

# Caged, helpless but not bored: consumption values derived from over-the-top platforms during pandemic

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## Abstract

**Purpose** – The use of over-the-top (OTT) platforms grew substantially after the declaration of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. With the pandemic receding, there is a concern that users may not continue with their subscriptions. To counter this, OTT service providers must strategize proactively to retain and acquire new users once the pandemic abates. Positing that understanding the consumption values that users ascribe to OTT platform usage can provide useful customer retention insights, the purpose of this paper is to use the theory of consumption value (TCV) to study the values that users derived from their use of OTT following the onset of the pandemic.

**Design/methodology/approach** – The mixed-method approach is used to collect qualitative and quantitative data. Analysis of qualitative responses collected through interviews of 12 current OTT platform users helped identify two categories of OTT platform-specific values: attribute-level and benefit-based. Next, the study examined the association of values thus identified with one another, as well as with continued intentions to use OTT platforms, by analyzing data collected from 371 existing users.

**Findings** – The findings indicated that functional value quality and social value, representing the attribute-level values, were positively associated with two benefit-based values – functional value price and emotional value (EMV). Next, EMV was not only associated with intentions but also partially mediated the association of attribute-level values with intentions. Premium subscription purchased and increased viewing time were confirmed to have moderating effects on the association between attribute-level and benefit-based values.

**Originality/value** – The study is amongst the foremost research initiatives to examine consumption values derived from OTT platform usage after the onset of the pandemic. Its novelty also comes from its identifying OTT platform-specific consumption values for the first time and adding a new dimension to the TCV by examining the interplay of these values in the OTT platform context.

**Keywords** Consumption values, OTT platforms, Pandemic, Premium subscriptions, Theory of consumption values

**Paper type** Research paper



## 1. Introduction

Pandemics and other disease outbreaks tend to change people's consumption patterns and lifestyles, as observed in the case of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS) and, more recently, in the case of COVID-19 (Baker *et al.*, 2020; Gössling *et al.*, 2020; Hoque *et al.*, 2020). Many studies have investigated and confirmed unusual consumer behavior during the pandemic, such as panic buying (Cohen, 2020; Laato *et al.*, 2020). Apart from the panicked stockpiling of essentials, academic and other studies have also noted a rise since the onset of the pandemic in the consumption of digital media, including through over-the-top (OTT) platforms such as Netflix (Zeitchik, 2020). In particular context of OTT platforms, the beginning of the pandemic saw an increase in viewing time of 12%, with 16 million new subscriptions to these platforms immediately after lockdown announcements worldwide (Dutta, 2020; Zeitchik, 2020). The pandemic presented a unique business opportunity on which most OTT service providers capitalized by formulating strategies and context-based approaches to attract and engage users. For instance, Disney collaborated with Hotstar, an OTT service provider in India with more than eight million premium subscribers, to increase its market share (TechCrunch, 2020; The Economic Times, 2020).

Given the recent findings on how the uncertainty created by the pandemic has increased the anxiety and sense of burden amongst individuals (Galea *et al.*, 2020; Brailovskaia and Margraf, 2020), driving them to use online media to offset their negative feelings (Brailovskaia and Margraf, 2021; Gao *et al.*, 2020), we suggest that OTT platforms were used as a key coping mechanism to counter pandemic-induced anxiety and isolation. This contention, quite logically, leads to the question of whether the increased use of OTT platforms, triggered by the pandemic, will continue to manifest as a long-term behavioral change or whether it will turn out to have been a temporary coping mechanism. More to the point, will subscriptions continue to be renewed after the pandemic-related changes fade, and will the increased usage persist? That consumers might reduce media consumption drastically as the pandemic recedes, and life returns to normal seems quite plausible, especially given recent reports of a decrease in subscriptions; a recent media report revealed that during the first quarter of 2021, Netflix added four million new subscribers worldwide, recording the lowest year-on-year rise for that quarter in the past four years (The Hindu, 2021).

Continued usage and added subscriptions are commercially crucial for OTT platforms since, in their business model, content spending is amortized relatively slowly. As an example, in the case of Netflix, 90% of the value of any series is amortized in about four years (Forbes, 2020). As a result, OTT service providers always endeavor to preempt any decline in usage and proactively strategize to protect their profit margins and retain users. The need to retain users and usage is relevant in the present situation as the world emerges from the pandemic. We, therefore, suggest that, at this point in time, OTT service providers need to understand post-pandemic consumers' dispositions toward their platforms, particularly the drivers of customer stickiness, in order to plan both effective consumer/user retention and new user acquisition strategies.

OTT platforms have been of significant interest to behavioral researchers over the past few years, leading to interesting findings on consumer behavior in relation to OTT platforms. However, these findings are related to pre-pandemic behavior and may not be generalizable to the post-pandemic period, which has brought with it substantial behavioral changes and alterations in consumption patterns. Past research has examined aspects such as consumer experience, enjoyment, engagement and satisfaction (See-To *et al.*, 2012), patterns of OTT platform usage (Baccarne *et al.*, 2013), advertising effectiveness related to OTT platforms (Kim *et al.*, 2017), subscription pricing (Shin *et al.*, 2016), video delivery choices (Prince and Greenstein, 2017), willingness to pay (Kim *et al.*, 2017), adoption of OTT platforms (Sujata *et al.*, 2015) and perceptions of nonsubscribers (Tsai, 2022), leaving other aspects such as value perception less explored.

Noting that post-pandemic consumer behavior toward OTT platforms needs to be examined with urgency and that, even before the pandemic, consumer perceptions of the value of OTT platforms were underexplored, we examine consumer disposition toward OTT

platforms following the onset of the pandemic by examining the forms of value that consumers or users derived from OTT platform use during the pandemic. By examining these value forms and how they drive individuals' ongoing intention to use these platforms, we explore what motivates such use on a sustained basis. By doing so, we aim to uncover the factors that can be leveraged by OTT service providers to secure continued user engagement.

To examine the value derived from OTT platform usage, we utilized the seminal theory of consumption values (TCV; [Sheth et al., 1991](#)), which is useful in understanding consumer choices and what motivates specific choices ([Sheth et al., 1991](#)). The suitability of the TCV is grounded in the fact that consumption values are key drivers of consumer choices, as noted by recent studies ([Kaur et al., 2021](#)). The TVC has been successfully used to explicate consumer choice behavior in both digital and traditional environments ([Kushwah et al., 2019](#); [Talwar et al., 2020a](#); [Wang et al., 2021b](#); [Wong et al., 2019](#)). At the same time, we draw upon recent studies (e.g. [Mäntymäki et al., 2019](#)) to suggest that the values proposed by the TCV may not be independent, as originally postulated by its proponents ([Sheth et al., 1991](#)); rather, they may interact in a sort of antecedent hierarchy. Uncovering the interplay of values can provide a more granular understanding of the drivers of consumer choices and their complex motivations. Following recent studies that have identified and measured context-specific values (e.g. [Kaur et al., 2021](#)), instead of examining classic TCV values, we have attempted to identify and measure OTT platform-specific values without diluting the theory's original conceptualizations and nomenclature. Finally, to capture the commercial concerns of OTT service providers about revenue streams and usage intensity, we consider the role of premium subscriptions purchased and increased viewing time as factors in driving consumption values derived from OTT platform usage during the pandemic.

We seek to examine the following research questions (RQs).

- RQ1. What are the OTT platform-specific consumption values derived from their usage?
- RQ2. How, if at all, do the OTT platform-specific consumption values interact with each other?
- RQ3. How are the OTT platform-specific consumption values associated with continued intentions to use (CITUs) OTT platforms?
- RQ4. How, if at all, did the fact of a *premium subscription purchased* and *increased viewing time* following the onset of the pandemic impact consumption values derived from OTT platform use?

