

Youngsters' Perceptions of OTT Platforms: An SPSS-Based Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) Study

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Abstract: Over-the-top (OTT) streaming platforms have become a routine part of entertainment consumption, particularly among youngsters. With multiple platforms competing for attention, it has become important to understand how young viewers perceive different OTT services. This study explores youngsters' perceptions of Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, JioHotstar, Zee5, Apple TV Plus, and SonyLIV using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) carried out in SPSS. By analysing attribute-based evaluations, the study develops a perceptual map that clearly illustrates similarities and differences among platforms. The results highlight distinct perceptual groupings between premium, content-focused platforms and value-driven, regionally oriented platforms, offering useful insights for OTT service providers targeting the youth segment.

Keywords: OTT Platforms, Youth Perception, Consumer Behaviour, Multidimensional Scaling, Perceptual Mapping, SPSS.

INTRODUCTION

The way youngsters consume entertainment has changed significantly with the rise of OTT platforms. Traditional television viewing is increasingly being replaced by on-demand streaming services that offer flexibility, personalized recommendations, and exclusive content. Platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, JioHotstar, Zee5, Apple TV Plus, and SonyLIV are actively competing to attract young audiences by continuously expanding their content libraries and improving user experience.

As the number of available OTT services grows, youngsters naturally develop perceptions about each platform. These perceptions play a key role in influencing subscription choices and long-term platform loyalty. Therefore, understanding how OTT platforms are perceived relative to one another is essential. Perceptual mapping using Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) provides a simple yet powerful method to visually represent these perceptions and competitive relationships.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Consumer perception is a key determinant of consumer choice and behaviour, particularly in service-based industries. Kotler and Keller (2016) define perception as the process through which individuals select, organize, and interpret information to form meaningful impressions of brands. In digital services such as OTT platforms, perceptions are shaped by both functional attributes—such as content variety, pricing, and ease of use—and experiential factors including personalization, interface design, and overall viewing experience.

The rapid expansion of OTT platforms has significantly transformed media consumption patterns, especially among youngsters. Prior studies indicate that young consumers

prefer OTT platforms due to on-demand accessibility, flexibility in viewing schedules, multi-device compatibility, and the availability of exclusive original content. Factors such as streaming quality, recommendation accuracy, subscription cost, and content diversity have been found to strongly influence platform preference and continued usage. These attributes collectively contribute to how youngsters differentiate between competing OTT services.

In the Indian context, the growth of OTT platforms has been further accelerated by affordable internet access and the increasing availability of regional and multilingual content. Research highlights that while international platforms are often perceived as premium and content-driven, domestic platforms gain preference through affordability and strong regional programming. This duality has created a competitive environment where platforms are positioned differently in the minds of young viewers.

Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) is a widely used technique for analysing brand positioning and consumer perceptions. According to Hair et al. (2019), MDS converts similarity or dissimilarity data into a spatial representation, enabling clear visualization of competitive relationships. Borg and Groenen (2005) emphasize that perceptual maps derived from MDS help identify brand clusters and underlying perceptual dimensions. Despite growing research on OTT adoption, limited studies have applied perceptual mapping techniques to compare multiple OTT platforms, particularly in the Indian youth segment. The present study addresses this gap by using SPSS-based MDS to visually analyse youngsters' perceptions of leading OTT platforms.

3. Objectives of the Study

- The study is conducted with the following objectives:
- To understand how youngsters perceive major OTT platforms.
- To develop a perceptual map of OTT platforms using Multidimensional Scaling in SPSS.
- To identify competitive clusters and relative positioning among OTT platforms.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive research design was adopted for the study. Respondents were asked to evaluate each OTT platform

using a seven-point Likert scale based on selected attributes such as content variety, original programming, price and value for money, user interface, streaming quality, availability of regional content, and recommendation accuracy.

The collected data were analysed using SPSS software. Mean scores for each attribute were computed for all platforms. A proximity matrix based on Euclidean distances was created and used as input for Multidimensional Scaling (Analyze → Scale → Multidimensional Scaling). Metric MDS was applied to obtain a two-dimensional solution, and the stress value was examined to assess the adequacy of the model.

RESULTS AND PERCEPTUAL MAPPING

The Multidimensional Scaling analysis resulted in a two-dimensional perceptual map with an acceptable stress value, indicating a satisfactory model fit. As MDS does not assign inherent meaning to the dimensions, interpretation was carried out by carefully examining platform positions and the dominant attributes associated with each dimension.

Dimension 1 was interpreted as 'Content Sophistication / Premium Orientation'. Platforms positioned higher on this dimension are strongly associated with high-quality originals, superior streaming quality, and a refined user interface. Netflix and Apple TV Plus are prominently placed along this dimension, reflecting their premium brand image.

Dimension 2 was interpreted as 'Affordability and Regional Orientation'. This dimension captures perceptions related to price value and the availability of regional or local content. Platforms such as JioHotstar, Zee5, and SonyLIV show stronger positioning along this dimension, indicating their appeal to value-conscious viewers seeking localized content.

