

DIGITAL BROADCASTING PLATFORM ATTRIBUTES AND AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT IN SAUDI ARABIA: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF OTT USERS

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of digital broadcasting platform attributes on audience engagement among Over-The-Top (OTT) users in Saudi Arabia. The study focuses on four key platform attributes: content diversity, on-demand convenience, interactivity, and personalized viewing experience, and investigates their influence on audience engagement in digital broadcasting environments. A quantitative cross-sectional research design was adopted, and data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed to OTT users in Saudi Arabia. A total of 462 valid responses were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The findings reveal that attributes of digital broadcasting platforms have a significant positive effect on audience engagement. Among the examined dimensions, personalized viewing experience emerged as the strongest predictor of audience engagement, followed by content diversity, interactivity, and on-demand convenience. The results indicate that audience engagement in digital environments is increasingly shaped by personalized and experience-driven factors rather than by content availability alone. The study also demonstrates satisfactory predictive relevance, confirming the model's ability to explain and predict audience engagement behavior among OTT users. The study contributes to the growing literature on digital media consumption by providing empirical evidence from the Saudi Arabian context, which remains underexplored in existing digital media and audience engagement research. Furthermore, the study adopts a parsimonious analytical model that emphasizes direct relationships between platform attributes and audience engagement without relying on complex mediating mechanisms. Practically, the findings provide valuable insights for digital broadcasting platforms and media organizations seeking to enhance user engagement through personalization strategies, content diversification, and interactive platform features in increasingly competitive digital media environments.

Keywords: Digital Broadcasting; Audience Engagement; OTT Platforms; Personalized Viewing Experience; Interactivity; Content Diversity.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has fundamentally reshaped the television broadcasting landscape, shifting it from traditional linear models toward on-demand, platform-based ecosystems. In this new environment, digital broadcasting platforms—particularly Over-The-Top (OTT) services—have transformed how audiences access, consume, and interact with media content, enabling greater flexibility, personalization,

and interactivity (Lotz, 2022; Cunningham & Craig, 2023). Platforms such as Shahid, Netflix, and YouTube exemplify this transformation by offering diverse content libraries, algorithm-driven recommendations, and user-centered viewing experiences that redefine audience roles from passive viewers to active participants (Alawneh et al., 2025).

Within this evolving media ecosystem, audience engagement has emerged as a central construct for understanding the effectiveness and sustainability of digital broadcasting platforms (Albashtawi et al., 2025). Unlike traditional audience metrics that focus on reach and ratings, engagement reflects a deeper, multidimensional interaction encompassing cognitive attention, emotional involvement, and behavioral participation (Hollebeek et al., 2022; Brodie et al., 2023). Prior research indicates that platform attributes—such as content quality, accessibility, interactivity, and personalization—play a critical role in shaping user engagement and influencing continued usage behavior (Huang & Rust, 2022; Verhoef et al., 2022).

Despite the growing body of literature on digital media engagement, existing studies remain fragmented and largely concentrated in Western contexts, limiting their applicability to emerging digital markets (Al-Nsour & Aiaf, 2024). In particular, the Middle Eastern region—and Saudi Arabia specifically—represents a unique and rapidly evolving media environment characterized by high digital adoption, strong government support for media innovation, and increasing demand for localized content (Al-Kandari & Dashti, 2023; Saudi Ministry of Media, 2024). The coexistence of regional platforms such as Shahid alongside global platforms like Netflix and YouTube further adds complexity to audience behavior and engagement patterns (Al-Nsour, 2023).

Accordingly, this study aims to examine the direct impact of digital broadcasting platform attributes on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia. By focusing on key platform characteristics and their influence on user interaction, the study seeks to provide a clearer and more contextually grounded understanding of engagement in digital broadcasting environments (Alnsour, 2022). In doing so, it contributes to bridging a critical gap in the literature by offering empirical evidence from a non-Western context and by adopting a parsimonious analytical model that emphasizes direct relationships between platform attributes and audience engagement.

