

A Systematic Review of the Factors that Influence Generation Z's Adoption of over-the-top Platforms

Liu Lu

University of Putra Malaysia

Mohd Feroz Shah De Costa bin Mohd Faris De Costa

University of Putra Malaysia

Muhamad Sufri bin Muhammad

University of Putra Malaysia

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Abstract

As a result of the proliferation of the internet and particularly the official commercial use of 5G in 2019, over-the-top (OTT) platforms are becoming major media services that individuals choose and use, especially for the main future consumers, Generation Z. An increasing number of research have paid attention on the trend and future development in the media industry. While there is limited systemic research focusing on the adoption of Generation Z on OTT platforms. The goal of this systematic review is to integrate and present the current research about the factors that impact Generation Z's adoption of OTT platforms. The factors included content, price, killing time/habit, information seeking, entertainment and relaxation, companionship and escape, binge-watching, and social interaction that impacted Generation Z's adoption of OTT platforms.

Introduction

The media industry is experiencing earthquake change, and correspondingly media consumption behaviour and habit are changing. According to a study conducted by PWC, a global consulting company, there is a significantly increasing population of people who have added streaming media services to their media portfolio (PWC, 2020). Streaming media is becoming an undeniable and major media consumption way, especially for Generation Z (Gen Z) (Ganjoo, 2016; Shelton, McKaig & Mendez, 2016). The rapid growth of the streaming industry is the result of digital and internet technology and other relative technology. Moreover, the development of 5G improves the ability of media platforms that directly

deliver the higher-definition and large-capacity content and services to the end-user, which is called the over-the-top (OTT) platforms (BEREC, 2016). The OTT platform provides a rich library of media resources, such as movies, TV series, news, and sports programs, with various handheld devices, such as smartphones and laptops, and users can choose in terms of their demand without the limitation of time and place. Additionally, the OTT market is undergoing a predictable and continuous expansion and may eventually become mainstream media by replacing television (Singh, 2019).

Due to the progressions in digital and network technologies, the scope and enhancement of people's viewing experiences have been significantly broadened by OTT platforms and the population of individuals who opt for streaming services is on the rise, concomitantly with an increase in the duration of time dedicated to viewing streaming services (Shelton et al., 2016). Previous studies have presented evidence to support the notion that the motives driving individuals' television consumption are multifaceted, such as entertainment and passing time. Regarding the use and gratification theory (Ruggiero, 2000), consumers actively select OTT platforms to satisfy their own needs, and the motivation behind the adoption of OTT platforms is multiple and complex, which has attracted great attention from scholars and media companies. Moreover, Gen Z, as a "digital native" (Seemiller & Grace, 2016) is more easily to adopt new technology and prefer to watch video on new media platforms. Their viewing behaviour of them is regarded as mobility-centred and algorithmic-based (Podara et al., 2021). Due to the special characteristics of Gen Z, their motivation of them to choose and adopt an OTT platform will be different from the previous generations. And as the future main consumer of the streaming industry, finding out their consumption behaviour of them plays an important role in the whole market. Thus, the shift in individuals' patterns of television consumption, along with the underlying reasons for their preferences and utilization of OTT platforms for television viewing, has progressively garnered attention from academic researchers and media companies. And this attracted a group of scholars to dig into this question and there are several articles that focused on this problem about the factors that impact Gen Z to adopt OTT platforms. Nevertheless, there is a scarcity of scholarly investigations specifically delving into the utilization of OTT platforms by Gen Z. A number of studies simply regard OTT platforms as digital substitutes for conventional television and neglect the supplementary distinctive attributes they provide, such as social functionality. Moreover, certain investigations lack focused and extensive research aimed at the Generation Z cohort. Thus, there is still a lack of a more objective and holistic explanation of this issue, which a systematic review can offer.

This investigation seeks to rectify this void, furnishing supplementary assets for the scrutiny of alterations in media consumption, the media consumption habits of Gen Z, and providing invaluable perspectives for OTT platform enterprises and associated media establishments. The objective is to broaden their clientele and augment the caliber of their commodities and amenities in order to amplify profitability.

The whole systematic review is based on the core questions: what factors impact Generation Z to adopt OTT platforms, and what is the relationship between these factors and the adoption of OTT platforms?

Methods

The section includes three major sub-sections, namely search strategy and process, data abstraction, and analysis. And the current review will employ Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-analyses (PRISMA) to conduct this systematic review.

