

Chanda, Ruby; Islam, Tajamul

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Baby boomers' Over-The-Top (OTT) rush-older customers on new platforms

Ruby Chanda  and Tajamul Islam

Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies (SIMS), Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune, India

ABSTRACT

In 2022, statistical data indicated that approximately 41% of individuals aged 55 and above in India intended to increase their video streaming and TV consumption. Against this milieu, this research article explores baby boomers' orientation toward Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, investigating their motivation for platform selection, overall experience, and expectations. Employing a semi-structured, in-depth interview methodology, we engaged with 30 OTT platform subscribers using the Google Meet platform for extensive interactions. The long interview method was adopted for interacting and documenting inputs using the Google Meet platform. The data were analyzed using the open coding method. The result ensured the users' gratification experienced by the respondents, emerging from the features and the quality of the programs available on these platforms. While the baby boomers generally report positive experiences, expectations revolve around refining the streaming languages and content control for specific programs. There are existing studies regarding the factors influencing OTT consumption of baby boomers in other cultural contexts, which might not be relevant to the Indian perspective as the behavior pattern changes due to regional and other demographic factors. This study highlights the untapped potential within the baby boomer segment in India. Moreover, it presents an opportunity for practitioners to devise impactful marketing strategies, creating a competitive edge in this dynamic OTT landscape. The insights gleaned from this research contribute significantly to understanding and leveraging the unique preferences and expectations of baby boomers in the Indian context.

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Introduction

The landscape of entertainment consumption has experienced a profound transformation with the ubiquitous presence of OTT (Over-the-Top) platforms, a term that has become synonymous with digitization and the pervasive range of the internet across diverse geographies and generations worldwide. Described as 'video delivery utilizing the Internet Protocol over an open network' (Gonçalves et al., 2014), OTT initially emerged as a means of distributing video content to consumers through the Internet, a milestone set by YouTube in 2005 and further popularized by Google in 2006. This pioneering era paved the way for an incursion of key players, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hot Star, Zee5, Sony Liv, and Voot, among others, subsequently dominating the market (Singh, 2019).

In the contemporary scenario, the global OTT market has witnessed a staggering expansion, poised to reach USD 210 billion by 2026 (Statista, 2021). Notably, the outbreak of COVID-19 marked a pivotal moment, catalysing a significant surge in OTT consumption globally. In India, the narrative has been particularly compelling, with 35–40% of consumption happening in local languages in tier II and tier III cities, an extensive contribution reflecting the changing dynamics of media consumption. This shift is further highlighted by increased data consumption and improved internet access in rural India, with an anticipated 48% of internet users hailing from these areas.

CONTACT Ruby Chanda  ruby.chanda@sims.edu  Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies (SIMS), Symbiosis International (Deemed University), Pune 411020, India

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The paradigm shift from traditional television services to direct customer outreach through in-house OTT platforms has propelled strategic progress in content creation and channel ownership (PwC, 2019). Modern audiences now anticipate OTT services tailored to their explicit requirements, spanning content, services, user interface, payment, and account management (Aarthi, 2020; Verma, 2019).

Older age groups, particularly those aged 45 to 54, are experiencing a striking 63% growth in adoption (E.T., 2019). Contrary to the notion that OTT platforms are exclusive to millennials, a report by KPMG (2019) divulges that viewing hours for the older generation approximate those of other cohorts, averaging around 8 hours per day. This statistic underlines that OTT is no longer confined to a millennial phenomenon; it has become a pervasive and integral part of the media landscape for all age groups. Moreover, the data highlights a compelling trend where the affordability factor of OTT services grows gradually with age, mirroring an increase in disposable income (Thompson & Thompson, 2009; Nielsen Reports and Insights, 2012). This confluence of factors indicates a dynamic and evolving landscape where OTT platforms are reshaping the way content is consumed, transcending demographic boundaries, and becoming a cornerstone of global entertainment trends.

BABY BOOMERS, also referred to as mature markets, Golden Grey market, or WOOFs (Well-off Older folks), constitute approximately 16% of the global population, as reported by the Census Bureau's Vintage Population Estimates (2019). This demographic is not only steadily expanding but is also gaining prominence as a significant target for marketers. Baby Boomers, having completed their careers and enjoying a life without dependents, enter retirement with ample disposable income, seeking an active lifestyle rich in experiences and the challenge of maintaining health and social connections in their later years (Moschis et al., 1997).

Despite possessing dynamic outlooks and significant purchasing power, this passionate consumer segment remains largely ignored by marketers and advertisers worldwide (Hanson, 2001; Thompson & Thompson, 2009). Baby Boomers are keen to experiment with new hobbies and perspectives, displaying a willingness to invest in attaining new life skills (Lamb et al., 2009). This cohort emerges as the primary revenue-generating demographic, contributing to over 70% of the nation's disposable income, according to Nielsen's 2012 report. In the U.S., Baby Boomers are reported to be avid users of online platforms, committing more than 20 hours per week to digital engagement (Nielsen Reports and Insights, 2012). This emphasizes the need for research into how this cohort responds to technology, particularly concerning the rapidly increasing use of Over-the-Top (OTT) platforms, a dimension that is currently mislaid in scholarly investigations and deems this study essential (Nunan & Di Domenico, 2019).

While prevailing studies explore factors influencing OTT consumption among Baby Boomers in different cultural contexts (Beneke et al., 2011), the relevance of these findings to the Indian perspective is dubious due to behavioral variations influenced by regional and demographic factors. This discrepancy poses a challenge in adapting such studies to comprehend OTT adoption by Indian Baby Boomers. Moreover, there is a void in surveying the experiences and expectations of this particular cohort regarding OTT consumption, representing a missed opportunity for strategic success in the Baby Boomers market.

