

Residential Status as a Moderator in the Adoption of OTT Platforms: An Empirical Study of Delhi, NCR

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ABSTRACT

The expansion of over-the-top (OTT) platforms has transformed content consumption patterns, making it essential to understand the contextual factors shaping user adoption. This study investigates the moderating role of residential status in OTT platform adoption by applying the extended unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT2) framework. Data were collected from 404 respondents across the National Capital Region (NCR) of Delhi, India, and analysed using partial least squares structural equation modeling. The findings reveal that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, price value, hedonic motivation, and habit significantly influence users' intention to adopt OTT platforms, which subsequently drives actual usage behaviour. Residential status does not exert a significant direct effect on adoption; however, it meaningfully moderates the relationships between key adoption determinants and intention. These results highlight residential context as an important situational factor that shapes how users perceive and respond to OTT platforms. The study contributes to digital adoption literature by offering nuanced insights into contextual moderation and provides practical implications for OTT service providers seeking region-specific engagement strategies.

Keywords: OTT platforms; Residential status; UTAUT2; Adoption intention; Digital media consumption

1. INTRODUCTION:

Over-the-top (OTT) platforms have become central to media consumption worldwide, reshaping how individuals access entertainment and informational content. OTT services bypass traditional cable, satellite, and broadcast distribution systems by delivering content directly over the internet to end-users' devices (Vaidya, H., Fernandes, S., & Panda, R., 2023). The rapid increase in broadband availability, smartphone usage, and digital literacy has accelerated OTT adoption across both developed and emerging markets. In many countries, streaming services are now ubiquitous, attracting diverse age groups and demographic segments (Ritu & Sarkar, 2024). However, this growth is not uniform across different population segments. Urban and rural communities often exhibit distinct patterns of media access and consumption due to disparities in infrastructure, socioeconomic status, and cultural contexts (Sridevi & Sarathy, 2025). Understanding these differences is crucial for developing effective theories and strategies around technology adoption.

Residential status refers to whether individuals live in urban, semi-urban, or rural areas. These areas often differ significantly in terms of internet speed, device ownership, media exposure, and cultural norms (Tiwary, 2024). Variations in these factors can shape not only access to OTT platforms but also users' perceptions and intentions toward adopting these services. Several studies have highlighted the importance of exploring contextual factors

in technology adoption. For example, research on connected TV and OTT adoption in India shows that infrastructure improvements and enhanced internet connectivity contributed to higher usage rates in urban centres (Manjesha & Ahmed, 2024; Patnaik et al., 2024). Furthermore, a comparative analysis of rural and urban youth in Mysuru revealed that urban youth were more active OTT users, confirming differences in content engagement and viewing habits across residential contexts (Xie, 2024; Vagdevi, Vadigeri, & Dolkar, 2025).

The COVID-19 pandemic catalysed media consumption through digital channels, including OTT platforms (Srivastav & Rai, 2024). Lockdowns and mobility restrictions compelled individuals to seek entertainment and information online, resulting in a surge in OTT subscriptions worldwide (Suganya & Vijayakumar, 2024). Yet, the extent of this surge varied by residential area due to differential availability of reliable internet connectivity. In rural settings, connectivity limitations may have dampened adoption despite comparable interest levels (Khanna et al., 2025). Conversely, urban residents with stable high-speed internet experienced seamless digital access, reinforcing OTT engagement (Rajkamal & Sripriya, 2024). These patterns underline how structural and contextual factors critically shape adoption behaviours.

Residential status is not merely about physical location; it captures the broader context of digital inclusion. Urban areas typically benefit from advanced technological infrastructure, higher disposable incomes, and greater

exposure to marketing campaigns. These factors can make residents more receptive to OTT innovations (Chanda & Islam, 2024). Rural populations, on the other hand, might face barriers such as lower internet reliability, fewer device options, and limited digital literacy (Behare et al., 2024). These influences extend beyond simple access and can moderate users' perceptions of usefulness, ease of use, and overall intention to adopt OTT platforms.