We addressed these questions by first conducting a qualitative study and following it up with quantitative data collection, as suggested in the prior literature ([Harrison, 2013](#)). To begin with, we conducted telephone interviews with existing OTT platform users to collect qualitative data. Analysis of the interview transcripts served as the basis for identifying OTT platform-specific consumption values. Notably, content analysis of qualitative responses helped us understand that the users categorized the values they derived from OTT platforms on the basis of (1) features/characteristics and (2) associated benefits. Building upon this finding, we drew upon the study by [Mäntymäki et al. \(2019\)](#), which explores consumption values derived from digital content services, to classify these values as either attribute- or benefit-based consumption values, proposing attribute-level consumption values as the antecedents of benefit-based consumption values to capture the interplay among values.

Based on the qualitative data, we identified conditional, functional value quality (FVQ) and epistemic and social values (SVs) to represent the attribute-level values derived from OTT platforms. Similarly, we identified functional value price (FVP) and emotional value (EMV) to capture the benefit-based values derived from OTT platforms. Next, we analyzed data from 371 users to test the hypothesized associations among values and of those values with the dependent variable, CITU. To offer deeper understanding, we examined the direct

association of values with CITUs and the mediating role of benefit-based values between attribute-level values and intentions. Finally, to capture the impact of the pandemic, we examined the moderating effect on the hypothesized associations of premium subscriptions purchased and increased viewing frequency following the onset of the pandemic.

Our study makes two major contributions. First, it adapts the TCV to the OTT platform context and adds a new theoretical dimension by categorizing the OTT platform-specific values into attribute-level and benefit-based values. Second, it is the first study to measure choice behavior toward OTT platforms in the face of extrinsic events, such as the pandemic, by capturing consumption values during the health crisis and by measuring their variation following the purchase of a premium subscription and increased viewing time following the onset of the pandemic. In sum, our findings contribute useful insights into OTT platform consumption behavior in the face of restrictions imposed due to the pandemic.

## 2. Theoretical background

### 2.1 Theory of consumption values

This article adopts the TCV as its framework to examine CITUs OTT platforms due to the values perceived to be derived from their usage. From the TCV perspective, consumers' choices depend on some or all of the five identified consumption values: functional, emotional, social, conditional and epistemic (Sheth *et al.*, 1991). These values capture the perceived utility derived from any product/service basis, its functional reliability, ability to stimulate emotions, features that yield social gains, ability to give utility in a specific situation, and capacity to infuse newness, stimulate interest, and gratify the need of knowledge (Biswas and Roy, 2015; Kaur *et al.*, 2021; Mäntymäki and Salo, 2015; Sheth *et al.*, 1991; Talwar *et al.*, 2020a; Teng, 2018).

We chose the TCV for three reasons. First, the TCV offers clearly demarcated consumption values, which help in mapping consumers' decision-making (Kaur *et al.*, 2018). Understanding such demarcation is important for OTT service providers, as they would benefit from knowing why individuals use OTT platforms and why they watch certain content while ignoring others. Additionally, examining consumption values can be informative for service providers seeking to attract new subscribers and retain existing users through more interactive and engaging content. Moreover, since OTT platforms strive to balance content and design (Hamari *et al.*, 2017; Mäntymäki and Salo, 2015), a greater understanding of consumers' values may help service providers make better trade-off decisions. Second, the TCV helps explain the drivers of the formation of a favorable attitude toward a product (Choe and Kim, 2018) and facilitates context-based theorization (Mäntymäki *et al.*, 2019). Therefore, the TCV helps explore the drivers of continued usage intentions toward OTT platforms, which is a product typically different from a one-time purchase. With a subscription, understanding drivers of perceived value can help reinforce them at the right time and trigger a positive renewal response as and when the subscription comes up for renewal. Third, previous studies have successfully used the TCV to examine user behavior in online contexts, such as online gaming (Teng, 2018), the virtual world (Mäntymäki and Salo, 2015), digital content (Kim and Kim, 2017) and mobile technologies (Yang and Lin, 2017). The proven efficacy of the TCV in theorizing and examining behaviors in digital contexts confirms the legitimacy of its use for OTT platforms.

Since we aimed to examine OTT platform-specific consumption values through the novel application of the TCV, we first explored the relevant aspects by interviewing current OTT platform users telephonically to understand their perspectives and the drivers of choice in the OTT platform context. The details of the qualitative study are discussed in Section 4. We analyzed the contents of the interviews to identify four values – conditional, FVQ, epistemic and SVs – representing attribute-level values and two values – FVP and EVs – representing benefit-based values, as described in Table 1.

**Table 1.**  
Description of the OTT  
platform-specific  
consumption values

Consumption value	Description
<i>Attribute-level consumption value</i>	
Conditional value (CV)	CV captures the value that would cause existing users to use their respective OTT platforms more often. Users derive this perceived value from factors such as the option to download content to watch later, freedom to skip advertisements and content streaming without much buffering
Functional value quality (FVQ)	FVQ represents the value that existing users associate with their respective OTT platforms when they deliver expected performance in terms of the streaming and resolution quality, availability of the desired content and ubiquity
Epistemic value (EPV)	EPV gauges the perceived value existing users derive from their respective OTT platforms, offering them opportunities to acquire information about any content through the preview facility before actually viewing it. They also perceive that their respective OTT platforms offer EPV by enabling them to gain information about related content
Social value (SV)	SV captures the social aspects of OTT platform use for existing users, wherein they perceive that their respective platforms offer value by enabling them to gain social approval, helping them to stand out among their peers and providing them with a talking point in social settings
<i>Benefit-based consumption value</i>	
Functional value price (FVP)	FVP represents the perceived value that existing OTT platform users derive from their respective platforms when they receive access to free content such as movies and events
Emotional value (EMV)	EMV captures the perceived value that existing OTT platform users derive from their respective platforms on account of the enjoyment, excitement and pleasure they experience watching the available content, such as web series

### 3. Hypotheses development

Our conceptual model, presented in [Figure 1](#), comprises six consumption values, of which four attribute-level values, namely, conditional, FVQ, epistemic and SV, act as antecedents of two benefit-based values, FVP and EV. The anticipated association of the values with each other is rooted in the prior literature ([Gutman, 1982](#); [Mäntymäki et al., 2019](#)). The outcome variable of interest is CITUs, which captures the continued usage intentions of existing users of OTT platforms. Both sets of values, attribute-level and benefit-based, are hypothesized to be associated with intentions. In addition, since there is *no a priori* work on this topic, we attempted to develop a clearer understanding of the anticipated associations by examining the mediation effects of FVP and EV, i.e., benefit-based values, on the association of attribute-level values with intentions. Furthermore, since OTT platform usage can be affected by personal and individual differences (e.g. [Khalid et al., 2022, 2023](#)), we proposed a moderation effect of premium subscription purchased and increased viewing frequency following the onset of the pandemic. Finally, age, gender and educational background are used as control variables.

#### 3.1 Attribute-level values and benefit-based values

We propose that four consumption values – conditional, FVQ, social and epistemic – represent attribute-level values. The classification of values using attributes is based on the features or affordances associated with OTT platforms, such as uninterrupted streaming, downloadable content, ability to skip advertisements, content quality, resolution quality, ubiquity, novel content, content that satisfies curiosity, social context and social connection. In addition, we classify FVP and EV as benefit-based values that reflect the monetary benefit of viewing free content and the nonmonetary benefit of hedonic pleasure and enjoyment that comes from the entertainment provided by

