

TO STUDY FACTORS INFLUENCING A CONSUMER'S CHOICE OF DIGITAL PLATFORMS FOR STREAMING SPORTS IN MUMBAI

Prashant Akhare, Sachin Nayak, Krishna Kejriwal, Pranav Tungare, Pratyush Ranjan, Sagar Bhatt

**International Institute of Sports Management,
Mumbai, India*

Abstract

This study involves understanding consumer behaviour. Sports is witnessing a paradigm shift in terms of viewership. With the advent of the internet, a whole new horizon has opened up to view sports as we know it. Now, a consumer can view content related to sports online on his computer or on his phone at the mercy of his fingertips.

This research aims to study the factors that influence a consumer's choice of digital platform for streaming sports. There are a plethora of sporting events these days and the digital rights to every single event cannot be acquired by one entity. This allows good competition for the broadcasting of these sports in the digital arena.

There are a lot of nitty gritty things that go into devising a sports platform and it is not easy by any means. There are a lot of factors that come into play when it comes to managing a digital platform which may or may not be beneficial to the consumer. This study aims to understand those factors, if any, and how they might influence consumer behaviour while streaming sports.

Keywords: Digital Platform, Streaming Sports, Mumbai.

1. INTRODUCTION

A major driver of change is how consumers, particularly younger viewers, watch sports today. The stereotype of sport spectators has long been groups of friends gathering around the TV set, making an event of watching a fixture at home. But traditional TV viewership is declining, as people increasingly consume TV in new ways, such as streaming on their mobile and other digital devices. Entertainment and media in India has grown rapidly in recent years, driven by the youth of the country. Nowadays it is easy for people to access to internet from anywhere on devices such as their phones, tablets, laptops etc. which are very easy to carry anywhere in the world. Because of this there has been change in the viewing of the media. Now it is easy for public to access to their digital media apps and can watch their favourite entertainment show & sports from anywhere in the world.

The main reason for sports being popular on digital platforms is because over 60% of the digital audiences is within the age group of 13-35 years, which is also the core audience for fast sports formats. The increase in consumption has made international companies to look at India in a more serious manner. The consumption of digital media has created a bond between the players and themselves which is beyond the field. The way we consume sports has rapidly changed over the past few years. It's no longer about watching games on television or in-person at the stadium. Sports has moved from the field to our living

rooms and mobile phones. Digital media, and largely, social media has had a huge role to play in the sport industry

Growing online viewership indicates the sense of comfort that users have with the digital medium. Online viewers are no longer a small, niche category. While most do not watch entire matches online, the average time spent per user is in the range of 30—35 minutes (on Hotstar). The majority of users (61%) access matches on mobile handsets and live in the top 10 metro cities. The first screen for the IPL still remains TV, but OTT platforms allow consumers to watch anytime anywhere and catch up on matches during travel time. Digital consumption has also been instrumental in driving fan engagement in new age sports properties. Sports properties are connecting with their audiences online, and this consumer database on digital will be key to connect with the audience for further downstream ancillary revenues.

Hence, it becomes imperative to research and find out about the various factors that influence a consumer's choice of digital platform (among Hotstar and Sony LIV) in Mumbai. The predetermined factors that were discussed before conducting the research was Price, Video and Audio Quality, Variety of Content, Customization, Ease of Accessibility across devices and User Interface.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

There are a few factors that impact the subscription business in India. The number one factor is the payment mechanisms. The ability to have seamless, frictionless payment systems – digital payment systems – will determine how fast the e-commerce business for digital business will move. Subscription is a large part of that. Subscription is yet to be mainstream in India. It is because the payment technology in India is still not digital friendly. Mr. Sodhi is of the opinion that as digital systems and digital wallets get established, the subscription usage will also increase. He is of the opinion that proper payment system is the core infrastructure that is required. The rest is in terms of service which you can use.

Speaking of the big players in the industry, Mr. Sodhi says that there are international players coming to India who are looking at the global footprint as well as broadcasters wanting to get into digital space, people who are independent digital companies who have digital lineage and want to get into the OTT space and some telecom companies like Jio, Vodafone. Mr. Sodhi further adds that sports gives OTT platforms large access to users. It gives access to users who are not entertainment or Hindi entertainment followers. Thus their channel gets a huge spike during sports shows. It has given them new users in terms of a profile perspective. Sony looks at sports as an additional Target Group, Segment. For Sony, during events like Euro, Coppa, La Liga, Carribean Premier League, the app's traffic level goes through the roof.

