree

Appendix B

Invitation to participants

WhatsApp screenshot:

3:22

< 44 [redacted]

Fri, 5 Apr

🔒 Messages and calls are end-to-end encrypted. No one outside of this chat, not even WhatsApp, can read or listen to them. **Learn more.**

Microsoft Forms

forms.office.com

Hi,
Hope you are doing well. Please find the below link to the survey I am doing for my thesis. Your participation on this survey is important to me. Kindly spare 5-7 minutes to fill this survey. Also, I would appreciate if you can forward the link to your friends and family so I can get better insight on this survey.
Thanks
Jane Tauro

https://forms.office.com/e/z9BUMyibDH?origin=lprLink

4:46 p.m.

National College of Ireland

Human Participants Ethical Review Application Form

All parts of the below form must be completed. However in certain cases where sections are not relevant to the proposed study, clearly mark NA in the box provided.

Part A: Title of Project and Contact Information

Name

Jane Smitha Tauro

Student Number (if applicable)

22169474

Email

X22169474@student.ncirl.ie

Status:
  Undergraduate ☐
  Postgraduate   ☐✲
  Staff   ☐

Supervisor (if applicable)

Title of Research Project

Strategies for increasing SVOD subscriber base in Dublin

Category into which the proposed research falls (see guidelines)

Research Category A ☐
Research Category B ☐✲
Research Category C ☐

Have you read the NCI Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants?
  Yes ☐✲
  No   ☐

Please indicate any other ethical guidelines or codes of conduct you have consulted

No

Has this research been submitted to any other research ethics committee?

  Yes ☐
  No   ☐✲

If yes please provide details, and the outcomes of this process, if applicable:

N/A

Yes   □
No   □∗

If yes please provide details, and indicate whether any restrictions exist on the freedom of the researcher to publish the results:

N/A

<div align="center">

Part B: Research Proposal

</div>

Briefly outline the following information (not more than 200 words in any section).

Proposed starting date and duration of project

Tentative date-September 2023 to May 2024

The rationale for the project

Study is conducted to identify the various factors influencing subscription decisions, awareness among the sample size on different SVOD platforms and suggest strategies to organizations operating in this space for increasing their subscriber base.

The research aims and objectives

Main aim is to recommend strategies for increasing SVOD subscriber base in Dublin by identifying the factors that influence subscription decision in Dublin. Understanding if the age has an impact on the content consumption and to identify consumers most preferred platform.

The research design

Research from qualitative and quantitative methods will be included in the research. Research will be both online and offline. Along with it secondary research will be conducted.

The research sample and sample size
Please indicate the sample size and your justification of this sample size. Describe the age range of participants, and whether they belong to medical groups (those currently receiving medical treatment, those not in remission from previous medical treatment, those recruited because of a previous medical condition, healthy controls recruited for a medical study) or clinical groups (those undergoing non-medical treatment such as counselling, psychoanalysis, in treatment centres, rehabilitation centres, or similar, or those with a DSM disorder diagnosis).

Sample Size- approx 100 and Age group- 13-60

If the study involves a MEDICAL or CLINICAL group, the following details are required:

Part C: Ethical Risk

Please identify any ethical issues or risks of harm or distress which may arise during the proposed research, and how you will address this risk. Here you need to consider the potential for physical risk, social risk (i.e. loss of social status, privacy, or reputation), outside of that expected in everyday life, and whether the participant is likely to feel distress as a result of taking part in the study. Debriefing sheets must be included in the appendix if required. These should detail the participant's right to withdraw from the study, the statutory limits upon confidentiality, and the obligations of the researcher in relation to Freedom of Information legislation. Debriefing sheets should also include details of helplines and avenues for receiving support in the event that participants become distressed as a result of their involvement in this study.

We will follow the ethical guideline and we will make sure that participants can withdraw anytime they feel like.

Do the participants belong to any of the following vulnerable groups?
(Please tick all those involved).

- ☐∗ Children;
- ☐ The very elderly;
- ☐ People with an intellectual or learning disability
- ☐ Individuals or groups receiving help through the voluntary sector
- ☐ Those in a subordinate position to the researchers such as employees
- ☐ Other groups who might not understand the research and consent process
- ☐ Other vulnerable groups

How will the research participants in this study be selected, approached and recruited? From where will participants be recruited? If recruiting via an institution or organisation other than NCI please attach a letter of agreement from the host institution agreeing to host the study and circulate recruitment advertisements/email etc.

I will reach out to my participants through personal network or online platform like linkedin or Facebook.

What inclusion or exclusion criteria will be used?

Children above 13 will be considered as they use OTT flatform.

How will participants be informed of the nature of the study and participation?

Before completing the informed consent form, participants will be given enough information about the study to make an educated, voluntary, and rational decision to participate.

Does the study involve deception or the withholding of information? If so, provide justification for this decision.

N/A

What procedures will be used to document the participants' consent to participate?

There will be a consent form for the participant before moving ahead with survey.

Can study participants withdraw at any time without penalty? If so, how will this be communicated to participants?

Yes, this will be mentioned initially in the survey form.

If vulnerable groups are participating, what special arrangements will be made to deal with issues of informed consent/assent?

In vulnerable group I will be including teenagers who will be between the age gap of 13 to 18.

Please include copies of any information letters, debriefing sheets, and consent forms with the application.

Part D: Confidentiality and Data Protection

Please indicate the form in which the data will be collected.

□ Identified   □ Potentially Identifiable∗   □ **De-Identified**

What arrangements are in place to ensure that the identity of participants is protected?

The name will not be disclosed in the survey. A consent form will be given to the participant which will mention that their data will be confidential and will animize the data.

Will any information about illegal behaviours be collected as part of the research process? If so, detail your consideration of how this information will be treated.

No

Please indicate any recording devices being used to collect data (e.g. audio/video).

This will be discussed with the supervisor and based on his guidelines arrangement will be done.

Please describe the procedures for securing specific permission for the use of these recording devices in advance.

N/A

Please indicate the form in which the data will be stored.

□ Identified   □ Potentially Identifiable∗   □ **De-Identified**

Who will have responsibility for the data generated by the research?

I will have the responsibility for the data generated by the research.

possibility that the data will be archived for secondary data analysis? If so, has this been included in the informed consent process? Also include information on how and where the data will be stored for secondary analytic purposes.

Yes, and this will be included in the consent form. The data can be stored in the NCI library.

If not to be stored for secondary data analysis, will the data be stored for 5 years and then destroyed, in accordance with NCI policy?

□ Yes *   □ No

Dissemination and Reporting

Please describe how the participants will be informed of dissemination and reporting (e.g. submission for examination, reporting, publications, presentations)?

It will be available in the survey / consent form.

IF ANY DISSEMINATION ENTAILS THE USE OF AUDIO, VIDEO AND/OR PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS (INCLUDING DIRECT QUOTES), PLEASE DESCRIBE HOW PARTICIPANTS WILL BE INFORMED OF THIS IN ADVANCE.

This will be discussed with supervisor for further guidance.

Part E: Signed Declaration

I confirm that I have read the NCI Ethical Guidelines for Research with Human Participants, and agree to abide by them in conducting this research. I also confirm that the information provided on this form is correct.

Signature of Applicant – **Jane Smitha Tauro**

Date   30 May 2023

Signature of Supervisor (where appropriate): N/A

Date   N/A

ANY OTHER INFORMATION THE COMMITTEE SHOULD BE AWARE OF?

N/A