This research intends to investigate the driving factors behind OTT consumption by Baby Boomers, confirming the attributes influencing the acceptance and usage of OTT technology in this demographic. By delving into the technology perception and outlook on life for Baby Boomers, this study pursues to establish a foundation for understanding their spending and consumption patterns. The eventual goal is to inform strategy formulation for OTT players, enabling them to target this valuable demographic more effectively through a nuanced understanding of their consumption behavior.

The fundamental research question guiding this study is: 'What are the experiences and expectations of Baby Boomers from OTT platforms?'

Literature review

Baby Boomers market

The baby boomer market has become more important, drawing researchers from academic, marketing, and social scientific fields worldwide (Hyde & Higgs, 2004; Stroud, 2005). Given that human lifespans are

now longer than ever before, the idea of longevity may be used to explain this interest in the demography (Moschis et al., 1997). Ironically, despite its increasing importance, the mature market has always been disregarded and misrepresented (Lazer, 1986).

Despite being overlooked for a significant period, the mature market stands out as the predominant and swiftly expanding consumer segment within the media landscape (Medcalf, 2006). Notably, this demographic exhibits a proclivity for embracing new media and is recognized for its concurrent engagement with multiple media channels (Paul, 2003). WOOFs (Well-Off Older Folks) display a keen interest in leisure activities, dedicating time to watching soap operas and movies, while also actively seeking health-related information (Gervey & Lin, 2000).

Interestingly, the initial disinclination of baby boomers to embrace the internet has evolved, leading to an increasing online presence, earning them the moniker 'Silver surfers' (Rowe, 2003). This technological adoption has been motivated by workplace demands and the influence of their children and grandchildren, gradually transforming them into avid users (Trocchia & Janda, 2000).

Media technology and screen culture

The triumph of an online service hinges on factors such as efficient network coverage, uninterrupted transmission, and key attributes such as diversity and range, as highlighted by Woo and Fock (1999). Notably, the landscape of Media Technology and Screen Culture is presently undergoing a dynamic shift. The extensive reach of smartphones, coupled with the availability of free or affordable internet access, has paved the way for the ascendancy of digital media. This transformation supports a range of services, including live streaming, Video on Demand (VoD), and Subscription Video on Demand (SVoD), as observed by Hyers (2006). Furthermore, the initiation of digital media has significantly impacted visual presentation preferences, with an growing number of consumers opting to upgrade from traditional televisions to Smart TVs for an enhanced viewing experience, as noted by Gershon (2016). This shift underscores the evolving landscape where consumers are more inclined towards new media forms facilitated by digital platforms.

According to the most recent research from Consultancy.in (2021), there is a major shift taking on in the Indian screen culture scene right now. In India, Over-The-Top (OTT) consumption has increased significantly over the last year, from 181 billion minutes to 204 billion minutes. According to PWC's projections for 2021, this rise is anticipated to continue until 2024, when it is likely to reach a significant milestone of \$55 billion at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of over 10%. It's interesting to note that, according to inplayer.com (2021), even the elder age, who are used to traditional linear TV, is breaking from traditional consumption habits. As opposed to what may be expected, this group is using OTT services and spending a lot of time on their home TV displays. Their watching habits indicate that Subscription Video on Demand (SVoD) accounts for a substantial 65% of their consumption, whilst Free Streaming Video services (FVoD) make up 35%. This change is indicative of a larger pattern of changing tastes and habits in India among a range of age groups when it comes to digital content consumption.

Perception of baby boomers

The Baby Boomer segment in the market is often unfairly characterized as unproductive or even deemed a drain on society, as noted by Thomas (2002). This demographic is frequently viewed through a lens of triviality, perceived as unadventurous and uncertain to embrace new products and services (Melchinger, 1999). Consequently, they are labeled as brand-loyal and stereotyped for their conservative taste, as observed in studies by Hanson (2001) and Thomas (2002). This predominant perception may oversimplify and overlook the diverse and dynamic characteristics of the Baby Boomer consumer group.

Contrary to prevailing stereotypes, the elderly actively rejects the label of being unadventurous and consider themselves flexible, active, and open to experimentation, as emphasized by Bradley and Longino (2001). Significantly, these Baby Boomers are realistic about their age, disapproving of being perceived as rebellious teenagers (Bradley & Longino, 2001). The gap in attitudes between corporate

communication strategies and the perceptions of consumers in this segment is noteworthy, as highlighted by Thompson and Thompson (2009).

Moreover, assumptions about brand rigidity and resistance to brand switching are speculative, as research indicates that Baby Boomers exhibit innovation and flexibility in their brand choices. Rentas-Giusti (2003) suggests that this demographic, having spent over 55 years with disposable income and time, is both discerning and open to new brand experiences. These challenge preconceived notions and emphasize the need for a nuanced understanding of the diverse attitudes and behaviors within the Baby Boomer consumer group.

Media consumption of baby boomers

Recognised as the largest consumer demographic with substantial leisure time, the baby boomer market actively participates in conventional media channels, including print, television, and radio (Metcalf, 2006). In contrast to popular belief, this group is open to new media and, as Paul points out, is even prepared to use many media channels at once (2003). According to a TNS Digital Life survey, people's online behaviour is impacted by when they first started using the internet. People over 55 are more likely to look for amusement, recreational opportunities, and health-related information (TNS, 2008; Gerverey & Lin, 2000). Significantly, as baby boomers gradually embrace technology and debunk myths about it, it is anticipated that their use of the internet will increase significantly (Eastman & Iyer, 2005). This changing trend challenges assumptions about how baby boomers interact with conventional and digital media, highlighting the market's dynamic character.