Search Strategy and Process

Information Resources

The main resources of literature of the current study are mainly from two main databases, namely Scopus and Web of Science, which include robust and huge studies from multiple fields, including media and communication studies and searching Google scholar to attain more resources.

Identification

The first stage of selecting relevant articles for a systematic review is the identification of keywords. In this step, the “OTT platform adoption,” “over-the-top platform adoption,” “OTT adoption”, “OTT platform”, “over-the-top platform” and “Generation Z”, “young generation”, “young”, “the youth” were implied as keywords to search relative articles.

In Scopus, there were 42 articles regarding the keywords of “over-the-top platform”, 144 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT platform”, and 3 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT adoption”. Besides, there was 1 article regarding the keywords of “OTT platform” and “Generation Z”, 1 regarding the keywords of “over-the-top platform” and “young”, and there were 9 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT platform” and “young”. And there were no results matching other keywords.

In Web of Science, there were 122 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT adoption”, 57 articles regarding the keywords of “over-the-top adoption”, 21 articles regarding the keywords of “over-the-top platform adoption”, 24 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT platform adoption”. And there was only 1 article regarding the keywords of “OTT platform adoption” and “young”, there were 5 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT adoption” and “young”, 3 articles regarding the keywords of “over-the-top adoption” and “young”.

And in Google scholar, there were 6 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT adoption” and “generation z”, 5 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT platform adoption” and “young”, 38 articles regarding the keywords of “OTT adoption” and “young”, 1 article regarding the keywords of “over-the-top adoption” and “generation z”, and 3 articles regarding the keywords of “over-the-top adoption” and “young”.

Screening

Firstly, to explore the motivation behind adopting the OTT platform among Gen Z, only the journal articles or research articles were selected, which can provide primary resources and empirical data. Then the published articles since 2019 were selected because of the commercial use of 5G in 2019, which greatly improved the development of the OTT platform. Meanwhile, open access was selected, which can legally gain the whole article. There were 56 articles from Scopus and 40 articles from Web of Science left for the next step. Moreover, after removed the duplicate articles, there are 38 articles from Scopus and 28 articles from Web of Science.

Eligibility

At this step, more detailed inclusion and exclusion criteria were employed for selection, and the title, abstracts, and whole content were looked through to ensure that the article was suitable for this research. Initially, the articles focused on OTT platforms and Generation Z. Moreover, the research explores the factors that impact the adoption of OTT platforms, which were based on empirical data. All the procedures are shown in Figure 1. Finally, four articles were included for review (See Table 1).