It gives the users far more engagement not just because they are live, but also by sharing it on their social media platforms. Mr. Sodhi comments that that the engagement of Sony with its users has gone up. The life of Sony's content is not just restricted to the traditional 8:30 pm – 9:30 pm time slot. There is more life to it. Also he says the consumption devices have become multi fold and hence there is far more a consumer can do in terms of sharing it with somebody, watching it with somebody on the go, watching it at the time they want to watch it. Sony sees itself as a total entertainment OTT portal. They have shows, movies and sports. Their portfolio is thus complete from these three verticals. Mr. Sodhi signs off by saying that Sony wants to offer its customers a full engagement 360 degree OTT experience.

This will help understand Sony Liv's future plans in the sports live streaming sector and how it plans to tailor content suitable to the needs and preferences of all its target audience with the diverse portfolio of its sporting properties.¹

3. OBJECTIVES

The key objective of this study is *to understand consumer behaviour on digital platforms while streaming sports*.

The secondary objectives of the study are as follows:

- To identify the factors that influence consumer behaviour while streaming sports on a particular digital platform.
- To identify the preferences of the factors that influence consumer behaviour while streaming sports on a particular digital platform.
- To identify an association between gender and awareness of sports digital platform.
- To identify an association between gender and usage of sports digital platform.
- To identify an association between gender and frequency of usage of a sports digital platform.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

- Population: Population includes people using digital sports platforms for live streaming in Mumbai city.
- Sampling technique: Random and Convenience Sampling Technique has been used to select the sample.
- Sample size: Sample size of 210 respondents was taken from various parts of Mumbai city. They were asked to fill the questionnaire.
- Tools for collection of data: Questionnaire
- Type of Data: Primary
- Tests carried out: Chi-Square Test and Factor Analysis individually for Hotstar and Sony LIV.

5. ANALYSIS

5.1. Factor Analysis

Factor Analysis for Hotstar divided the 12 statements from the questionnaire regarding Hotstar into the following factors.

¹ Adgully (2016), OTT Market in India Is Exploding at 30 – 35% : Uday Sodhi
New Delhi Re.Ed.2018

Factors	Statement No.	Statements included in the factor	Factor Name based on inference
1	10	I am satisfied with my experience on Hotstar through mobile apps. (Android and IOS)	Technical Characteristics
	11	I feel that the interface of Hotstar is very user friendly.	
	9	I am satisfied with my experience on Hotstar through their website on mediums such as PCs and Laptops.	
	3	I am satisfied with the video and audio quality while streaming sports live on Hotstar.	
	12	I find it easy and convenient to navigate a specific sport or team through Hotstar's interface.	
	6	I am satisfied with the variety of content available on the website in the sports domain.	
2	4	I am not satisfied with the buffering speed while streaming sports live on Hotstar.	Customisability
	7	Hotstar allows me to pay for only an exclusive event of sports and not the entire sports package.	
	8	I am satisfied with Hotstar's ability to customise streaming services according to my needs.	
	5	I feel that Hotstar has variety of content available on the website in the sports domain.	
3	1	I feel that the price of subscription services of Hotstar is economical.	Price
	2	I feel that the content of subscription package on Hotstar for which I have paid is justified.	

Factor Analysis for Sony LIV divided the 12 statements from the questionnaire regarding Sony LIV into the following factors.

Factors	Statement No.	Statement	Factor name based on inference
1	6	I am satisfied with the variety of sports content displayed on Sony LIV.	Technical Characteristics
	10	I am satisfied with my experience on Sony LIV through mobile apps. (Android and IOS)	
	11	I feel that the interface of Sony LIV is very user friendly.	
	8	I am satisfied with Sony LIV's ability to customize streaming services according to my needs.	
	9	I am satisfied with my experience on Sony LIV through their website on mediums such as PCs and Laptops.	
	5	I feel that Sony LIV has variety of content available on the website in the sports domain.	
	12	I find it easy and convenient to navigate a specific sport or team through Sony LIV's interface	
2	1	I feel the price of subscription services of Sony LIV is economical.	Price
	2	. I feel that the content of subscription package on Sony LIV for which I have paid is justified.	
	3	I am satisfied with the video and audio quality while streaming sports live on Sony LIV.	
3	4	I am not satisfied with buffering speed while streaming sports live on Sony LIV.	Miscellaneous Factors
	7	Sony LIV allows me to pay for only an exclusive event of sports and not the entire	

		sports package.	
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5.2. CHI-SQUARE ANALYSIS

5.2.1. Chi-Square for Gender and Awareness of Digital Platform.

A Chi-Square Test was carried out to test the hypothesis whether there is a significant association between gender and awareness on digital platforms.