UTAT (Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology) model and baby boomers

The Technology acceptability Model (TAM), first proposed by Davis in 1989, can serve as a theoretical foundation for investigations into client acceptability of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms, especially with regard to baby boomers. The purpose of TAM, which is based on the Theory of Reasoned Actions (TRA), is to determine how people view technology by looking through the prisms of perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU) (Davis, 1989). This paradigm offers a framework for comprehending how people assess and utilise technology. Additionally, to better reflect the continual growth and refinement of models to capture the nuances of technology acceptance, TAM has undergone expansions such as TAM 2 and the Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) (Davis, 1989). These frameworks may be used to analyse how baby boomers behave when it comes to technology, particularly when it comes to over-the-top (OTT) services. This can provide important insights into the aspects that affect how they embrace and use technology. Technological Acceptance Models (TAM) are evolving, as seen by innovations such as TAM 3, which explores perceived risk and trust in relation to technology/systems, especially in e-commerce environments. To further enhance our understanding of how different factors affect technology adoption in distinct user groups, UTAUT2 has also been proposed to investigate the moderating impacts of demographics.

As Cha (2013) stated, the literature that is currently available highlights the importance of user experience, perceived pleasure, content customisation, and content quality as determining elements that shape user attitudes in the context of Over-The-Top (OTT) adoption. The UTAT model was first presented by Venkatesh et al. (2003). It includes components that directly impact how users behave with technology, including performance expectancy, social influence, effort expectancy, and enabling factors. Later, three more elements were included to this model: hedonic motivation, price value, and habit (Venkatesh et al., 2012). The body of research examining the use of over-the-top (OTT) technologies is thin, despite its relative novelty. Though some research has begun to look at why people choose to use over-the-top (OTT) services instead of traditional television providers, such as Yi-Ning Katherine Chen's 2019 study, this field is still relatively new. As the environment of digital media consumption changes, this expanding collection of research helps us better understand the elements influencing consumer behaviour.

User gratification and baby boomers

Building on the theoretical frameworks that were previously explored, the User and Gratification Theory (Severin & Tankard, 1997) provides important insights into how people consume media. This theory puts the user front and centre, seeking to understand what particular media consumers desire to satisfy their entertainment demands, in contrast to other media theories that concentrate the focus on the medium itself (Katz et al., 1973; Wu et al., 2010). Compared to traditional media theories, which place the medium at the centre, this user-centric approach is different (Katz, 1959). The User Gratification Theory covers a wide range of topics when it comes to social media, such as networking, personal efficacy, socialising, online communities, information sharing, global exchange, and spiritual and emotional support (Apaolaza et al., 2014; Chen & Kim, 2013; Luo & Remus, 2014; Smock et al., 2011; Roy, 2009; Anderson, 2011). The idea posits that there exists a causal relationship between baby boomers' use of Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms and the ease, comfort, and satisfaction they gain from utilising the platform for media consumption. In this situation, utilising technology and choosing distinctive media become essential elements. There are several reasons why baby boomers watch over-the-top (OTT) material, including hedonism, comfort, fulfilment, and the wide selection of shows that are available. Contrarily, price has the ability to act as both an inducer and a deterrent. These cues have a big impact on baby boomers' media consumption patterns and expectations for the calibre and diversity of information (Lee, 2009). This thorough approach offers a sophisticated knowledge of the tastes and behaviours of the baby boomer population by assisting in the unravelling of the complex dynamics of media consumption within this group.

The synergy between both theories becomes apparent here, as UTAT places a stronger emphasis on the perceived usefulness and ease of use of technology, specifically Over-The-Top (OTT), within explicit demographics like Baby Boomers. This focus emphasizes customer satisfaction and fulfillment, particularly when the platform is user-friendly and offers a diverse range of options. Consequently, Baby Boomers appear as potential OTT customers contributing to the continuously expanding OTT market, despite not being the direct focus of media owners or marketers. The potential for augmented consumption and revenue generation becomes evident when customized communication is developed and targeted towards this demographic.

Materials and methods

Throughout this study, we conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with individuals falling within the baby boomer age group, specifically those aged between 55 and 75. Participants were selected from the middle-class or upper-middle-class strata, ensuring their access to Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms. The criteria for selection were centered around individuals actively using OTT platforms.

We employed a convenience sampling technique using a snowball approach, wherein respondents referred future participants from among their acquaintances. The participants were predominantly approached from metro cities across India. Prior oral consent was obtained from the respondents for using the collected data for academic purposes, and the recorded interviews were subsequently shared with them. The confidentiality and privacy of the participants were carefully maintained.

The research employed the long interview method, as proposed by McCracken (1988), conducted virtually to collect data. The determination of the number of respondents followed the saturation concept, guided by the works of Marshall et al. (2013) and Guest et al. (2006). The emergence of new codes became sporadic after the 20th interview, disappearing entirely by the 28th interview. The research concluded after the 30th respondent, as the number of identified codes ceased to increase with additional interviews.

The individual interviews, each lasting approximately 50–60 minutes, were conducted by the researcher and recorded via Google video meetings.

The ethical committee of the institute was not formed at the time of research.

Analysis

The interpretive model worked on the premise that gaining a deeper understanding of a phenomenon is attainable by comprehending the interpretations of those who have experienced it (Shah & Corley,

2006). To analyze the data, we utilized the open coding process outlined by Corbin and Strauss (1990). This involved a meticulous review of the interviews, followed by the formation of transcripts. The transcripts were then scrutinized recurrently to extract meaningful interpretations. Conceptual groupings were established by comparing perspectives and consolidating similar elements under distinct categories. In the second stage, codes were refined and cross-checked for any overlooked components. The final codes and categories underwent further revision and analysis to validate themes and confirm the ultimate research questions.

During this phase, the emerging themes were harmonized with the user gratification theory framework, integrating the codes and categories (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) around its central theme. Initially, 29 codes surfaced in the first stage, which were subsequently condensed to 10 after thorough analysis. Eventually, themes materialized and were categorized into three overarching groups: experience, expectations, and motivation for using OTT platforms by baby boomers.