A residential lens urges researchers to consider how environmental and socioeconomic contexts interact with psychological and behavioural determinants of adoption. Investigating these interactions can reveal whether rural and urban users interpret key adoption constructs differently, providing a more nuanced understanding of user behaviour.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Technology adoption research traditionally explores the factors that influence users' willingness to use new services. Models such as the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Unified Theory of Acceptance and Use of Technology (UTAUT) are frequently employed to explain why individuals adopt digital technologies. These models emphasise constructs like perceived usefulness, ease of use, social influence, and facilitating conditions (Kim, Oyunbold, & Roh, 2024). Despite the strong theoretical foundation in technology adoption literature, limited research has investigated the influence of residential status on OTT adoption. The sparse existing literature underscores the value of integrating residential context into adoption studies. Most OTT adoption research focuses on individual traits such as age, gender, preferences, and perceived value (Liu, Costa, & Muhammad, 2023). However, few studies explicitly examine how where people live interacts with these traits to shape digital media adoption.

The expansion of over-the-top (OTT) platforms has significantly altered the global media ecosystem. These platforms enable users to access video content through internet-based delivery, independent of traditional broadcasting infrastructure. This shift has intensified scholarly attention toward understanding adoption behaviour across diverse consumer groups. Several studies have explored OTT platform adoption through the lens of consumer behaviour and digital innovation. Researchers commonly identify perceived value, convenience, content variety, and personalization as major drivers influencing user adoption intentions (Panda & Pandey, 2022). These factors collectively shape users' evaluations of OTT services and determine their continued engagement.

Technology-oriented frameworks remain dominant in explaining OTT adoption. The Technology Acceptance Model has been widely applied to assess how perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use influence intention to adopt streaming platforms. Empirical evidence from digital entertainment contexts confirms that users are more likely to adopt OTT platforms when they perceive functional efficiency and minimal effort requirements (Kumar & Bansal, 2023). Beyond functional perceptions,

emotional and experiential factors also play a critical role. Hedonic motivation, entertainment value, and emotional attachment have been found to significantly influence OTT usage patterns. Studies indicate that immersive storytelling, interactive interfaces, and personalized recommendations enhance user satisfaction and adoption intention (Dwivedi et al., 2021). These findings suggest that OTT adoption is driven by both utilitarian and affective motivations. Social influence is another determinant frequently examined in digital media adoption studies. Peer recommendations, family preferences, and online reviews shape individuals' attitudes toward OTT platforms. In collectivist societies, social endorsement exerts a stronger influence on adoption intention, particularly among first-time users (Sheth, 2020). This highlights the importance of social context in shaping technology acceptance. While the literature robustly explains individual-level adoption factors, fewer studies examine how contextual characteristics affect these relationships. Residential status represents one such contextual factor that captures differences in access, infrastructure, and socio-economic environment. These differences may alter how individuals perceive and evaluate OTT platforms. Urban areas generally provide better digital infrastructure, higher internet speeds, and greater exposure to digital innovations. As a result, urban consumers often demonstrate higher levels of digital readiness and experimentation with new media technologies. Research on smart media adoption shows that urban residents are more responsive to advanced platform features and premium content offerings (Sharma & Gupta, 2022). In contrast, rural environments may present constraints related to bandwidth limitations, affordability concerns, and digital literacy gaps. These constraints can influence the perceived ease of use and usefulness of OTT platforms. Studies on rural digital adoption indicate that even when interest exists, structural barriers can weaken adoption intentions (Singh & Srivastava, 2021).

Despite these differences, residential status is often treated as a control variable rather than a theoretical construct. This limits the ability of existing studies to explain variations in adoption behavior across geographical contexts. Scholars increasingly argue for integrating contextual moderators to enhance explanatory power in technology adoption research (Venkatesh et al., 2022). Moderation analysis allows researchers to assess whether the strength of relationships between predictors and adoption intention varies across groups. Applying residential status as a moderator can reveal whether perceived usefulness, ease of use, or social influence operate differently in urban and rural settings. Such insights are essential for understanding heterogeneous adoption patterns.

Emerging evidence from digital service adoption suggests that contextual moderators significantly alter behavioural relationships. For instance, studies on mobile banking and e-governance adoption reveal that rural users place greater emphasis on simplicity and reliability, while urban users

prioritise convenience and feature richness (Rao & Mishra, 2023). These findings support the inclusion of residential status as a moderating variable in OTT adoption models. The Diffusion of Innovations theory further reinforces this perspective. According to the theory, adoption is influenced by communication channels, social systems, and time. These elements vary across residential contexts, affecting how innovations spread and are perceived (Rogers, 2003). Urban environments often facilitate faster diffusion due to denser social networks and greater media exposure.

