

# “Do You Love Binge-Watching It?”: A Study of Brand Love for Over-The-Top (OTT) Media Platforms

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## ABSTRACT

Digital advancement pushed up further due to the latest pandemic crisis has revolutionized the content creation business. Over the years there has been growing presence of various Over-the-top (OTT) media platforms which has changed the way people perceive and view the media and entertainment industry. The focal aim of this study is to examine the presence of brand love for OTT media service platforms. The other objectives involve examining the impact of brand love on word of mouth, attitudinal loyalty and behavioural loyalty for the OTT media platforms. In this regard, an online survey using a self-administered questionnaire on 564 users of OTT media platforms from New Delhi was conducted in the summer of 2020. Snow-ball sampling was used to outreach the digital media platform users. Structural equation modelling framework was applied for testing the proposed empirical model of the study. The results indicate the presence of brand love for the varied brands of OTT media platforms. Brand love was also found to considerably influence word of mouth and behavioural loyalty, but the impact of brand love on attitudinal loyalty was found slightly lesser than the former two..

**Keywords: : Over-the-Top (OTT) Media Platforms, Brand Love, Word of Mouth, Attitudinal Loyalty, Behavioural Loyalty**

## INTRODUCTION

The world is bracing with the worst health and economic crisis of its time. With the rising cases of the pandemic and its growing fear in the country enforcing nationwide lockdowns and various on and off local lockdowns the economic activity came to a halt. Not just the GDP figures took the toll in view of the pandemic but it also played a focal role in changing the consumption styles and behavioural patterns of the people- courtesy the grip of the digital advancement in

our lives.

One sector that felt most of the burnt due to evolving consumption patterns is the media, entertainment and showbiz. But the early presence and fair reach of the OTT media platforms acted as the knight in shining armour for the dull and non-lustrous industry bracing the pandemic. The pandemic has also served to act as a boon for the growth and far off connectivity of the various OTT media platform brands with a rising set of users.

The one of its kind consumer survey report- 'Entertainment Goes Online', prepared by the top global consultancy firm, the Boston Consulting Group states that the OTT media platform market can grow to a size of 5 billion dollars by the year 2023, majorly attributable to the growing data penetration in the rural India, breaking of the traditional tv viewing patterns cutting across genders and age difference and the ever growing hunger for fresh content (The Boston Consulting Group [BCG], 2018). The present research aims to diagnosis the presence of brand love and its impact on the word of mouth, attitudinal and behavioural loyalty for the varied brands of OTT media platforms.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

### Over-the-top (OTT) media platforms

Over-the-top (OTT) media platforms refer to the content and media development and dispersal over direct internet (Fitzgerald, 2019). Such new type of media service development directly over the internet at one hand has led to massive disruption in the media industry, but has also led to freedom and empowering of many independent artists and voices (Fitzgerald, 2019; Kwon & Lee, 2015). It is particularly a boom for such users who want to be able to get access to their favourite content on the go (Moyler & Hooper, 2009), that is to say “anytime, anywhere, and on any device”

(Kim, Kim, Hwang, Kim & Kim, 2017, p. 198).

India with a vast population and rapid penetration of the low-cost internet service has become a tempting market to the various OTT media platform brands ('Indian OTT market', 2018). Initially the OTT media platform in India was dominated by YouTube owing to the vast presence and free access offered by it, followed by Hotstar (Fitzgerald, 2019). Currently this market is marked by the presence of global brands like Netflix, Amazon Prime and Disney+Hotstar and also a wide array of domestic brands like Voot, Sony Liv, Zee5, MX Player, ALTBalaji, ErosNow (Khatter, 2020; 'Top 10 OTT platforms', 2020).