2. RESEARCH STATEMENT

The rapid expansion of digital broadcasting platforms has significantly transformed television consumption patterns, shifting audiences from traditional linear viewing toward more flexible and interactive media environments. This transformation has been driven by the widespread adoption of internet-based streaming services, which allow users to access content anytime and anywhere. In recent years, platforms such as Shahid, Netflix, and YouTube have played a central role in redefining audience behavior by offering personalized and on-demand viewing experiences (Lotz, 2022; Cunningham & Craig, 2023).

In the Saudi Arabian context, this shift has been particularly significant due to high levels of digital connectivity and strong governmental support for media digitalization under Vision 2030. Recent reports indicate a growing reliance on OTT platforms as primary sources of entertainment, especially among younger audiences (Saudi Ministry of Media, 2024; Statista, 2024). However, despite the rapid growth of digital media consumption, understanding the determinants of audience engagement in such environments remains limited. Engagement has evolved beyond mere exposure to encompass cognitive, emotional, and behavioral dimensions, making it a complex construct that requires deeper empirical investigation (Hollebeek et al., 2022; Brodie et al., 2023).

Previous studies have identified several platform attributes—such as content quality, interactivity, accessibility, and personalization—as key drivers of user engagement (Huang & Rust, 2022; Verhoef et al., 2022). For example, Huang and Rust (2022) emphasize the importance of personalization in enhancing user experiences, while Verhoef et al. (2022) highlight the role of digital platform capabilities in shaping customer engagement. Nevertheless, these studies are predominantly conducted in Western contexts, which limits their applicability to culturally distinct and rapidly evolving markets like Saudi Arabia. Moreover, many empirical studies have relied on complex models incorporating mediating or moderating variables, which often obscure the direct relationship between platform attributes and audience engagement (Dwivedi et al., 2023). In addition, the coexistence of regional platforms such as Shahid alongside global platforms like Netflix and YouTube creates a unique media ecosystem in Saudi Arabia. This dual structure introduces variations in content localization, cultural relevance, and user expectations, which may influence engagement patterns differently compared to other markets (Al-Kandari & Dashti, 2023).

Accordingly, the core problem of this study lies in the lack of clear and context-specific empirical evidence regarding the direct impact of digital broadcasting platform attributes on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia. Addressing this gap is essential for advancing theoretical understanding and for providing practical insights to media organizations aiming to enhance user engagement in an increasingly competitive digital broadcasting environment.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The Main Question is " To what extent do digital broadcasting platform attributes significantly predict audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia? There are five Sub-Research Questions

- How does content diversity affect audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia?
- How does on-demand convenience influence audience engagement in digital broadcasting platforms?
- How does interactivity affect audience engagement among users of digital broadcasting platforms?

- How does the personalized viewing experience influence audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia?
- To what extent do digital broadcasting platform attributes collectively explain audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia?

4. RESEARCH SIGNIFICANCE

This study is significant as it addresses the growing importance of digital broadcasting platforms in shaping contemporary media consumption and audience engagement. With the increasing reliance on Over-The-Top (OTT) platforms such as Shahid, Netflix, and YouTube, understanding the factors that drive audience engagement has become essential for both scholars and practitioners. Prior research highlights that platform attributes—particularly content diversity and personalization—play a critical role in enhancing user engagement and satisfaction (Huang & Rust, 2022; Smith & Telang, 2023). Similarly, Hollebeek et al. (2022) and Brodie et al. (2023) emphasize that engagement in digital environments is a multidimensional construct that directly influences user retention and platform success.

Furthermore, recent studies suggest that interactive features and on-demand viewing capabilities significantly reshape audience behavior by increasing user control and participation in media consumption (Verhoef et al., 2022; Cunningham & Craig, 2023). Despite these insights, most empirical evidence has been derived from Western contexts, with limited attention to emerging digital markets such as Saudi Arabia. In this regard, Al-Kandari and Dashti (2023) argue that cultural factors and localized content significantly influence media consumption patterns in Arab societies, highlighting the need for context-specific research.