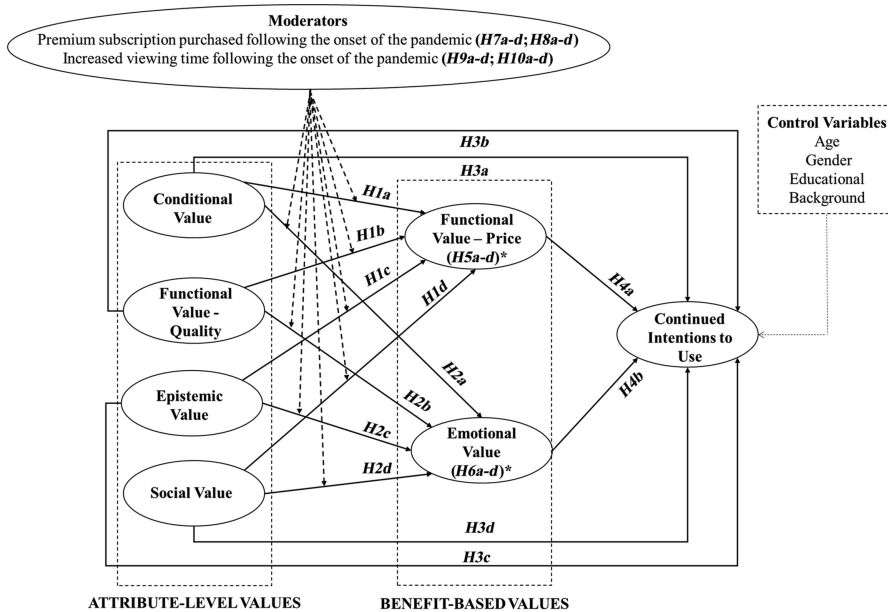


Figure 1. Research model

OTT platforms. Since these values were associated with using OTT platforms through our qualitative study, we determined that their interactions were of interest. Thus, following the study by Mäntymäki *et al.* (2019), we propose the attribute-level values as antecedents of benefit-based values. This is further supported by the means–end chain model (Gutman, 1982), which states that consumers tend to think about various products in terms of their attributes and the favorable outcomes of using them, i.e., their benefits. Although there is no literature on OTT platform-specific consumption values or their mutual interactions, based on extensive existing evidence, we suggest it is useful to understand the impact of attribute-level values on those values based on monetary benefit (here represented by FVP) and those based on nonmonetary benefit (here represented by EV). Furthermore, we anticipate that greater attribute-level value will enhance both benefit-based values. Hence, we propose the following hypotheses.

(1) *For monetary consumption value, represented by FVP*

H1. Attribute-level consumption values, represented by (a) conditional, (b) FVQ, (c) epistemic and (d) SVs, have a positive association with monetary consumption value, represented by FVP.

(2) *For nonmonetary consumption value, represented by EV*

H2. Attribute-level consumption values, represented by (a) conditional, (b) FVQ, (c) epistemic and (d) SVs, have a positive association with nonmonetary consumption value, represented by EV.

3.2 Attribute-level values, benefit-based values and continued intentions to use

Intention to use is the intent of individuals to adopt and consume a given product (Agag and El-Masry, 2016). Past studies have examined a similar variable – intention to adopt

(e.g. [Teo et al., 2003](#)). Notably, the scholarly literature segregates pre- and post-adoption usage intentions; post-adoption usage intention captures intent to continue use and is popularly called continuance intention in the information system literature (e.g. [Ashrafi et al., 2022](#); [Foroughi et al., 2019](#); [Wang et al., 2019](#)). Existing scholarship has examined the value–intentions relationship. For instance, [Talwar et al. \(2020b\)](#) revealed that purchase intentions were impacted by FVQ, social, epistemic and conditional values (CVs) derived from online travel agencies. Similarly, [Kaur et al. \(2021\)](#) confirmed the impact of epistemic, conditional and SVs on the intention to purchase from food delivery apps (FDAs), and [Suki \(2016\)](#) confirmed the impact of FVQ on the intention to save the environment. Similar findings have been reported for different online and offline contexts; studies have found the association between intentions and CV ([Biswas and Roy, 2015](#); [Kushwah et al., 2019](#)), epistemic value (EPV) ([Kushwah et al., 2019](#); [Khan and Mohsin, 2017](#)) and SV ([Teng, 2018](#); [Dhir et al., 2018](#)).

Although there are no existing OTT platform studies, it is plausible to extrapolate the findings in the digital domain to the present context, thereby suggesting that the four OTT platform-specific attribute-level values can enhance the intention of existing users to continue use. This extrapolation is supported by past findings indicating that aspects such as quality, novelty and social networks are important considerations for both current and potential OTT platform users. For instance, the scholarly literature offers evidence to support the following: (a) the quality of OTT platforms is an important concern for users ([Chen, 2019](#)); (b) people perceive OTT platforms as novel media compared to traditional television ([Kim et al., 2016](#)) and (c) consumers may develop social networks through OTT platforms ([Kim et al., 2017](#)). In sum, TCV-based studies in various contexts, as well as the OTT literature, have found quality, novelty and SV as important considerations in OTT platform usage. These support our positing that attribute-level values derived from OTT platforms positively impact the intention to use these. Hence, we suggest the following:

*H3.* Attribute-level consumption values, represented by (a) conditional, (b) FVQ, (c) epistemic and (d) SVs, have a positive association with CITU OTT platforms.

As with attribute-level values, we anticipate the positive association of benefit-based values with CITU OTT platforms. The existing literature on consumer behavior in general, the TCV in different contexts and OTT platform-specific findings offer overarching support for our expectations of both monetary and nonmonetary benefits. For example, the past literature on consumer behavior suggests the dominant role of price in the choice of any product (e.g. [Chenavaz and Jasimuddin, 2017](#)). Similarly, TCV-based studies support the association of FVP with intention in online ([Talwar et al., 2020b](#); [Kaur et al., 2021](#)) and offline contexts ([Jamrozy and Lawonk, 2017](#)). Similar support is available for the association of EV and intentions (e.g. [Gonçalves et al., 2016](#)). Importantly, TCV-based studies focusing on the digital context, such as online social-media brand communities ([Kaur et al., 2018](#)) and the virtual world ([Mäntymäki and Salo, 2015](#)), have also confirmed this linkage. Although the association of FVP and EV with continued intention to use has not previously been examined for OTT platforms, the existing evidence provides a sufficient basis for us to speculate an association between these two benefit-based values and continued intention to use OTT platforms. Hence, we propose the following:

*H4.* Monetary benefit-based consumption values, represented by (a) FVP and (b) EV, have a positive association with CITU OTT platforms.

### *3.3 Mediation effect of functional value price and emotional value*

Apart from the intuitively plausible direct associations, we examine certain intervening mechanisms that may impact the values–intention linkages. Specifically, drawing upon

existing TCV-based studies (e.g. Tandon *et al.*, 2021; Molina-Castillo *et al.*, 2020), we contemplate the mediation effect of benefit-based values in the relationship between the attribute-level values and intentions. Expanding on the existing literature, Tandon *et al.* (2021) confirmed that functional, social status and preference values mediated visibility intentions toward FDAs relationship, and Molina-Castillo *et al.* (2020) revealed that functional value mediated learning costs' intention to use payment apps on mobile linkage. Similarly, the mediation effect of values (e.g. social and emotional) on environmental knowledge – the intention to visit green hotels association – was uncovered by Wang *et al.* (2018) and Wang *et al.* (2021a) confirmed the same for monetary value in the case of celebrity avatars-game-item purchase intentions relationship. We, therefore, propose the following:

(1) *For monetary consumption value, represented by FVP*

H5. FVP mediates the association between (a) CV, (b) FVQ, (c) EPV and (d) SV and the CITU OTT platforms.

(2) *For nonmonetary consumption value, represented by EV*

H6. EV mediates the association between (a) CV, (b) FVQ, (c) EPV and (d) SV and the CITU OTT platforms.

### *3.4 Moderation effect of premium subscription purchased and increased viewing frequency following the onset of the pandemic*

Premium subscriptions help digital content services providers generate revenue (Mäntymäki *et al.*, 2019). Scholars have discussed various factors that motivate users to opt for a premium subscription to online platforms for music (Wagner *et al.*, 2014), games, social networks (Hamari *et al.*, 2020) and the virtual world (Mäntymäki and Salo, 2013). The literature has also explored premium subscriptions in the case of communities and user contributions (Oestreicher-Singer and Zalmanson, 2013), premium fit (Wagner *et al.*, 2014) and the influence of service-quality perceptions (Hamari *et al.*, 2017).