From a media consumption standpoint, residential differences also shape content preferences. Urban users may favor international and premium content, while rural users may gravitate toward regional language programming and culturally relevant narratives. Such differences influence perceived content value, which in turn affects adoption intention (Mukherjee & Banerjee, 2022). The COVID-19 pandemic further accentuated residential disparities in digital media usage. While OTT consumption increased across regions, the intensity and continuity of usage varied significantly. Studies report that urban users sustained higher engagement levels due to stable connectivity and work-from-home arrangements, whereas rural users experienced intermittent access (Chatterjee et al., 2021). Despite growing acknowledgement of these disparities, empirical research explicitly testing the moderating role of residential status in OTT adoption remains limited. Most studies rely on aggregated samples without disaggregating results by residential category. This approach masks meaningful behavioural differences and limits theoretical advancement.

Integrating residential status as a moderator contributes to a more inclusive understanding of digital adoption. It enables scholars to capture how environmental conditions interact with psychological determinants. Such integration is particularly relevant in emerging economies characterised by pronounced rural–urban divides. From a managerial perspective, recognizing residential moderation effects can guide platform design and market segmentation strategies. OTT providers can develop differentiated offerings based on connectivity conditions, content preferences, and usage patterns across residential groups.

Prior research on OTT platform adoption predominantly applies technology adoption models to examine individual-level determinants of usage intention. However, these studies largely overlook contextual moderators that may alter adoption dynamics. Residential status is often included as a descriptive variable rather than a theoretically grounded moderator. This limits understanding of how structural and environmental differences influence adoption mechanisms. Empirical evidence explaining whether adoption predictors function differently across residential contexts remains scarce, particularly in emerging digital markets.

Theoretical Framework: UTAUT2

This study is grounded in the extended unified theory of acceptance and use of technology (UTAUT2), which *Advances in Consumer Research*

extends the original UTAUT by incorporating consumer-oriented constructs. UTAUT2 explains technology adoption through performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, price value, and habit (Venkatesh, Thong, & Xu, 2012). The model is particularly relevant for OTT platforms, as these services combine functional utility with entertainment value. By integrating residential status as a moderating variable, this study contextualises UTAUT2 and enhances its explanatory power in heterogeneous adoption environments (Tamilmani et al., 2021).

Objectives and Research Methodology

The primary objective of this study is to examine determinants of OTT platform adoption using the UTAUT2 framework. Specifically, it aims to analyse the effects of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, hedonic motivation, price value, and habit on adoption intention. The study further investigates the moderating role of residential status in these relationships. The proposed research model positions adoption intention as the dependent variable, UTAUT2 constructs as independent variables, and residential status as a moderator influencing the strength of these relationships. The responses of 439 have been collected from Delhi NCR, out of which 404 data were found fit for the study.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section examines the results and discussion, intending to analyse the moderating role of residential status in OTT platform adoption. The data were analysed using partial least squares structural equation modeling to test the proposed relationships and moderation effects. Prior to hypothesis testing, construct reliability and measurement consistency were assessed and found to be within acceptable thresholds, ensuring the robustness of the results.

Table 1: Profiling of Respondents

| <i>Demographics and Sub Demographics</i> | | <i>Total No. of Response</i> | <i>%</i> |
|--|--------------|------------------------------|----------|
| <i>No. of Total Response</i> | | 404 | 100.0 |
| <i>Gender</i> | Male | 193 | 47.8 |
| | Female | 211 | 52.2 |
| <i>Age (in yrs.)</i> | 18-24 | 226 | 55.9 |
| | 25-34 | 78 | 19.3 |
| | 35-44 | 65 | 16.1 |
| | 45 and above | 35 | 8.7 |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|-----|------|
| <i>Education</i> | Above Post Graduation | 105 | 26.0 |
| | Post Graduation | 32 | 7.9 |
| | Graduation | 180 | 44.6 |
| | 12th | 80 | 19.8 |
| | Below 12th | 7 | 1.7 |
| <i>Marital Status</i> | Married | 152 | 37.6 |
| | Unmarried | 252 | 62.4 |
| <i>Family</i> | Joint | 146 | 36.1 |
| | Nuclear | 258 | 63.9 |
| <i>Residential Area</i> | Urban | 302 | 74.8 |
| | Semi-Urban | 42 | 10.4 |
| | Rural | 60 | 14.9 |
| <i>Occupation</i> | Business/Self Employed | 68 | 16.8 |
| | Service | 112 | 27.7 |
| | Student | 194 | 48.0 |
| | Other | 30 | 7.4 |
| <i>Income</i> | Below 25 K ₹ | 47 | 11.6 |
| | 25 K ₹ - 50K ₹ | 84 | 20.8 |
| | 50K ₹ - 75K ₹ | 80 | 19.8 |
| | 75K ₹ - 1 Lakh ₹ | 98 | 24.3 |
| | 1 Lakh ₹ and above | 95 | 23.5 |