Accordingly, this study contributes to the literature by providing empirical evidence from the Saudi context and by examining the direct relationship between digital broadcasting platform attributes and audience engagement without relying on complex mediating models. This approach responds to recent calls for more parsimonious and contextually grounded research models in digital media studies (Dwivedi et al., 2023). Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for media organizations, including MBC Group, to enhance content strategies and improve audience engagement in an increasingly competitive digital broadcasting environment.

5. LITERATURE REVIEW

5.1 Digital Broadcasting Platforms and the Evolution of Media Consumption:

Digital broadcasting platforms have fundamentally transformed the structure of media consumption, reshaping the ways audiences access, interact with, and engage with media content in the digital era. Traditional media institutions no longer possess exclusive control over the production and distribution of information, as digital platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, and Spotify have introduced highly interactive and personalized models of media consumption based on instant accessibility, algorithmic recommendations, and

on-demand viewing experiences (Lobato, 2019; Jenner, 2018). This transformation has altered not only media delivery systems but also the very nature of audiences, who have evolved from passive receivers into active participants capable of selecting, evaluating, sharing, and reproducing media content across digital environments (Jenkins, 2006).

Platforms such as Shahid, Netflix, and YouTube have capitalized on this shift by integrating advanced technological capabilities, including recommendation algorithms, cross-device accessibility, and interactive interfaces. These features have redefined audience roles, transforming users into active participants who curate, share, and engage with content rather than merely consuming it (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Verhoef et al., 2022). Consequently, understanding the attributes that drive audience engagement has become a central concern in digital media research.

Furthermore, the integration of artificial intelligence and big data analytics has enabled digital broadcasting platforms to predict user preferences and customize content according to behavioral patterns, leading to the emergence of individualized media ecosystems that prioritize user engagement and continuous interaction (Napoli, 2019). Scholars argue that the rise of streaming and digital broadcasting services has accelerated the decline of traditional linear broadcasting models and encouraged the development of fragmented yet highly targeted audience structures (Lotz, 2017).

Consequently, media competition is no longer determined solely by content quality, but increasingly by the ability of platforms to capture audience attention, sustain digital engagement, and build long-term consumer loyalty (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). In this context, digital broadcasting platforms have become powerful cultural and economic actors that significantly influence public opinion, entertainment habits, and the broader evolution of global media culture in the digital age (Couldry & Hepp, 2017).

5.2 Digital Broadcasting Platform Attributes:

Recent empirical studies emphasize that user engagement in digital broadcasting environments is largely shaped by specific platform attributes that enhance the overall user experience. Content diversity remains one of the most influential factors, as platforms offering a wide range of genres and culturally relevant content are more likely to satisfy heterogeneous audience preferences. Prior research indicates that content variety not only increases viewing time but also strengthens user loyalty and retention (Smith & Telang, 2023; Cunningham & Craig, 2023). In culturally distinct markets, such as Saudi Arabia, the integration of localized content further amplifies engagement by aligning with audience values and expectations (Al-Kandari & Dashti, 2023).

On-demand convenience is another critical attribute that enables users to control their viewing schedules and access content across devices. This flexibility aligns with contemporary consumption patterns characterized by immediacy and autonomy, significantly influencing user satisfaction and continued platform usage (Lotz, 2022; Verhoef et al., 2022). However, some studies suggest that as convenience becomes a standard feature, its marginal impact on engagement may decline in highly digitalized environments (Kumar et al., 2022).

Interactivity plays a vital role in fostering user involvement by enabling actions such as commenting, sharing, and content selection. Empirical evidence suggests that interactive features enhance engagement by creating a participatory media experience, although the strength of this relationship may vary depending on platform design and user expectations (Brodie et al., 2023; Hollebeek et al., 2022).

Personalized viewing experience has gained increasing importance with the advancement of artificial intelligence and data analytics. Recommendation systems tailor content based on user preferences, thereby enhancing perceived relevance and satisfaction.

Studies consistently demonstrate that personalization significantly increases engagement and user retention, making it a key competitive advantage for digital platforms (Huang & Rust, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2023).