Result

Category-experience of the OTT platform

While all of the respondents use OTT platforms in different ways, there are variations in the length of time they have been associated with them. Some respondents, particularly those who used OTT more frequently, learned about it from their professional experiences (Table 1). Examples include academics who educate media and communication, ad filmmakers, theatrical performers, and government employees who worked abroad. OTT material was consumed by the majority of other baby boomers, either

Table 1. Respondent profile.

SI. NUMBER	AGE	WORKING STATUS	AFFILIATION	SINCE WHEN WATCHING OTT	GADGET TO WATCH	ENGAGEMENT	PREFER T.V. OR OTT
P1	78	Retired	Defense Veteran	3 years	Mobile	3 hrs	OTT
P2	66	Working	Director MBA Institute	3 years	Big Screen	2–3 hrs	OTT
P3	67	Retired	MBA Institute	3 years	Big Screen	2–3 hrs	OTT
P4	70	Retired	Army	3 years	Big Screen	2 hrs	OTT
P5	70	Working	Co Chancellor	4 years	Big Screen	3–4 hrs	OTT
P6	65	Retired	BJP candidate	3 years	Big Screen	2 hrs	T.V.
P7	61	Working	Academician	2 years	Big Screen	1 hr	OTT
P8	62	Working	Academician	2 years	Big Screen	3–4 hrs	OTT
P9	58	Working	Director D Y Patil	2 years	Big Screen	8 hrs once, but not much	TV
P10	58	Working	IBS Delhi	5 years	Big Screen	2–3 hrs on weekends	OTT
P11	60	Working	L&T and Academics	2 years	Big Screen	1–2 hrs	OTT
P12	65	Working	IIP, Own Travel company	2 years	Big Screen	2–3 hrs	OTT
P13	63	Working	Management Consultant	2 years	Big Screen	Do not watch T.V. much	TV
P14	61	Working	Academician	2 years	Big Screen	Do watch T.V. much, series	TV
P15	59	Working	Spiritual Healer	2 years	Big Screen	Do watch T.V. much, series	TV
P16	64	Retired	Ultratech, ACC	2 years	Big Screen	Do not watch T.V. much, series	TV
P17	67	Retired	Sales and marketing	3 years	Big screen or mobile	Binge-watching some times	OTT
P18	64	Working	Advertising, Short films	since long	Big Screen	2–3 hours	OTT
P19	66	Retired	IRS, Asian Development Bank	2 years	Big Screen	Binge-watching	OTT
P20	63	Retired	Customer Dept.	2 years	Big Screen	Binge-watching	TV
P21	62	Retired	Head of Sales Insti Business (Automotive Industry)	2 years	Laptop, iPad, iPhone	3–4 hrs	OTT
P22	69	Working	Theatre actor	4 Years	Big Screen	4–5 hours	OTT
P23	70	Working	Consultant and Board member of companies	5 Years	Big Screen	1–2 hrs	OTT
P24	63	Retired	Ultratech cement	4 years	Big Screen	Daily 30 mins but binge-watching	OTT
P25	67	Working	Academic, Coach n Mentor and consultant	4 years	Big Screen	2–3 hrs every day	OTT
P26	63	Retired	TATA Retails	2 years	Big Screen	2–3 hrs	OTT
P27	72	Working	Private Company	5 years	Big Screen	3–4 times binge-watching	OTT
P28	58	Working	Exe Director LIC	2 years	Big Screen	2–3 hrs and on weekends when office going binge watch sometimes	OTT
P29	65	Retired	School Principal, Yoga Instructor	2 years	Big Screen	3 hrs on an average	TV
P30	65	Working	Trader, UltraTech	2 years	Big Screen	1 hr or so	TV

after retirement or as a result of having more free time during the COVID-19 lockdown. Although prior research has found a number of factors impacting the adoption of over-the-top (OTT) platforms across various segments (Chang & Chen, 2008; Delafrooz et al., 2011), our study primarily focuses on the experience elements. This covers factors including pricing, hedonic pleasure, comfort level, quality, and contentment. The experiences of the respondents differed based on these variables, illuminating the complex dynamics of over-the-top (OTT) consumption among baby boomers.

Theme 1 Comfort level

Although they are embracing technology, baby boomers are not doing it as quickly as earlier generations. They like a platform that is simple to use and intuitive so they can explore with ease. They specifically state that they want to watch shows or series of their choosing and that they want to do so on their own, without help. It's interesting to note that over 70% of respondents said it was simple to move between platforms and do searches. At first, a lot of baby boomers asked their friends or kids for help using these sites. But when respondents quickly became accustomed to utilising these devices on their own, a noticeable pattern started to develop. Their tendency towards accessible and user-friendly interfaces is shown in this changing pattern, which also demonstrates their capacity to adjust to new technologies at their own speed.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 27	'In the beginning, it was a little time-consuming, but now I can search and watch on my own. You can switch between the programs.'
Respondent 21	'It's on call. I don't need to plan and schedule. It's when I have time I can watch. It's there.'
Respondent 3	'Watch it at your own pace, at the place you want, with friends or family or alone. Very comfortable, it's easy. Watch it on different gadgets but prefer to watch it on T.V.'

Moreover, the decision to opt for an OTT platform over traditional television is strongly influenced by the preference for watching content at their own pace. Baby boomers, engrossed in various activities, prioritize evading any disruptions to their leisure time, making this a important consideration. This desire not to miss out on their preferred content emerges as a primary concern, underscoring the importance of flexibility and personalized viewing experiences offered by OTT platforms in aligning with their dynamic lifestyles.