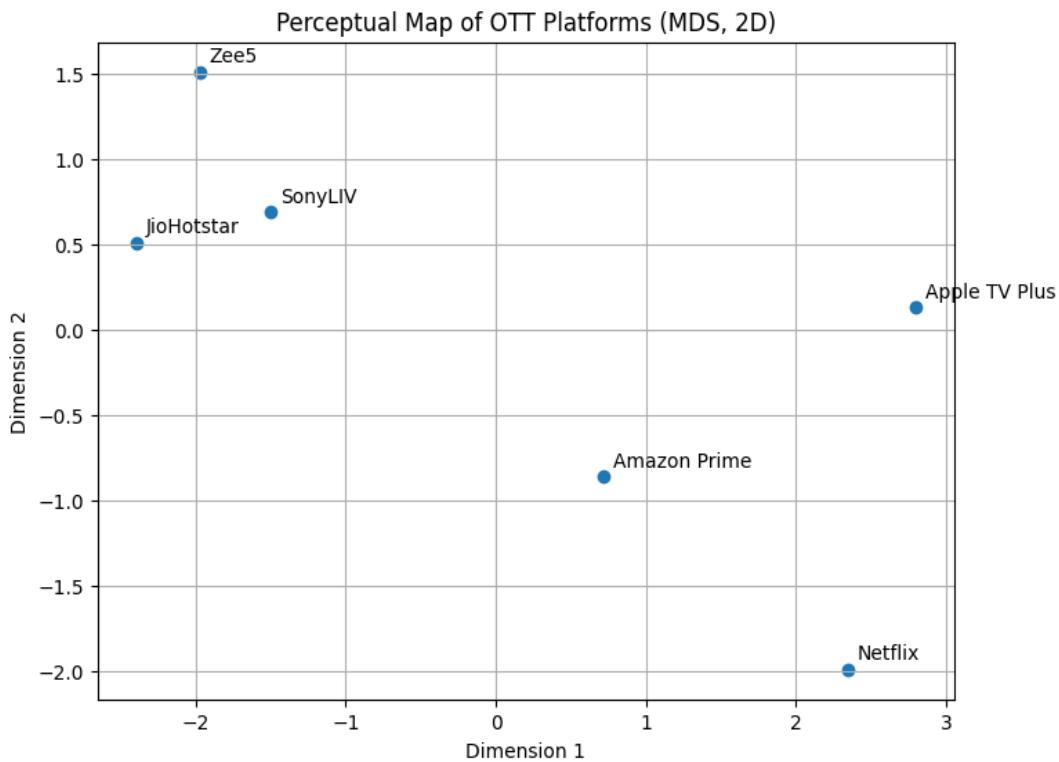
Table 1: Interpretation of MDS Dimensions Based on Dominant Attributes

Dimension	Key Attributes	Interpretation
Dimension 1	Originals, Streaming Quality, UI/UX	Content Sophistication / Premium Orientation
Dimension 2	Price Value, Regional Content	Affordability and Regional Orientation

Figure 1: Perceptual Map of OTT Platforms Using Multidimensional Scaling (SPSS)

Dimension 1: Content Sophistication / Premium Orientation

Dimension 2: Affordability and Regional Orientation



DISCUSSION

The Multidimensional Scaling (MDS) results provide clear insights into how youngsters perceive and differentiate OTT platforms based on key service attributes. The structured positioning observed in the perceptual map indicates that young viewers form consistent mental representations of OTT services, supporting consumer behaviour theories that emphasize the role of perception in service choice and brand evaluation.

The first dimension, interpreted as *Content Sophistication / Premium Orientation*, highlights the importance of high-quality original content, superior streaming performance, and refined user interface design. The strong positioning of Netflix and Apple TV Plus along this dimension suggests that youngsters associate these platforms with premium viewing experiences and content excellence. This finding aligns with earlier research that links global OTT platforms with strong brand prestige and exclusive programming. The second dimension, labelled *Affordability and Regional Orientation*, reflects the significance of price sensitivity and localized content in shaping platform perceptions. Platforms such as JioHotstar, Zee5, and SonyLIV are perceived as more accessible and culturally relevant, indicating their appeal to value-conscious youngsters seeking regional programming. Amazon Prime Video occupies a relatively central position, suggesting a balanced perception that combines both premium content and value-for-money attributes.

Overall, the perceptual clusters reveal important strategic implications for OTT providers. Premium platforms benefit from differentiation through content quality, while domestic platforms gain advantage

through affordability and regional focus. The findings reinforce the usefulness of perceptual mapping as a strategic tool for understanding competitive positioning and youth preferences in the evolving OTT market.

CONCLUSION

This study offers valuable insights into youngsters' perceptions of major OTT platforms through the application of SPSS-based Multidimensional Scaling (MDS). The perceptual map clearly demonstrates that young viewers form distinct impressions of OTT services based on key attributes such as content quality, pricing, user experience, and regional relevance. Rather than viewing platforms as homogeneous, youngsters perceive clear competitive differences that influence their platform preferences and subscription choices.

The findings indicate a perceptual divide between premium, content-driven platforms and value-oriented, regionally focused platforms. Netflix and Apple TV Plus are strongly associated with high-quality originals and a premium viewing experience, while JioHotstar, Zee5, and SonyLIV are perceived as affordable platforms with strong regional content appeal. Amazon Prime Video occupies a balanced position, reflecting a mix of premium content and value-for-money attributes. These perceptual groupings highlight the importance of differentiated positioning strategies in the highly competitive OTT market.

From a managerial perspective, the study underscores the relevance of perceptual mapping in guiding strategic decisions related to branding, content development, and pricing. Academically, it contributes to existing literature by demonstrating the effectiveness of MDS as a visual and analytical tool for understanding consumer

perceptions in the Indian OTT context. While the study is limited by sample size and selected attributes, future research may expand the scope by incorporating additional variables, broader samples, or longitudinal approaches. Overall, the study confirms that MDS-based perceptual mapping provides a meaningful framework for analysing competitive positioning in the evolving OTT ecosystem.

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