Source: Primary Data

Table 1 presents the demographic profile of the 404 respondents from the NCR region. The sample shows a balanced gender composition, with slightly higher female participation. Most respondents belong to the 18–24 age group, indicating strong youth representation. Educational attainment is relatively high, as a majority possess graduation or higher qualifications. Unmarried respondents and individuals from nuclear families dominate the sample. Urban residents form the largest group, followed by rural and semi-urban participants, supporting the study's residential comparison. Students and salaried employees constitute the primary occupational groups. Income distribution reflects moderate to high-earning segments, ensuring economic diversity.

The Moderating Role of Residential Status in OTT Platform Adoption:

To Analyse the moderating role of Residential status of OTT Platforms following hypotheses have been formed:

H1: There exists a significant relationship between residential status and the factors for the adoption of OTT platforms.

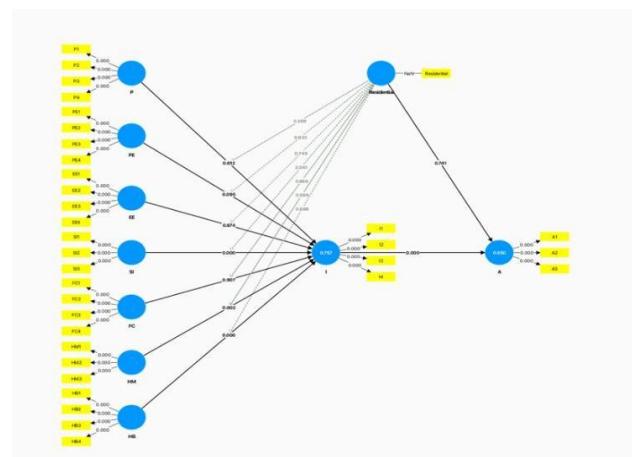


Figure 1: Structured Model highlighting Residential Area as a catalyst for adoption of OTT platforms

Figure 1 illustrates the structural model examining OTT platform adoption using the UTAUT2 framework with residential status as a moderator. The model shows that performance expectancy, effort expectancy, social influence, facilitating conditions, hedonic motivation, and habit significantly influence adoption intention. The R^2 value indicates strong explanatory power for adoption intention, suggesting that the selected predictors effectively explain user behaviour. Residential status demonstrates a moderating effect on several relationships, highlighting contextual differences across living environments. Adoption intention further shows a strong positive impact on actual usage behaviour. Overall, the model confirms the robustness of UTAUT2 while emphasising the importance of residential context in OTT adoption decisions.

Table 2: Path-coefficient Assessment for Residential Area

| <i>Constructs</i> | <i>Sample mean (M)</i> | <i>Standard deviation (STDEV)</i> | <i>T statistics (O/STDEV)</i> | <i>P values</i> |
|------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>Residentialal -> A</i> | -0.011 | 0.035 | 0.331 | 0.741 |
| <i>Residentialal -> I</i> | -0.004 | 0.024 | 0.055 | 0.956 |

| | | | | |
|------------------------|--------|-------|-------|-------|
| Residenti al x P -> I | -0.033 | 0.039 | 0.899 | 0.000 |
| Residenti al x PE -> I | -0.003 | 0.046 | 0.211 | 0.002 |
| Residenti al x EE -> I | -0.017 | 0.053 | 0.320 | 0.000 |
| Residenti al x SI -> I | 0.027 | 0.040 | 0.582 | 0.612 |
| Residenti al x FC -> I | 0.000 | 0.057 | 0.167 | 0.095 |
| Residenti al x HM -> I | 0.030 | 0.049 | 0.527 | 0.599 |
| Residenti al x HB -> I | 0.015 | 0.054 | 0.402 | 0.688 |

Source: Primary Data

*Significant at 5% Level

Based on Table 2, the moderating role of residential status is partially supported. Although the direct paths from residential status to adoption intention ($\beta = -0.004$, $p = 0.956$) and actual usage ($\beta = -0.011$, $p = 0.741$) are insignificant, important interaction effects emerge. Residential status significantly moderates the relationships between performance expectancy ($\beta = -0.033$, $p < 0.05$), effort expectancy ($\beta = -0.017$, $p < 0.05$), and price/value-related factors ($\beta = -0.003$, $p < 0.05$) with adoption intention. These significant moderating paths indicate that the influence of key functional determinants varies across residential groups. Therefore, H1 is accepted in the case of performance expectancy, effort expectancy and price, which confirms that residential status plays a meaningful contextual role in OTT platform adoption.