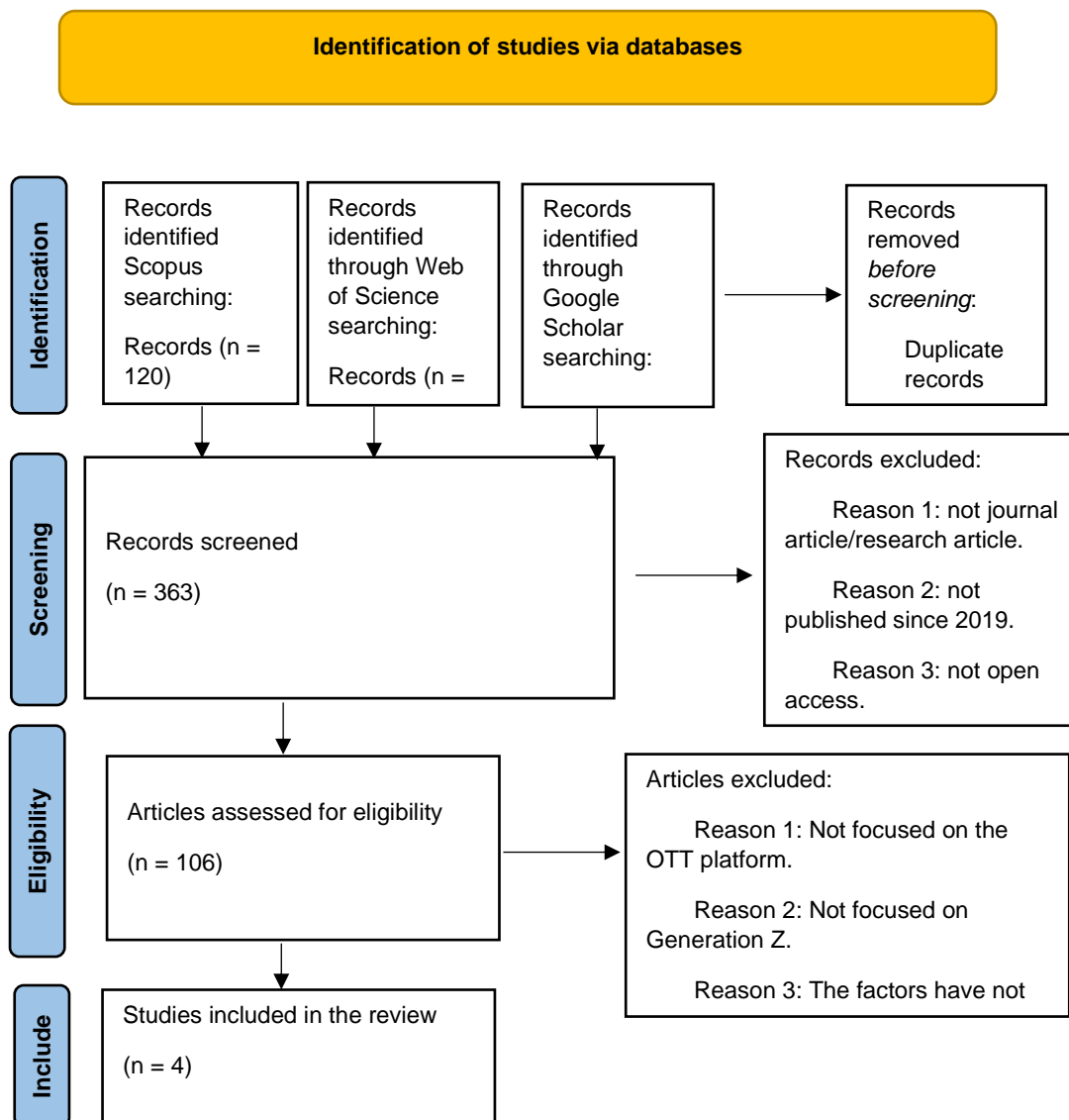
Data abstraction and analysis

This study implies quantitative methods to analyse the collected data from the group of four articles. Due to the limited resources, the factors that impact adoption are directly extracted, and it uses NVivo software for content analysis to answer the research questions. The author carefully extracted the factors via the coding method to create themes. Then we identified the relationship between these factors and OTT adoption by searching and analysing the keyword about the relationship, such as “positive” and “negative”. Eventually, there were four themes, namely content, convenience, cost, and social interaction.

Table 1
Included Journal Articles

Authors	Publish Time	Title
Ahn, Jungah	2022	Generation Z and Its OTT Usage Patterns: The Case of Netflix in Korea
Gupta, Amisha et al.	2022	Study on the Downfall of D2H and Growth of OTT in Millennials and Generation Z Post Covid
Mumpuni, Restu Ayu et al.	2021	Understanding the intention of generation Z on Netflix and Viu streaming services
Anand, M. G., & Srinivas, N.	2020	Understanding The Ott-Streaming Behaviour Among Generation Z Consumers During the Lockdown Period

Figure 1 PRISMA flow diagram of the study



Results

Generation Z's Characteristic

According to the Generation Theory, Generation Z is classified as those who were born in 1995-2010 and are in their 10s or 20s now (Mumpuni et al., 2021). In all these selected articles, the year 1995 is used as an identity index for selecting responses. Moreover, these researchers stated that younger generations and Generation Z are more inclined to choose OTT platforms for media consumption (Ajaegbu, Akoja & Akinsanya, 2022; Tengeh, 2021; Dimock, 2019). As major consumers of OTT platforms, it is indispensable to understand their consumption behaviour and motivation.

As for the characteristics of Generation Z, first and foremost, they were born and raised with internet technology, and their life is strongly connected to the network. It is normal for them to use the network to gain information and entertainment. They have already been used to daily access to the internet and prefer to communicate with others through digital mobile devices. Meanwhile, the accessibility, availability, and cheaper broadband data push individuals to move to OTT platforms, and Generation Z actively accepts and chooses the new technology to connect with their media consumption activities (Alčaković, 2019; Cilliers, 2017; Turner, 2015; Wood, 2013).

At the same time, due to the growth of the video-on-demand and preference for personalized lifestyles, and functions of OTT platforms fit these features, it gradually become a habit for Generation Z to watch TV content on OTT platforms. (Ahn, 2022) Furthermore, OTT platforms break the limitation of space and time and provide the probability to access content with multiple devices, which offers convenience for consumers.