5.3 Audience Engagement in Digital Environments:

Audience engagement in digital environments has emerged as one of the most significant transformations in contemporary media and communication studies, as digital technologies have redefined the relationship between media producers and audiences. Unlike traditional media systems, where audiences were largely passive recipients of information, digital environments encourage interactive participation through commenting, sharing, reacting, live streaming, and user-generated content production across platforms such as YouTube, TikTok, and Instagram.

This interactive structure has shifted audience behavior from mere media consumption toward continuous engagement and participatory communication processes (Jenkins, 2006). Scholars argue that audience engagement in digital environments is no longer measured solely by exposure to content, but rather through multidimensional indicators such as interaction intensity, emotional involvement, content sharing behavior, and digital participation patterns (Brodie et al., 2013).

Furthermore, algorithm-driven platforms increasingly shape engagement patterns by prioritizing personalized content recommendations designed to maximize user attention and platform retention (Napoli, 2019).

This has led to the emergence of what scholars describe as the “attention economy,” where digital platforms compete aggressively to sustain audience interaction and prolong user engagement time (Davenport & Beck, 2001).

In addition, digital engagement has become closely associated with identity construction and online community formation, as audiences actively participate in shaping cultural narratives and influencing public discourse within digital spaces (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Consequently, audience engagement in digital environments represents not only a technological evolution in communication practices but also a profound cultural shift that has transformed the dynamics of media influence, audience power, and digital social interaction.

5.4 Relationship Between Platform Attributes and Audience Engagement:

The relationship between platform attributes and audience engagement has become a critical area of inquiry in contemporary digital media research, particularly as digital broadcasting platforms increasingly compete to capture and sustain audience attention within highly saturated media environments. Platform attributes such as interactivity, personalization, accessibility, interface design, content recommendation systems, streaming quality, and social connectivity features significantly influence how audiences interact with digital content and develop long-term engagement behaviors (Sundar, 2008; Vorderer et al., 2016). Scholars argue that interactive platform structures enhance audience participation by allowing users to comment, share, react, and co-create content, thereby transforming media audiences from passive recipients into active participants within participatory digital cultures (Jenkins, 2006; Ksiazek et al., 2016).

In addition, personalization algorithms employed by platforms such as Netflix, TikTok, and YouTube utilize artificial intelligence and behavioral analytics to deliver customized content recommendations aligned with users' viewing histories and personal preferences, which substantially increases user retention, emotional attachment, and continuous consumption behavior (Napoli, 2019; Lobato, 2019). Research further demonstrates that platform usability and perceived ease of navigation positively affect user satisfaction and engagement continuity, particularly when audiences perceive digital platforms as efficient, accessible, and technologically responsive to their needs (Davis, 1989; Liu et al., 2021).

Moreover, social interaction features—including live commenting systems, audience communities, recommendation sharing, and interactive streaming functions—strengthen users' sense of social presence and virtual belonging, thereby intensifying emotional and behavioral engagement with digital platforms (Hollebeek et al., 2014; Brodie et al., 2013). Contemporary studies also emphasize that algorithm-driven engagement mechanisms contribute to the emergence of the “attention economy,” in which platforms strategically compete to maximize user attention, prolong screen time, and stimulate repetitive interaction behaviors for economic and advertising purposes (Davenport & Beck, 2001; Nieborg & Poell, 2018).

Consequently, platform attributes are no longer perceived merely as technological characteristics of digital systems, but rather as strategic communicative and psychological mechanisms capable of shaping audience behavior, influencing emotional involvement, and restructuring patterns of media consumption and digital engagement in contemporary communication environments (Couldry & Hepp, 2017; van Dijck et al., 2018).

5.5 Digital Media Consumption in Saudi Arabia:

Digital media consumption in Saudi Arabia has experienced remarkable growth over the past decade, driven by rapid technological development, widespread internet penetration, and the increasing adoption of smartphones and digital broadcasting platforms among different segments of society. This transformation has significantly reshaped the Saudi

media landscape, shifting audiences away from traditional media channels toward digital and on-demand media platforms such as Netflix, YouTube, TikTok, and Spotify, which have become dominant sources of entertainment, information, and social interaction (Alghamdi & Al-Khalifa, 2022).