Theme 2 Quality

Quality, in the context of user experience, is assessed by the user's satisfaction with the services, influenced by the services' performance. Users tend to be frequent if the performance aligns with their expectations, primarily dictated by their personality and current state (Brunnström, 2013). The ongoing enjoyment and utilization of services become a direct reflection of the perceived quality and alignment with user expectations.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 7	'Picture quality is good and provides Worldwide coverage.'
Respondent 25	'You get to choose as per your mood, movies, series, or even the good documentary; I have seen plenty now.'
Respondents (Almost all)	'Much better than the traditional, structured format of T.V. consolidation of platforms and variety is good.'

Most respondents said they were happy with the content quality and thought it was of a very high standard. Some participants, however, had concerns over the subtitles, pointing out that on some streaming sites, they are occasionally excessively small, which can be problematic for people with bad vision. Furthermore, a responder particularly conveyed their discontent with the quality of the content because it contained unedited information. In spite of these reservations, most respondents expressed satisfaction and contentment with the services received when asked about the overall quality of the services.

Theme 3 Hedonic motivation

For baby boomers, utilizing technology and OTT platforms is a source of wonderful satisfaction in fulfilling their entertainment desires (Venkatesh et al., 2012; Magni et al., 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). The

acceptance and usage of technology play a critical role in their decision-making process, influencing their choice of platforms and encouraging continued engagement. A prevalent sentiment among respondents is the appreciation for the diverse array of content available, emphasizing the abundance of choices. The ease with which favourite shows may be downloaded and the lack of commercial breaks further add to the satisfying user experience. Remarkably, around 80% of respondents said they would rather watch video on larger screens, citing improved overall viewing quality, better technological specs, and better image quality as reasons for their choice. Respondents consider the platform to be an audio-visual pleasure and appreciate it for its depth of knowledge in addition to its entertainment appeal. Throughout the conversations, a lot of baby boomers talked about how nostalgic they felt and how much fun it was to watch old films and other stuff that they loved that is now easily accessible on these platforms but might not be available anywhere else. A fondness for thinking back on treasured experiences from the past is fostered by this sentimental connection.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 22	'OTT, for me, is like a book; you read it and underline it whatever part you like.'
Respondent 18	'Watching the film from a distance, with 1000 people around you, listening to their ooh and aah doesn't give us joy. Watching comfortably at home is what I prefer.'
Respondent 11	'I love to watch Old classics that are not screened in Multiplexes. You can explore, and many of those black and white films are also available on OTT. You can't get enough of it.'

Hedonic motivation holds critical importance as OTT platforms largely cater to entertainment purposes (Prince & Greenstein, 2017). The resulting pleasure experienced by customers during the consumption of OTT content contributes to a positive feeling that leads to greater satisfaction (Hsiao et al., 2016).

Theme 4 Satisfaction

It is the succinct psychological state of an individual, confirming their emotions regarding non-established expectations, which are tied to their former feelings about the consumption experience, as defined by Oliver (1980). Oliver recommended that satisfaction is contingent on evaluating the customer's life experience with the product or service against their expectations. Satisfaction is achieved when the product or service experience meets or exceeds customers' expectations (Du Plessis et al., 2012).

Existing literature emphasizes the relationship between satisfaction and customer engagement, with satisfaction reportedly influencing customer engagement (Pansari & Kumar, 2017). The quality of engagement is used as a tool to measure user satisfaction (Nourikhah & Akbari, 2016). In the context of OTT, satisfaction plays a crucial role in stimulating referrals, reducing customer acquisition costs, and ensuring customer lifetime value through subscriptions and promotions (Netflix Inc., 2018).

Positive. The majority of respondents express satisfaction with the quality of content and the variety of programs offered to them on OTT platforms. Interestingly, there are occasions where the content surpasses their expectations, such as the availability of an old favorite comedy show like 'Sarabhai vs. Sarabhai'. Around 60% of baby boomers express delight in discovering high-quality regional films and programs.

One respondent shared that their initiation into OTT viewing happened while posted in the U.S., and the ability to endure with similar choices back home brings them satisfaction. The sentiment is encapsulated by another respondent who started watching OTT during the pandemic, reflecting a shift in viewing habits and preferences influenced by changing circumstances.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 8	'We are serious about what we watch. A whole new world has opened up as I never used to watch T.V. much. But since I started watching OTT, it's a new experience altogether, and I watch different contents which are so engaging.'

But we also came across a few respondents who were not very satisfied and happy with everything available here.

Negative. A few unfavourable experiences were mentioned, mostly involving international content, linguistic obstacles, nudity, and cultural differences. A number of participants conveyed their dissatisfaction

over the copious volume of material accessible, perceiving it as daunting. In addition, as some baby boomers are still getting used to these skills, issues with typing, navigating filters, and finding favourite material were noted. Some respondents find it difficult to recall a variety of information and find it difficult to keep track of what they have already viewed because of their age.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 18	'So much content, and for searching, you need to type the names, which are cumbersome.'
Respondents 22 & 28	'Language is not acceptable as so much use of F word, and sometimes they put so much of sex and nudity which is not required. Now my kids are grown up, so it's ok for me. Otherwise, you can't watch this stuff with kids.'

Category-expectations from the OTT platform

Around 20% of the respondents felt the need for some check on the content being streamed.

Respondent	Response
Respondents 20& 25	'T.V. has certain norms to follow, or else content gets censored, but OTT platforms don't have it.'

Theme 5 Regulations

There are tranquil policies and regulations for checking the streaming of online services in India regarding violence, sex, language, nudity, etc., compared to offline services like films and TV (Davis & Zboralska, 2017). This might influence the market power of OTT platforms, and their fuelling growth as OTT platforms are very flippantly regulated for social interest accountability and anti-monopolistic behavior. Further, this discrepancy is founded on the disproportion in one-sided and two-sided content markets (Bilbil, 2018).

Theme 6 Choice

Several respondents felt overwhelmed with the quantity of content they were exposed to on a daily basis. Mature customers find it challenging to explore and select content for themselves and feel lost at times.