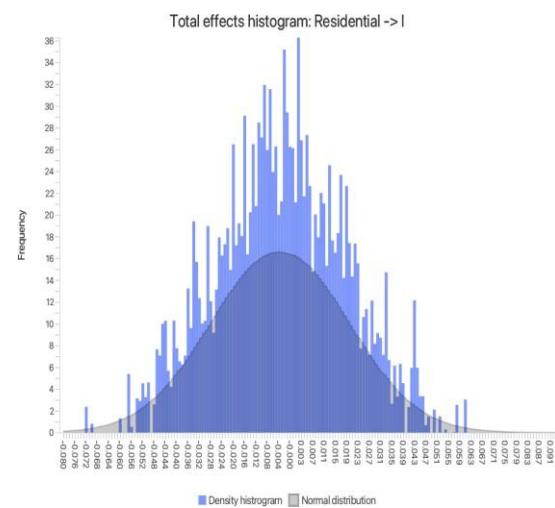


Figure 2: Total Effect of Distribution

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of total effects of residential status on adoption intention and actual usage of OTT platforms. The distributions closely follow a normal curve, indicating stable and reliable estimation of effects. The concentration of values around zero in the histogram for residential status to actual adoption suggests a minimal direct influence on usage behaviour. Similarly, the distribution of residential status to adoption intention shows a symmetrical pattern with limited dispersion. The histogram displays a near-normal distribution, with most values clustered around zero, indicating a limited overall impact. The concentration of observations near the centre implies that residential status does not exert a strong direct influence on actual adoption behaviour. Instead, its effect appears marginal and evenly dispersed across respondents. This pattern supports earlier findings that residential status functions primarily as a contextual moderator rather than a direct determinant of OTT platform adoption.

Findings:

The findings indicate that OTT platform adoption is significantly influenced by key UTAUT2 constructs, including performance expectancy, effort expectancy, hedonic motivation, price value, and habit. Adoption intention strongly predicts actual usage behaviour, confirming the validity of the proposed model. Residential status does not exert a significant direct effect on adoption intention or actual usage. However, it meaningfully moderates the relationships between selected functional determinants and adoption intention. The moderating effects are particularly evident for performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and value-related factors, suggesting contextual differences across residential groups. Overall, the results emphasise that residential status shapes how adoption drivers operate rather than acting as an independent predictor.

4. CONCLUSION:

This study concludes that OTT platform adoption is primarily driven by core UTAUT2 factors, while

residential status plays a contextual role rather than acting as a direct determinant. Its moderating effect on selected functional determinants highlights meaningful differences in how users across residential contexts evaluate OTT platforms. Factors related to performance expectancy, effort expectancy, and value perceptions vary across residential groups, reflecting disparities in infrastructure access and usage conditions. The robustness of the model is further supported by stable effect distributions and strong explanatory power. By integrating residential status as a moderator, the study extends existing technology adoption research and provides a more context-sensitive understanding of OTT consumption. The results offer valuable implications for service providers seeking to design inclusive and adaptive digital strategies for diverse user segments.

Future Research Direction:

Future research should adopt more comprehensive approaches to deepen the understanding of OTT platform adoption across diverse contexts. Incorporating additional moderating variables such as digital literacy, network quality, and regional content preferences may provide

richer explanatory insights. Longitudinal designs would help capture evolving adoption patterns and post-adoption behaviour over time. Qualitative or mixed-method approaches could further uncover subtle contextual differences influencing adoption decisions. Exploring emerging OTT formats, including connected television and immersive streaming experiences, represents another promising avenue for future investigation.

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Conflict of Interest:

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest associated with this research.

Ethical Consideration:

The study was conducted in accordance with ethical research standards, with informed consent obtained from all participants and confidentiality of responses strictly maintained

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