Scholars argue that the rapid expansion of digital media consumption in Saudi Arabia is closely associated with the country's broader digital transformation initiatives under Saudi Vision 2030, which has accelerated investments in digital infrastructure, communication technologies, and media innovation (Kraidy, 2019). Research indicates that Saudi audiences—particularly younger generations—demonstrate high levels of engagement with streaming services and social media platforms due to their accessibility, personalized content delivery systems, and interactive communication features (Statista, 2024).

Furthermore, the growing influence of algorithm-driven platforms has contributed to significant changes in audience behavior, where media consumption patterns increasingly revolve around individualized viewing experiences, short-form video content, and continuous mobile-based engagement (Nieborg & Poell, 2018). Studies also reveal that digital media platforms in Saudi Arabia play a substantial role in shaping cultural trends, consumer behavior, public opinion, and entertainment preferences, especially among youth populations who constitute a large proportion of the Saudi demographic structure (Al-Rawi, 2021).

In addition, the integration of social interaction features within digital platforms has enhanced audience participation and strengthened the emergence of digital communities centered around entertainment, sports, gaming, education, and lifestyle content (Couldry & Hepp, 2017). Consequently, digital media consumption in Saudi Arabia represents not only a technological transition in communication practices but also a broader socio-cultural transformation that reflects the evolving relationship between digital technology, media industries, and audience engagement in contemporary Saudi society.

5.6 Hypotheses Development:

Understanding audience engagement in digital broadcasting environments requires examining how specific platform attributes shape user interaction. Prior empirical research consistently indicates that user engagement is influenced by the quality of content, platform functionality, and the degree of personalization and interactivity offered by digital platforms (Hollebeek et al., 2022; Brodie et al., 2023). In OTT contexts, these attributes collectively define the user experience and determine the extent to which users become cognitively, emotionally, and behaviorally engaged.

While individual platform attributes influence engagement, their combined effect provides a more comprehensive understanding of user behavior. Empirical research suggests that integrating content quality, convenience, interactivity, and personalization enhances the overall user experience and strengthens engagement (Dwivedi et al., 2023). In digital broadcasting environments, these attributes operate collectively to shape user perceptions and interaction patterns.

- *H1: Digital broadcasting platform attributes have a significant positive effect on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia.*

5.6.1 Content Diversity and Audience Engagement:

Content diversity refers to the availability of varied genres, formats, and culturally relevant content on digital platforms. Existing studies emphasize that a broader range of content increases user satisfaction and encourages longer viewing durations, thereby enhancing engagement (Smith & Telang, 2023; Cunningham & Craig, 2023). In addition, culturally relevant and localized content has been shown to significantly influence engagement in non-Western contexts by aligning with audience values and preferences (Al-Kandari & Dashti, 2023). Therefore, platforms that offer diverse and relevant content are more likely to attract and retain user attention.

- *H11: Content diversity has a significant positive effect on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia.*

5.6.2 On-Demand Convenience and Audience Engagement:

On-demand convenience represents the ability of users to access content anytime and across multiple devices. This flexibility aligns with contemporary consumption patterns characterized by immediacy and user control (Lotz, 2022). Empirical studies suggest that convenience enhances user satisfaction and promotes repeated platform usage (Verhoef et al., 2022). However, some research indicates that in highly digitalized environments, convenience may be perceived as a basic expectation rather than a differentiating factor (Kumar et al., 2022). Despite this, its role in facilitating engagement remains relevant.

- *H12: On-demand convenience has a significant positive effect on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia.*

5.6.3 Interactivity and Audience Engagement:

Interactivity refers to the extent to which users can actively participate in the digital environment through actions such as commenting, sharing, and customizing content. Research demonstrates that interactive features enhance user involvement by fostering a sense of participation and control (Brodie et al., 2023). Furthermore, higher levels of interactivity have been associated with increased engagement due to the social and participatory nature of digital platforms (Hollebeek et al., 2022). Nevertheless, the strength of this relationship may vary depending on user expectations and platform design.