Respondent	Response
Respondents 11&9	'Too much choice is also a challenge and is confusing.'
Respondents 3&19	'It is good that Netflix recommends the movies and other programs based on what I watch previously. Also, they put the caution regarding the content, so you are mentally prepared.'

The respondents appreciated how the site makes programme suggestions based on their viewing history and considered its AI-based recommendations to be very helpful. The general consensus was that quality should be prioritised above quantity, and many people said they would rather have a smaller number of excellent programmes. The cultural and geographic coverage received particular attention from around 30% of respondents with expertise with global material, suggesting that they were aware of and interested in different content from around the globe.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 17	'In British or American channels, the use of the F*** word is normal but not acceptable for Indian customers.'

The pricing of the OTT platforms was also a point of concern. Most of the respondents felt that it is too economical, which dilutes the quality of the content. They felt that discriminatory pricing should be applied wherein whoever wants to see a particular program will pay accordingly. It will restrict and maintain the quality of content.

Category-motivation for consuming the OTT platform

It is crucial to comprehend the reasons behind baby boomers' switch from traditional TV or media to over-the-top (OTT) content since these shifts can occur for a variety of reasons, as interactions indicate.

The main draws for this change are the convenience of consuming material on OTT platforms and the high quality of the content itself. Customers have a wide range of options and price flexibility, which further improve accessibility and make OTT an appealing alternative for this group of people.

Theme 7 Price

With a substantial shift in media consumption dynamics towards OTT, researchers are actively investigating the factors driving customers to pay or subscribe to these services (Chen et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2018). In a previous study, Ye et al. (2004) highlighted that customer are more likely to subscribe to fee-based services if they observe a quantitative advantage over free services. This perspective is reinforced by Baccarne et al. (2013), who emphasize that low cost is a crucial element for the successful adoption of OTT. Kim et al. (2017) further recommended that product characteristics such as resolution, a recommendation system, and viewing options play a dynamic role in determining the willingness to pay. These insights align with the findings of the current study, where respondents emphasized the significance of content quality and the availability of options at an economical price.

Most of the respondents cited: 'Very economical, multiple platforms are available'.

As per one respondent, the pricing should be as per the content access. At a meagre price, everyone is watching everything, which is diluting the quality.

Another respondent had a different viewpoint on this, 'Quite economical and value packs available because of competition'.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 22	'If you go out with the whole family to watch a movie in multiplex, tickets only cost 1000 plus. Then you feel like having dinner also outside. That way, you spend quite an amount on just one movie whereas in the same amount, you can see many movies and programs in OTT along with your family'.
Respondent 7	'Netflix is slightly costlier than other platforms, but add-ons are excellent'.

The preceding statements provide a comprehensive understanding of the baby boomers' perspective on pricing. Overall, there is a consensus that OTT subscriptions are economical, especially when considering the diverse range of programs catering to individual preferences, as opposed to the one-size-fits-all model of traditional TV setups. Respondents unswervingly expressed a shared opinion on the cost-effectiveness of OTT platform services. Several believe it offers value for money, and they actively engage in cost-benefit analyses, weighing the price against the benefits derived, including access to multiple platforms with a rich variety of content.

Theme 8 Variety

Indian consumers exhibit a strong affinity for viewing both global and regional content on OTT platforms, spanning movies, documentaries, and series. The accessibility of subtitles enhances the viewing experience, making it easier for them to follow the context and appreciate content from diverse cultural backgrounds.

Respondent	Response
Respondents 22 & 26	'I Watch regional content as well along with Hindi. Do not watch western content. Do not like the storyline of those. Regional access is comprehensive, Regional films as well, documentary and cinema'.

Many baby boomers used to have trouble accessing national programmes or Hindi. But the emergence of OTT platforms, which provide a vast selection of international material, has greatly broadened the reach. One of the most important factors affecting consumption and the evolution of watching habits is the availability of various material. One responder highlighted that 'you cannot have one answer for all problems; different people have different choices', which highlights how crucial it is to accommodate a range of preferences through the variety of content options available on over-the-top (OTT) platforms.

Theme 9 Social Connect

The most important aspects defining a better quality of life for this cohort are maintaining good health and staying positively connected with their family and social circle (Bowling, 1995). The baby boomers

are generally retired or at the stage where their children are already established and staying separately, thus bringing social isolation with low social connectivity (Scharf & Smith, 2004). Also, intergenerational equity is becoming debatable, which is represented by individuals relating to each other across the generations (Williams, 1997) on different aspects ranging from macro to microenvironmental agendas besides their personal and emotional links (Rosa Dias & Jones, 2007).

Most respondents felt socially connected while discussing the OTT programs with their friends and family. They feel bonded and relate to each other with different threads.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 8	'It has become a talking point for us with our friends.'
Respondent 21	'Discuss the content with friends, as most of us are in the same age bracket and retired. We have more leisure time, so discuss it more.'
Respondent 28	'I am more person-oriented, and social connection is not through OTT; we do talk but not the programs.'
Respondent 5&19	'We have a WhatsApp group where we recommend the good programs we have watched. It keeps getting updated, and we have the feedback and reviews on those. Based on group rating, we watch.'

Of the thirty responders, twenty-five children who have moved out and only communicate virtually with their kids. For them, it is very important to have a topic of conversation that both sides find interesting. Meanwhile, a small number of responders had an alternative viewpoint. The majority of respondents also mentioned how much they depend on program suggestions and how difficult it is for them to look up stuff that interests them independently.