**Brand Love**

Human beings are rational but still they tend to make decisions emotionally- “the essential difference between emotion and reason is that emotion leads to action while reason leads to conclusions” (Roberts, 2004, p. 42). According to Carroll and Ahuvia (2006), brand love is an emotional and passionate feeling of an individual for a particular trade name. Emotion and passion are feelings indicating to an intimate bond, thus the definition by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) is indicative of romantic love as propounded by Sternberg (1986) and defined as romanceful relationship with the brands (Sarkar, 2013). Romantic brand love can be considered an integral aspect of overall brand love (Sternberg, 1986; Hendrick & Hendrick, 1989). “Romanticism is the core of any love feeling” (Sarkar, 2013, p. 25).

**Brand Love and Word of Mouth**

Favourable brand interactions indeed make consumers to the spread of positive word-of-mouth for brands (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Fetscherin, 2014) and reaffirm their future behaviours (Batra, Ahuvia & Bagozzi, 2012; Fetscherin, 2014). A constant reminder of loved brands in the daily life of a person, further enhances the feeling of love to grow and talk good about it (Batra et al., 2012; Roberts, 2004).

**Brand Love and Attitudinal Loyalty**

Attitudinal loyalty sees loyalty for a brand as an attitude of consumer (Geçti & Zengin, 2013; Odin, Odin & Florence, 2001). It deals with the way people approach decisions making towards the brands (Bennett & Thiele, 2002). In this direction it looks for the percep-

tions, ideas, beliefs and opinions for a brand in their minds before making the purchase (Bowen & Chen, 2001; Quester & Lim, 2003). People tend to feel a sense of belonging and warmth with such brands, which nurtures love as a bond making them strongly desire the brand (Fournier, 1998). The degree of familiarity and involvement of the consumer and the brand in the past is considered as an important barometer of love (Batra et al., 2012).

**Brand Love and Behavioral Loyalty**

Behavior of making the decision to choose the same brand continuously is referred to behavioral loyalty (Back & Parks, 2003; Odin et al., 2001). Literature indicates the presence of relationship among both loyalty constructs-attitudinal and behavioral (Carpenter, 2008; Halim, 2006; Huang & Zhang, 2008). People favoring the brand are found to be in love with such brands for some time, which motivates them to further repeat the behavior also (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). For if brands are loved they command future loyal behavior also (Batra et al., 2012).

**OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

Keeping in mind the background developed in the literature review the study has the following objectives:

- To check for the presence of brand love among the users of the OTT media platforms empirically.
- The study also aims to measure the empirical impact of brand love for the OTT media service brands on the word of mouth, their attitudinal loyalty and behavioural loyalty.

Guided by the above stated objectives the proposed framework for the study is presented here (refer Figure 1).

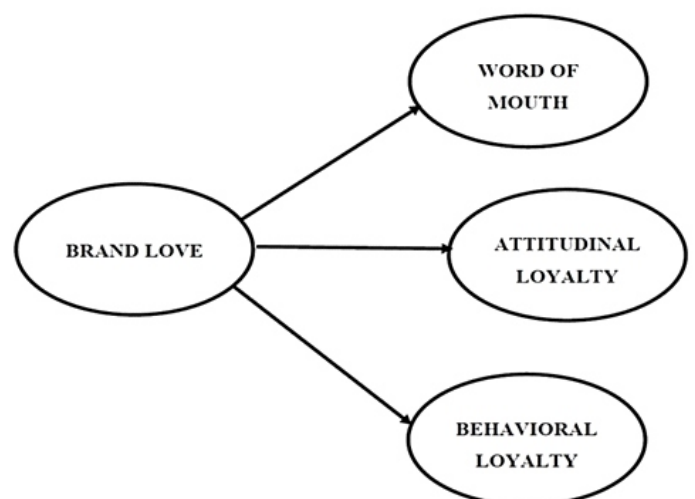


Figure 1: Theoretical Framework  
Source: The Author

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Data Sources

The self-administered questionnaire used for the study contained two sections. In the former section, the details regarding the demographic profile of the users of OTT media platforms was collected. Information pertaining to the users' gender, age, occupational roles and income levels. The users were asked to fill in the brand of the OTT media platforms which they have a preference over the others or which they have been using for the longest period of time. This decision for the brand selection was made similar to the brand selection choice in the existing literature studies

(Batra et al., 2012; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006).