Table 6.2a - Gender * Awareness of Platform Crosstabulation

		Awareness of Platform					Total	
		Hotstar	Sony LIV	Other	Hotstar and Sony LIV	Hotstar, Sony LIV and VEQTA		
Gender	Male	Count	41	3	2	108	14	168
		Expected Count	48.8	4.8	1.6	100.0	12.8	168.0
	Female	Count	20	3	0	17	2	42
		Expected Count	12.2	1.2	.4	25.0	3.2	42.0
Total		Count	61	6	2	125	16	210
		Expected Count	61.0	6.0	2.0	125.0	16.0	210.0

5.2.2. Chi-Square Test for Gender and Usage of Digital Platform.

Another Chi-Square test was carried out to check the association between gender and usage of digital platforms.

Table 6.2c - Gender * Usage of Platform Crosstabulation

		Usage of Platform					Total		
		Hotstar	Sony LIV	VEQTA	Other	Hotstar and Sony LIV	Hotstar, Sony LIV and VEQTA		
Gender	Male	Count	80	5	0	6	74	3	168
		Expected Count	84.0	4.8	2.4	5.6	68.8	2.4	168.0
	Female	Count	25	1	3	1	12	0	42
		Expected Count	21.0	1.2	.6	1.4	17.2	.6	42.0
Total		Count	105	6	3	7	86	3	210
		Expected Count	105.0	6.0	3.0	7.0	86.0	3.0	210.0

5.2.3. Chi-Square Test for Gender and Frequency of Usage of Digital Platform.

Another Chi-Square test was carried out to check the association between gender and usage of digital platforms.

Gender * Frequency of Usage Crosstabulation						
			Frequency of Usage			Total
			Frequently	Ocassionally	Rarely	
Gender	Male	Count	69	60	39	168
		Expected Count	59.2	68.0	40.8	168.0
	Female	Count	5	25	12	42
		Expected Count	14.8	17.0	10.2	42.0
Total		Count	74	85	51	210
		Expected Count	74.0	85.0	51.0	210.0

6. FINDINGS

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	13.871 ^a	4	.008
Likelihood Ratio	13.201	4	.010
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.330	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	210		

The degree of freedom for the above test is 4. The p-value for the test was 0.008 which is less than 0.05 which has been taken as the level of significance. Hence this does prove that there is a significance association between gender and awareness of digital platform. It means that the awareness of a digital platform in sports is dependent on gender.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.852 ^a	5	.007
Likelihood Ratio	14.249	5	.014
Linear-by-Linear Association	3.415	1	.065
N of Valid Cases	210		

The degree of freedom for the above test is 5. The p-value for the test was 0.007 which is less than 0.05 which has been taken as the level of significance. Hence this does prove that there is a significance

association between gender and usage of digital platform. It means that the usage of a digital platform in sports is dependent on gender.

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
<i>Pearson Chi-Square</i>	13.214 ^a	2	.001
<i>Likelihood Ratio</i>	14.932	2	.001
<i>Linear-by-Linear Association</i>	6.834	1	.009
<i>N of Valid Cases</i>	210		

The degree of freedom for the above test is 2. The p-value for the test was 0.001 which is less than 0.05 which has been taken as the level of significance. Hence this does prove that there is a significance association between gender and frequency of usage of digital platform. It means that the frequency of usage of a digital platform in sports is dependent on gender

7. CONCLUSION

It can be concluded from the analysis and findings, that there are three overarching factors that influence a consumer while streaming sports on digital platforms: Price, Technical Characteristics and Customisability.

Scope for further research

- There is scope for further research if determinant analysis can be carried out for the reduced factors in the factor analysis for Hotstar and Sony LIV.
- There is scope to get better results in analysis if the sample size is increased.
- If the sample size of VEQTA can be increased, factor analysis and further determinant analysis can be carried out to obtain results.
- The research can be further aided by addition of secondary data.

Limitations of the Study

The study has the following limitations:

- The study is limited to only one city, that is Mumbai and hence the result may not be applicable in any other part of the country.
- The study is only limited to the digital platforms that the consumers choose for streaming sports online.
- The study does not consider illegal methods of live streaming of sports through various websites.
- The study does not mediatory platforms like JioTV, AirtelTV.

(e) The study only considers three digital platforms for streaming of sports i.e. Hotstar, Sony LIV and VEQTA.

(f) The study uses only Primary Data and little to no Secondary Data.

(g) The sample size of 210 is good but a larger sample size can paint a more accurate picture.

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