Given the discussions around premium subscriptions, we suggest that in the OTT platform context there is a need to understand the moderation effect of premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic on the association between the attribute-level and benefit-based consumption values. Similarly, even though there is no *a priori* evidence, we speculate that increased OTT platform viewing time following the onset of the pandemic is also likely to impact the strength of the association between the two categories of values examined in our study. Our speculation rests on the assumption that the greater the usage of OTT platforms, the more accumulated experience to which different consumption values can be assigned. We only venture to suggest that these moderators will impact the associations between the two categories of values and do not presume to predict the direction of the change. Hence, we propose the following:

H7. The association of each attribute-level consumption value – (a) conditional, (b) functional quality, (c) epistemic and (d) social – with FVP is moderated by premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic, such that the strength of the positive association is changed.

H8. The association of each attribute-level consumption value – (a) conditional, (b) functional quality, (c) epistemic and (d) social – with EV is moderated by premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic, such that the strength of the positive association is changed.

- H9. The association of each attribute-level consumption value – (a) conditional, (b) functional quality, (c) epistemic and (d) social – with FVP is moderated by increased viewing time following the onset of the pandemic, such that the strength of the positive association is changed.
- H10. The association of each attribute-level consumption value – (a) conditional, (b) functional quality, (c) epistemic and (d) social – with EV is moderated by increased viewing time following the onset of the pandemic, such that the strength of the positive association is changed.

### 3.5 Control variables

Studies using the TCV framework have used several variables to control for consumer heterogeneity, ensure the robustness of the findings and test that the outcomes are not confounded by the covariance of one variable with others. For instance, [Carlson et al. \(2019\)](#) used usage intensity, social network size and income as control variables in a study of brand relationship performance in social media brand communities. [Pappas et al. \(2017\)](#) controlled for time spent on mobile games and gender in a study of user experience related to mobile gaming apps. [Mäntymäki et al. \(2019\)](#) used gender and age, along with the daily time spent on the digital content service, as control variables. Consistent with existing evidence (e.g. [Cao et al., 2018](#); [Luqman et al., 2018, 2020](#); [Masood et al., 2020](#)), we have used – age, gender and educational background as controls.

## 4. Research methodology

### 4.1 Qualitative study

We developed the interview protocol to collect qualitative data by reviewing the TCV and OTT platform literature extensively. In addition, for methodological insight, we drew on the design of recent studies, such as those of [Luqman et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Nusrat et al. \(2021\)](#). We presented the initial protocol to a panel of three professors in marketing and information systems and used their feedback to modify the questions. Next, we pilot tested the protocol with three respondents to check for clarity and relevance of content. The final interview protocol comprised the following questions: (a) What was the frequency of your usage of OTT platforms before the COVID-19 pandemic? Do you think that the frequency of your usage has changed following the onset of the pandemic? (b) What are the features that differentiate OTT platforms from traditional TV? Which do you prefer to use more frequently and why? (c) What are the main reasons/factors that drive your use of OTT platforms? (d) What do you like most about OTT platforms? (e) Which additional factors/features would cause you to use OTT platforms more often? Conversely, what are the factors that would prevent you from using OTT platforms more often? (f) How does your social circle perceive OTT platforms? (g) What are the different aspects of OTT platforms that you discuss with your social group? (h) Why have or have you not recommended OTT platforms to others during the pandemic?

Using this protocol, we conducted the final interviews via telephone in India and completed 12 interviews during April 2020 to reach theoretical saturation. Seven of the 12 respondents were males between 21 and 52 years old. We analyzed the transcripts of these 12 interviews following the standard process of content analysis of qualitative data in existing scholarship (e.g. [Talwar et al., 2021a](#)). Two of the authors analyzed and coded the responses independently and then discussed the generated codes to identify discrepancies. There were very few disagreements since the TCV is a well-researched theory in multiple contexts, including digital environments. As a result, we reached an inter-coder consensus quite easily and identified conditional, emotional, functional, epistemic and SVs as the consumption values that existing users see as the value derived from their use of OTT platforms. We then

refined this classification by dividing functional value into two parts, quality and price, as both appeared quite prominently in the responses. Since consumer value is subjective (Zeithaml, 1988), the results of the discussion were presented to a panel of three professors to solicit their feedback and ensure the validity and reliability of the analysis. In addition, we divided our values into two parts, based on whether they were related to an attribute or a benefit, following the theoretical findings of Mäntymäki *et al.* (2019). We identified four values – conditional, FVQ, epistemic and SVs – to represent attribute-level values and two values – FVP and EV – to represent benefit-based values.

#### 4.2 Quantitative study

Having identified the OTT platform-specific values, we proceeded to collect quantitative data. At this stage, data were collected from existing OTT platform users who had been using them prior to the pandemic, inquiring at the same time whether or not they had purchased a premium subscription following the onset of the pandemic. In India, following the onset of the pandemic, a complete lockdown was instituted on March 24, 2020 (Gettleman and Schultz, 2020), and the movement of people outside their homes was completely restricted. We collected the data using an online survey in May 2020, during a period when the complete lockdown was in force. We recruited respondents using the snowball sampling method, whereby we first invited an initial set of respondents through our colleagues and social circles and then engaged those respondents in recruiting others according to the screening criteria. Although our sampling approach was based on self-selection and could lead to some bias, this method is commonly used in online contexts (Casaló *et al.*, 2021).

The data-collection instrument was developed by adopting pre-validated scales used in prior TCV studies and modifying them based on the findings of our qualitative study. Measurement items for conditional and FVQ, FVP, and epistemic, social, and emotional values were adapted from Talwar *et al.* (2020a) and Kaur *et al.* (2021); measurement items for CITUs were adapted from Bhattacharjee (2001) and Teo and Zhou (2014) (Table 2). The moderating variables – premium subscription purchased and increased viewing frequency following the onset of the pandemic – were measured as dichotomous variables (yes/no).

In line with the prevalent practice, we assessed the preliminary questionnaire for face and content validity (e.g. Talwar *et al.*, 2021a). For this purpose, we sought feedback from three professors and piloted the instrument with 11 OTT platform users. The final instrument for data collection was prepared after due modifications based on the inputs received. After removing outliers and incomplete responses, as recommended by Kim *et al.* (2019), we were left with 371 valid responses for further analysis. Of these, 42.6% ( $n = 158$ ) were male and between 18 and 65 years of age. In addition, 4% ( $n = 15$ ) had completed schooling, 22.4% ( $n = 83$ ) were graduates, 66.3% ( $n = 246$ ) were postgraduates and the rest had higher educational degrees (7.3%).

#### 4.3 Data analysis methods

Data were analyzed in SPSS AMOS using covariance-based structural equation modeling (CB-SEM), which is a popular tool for statistical analysis (e.g. Kumar *et al.*, 2021a, b; Talwar *et al.*, 2020b). We first conducted a confirmatory factor analysis to evaluate the reliability and validity of the statistics. Next, we analyzed the path coefficients. Moderation analyses were conducted with the PROCESS macro. Before analyzing the data in AMOS, we performed the recommended diagnostic tests to confirm data suitability (Kumar *et al.*, 2021c).