The second section consisted of various scale items used in the study adapted from the pre-existing scales in the literature review to gauge the core constructs of the study. Likert type scale with five anchor points (1=Strongly Disagree to 5=Strongly Agree) is employed in this study for empirical testing of the proposed model. The scale items from Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) have been adapted to measure brand love (10 items) and word of mouth (4 items). The scale items from Halim (2006) have been adapted to measure the two perspective of loyalty-attitudinal (3 items) and behavioural (3 items) in the present study. The scale items used in the study are stated in Table 1.

Table 1. Scale items

Constructs	Scale items
<b>Brand Love [BL]</b> (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006)	BL1 This is a wonderful brand. BL2 This brand makes me feel good. BL3 This brand is totally awesome. BL4 I have neutral feelings about this brand*. BL5 This brand makes me very happy. BL6 I love this brand. BL7 I have no particular feelings about this brand*. BL8 This brand is a pure delight. BL9 I am passionate about this brand. BL10 I'm very attached to this brand.
<b>Word of Mouth [WM]</b> (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006)	WM1 I have recommended this brand to lots of people. WM2 I 'talk up' this brand to my friends. WM3 I try to spread the good -word about this brand. WM4 I give this brand tons of positive word -of-mouth advertising.
<b>Attitudinal Loyalty [AL]</b> (Halim, 2006)	ATL1 I will not switch to other brand even though there are lots of other brand options. ATL2 I am willing to pay more than any other brand to get this particular brand. ATL3 I will always use this brand.
<b>Behavioural Loyalty [BEL]</b> (Halim, 2006)	BEL1 I will buy this brand in the future. BEL2 I will fulfil my everlasting purchasing will for this brand BEL3 I wish to continue purchasing over this brand.

Source: Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006; Halim, 2006

### Sample

The questionnaire of the study was administered on a sample from the users of the OTT media platforms in New Delhi. Snow-ball sampling was applied where, the self-administered questionnaires were sent to known acquaintances via mails with the request to forward the same to the potential subjects which could serve as sample for the study (Bryman, 2012). The data was collected in the summer of 2020 for a period of 2 months. 596 users of the OTT media platforms took part in the survey but after data refining only 564 were found usable for the present study.

The sample ranging from a range of 20 years to 60 years consisted of around 57% female users and 43% male users. The most prominent age group came out to be of 20-30 years. Students occupied the majority (35%) of the sample, followed by the share of professionals (28%), self-employed (21%) and home-makers (16%). The users belonging to the income group of ₹ 50,000 to ₹ 75,000 (53%) were found to be the most prominent ones followed by the users in income group of ₹ 75,000 to ₹ 1,00,000 (42%). The most reported brand was Netflix (29%), followed by Amazon Prime (24%), Disney+Hostar (21%) and the remainder (26%) consisted of other brands like Zee5, Voot, Sony Liv, MX Player, ALT

Balaji etc.

## **ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS**

### **Reliability and Factor Analysis**

The present study has covered 564 users of OTT media platforms as a justifiable sample size for carrying out the confirmatory factor analysis and structural equation modelling analysis (Hu & Bentler, 1999; Jackson, 2001). Cronbach's alpha was found greater than .70 for all the empirical constructs used in the study suggesting the justifiable reliability of all the scale items (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2014). For carrying out the exploratory factor analysis, principal component analysis was used as extraction method and varimax type of rotation was used. For all the scale items the

factor loadings were found greater than .50 and thus justifiable (Hair et al., 2014), barring for 1 item of brand love (BL8) and one item of word of mouth (WOM4), which were dropped from the following analysis.

### **Empirical Model and Validity**

The testing of the empirical model began with the application of the confirmatory factor analysis first using AMOS. The factor loadings of all the scale items for the model were greater than .70 (Hair et al., 2014) as stated in Table 1. The model fit indicators like Chi-square coefficient (2.54), CFI (.94), TLI (.96), RMSEA (.08) and SRMR (.03) all reflect towards the significant goodness and acceptance of the empirical model (refer Table 2).