Theme 10 Social Trend

This social phenomenon reflects a constant shift in social dynamics over time, influenced by the cumulative influence of actions from numerous social groups, whether coordinated or not. Existing literature indicates a trend of baby boomers experiencing a drop in subjective age, driven by their enthusiasm for acquiring new skills that support both social connections and health maintenance. This results in a novel perspective on the aging process, allowing them to navigate time in their unique way for the first time (Agogo et al., 2014). The use of digital technology, illustrated by virtual apps like Apple's FaceTime and engagement on social media platforms such as Facebook, has contributed to the growing popularity and desirability of connectivity with friends, family, and health professionals—a form of 'bonding time'.

Moreover, the literature explores into the concept of social value, exemplified by enhancing one's self-image within society. The gratification theory aligns with the status and self-image concept, akin to the belief of social value (Leung & Wei, 2000). Utilizing technology and staying current with the next generation on the same platform serves as a means to affirm one's status and social value. A noteworthy share of respondents feel trendy and updated when using OTT platforms because their children watch the same content. This shared experience helps bridge the generation gap, reinforcing a sense of connection and contemporary relevance.

Respondent	Response
Respondent 27	'We understand the context and the references. We enjoy the jokes and the punches. In fact, we relate with the discussion and feel trendy.'
Respondent 26	'Not feel left out; try to be at par with the younger generation.'

Discussion and conclusion

The findings highlight the significant trend of baby boomers adopting Over-The-Top (OTT) content consumption more and more, which has significant ramifications. There is a noticeable difference in the ease of use and exploration of over-the-top (OTT) platforms between working and retired baby boomers. The former are more willing to explore this digital space, frequently asking friends and family for advice. Regardless of their social standing, baby boomers have a strong willingness to learn new things and explore new areas. This receptivity is largely ascribed to the abundance of available time and the affordability of OTT subscriptions. The diverse content offerings prove overwhelmingly appealing, surpassing

the scope of what they were habituated to watching in the past. The analysis identified ten emerging themes across three overarching categories, primarily focussed on expectations, experiences, and the motivation driving baby boomers to engage with OTT platforms.

Particularly, in the Indian subcontinent, the elderly population is growing rapidly, and the use of Social Networking Sites (SNS) and Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms contributes to fulfilling some of their social needs (Nam, 2021). A study by Khoo and Yang (2020) revealed that utilizing social media for interactions with broader social networks, such as friends, is as beneficial as connecting with family in enhancing the perception of social support among middle-aged and older adults. This outcome aligns with the insights gained during interviews, where respondents often mentioned being drawn to OTT platforms based on recommendations from their family and friends. The shared interest in these platforms often becomes a common topic of discussion when communicating, fostering a sense of connection and shared experience among older individuals. Out of 30 respondents, 26 use these platforms entirely and have a good experience. The other four are not using it for entertainment and consuming only YouTube for spiritual and educational sessions. Almost all the respondents liked watching on the big screen unless they were traveling or outside. They generally preferred to watch with their spouses or alone for some specific programs. Most respondents admitted to binge-watching as they do not have much of a schedule. If they like something, they prefer to watch it in one sitting. Since many of them watch YouTube and a few documentaries, the reliability and authenticity of the information were of concern to them. Still, they were happy with the information they were consuming.

By concentrating on a group that has historically received less attention, the study sought to close a gap in the literature on Over-The-Top (OTT) usage. This specific group has a lot of promise since they regularly watch OTT content based on suggestions and spend a lot of time engaging with it.

Implications for practice

The entertainment dynamics are changing fast, and segment attributes are also changing. Earlier studies have focussed more on millennials and generation Z. Their choice changes very fast and is generally influenced by trends and fashion. At the same time, baby boomers are steady and are growing consistently. Their selection is influenced by technology adaptation, the convenience of using the technology, and adaptability. Marketers cannot ignore them; the study posits that the segment is considerably large with well-defined media habits. The only challenge is Boomers are in different ages and stages of life. This study provides an overview of the unlocked potential of the Baby boomer segment in India. The study also offers an opportunity to the practitioner to formulate effective marketing strategies for creating a competitive advantage. A similar quantitative analysis should be conducted to provide a specific insight to the marketers regarding the important factors to consider while formulating the marketing plan for this neglected segment. The mature market looks forward to clearing presentation, easy navigation, and specific choice of programs, the absence of these may disappoint them, and they move to other platforms. Summarizing the findings, a more customized approach through direct marketing and email and text message campaigning would be helpful to reach out to these customers as they have a presence on these platforms. The baby boomers are inclined towards binge-watching as well but they find it difficult to explore the programs of their choice. Recommendation services in Netflix are helpful as to guide them for selection of the content. Font size, color, and description of the content would be a great option for them to customize their choice. Content overload is also one of the crucial attributes when the challenge of exploring the content was discussed with the respondents. Customization can help to focus on the variety of the contents for this cohort as comfort in selecting the content was crucial for them while discussing the experience of OTT. The other factor which could help is pricing as per the content quality. The segment can afford the pricing as it is very economical for them. They are willing to pay more for more customized content. As one of the respondents proposed, discriminatory pricing would be better as people interested in watching more and quality content would go the extra mile. These attributes can be considered while targeting this segment and be a more focused approach in leveraging this customer group.

Limitations and future research directions

While the baby boomers segment presents broad implications for market strategy and customer needs, there is a scarcity of empirical studies on this theme in OTT consumption behavior and digital marketing services. Thus, there is a gap in existing literature regarding the relationship between mature customers and digital platforms. There is a paucity of data related to these digital platforms' age and consumption pattern and more specifically, OTT platforms. The attributes considered were based on the experience of the segment regarding their usage, which was explicitly studied. For future study, few essential aspects like reference and recommendation, trust and reliability, content choice, attitude, and perception of the baby boomers can be taken into consideration.