## 5. Results

### 5.1 Data diagnostics

Collected data were first analyzed to assess whether they were normally distributed, which is an essential requirement to ensure its suitability for further analyses. To begin with, we

Study measures	Measurement items	CFA	SEM
Conditional value (CV) <a href="#">Lin and Huang (2012)</a>	CV1: I would use [OTT platform] more often if live streams did not lag too much	0.75	0.75
	CV2: I would use [OTT platform] more often if I were allowed to skip advertisements	0.77	0.77
	CV3: I would use [OTT platform] more often if I were allowed to download content for watching later	0.81	0.80
Functional value quality (FVQ) <a href="#">Lin and Huang (2012)</a>	FVQ1: [OTT platform] enables me to watch TV shows and series	0.71	0.71
	FVQ2: [OTT platform] streams content in high-quality resolution	0.76	0.76
	FVQ3: [OTT platform] enables me to watch desired content anytime and anywhere	0.78	0.79
Epistemic value (EPV) <a href="#">Lin and Huang (2012)</a>	EPV1: Before watching content on [OTT platform], I acquire information about it on [OTT platform]	0.83	0.83
	EPV2: [OTT platform] allows me to gain information by previewing the content	0.90	0.90
	EPV3: [OTT platform] allows me to gain information from related content	0.86	0.86
Social value (SV) <a href="#">Lin and Huang (2012)</a>	SV1: Watching [OTT platform] helps me to participate in social conversations	0.81	0.81
	SV2: Watching [OTT platform] helps me to gain social approval	0.90	0.90
	SV3: Using [OTT platform] helps me stand out among my peers	0.83	0.83
Functional value price (FVP) <a href="#">Lin and Huang (2012)</a>	FVP1: [OTT platform] allows me to watch movies that I want to watch for free	0.89	0.89
	FVP2: [OTT platform] allows me to watch events that I want to watch for free	0.82	0.82
Emotional value (EMV) <a href="#">Lin and Huang (2012)</a>	EMV1: Watching a web series on [OTT] is exciting	0.85	0.86
	EMV2: Watching [OTT] is enjoyable	0.79	0.79
	EMV3: I enjoy web series that are available on [OTT platform]	0.84	0.84
Continued intention to use (CITU) <a href="#">Bhattacharjee (2001), Teo and Zhou (2014)</a>	ITU1: I intend to continue watching live streams on [OTT platform]	0.76	0.77
	ITU2: If I have an opportunity to watch a web series on [OTT platform], I will continue to do so in the future	0.77	0.77
	ITU3: I have intentions to continue using [OTT platform]	0.80	0.79

**Note(s):** # Hotstar used as sample OTT platform. CFT = confirmatory factor analysis

**Table 2.**  
Constructs,  
measurement items  
and loadings

confirmed that skewness and kurtosis values conformed to the recommended parameters, indicating that the data were normally distributed. Next, we tested the data to check for the absence of multicollinearity by examining the variance inflation factor and tolerance value; the results indicated that all variance inflation values were less than 5, and the tolerance value was greater than 0.1. These cutoffs conform to the suggested values (e.g. [Talwar et al., 2022](#)), indicating that the data had no multicollinearity issue.

### 5.2 Common method bias

Data for all variables were collected using a single instrument at the same point in time, creating the possibility of common-method bias (CMB), which could lead to a biased interpretation of the results ([Avolio et al., 1991](#)). To assess the data for the presence of CMB, we conducted Harman's single factor test (e.g. [Kumar et al., 2021d](#)) and observed that a single factor explained only 26.2% of the variance in other factors, which is lower than the cutoff value of 50%, confirming absence of CMB.

5.3 Validity and reliability

The fitness indices of the measurement model ( $\chi^2/df = 2.16$ ,  $CFI = 0.96$ ,  $TLI = 0.95$  and  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ) were within the recommended limits (Hair et al. (2010), confirming a good fit. All validity and reliability criteria were also met. All factor loadings were above 0.7 (as reported in Table 2), exceeding the suggested cutoff of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2010) and confirming convergent validity. Next, the composite reliability and the average variance extracted values were also higher than the suggested cutoffs of 0.7 and 0.5, respectively (Hair et al., 2010), confirming the internal reliability and convergent validity of the constructs. Finally, discriminant validity was also confirmed since the square roots of average variances extracted (AVEs) exceeded the corresponding correlation values, as required (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Individual values are reported in Table 3.

5.4 Control variables

Consistent with past evidence (Mäntymäki et al., 2019; Talwar et al., 2021b), the results revealed that age ( $\beta = 0.063$  and  $p > 0.05$ ), gender ( $\beta = -0.086$  and  $p > 0.05$ ) and educational background ( $\beta = 0.064$  and  $p > 0.05$ ) have no confounding influence on the outcome variable, intentions. These findings are set out below.

5.5 Structural model

The fitness indices of the structural model ( $\chi^2/df = 2.16$ ,  $CFI = 0.96$ ,  $TLI = 0.93$  and  $RMSEA = 0.06$ ) also confirmed the goodness of fit. The path coefficients are as follows (Figure 2 and Table 4): H1a:  $\beta = -0.03$  and  $p > 0.05$ , H1b:  $\beta = 0.47$  and  $p < 0.001$ , H1c:  $\beta = 0.04$  and  $p > 0.05$ , H1d:  $\beta = 0.33$  and  $p < 0.001$ , H2a:  $\beta = 0.13$  and  $p > 0.05$ , H2b:  $\beta = 0.36$  and  $p < 0.001$ , H2c:  $\beta = -0.12$  and  $p > 0.05$ , H2d:  $\beta = 0.64$  and  $p < 0.001$ , H3a:  $\beta = 0.19$  and  $p > 0.05$ , H3b:  $\beta = 0.15$  and  $p > 0.05$ , H3c:  $\beta = 0.10$  and  $p > 0.05$ , H3d:  $\beta = 0.02$  and  $p > 0.05$ , H4a:  $\beta = -0.09$  and  $p > 0.05$ , and H4b:  $\beta = 0.51$  and  $p < 0.001$ . These results indicate that H1b, H1d, H2b, H2d and H4b are supported. In comparison, there is no statistical support for hypotheses H1a, H1c, H2a, H2c, H3a–d, and H4a. These findings indicate that FVQ and SV are associated with FVP (H1b and H1d) and EV (H2b and H2d).

The variance explained in FVP is 49.7%, and the variance explained in EV is 79%. EV is positively associated with intentions (H4b), wherein the variance explained in intentions is 64%.

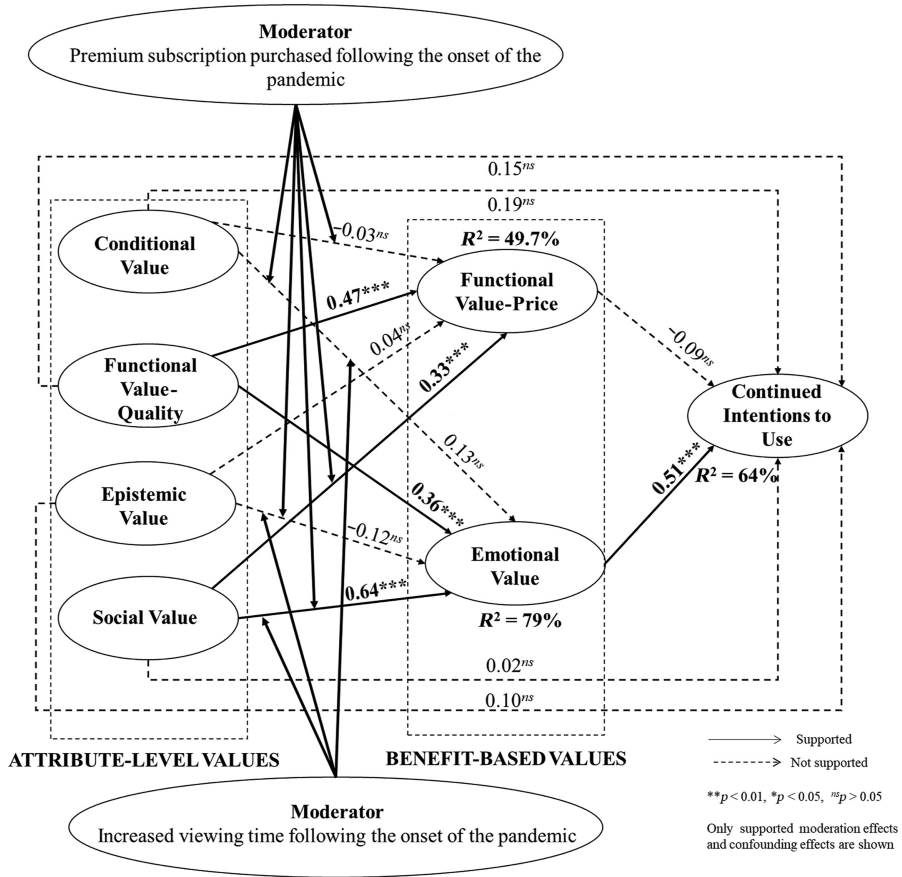
5.6 Mediation and moderation analyses

To examine the mediation effect of FVP and EV, we decomposed the total indirect effect into specific mediating effects. Results reveal that EV partially mediates the associations of conditional and functional value quality, and epistemic and SVs with intentions, but FVP