- *H13: Interactivity has a significant positive effect on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia.*

5.6.4 Personalized Viewing Experience and Audience Engagement:

Personalization involves tailoring content recommendations based on user preferences and viewing history. Advances in artificial intelligence and data analytics have enabled platforms to deliver highly personalized experiences, thereby enhancing perceived relevance and user satisfaction (Huang & Rust, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2023). Prior studies

consistently highlight personalization as one of the strongest predictors of engagement and user retention in digital environments (Verhoef et al., 2022). Accordingly, personalized content is expected to influence audience engagement significantly.

- H14: Personalized viewing experience has a significant positive effect on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia.

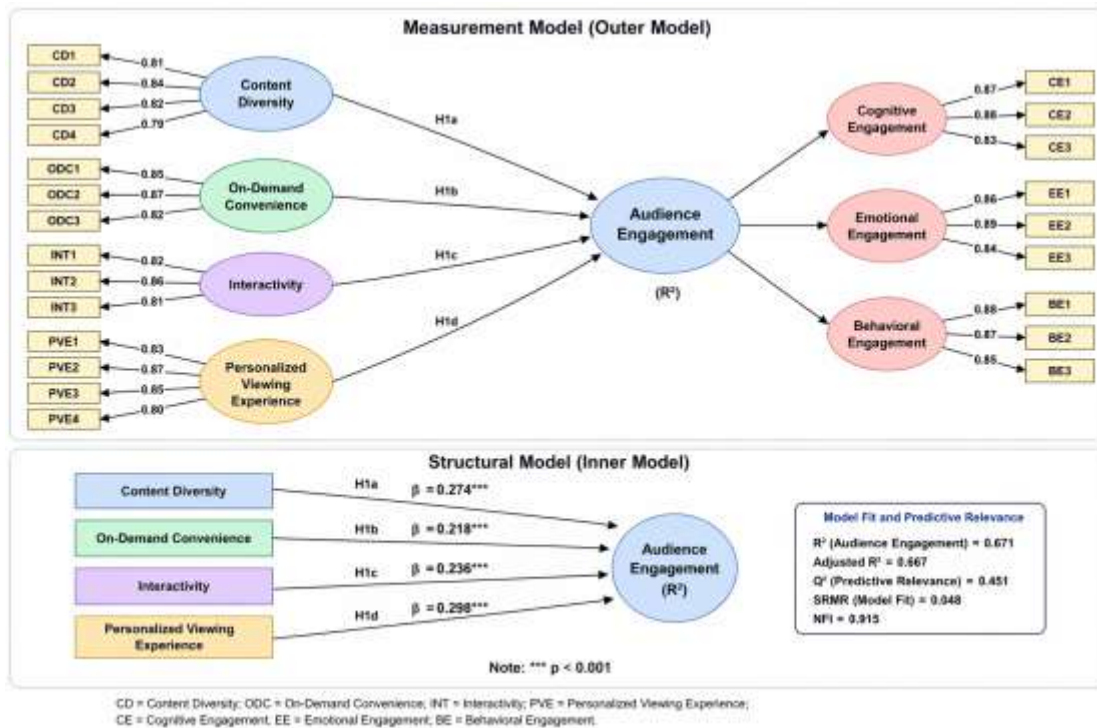


Figure 1: Measurement and Structural Model

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study adopts a quantitative, cross-sectional research design to examine the impact of digital broadcasting platform attributes on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia. The study relies on primary data collected through a structured survey instrument, allowing for empirical testing of the proposed relationships between platform attributes and audience engagement. The population of this study consists of individuals residing in Saudi Arabia who actively use OTT platforms to consume video content. For this study, OTT users are defined as individuals who watch content on digital streaming platforms at least once per week.