Table 2

Characteristics of Generation Z

Authors	Title	Characteristics of Generation Z
Ahn, Jungah	Generation Z and Its OTT Usage Patterns: The Case of Netflix in Korea	“born in the middle or late 1990s” “enjoy diverse content without restriction of spate-time using various devices” “digital native” “mobile native” “actively accept new technologies that they incorporate in connection with their consumption activities” “have excellent skills for quite freely communicating with people around the world and utilizing multiple devices using social network services” “highly appreciates goal-oriented shared value” “personalized and customized lifestyle” “consumes more OTT content on a daily basis”
Gupta, Amisha et al.	Study on the Downfall of D2H and Growth of OTT in Millennials and Generation Z Post Covid	“2-25 years” “consumes more OTT content on a daily basis”
Mumpuni, Restu Ayu et al.	Understanding the intention of generation Z on Netflix and Viu streaming services	“multitasking” “related to a virtual world” “familiar with technology” “born after 1995” “born and raised up with technology” “prolific use of social media” “stream more content” “seek experience and formed by peer and social influencers on products their desires” “communicates mostly through video” “not only use the content of internet, but they also create and control it” “use multiple mobile devices for various purposes”
Anand, M. G., & Srinivas, N.	Understanding The Ott- Streaming Behaviour Among Generation Z Consumers During the Lockdown Period	“Age 11 to 25 years of age” “key buyer fragment”

Factors impacting the adoption of OTT platforms

Digitalization has changed and reshaped the consumption of the media industry, particularly television. Many consumers are moving to over-the-top platforms, such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, iQiyi, and Tencent video. Furthermore, since 2019, the 5G internet has provided more convenient and effective conditions for individuals to access media content and has proven the adoption consumption of OTT platforms. Especially Generation Z, who has grown with the internet and digital technology, it is easier to adopt new technology.

According to the use and gratification theory, people actively choose a kind of media to consume to meet their needs. Several factors impact Generation Z to adopt OTT platforms, such as content, convenience, cost, and social relation. *Content*: content plays a significant role in OTT platform adoption. All these articles stated that the diversity of content has an important influence on Generation Z's adoption of OTT platforms (Sadana, & Sharma, 2020). The OTT platforms provide various choices of content for consumers, especially the original streaming content, which attracts young users to subscribe to OTT platforms (Ahn, 2022; Gupta et al., 2022; Mumpuni, et al., 2021; Anand & Srinivas, 2020). Moreover, high-quality content is the initial factor that decides users to subscribe and continue to subscribe to OTT platforms (Gupta et al., 2022). And due to the AI technology and big data employed in services, the platforms can offer recommendation systems and customized content to fit different user's preferences, which coincides with Generation Z's personalized lifestyle (Ahn, 2022; Gupta et al., 2022; Anand & Srinivas, 2020). Furthermore, since Netflix released its first original series, binge-watching is growing popular. Binge-watching means continuously watching several episodes in one setting. And this phenomenon improves the subscription of OTT platforms in return (Ahn, 2022; Gupta et al., 2022).

Convenience: Easily using various devices to access content without the limitation of space and time provides convenience, and user-friendly interface strengthens the feeling of perceived ease of use, which improves the intention of subscription to OTT platforms (Ahn, 2022; Gupta et al., 2022; Mumpuni, et al., 2021; Anand & Srinivas, 2020; Sadana, & Sharma, 2020; Teerasombut, Lopansri, Noda, Masathienwon, & Rungtrakulchai, 2022).

Cost: Compared to traditional TV, the fee of subscribing to OTT platforms is cheaper and more affordable. At the same, users are free to start, stop and restart to subscribe to platform services. There are different payment patterns and methods for attaining different services, which are decided by the users themselves and sharing account makes users be able to log on to different devices at the same time, which enables consumers to share or families and friends (Ahn, 2022; Gupta et al., 2022; Mumpuni, et al., 2021; Anand & Srinivas, 2020; Sadana, & Sharma, 2020).

Social relation: OTT platforms also provide chances for consumers to communicate with peers and friends. For example, users can view what their friends are watching, and then the platforms recommend the same content for users, which expands the social interaction activities (Ahn, 2022; Gupta et al., 2022; Mumpuni, et al., 2021; Anand & Srinivas, 2020; Meng & Leung, 2021; Kamble, Desai & Mehendale, 2021).

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