	CR	AVE	MSV	ASV	EPV	FVQ	FVP	SV	EMV	CV	CITU
EPV	0.90	0.74	0.54	0.38	0.86						
FVQ	0.80	0.57	0.50	0.40	0.57	0.75					
FVP	0.84	0.73	0.41	0.31	0.51	0.64	0.85				
SV	0.88	0.71	0.67	0.40	0.66	0.50	0.57	0.85			
EMV	0.87	0.68	0.67	0.48	0.61	0.71	0.60	0.82	0.83		
CV	0.82	0.60	0.54	0.41	0.74	0.69	0.51	0.58	0.66	0.77	
CITU	0.82	0.60	0.57	0.39	0.59	0.65	0.47	0.61	0.75	0.65	0.78

**Note(s):** Composite reliability = CR, average variance extracted = AVE, maximum shared variance = MSV, average shared variance = ASV, epistemic value = EPV, functional value – quality = FVQ, functional value price = FVP, social value = SV, emotional value = EMV, conditional value = CV and continued intention to use = CITU

**Table 3.** Validity and reliability analysis



**Figure 2.**  
Results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Path	$\beta$	Sig	Support
H1a	Conditional value → functional value price	-0.03	> 0.05	No
H1b	Functional value quality → functional value price	0.47	< 0.001	Yes
H1c	Epistemic value → functional value price	0.04	> 0.05	No
H1d	Social value → functional value price	0.33	< 0.001	Yes
H2a	Conditional value → emotional value	0.13	> 0.05	No
H2b	Functional value quality → emotional value	0.36	< 0.001	Yes
H2c	Epistemic value → emotional value	-0.12	> 0.05	No
H2d	Social value → emotional value	0.64	< 0.001	Yes
H3a	Conditional value → continued intentions to use	0.19	> 0.05	No
H3b	Functional value quality → continued intentions to use	0.15	> 0.05	No
H3c	Epistemic value → continued intentions to use	0.10	> 0.05	No
H3d	Social value → continued intentions to use	0.02	> 0.05	No
H4a	Functional value price → continued intentions to use	-0.09	> 0.05	No
H4b	Emotional value → continued intentions to use	0.51	< 0.001	Yes

**Table 4.**  
Results of hypotheses testing (direct effects)

does not mediate any of the proposed associations (Tables 5 and 6). Thus, H6a–d are supported, but H5a–d are not supported.

Of the hypothesized moderation effects of premium subscription purchased and increased viewing frequency following the onset of the pandemic, eight hypotheses are supported. The results confirmed the moderating effect of premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic on the relationship between (a) CV and functional value price (H7a), (b) SV and FVP (H7d), (c) conditional and emotional values (H8a), (d) epistemic and emotional values (H8c) and (e) social and emotional values (H8d). Furthermore, increased viewing frequency following the onset of the pandemic moderated the relationship between (a) conditional and emotional

	$\beta$	se	T	<i>p</i>	LLCI	ULCI
<i>CV → FVP/EMV → CITU</i>						
CV → FVP	0.49	0.05	8.98	0.00	0.3806	0.5940
CV → EMV	0.58	0.04	13.19	0.00	0.4962	0.6700
CV → CITU	0.24	0.04	5.45	0.00	0.1559	0.3321
FVP → CITU	0.03	0.04	0.74	0.46	-0.0459	0.1020
EMV → CITU	0.43	0.05	9.30	0.00	0.3385	0.5201
Total effect of CV → CITU	0.51	0.04	12.34	0.00	0.4270	0.5890
<i>FVQ → FVP/EMV → CITU</i>						
FVQ → FVP	0.62	0.05	11.44	0.00	0.5103	0.7222
FVQ → EMV	0.64	0.05	14.25	0.00	0.5536	0.7310
FVQ → CITU	0.20	0.05	3.88	0.00	0.0967	0.2951
FVP → CITU	0.02	0.04	0.52	0.60	-0.0570	0.0980
EMV → CITU	0.46	0.05	9.76	0.00	0.3670	0.5522
Total effect of FVQ → CITU	0.50	0.04	11.45	0.00	0.4172	0.5903
<i>EPV → FVP/EMV → CITU</i>						
EPV → FVP	0.48	0.05	9.27	0.00	0.3773	0.5803
EVP → EMV	0.54	0.04	12.46	0.00	0.4516	0.6209
EVP → CITU	0.21	0.04	5.01	0.00	0.1298	0.2973
FVP → CITU	0.03	0.04	0.66	0.51	-0.0497	0.0999
EMV → CITU	0.45	0.05	9.80	0.00	0.3575	0.5369
Total effect of EPV → CITU	0.47	0.04	11.61	0.00	0.3866	0.5442
<i>SV → FVP/EMV → CITU</i>						
SV → FVP	0.54	0.05	11.17	0.00	0.4470	0.6379
SV → EMV	0.69	0.04	19.60	0.00	0.6205	0.7588
SV → CITU	0.11	0.05	2.22	0.03	0.0132	0.2156
FVP → CITU	0.05	0.04	1.19	0.24	-0.0306	0.1233
EMV → CITU	0.47	0.05	8.67	0.00	0.3619	0.5743
Total effect of SV → CITU	0.46	0.04	11.84	0.00	0.3856	0.5392

**Table 5.** Results of mediation analysis

Hypothesis	Path	Effect	SE	LLCI	ULCI	Mediation?
H5a	CV → FVP → CITU	0.01	0.02	-0.0255	0.0558	No
H5b	FVQ → FVP → CITU	0.01	0.03	-0.0391	0.0621	No
H5c	EPV → FVP → CITU	0.01	0.02	-0.0304	0.0568	No
H5d	SV → FVP → CITU	0.03	0.02	-0.0192	0.0733	No
H6a	CV → EMV → CITU	0.25	0.04	0.1820	0.3211	Yes
H6b	FVQ → EMV → CITU	0.30	0.04	0.2196	0.3718	Yes
H6c	EPV → EMV → CITU	0.25	0.03	0.1886	0.3156	Yes
H6d	SV → EMV → CITU	0.32	0.05	0.2340	0.4174	Yes

**Table 6.** Indirect effects between dependent and independent variables

values (H10a), (b) epistemic and emotional values (H10c) and (c) social and emotional values (H10d). These findings are presented in Table 7 and Figures 3–7 and 8–10.

**6. Conclusion**

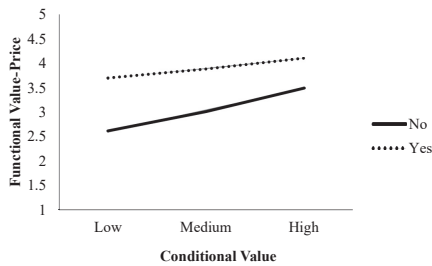
*6.1 Discussion*

This study addressed four RQs. To respond to RQ1, we conducted an initial qualitative study through telephone interviews and identified six consumption values derived from the use of