As this was a very nascent study in this area, a quantitative approach with a specific scale would supplement it by making it more measurable and focused. This article attempted to identify the attributes that will help the marketers and academicians focus on this cohort with imminent potential and largely ignored. Also, convenience snowball sampling considering the respondents' affinity towards OTT might have influenced the responses and skewed the result. The research was distributed considering gender and age groups to overcome this. This can also be avoided in a quantitative study with a larger sample.

Lastly, this was only an exploratory study to identify the literature gap for ascertaining the discriminatory power of different constructs. The socio-economic, i.e., grouping and psychographic segmentation, can further enhance the themes. The limitation is also reflected in the generalizability and validity as the study was restricted to India. The implications of the study may not be applicable beyond the Indian subcontinent. Also, the OTT platforms were mainly Global and local platforms mixed; thus, the external validity of the research is inadequate. As the age segment understudy was specific, the global generalizability of the study is also limited. However, despite these, the study provides good insight for academic and industry practitioners alike in understanding the behavior and the expectations of baby boomers to formulate better strategies accordingly.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

About the authors

Dr. Ruby Chanda is an Associate Professor with Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies, Constituent of Symbiosis International (Deemed University) Pune, India. Her domain is Marketing. Her research areas are CRM, Services Marketing and Brand Management and has published around 35 research papers in National and International Journals. She has also published a few case studies in reputed journals.

Dr. Tajamul Islam is an Assistant Professor in Symbiosis Institute of Management studies. He teaches subjects of Essentials of Marketing Management and Consumer Behavior. His area of research is Consumer Behavior. He has published few research papers in peer review journals in the area of marketing and consumer behavior.

ORCID

Ruby Chanda  <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3301-7629>

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Appendix

Coding and categories selection

Initial OCCURRENCES	Coding 1	Coding 2	Category	RQ
In the beginning, it was little time taken, now I can search and watch on my own. You can switch between the programs	Comfortable, able to surf	Comfort Level	Positive Experience	What is your experience with OTT platforms you are watching?
You get to choose as per your mood, movies, series or even the good documentary, I have seen plenty now I am not bound by the time and the schedule as in TV and can watch it at my convenience and pace few movies are difficult to catch hold of and you can watch them on OTT	Variety of Movies, very good content Watch at your convenience	Quality of Service Hedonic		
Watch it while traveling or at the airport where the internet is available	Time and place convenience makes it more desirable			
Watched the series continuously for 4 days as it was very captivating and complete it	Content is very engaging			
AI in these OTT suggests the content of your liking which makes it easier for you to select	Recommendations on the content by the platform			
Indian and Global content both are good, we come to know the culture and their way of life	Understand the global culture, subjects are very interesting	Satisfaction		
Frustrated by the TV shows of Eka Kapoor, in comparison, OTT series are very different and interesting like Panchayat, beautifully made	Indian content on OTT is very good			
Sports, music, and even history you can explore. I mostly watch documentaries on OTT	Overall experience is good and a lot of learning			
I will not switch over to TV rather will continue with OTT only	Continue to watch and subscribe			
More violence and more nudity in different platforms, even stars compete	Unnecessary sex, violence and nudity, abusive language	Limitations	Negative Experience	
So much content and for searching, you need to type the cumbersome names. May times you forget the content where you watch and what you watch, searching is difficult	Search is a little difficult, typing the alphabet, etc			

Initial OCCURRENCES	Coding 1	Coding 2	Category	RQ
Amazon has a scheme of 5 people sharing one subscription to show the economy of pricing is not working	The pricing Model of sharing amongst 5 users is annoying			
Sometimes the vulgarity of language and presentation is not acceptable, some censor on that is required	Control required		Expectation	What do you expect from OTT platforms?
There should be a quality check, too much content should not be there with low quality	Selective content			
Some innovation in terms of range and quality will make it more competitive	Creativity required			
Low price is diluting the quality, different pricing for different customers will be a good option	Differential and discriminating pricing for better content and reach is required			
Unnecessary content should not be there like objectionable language and other things	self-regulations for the content			
Low price for so much content is an attraction	Value for Money	Price	Motivation	Why did you start watching OTT platforms?
Many times, a program is not available on TV like a match or documentary	Content variety and which is not available elsewhere	Variety		
I love watching Marathi and Punjabi movies which are the latest and good	accessibility of global and national content which is quality			
Old movies and series can be seen here	Can get hold of old nostalgic movies			
We installed the smart TV and it was all in the offer, so we installed it	It was all in the package	Smart TV		
Refer the content to my kids which I liked, they also recommend	Social Connect, family connect	Social connect		
Kids introduced when in the US, Watching Golf	Peer Recommendation, friends recommend			
I feel that I am not missing anything and is not left out	To be updated with trends, technology, and generation	Social Trend		
My friends and family also watch the same thing, I feel connected and updated	Continue watching it as it's getting better			
Wish to know how the younger generation behave, their lingo, body language, their thought process and all	Next-generation connect			

Question for the interviews

Section I. Name, Age, Affiliation and Occupation details

Section II

- How much you know about different OTT platforms?
- What do you prefer to watch, TV programs or OTT?
- Which platforms you are subscribed to?
- How much comfortable you are watching OTT?
- What is the frequency of watching?
- Do you watch it alone or with family members?
- Do you watch it on TV or on any other app like on mobile?
- Do you know how to operate and navigate it?
- How is the quality of the program and the streaming of OTT program?
- Do you do binge watching?
- How do you select the program?
- Do your family and friends recommend anything to watch?
- Do you feel connected with younger generation and social connectedness through OTT?
- Does it engage you and for how long?
- How many hours a day you watch OTT?
- Do you feel like recommending it to others?
- Does it give you the freedom to watch your choice of content?
- Which media do you prefer, traditional TV or OTT, and why?
- What is your favorite time for watching the content?
- Any challenges you come across during the program watching on OTT- technical or content related?
- What would you recommend to upgrade/overcome the challenges?

These were some pointers for the interview questions.