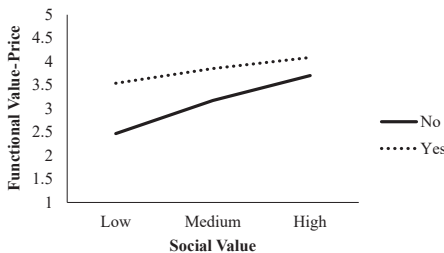
	$\beta$	$t$	$p$	LLCI	ULCI	Moderation?
<i>Premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic</i>						
CV → FVP	-0.26	-1.78	0.08	-0.5394	0.0272	Yes
CV → EMV	-0.30	-2.60	0.01	-0.5338	-0.0741	Yes
FVQ → FVP	-0.02	-0.11	0.92	-0.3618	0.3246	No
FVQ → EMV	-0.17	-1.17	0.24	-0.4589	0.1159	No
EPV → FVP	-0.14	-1.07	0.29	-0.4093	0.1213	No
EPV → EMV	-0.26	-2.36	0.02	-0.4843	-0.0439	Yes
SV → FVP	-0.29	-2.31	0.02	-0.5435	-0.0434	Yes
SV → EMV	-0.17	-1.78	0.08	-0.3493	0.0178	Yes
<i>Increased viewing time following the onset of the pandemic</i>						
CV → FVP	-0.06	-0.48	0.63	-0.2990	0.1810	No
CV → EMV	-0.26	-2.76	0.01	-0.4457	-0.0749	Yes
FVQ → FVP	-0.18	-1.17	0.24	-0.4864	0.1234	No
FVQ → EMV	-0.12	-0.93	0.35	-0.3639	0.1317	No
EPV → FVP	-0.03	-0.27	0.78	-0.2580	0.1950	No
EPV → EMV	-0.23	-2.48	0.01	-0.4078	-0.0471	Yes
SV → FVP	-0.19	-1.64	0.10	-0.4115	0.0376	No
SV → EMV	-0.28	-3.42	0.00	-0.4353	-0.1173	Yes

**Table 7.**  
Results of moderation analysis

**Figure 3.**  
The moderating influence of premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic

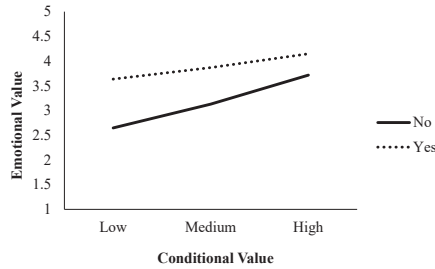


**Figure 4.**  
The moderating influence of premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic

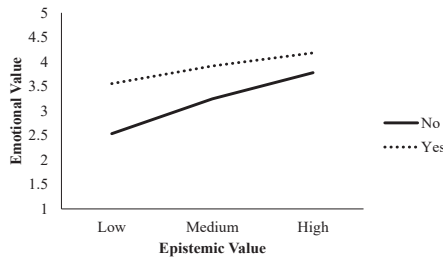


OTT platforms: conditional, social, epistemic, emotional, FVP and FVQ, consistent with the generic TCV values (Sheth *et al.*, 1991).

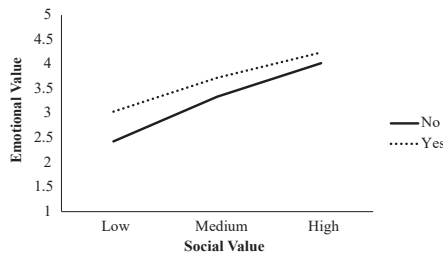
To address RQ2, we drew upon the scholarly literature to classify the identified OTT platform-specific values into attribute-level values and benefit-based values and proposed the



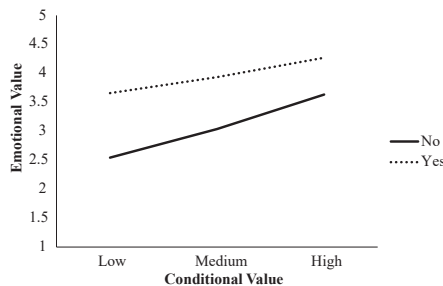
**Figure 5.** The moderating influence of premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic



**Figure 6.** The moderating influence of premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic



**Figure 7.** The moderating influence of premium subscription purchased following the onset of the pandemic



**Figure 8.** Moderating influence of increased viewing time following the onset of the pandemic

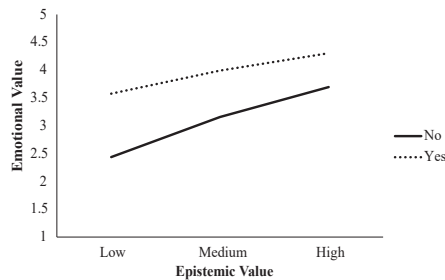
attribute-level values as antecedents of benefit-based values, in concordance with prior studies (Gutman, 1982; Mäntymäki *et al.*, 2019). The findings revealed support for H1b, H1d, H2b and H2d, implying that FVQ and SV are associated with FVP and EV. This indicates that the quality of content available for viewing and the technical superiority of OTT platforms (the ability to stream content at high resolution) increase the perceived monetary and nonmonetary benefits of their use. Similarly, the facility to watch desired content ubiquitously, participate in social conversations and gain peer appreciation increases the price and EV derived from OTT platform use. This accords with the past evidence (Choe and Kim, 2018; Hu *et al.*, 2016; Kushwah *et al.*, 2019; Suki, 2016; Teng, 2018).

Our findings do not support H1a, H1c, H2a and H2c, indicating that conditional and epistemic values have no association with FVP and EV, contrary to the TCV literature on epistemic value (Biswas and Roy, 2015; Kushwah *et al.*, 2019). One explanation for this could be the health crisis, which led to restrictions such as social distancing and working from home. Such confinement and limited person-to-person interaction could have generated an emotional context in which users were less interested in seeking new information and/or less patient with advertisements or delayed streaming, such that these factors did not affect the price value or enjoyment derived from using OTT platforms.

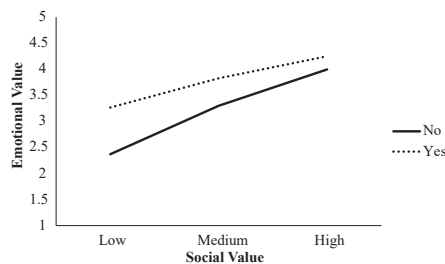
The analyses in response to RQ3 revealed the positive association of EV with intentions, as proposed by H4b and anticipated based on past findings (Gonçalves *et al.*, 2016; Lin and Huang, 2012); this implies that the excitement and enjoyment that OTT platforms offer enhance the intentions of consumers to watch live streams and web series on these platforms.

By comparison, CV, FVQ, epistemic value, SV and FVP did not have an association with intentions, contrary to H3a, H3b, H3c, H3d and H4a. This finding diverges from the current literature (Jamrozny and Lawonk, 2017; Kushwah *et al.*, 2019; Talwar *et al.*, 2020a), implying that specific conditions such as skipping advertisements, streaming without lag, the ability to download content, access to information and availability of free content do not impact the CITUs OTT platforms. Additionally, the features of OTT platforms, such as streaming content at high resolution, having a variety of content such as TV shows and web series, ubiquity and offering

**Figure 9.**  
Moderating influence  
of increased viewing  
time following the  
onset of the pandemic



**Figure 10.**  
Moderating influence  
of increased viewing  
time following the  
onset of the pandemic



social approval, do not impact the intentions of consumers to use them. These findings are confusing and can perhaps be attributed to the specific context of the initial lockdown, wherein consumers were seeking solace from the stressful confinement and did not have very high expectations, instead seeing OTT platforms as a form of distraction from the changed social and economic milieu in the wake of the health crisis. However, additional studies with diverse samples that consider the moderation effect of demographic factors are required before it can be concluded that specific conditions, novelty and monetary benefits do not increase the use intention, even in the presence of extrinsic factors, like the pandemic.

Since it is possible that some consumption values may act as mediators between other consumption values and intentions, to further answer RQ3; we investigated the mediation role of benefit-based values between attribute-level values with CITUs OTT platforms. The analysis confirmed the partial mediating role of EV. Specifically, H6a–d are supported but H5a–d are not. This indicates that rather than impacting intentions directly, the attribute-level consumption values enhance the CITU OTT platforms through the monetary and nonmonetary benefits derived from them.

RQ4 inquired about the moderation effect of premium subscription (H7a–d and H8a–d) and increased viewing frequency on the association between attribute-level values and benefit-based values (H9a–d and H10a–d). Having purchased a premium subscription has a negative moderating effect on the association of conditional and SV with FVP, implying that purchasing such a subscription eroded the positive effect of these two values on FVP. Similarly, a premium subscription purchase has a negative moderating effect on the association of conditional, epistemic and SV with EV, implying that the purchase of a premium subscription eroded the positive effects of these three values on EV. In sum, the results of moderation analysis imply that a premium subscription purchase decreased the monetary and nonmonetary benefits derived from the use of OTT platforms during the pandemic. Regarding the moderating effect of increased viewing frequency, the association of attribute-level values with monetary benefit was not significant. In comparison, it had a negative effect on the association of conditional, epistemic and SVs with EV, indicating that increased usage eroded nonmonetary benefits.

## 6.2 Theoretical contributions

The study's contribution can be summed up as follows: First, we bring into focus the consumption values derived from OTT platforms, which have remained unexplored in the literature despite being an important aspect of consumers' intentions toward a product (Talwar *et al.*, 2020a). Making efforts to enhance consumption values may prove to be a strategically significant way for service providers to influence CITU OTT platforms. Underscoring the importance of values that service providers can leverage, and examining practically relevant moderators, such as premium subscriptions, strengthened the practical implications of our study, making our theoretical contribution even more important. The literature suggests that focusing on managerial issues further enhances the theoretical contribution of academic research (Corley and Gioia, 2011). We have also examined continuance intentions as an outcome variable, which has been a key variable of interest in the information systems' literature, particularly following the classic study by Bhattacharjee (2001) and subsequent studies (e.g. Chiu *et al.*, 2021). However, it has not been examined much in the specific context of OTT platforms. In sum, these findings enrich the accumulated knowledge related to consumer behavior toward OTT platforms, building on works such as Kim *et al.* (2017) and Shin *et al.* (2016).

Second, although we employ TCV values as a theoretical lens; we did not use them as originally developed. Rather, we conceptualized a model that comprises hitherto unexplored OTT platform-specific values by categorizing them into two broad groups – attribute-level and benefit-based values. We also tested a hierarchical association between the values by

testing attribute-level values as antecedents of benefit-based values and benefit-based values as mediating variables between attribute-level values and the CITU OTT platforms. Thus, we presented a new model with new constructs and associations grounded in a qualitative study and tested through quantitative data. Our study proposed a new way of looking at existing constructs, theorized under-researched associations and revealed significant relationships in the face of extrinsic stressors like the pandemic. Offering new associations and insights compounds the theoretical contribution of our study, as contended by prior studies (Corley and Gioia, 2011; Whetten, 1989). In sum, our study further broadens the context of the TCV, either by including contextual variables or by extending the theory to different contexts (Choe and Kim, 2018; Mäntymäki *et al.*, 2019; Teng, 2018).

Third, our study responded to the call for research on the behavior of consumers during lockdowns following the onset of the pandemic (Ellis, 2020; Xie *et al.*, 2020). We believe this study to be the first to explore the consumption behavior toward digital content services in the wake of the pandemic, which has changed global lifestyles and consumption patterns (Baker *et al.*, 2020). Although scholars have explored consumer behavior during natural disasters (Qu *et al.*, 2011; Rajkumar *et al.*, 2008; Shimizu *et al.*, 2000; Shklovski *et al.*, 2010), the characteristics of a health crisis and a natural disaster are different. Moreover, the pandemic created an extended lockdown situation, which was unprecedented. Thus, we contribute to the consumer behavior literature by explicating behavioral manifestations in the face of uncontrollable extrinsic pressures and uncertainty.

Finally, we offer theory-driven insights into consumer behavior toward OTT platforms. In the past, relatively few studies used such theoretical frameworks to examine behavior toward OTT platforms. For example, Cha (2013) used the theory of planned behavior and the technology acceptance model to examine consumers' perception of online video platforms as compared to traditional television, and Kim *et al.* (2016) used the niche theory to reveal that gratification and time spent on OTT platforms were important for consumers. By extending a well-recognized theory to explain consumer behavior toward OTT platforms, we contribute to expanding the theory-based insights and accumulated knowledge in the area.

### 6.3 Managerial implications

Our study's implications can be summarized as follows: First, it identifies the fundamental role of EVs in CITU OTT platforms. This indicates the importance of the hedonic aspect of OTT platform use and the pleasure gained from viewing the available content. The importance of EV has also been confirmed in other online contexts, such as gaming, brand communities and virtual goods (Kaur *et al.*, 2018; Mäntymäki and Salo, 2015), providing support to our argument that OTT service providers need to be cognizant of emotional takeaways while strategizing to better engage with consumers. Our study indicates that to attract new users and to ensure continued engagement by existing users, service providers should design communication strategies and promotional content by leveraging the hedonic aspect of OTT platforms, particularly as a coping mechanism, in the face of extrinsic stressors. Furthermore, website or app developers can choose colors and designs that are vibrant and evoke a sense of pleasure, excitement and enjoyment.

Second, our findings indicate that FVQ and SV are the two attribute-level values that drive EV, which in turn increases the positive intent to use OTT platforms. This indicates that the quality features of OTT platforms, such as high-quality streaming resolution, a variety of content and ubiquity, enhance the enjoyment consumers derive from using OTT platforms and increase the likelihood of continued use. As a result, we suggest that service providers not only integrate these features into their web portals or apps but also showcase them visibly. For example, a toggle switch asking users to choose a seamless viewing experience across devices can serve to draw attention and enhance the value derived. Since SV emerged as a key

driver of EV in our study, we suggest that OTT service providers can emphasize social networking aspects by including a button to recommend any series or movie to peers. Further, since OTT platforms allow individuals to stand out among their peers and gain social approval, OTT service providers can integrate a discussion forum or comments section with digital content to be shared on social media platforms.

Third, our findings indicate that specific conditions and features, such as the ability to skip advertisements, stream without lag, download content for offline viewing and offering new information and free content, do not impact the intentions of consumers to continue to use OTT platforms, particularly in the face of extrinsic stressors such as the pandemic. The insignificant impact of all but EV implies that these features do not meaningfully enhance continued usage intentions; rather, if service providers focus too much on these aspects or leverage them repeatedly, current and potential users may become irritated. It is possible that these values do not play a role in increasing usage intentions because consumers have come to expect them as basic features in OTT platform design. From a managerial perspective, this insight into consumers' expectations can help designers avoid unnecessary add-ons, integrate these features into their designs and develop their marketing communications accordingly.

## 7. Limitations and future research

Although it offers novel inferences, our study has certain limitations. First, we collected data from a single country, so the results may not be applicable universally. Future studies can counter this limitation by applying our model to diverse geographic and cultural backgrounds to test the generalizability of the findings and offer context-specific observations. Second, the study was undertaken when the pandemic-related lockdown restrictions were in full force. While it was our objective to capture consumer behavior toward OTT platforms during the pandemic, this limits the applicability of the results to other settings since the health crisis resulted in alterations of consumption behavior that may not persist beyond this particular context. However, since there are no prior studies on OTT platform-specific consumption values, there are no benchmarks to evaluate these results. We suggest that future researchers examine OTT-specific consumption values after the pandemic is over. Such findings can serve as a basis for comparing the values-intentions association during periods of economic stability versus periods of instability due to extrinsic stressors, such as a health crisis, natural disaster or war.

Third, we collected data from existing users of OTT platforms, that is, consumers who were using these platforms before the pandemic. This aligned with the objectives of our study, but it is important to conduct more studies that collect data from individuals who started using OTT platforms only after the onset of the lockdown. Such studies can investigate the consumption values that users derived from subscribing to OTT platforms during the pandemic, along with other key consumer behavior variables such as barriers experienced, satisfaction, brand love and brand avoidance. In addition, researchers can build on our model by examining the potential moderation effect of values on the hypothesized associations, in keeping with studies in other contexts, such as green products (De Silva *et al.*, 2021).

Furthermore, researchers can advance the theoretical development in the area of consumer behavior toward OTT platforms by utilizing theories such as innovation resistance and behavioral reasoning theories that can explain both the reasons for and the barriers against adoption, as recommended by recent findings (Sahu *et al.*, 2020; Talwar *et al.*, 2020b).

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