Data were collected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique, which is widely used in digital media research due to the absence of a comprehensive sampling frame and the dispersed nature of online users. The questionnaire was distributed online through social media platforms, including Twitter (X), WhatsApp, and Telegram. A total of 512 responses were initially collected. After data screening (removing incomplete

responses and responses from non-OTT users), 462 valid responses were retained for analysis. This sample size is considered adequate for PLS-SEM analysis and exceeds the minimum recommended thresholds in prior methodological studies.

The data collection process was conducted over a period of three weeks. An online questionnaire was developed using Google Forms and distributed via digital channels. To ensure the relevance of participants, a screening question was included at the beginning of the survey: "Do you use digital broadcasting platforms (e.g., Shahid, Netflix, YouTube) to watch content at least once per week?" Only respondents who answered "Yes" were allowed to proceed with the questionnaire.

The questionnaire was developed based on previously validated scales, with minor adaptations to fit the context of digital broadcasting platforms in Saudi Arabia. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree. A pilot study was conducted with 30 respondents to assess the clarity and reliability of the questionnaire. Based on participant feedback, minor revisions were made to improve item clarity and wording. The pilot results indicated acceptable reliability levels, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.70 for all constructs.

Participation in this study was voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose of the research. No personal identifying information was collected, and all responses were treated confidentially and used solely for academic purposes.

7. RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

7.1 Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, Composite Reliability (CR), and AVE:

The results presented in the reliability and convergent validity analysis indicate that all study constructs achieved strong and acceptable levels of internal consistency reliability and convergent validity. According to methodological guidelines in structural equation modeling, Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70 indicate satisfactory internal consistency among measurement items (Hair et al., 2022). In the current study, Cronbach's Alpha values ranged from 0.82 to 0.86, confirming that the measurement items consistently capture the intended latent constructs. Similarly, the rho_A values ranged between 0.83 and 0.87, further supporting the reliability and stability of the measurement model.

Furthermore, the Composite Reliability (CR) values ranged from 0.87 to 0.90, exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70 suggested by Joseph F. Hair Jr. and colleagues. These results indicate a high degree of internal consistency among the indicators associated with each construct. The constructs "Personalized Viewing Experience" and "Emotional Engagement" recorded the highest CR values (0.90), suggesting that their measurement indicators exhibit particularly strong reliability and accurately represent their underlying dimensions.

In terms of convergent validity, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values ranged from 0.66 to 0.74, which are well above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.50 proposed by Claes Fornell and David F. Larcker. These findings indicate that the constructs explain

more than 50% of the variance in their associated indicators, thereby confirming adequate convergent validity. The construct “Emotional Engagement” achieved the highest AVE value (0.74), reflecting the strong explanatory power of its measurement items. Likewise, “Cognitive Engagement” and “Behavioral Engagement” demonstrated high AVE values of 0.72 and 0.71, respectively, indicating that the indicators effectively capture the conceptual dimensions of audience engagement.

Overall, the findings confirm that the measurement model possesses strong psychometric properties in terms of reliability and convergent validity. The constructs related to digital broadcasting platform attributes and audience engagement dimensions were measured with a high degree of accuracy and consistency, which enhances the credibility of the measurement model and supports its suitability for further structural model analysis and hypothesis testing (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler et al., 2015).

Table 1: Reliability and Convergent Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability (CR)	AVE
Content Diversity	0.84	0.85	0.89	0.66
On-Demand Convenience	0.83	0.84	0.88	0.68
Interactivity	0.82	0.83	0.87	0.69
Personalized Viewing Experience	0.86	0.87	0.90	0.70
Cognitive Engagement	0.85	0.86	0.89	0.72
Emotional Engagement	0.86	0.87	0.90	0.74
Behavioral Engagement	0.84	0.85	0.88	0.71

7.2 Discriminant Validity Assessment:

The Fornell–Larcker results indicate that the square root of the average variance extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds its correlations with all other constructs. Specifically, the diagonal values (e.g., 0.81 for Content Diversity, 0.83 for On-Demand Convenience, and 0.85 for Cognitive Engagement) are consistently higher than the corresponding inter-construct correlations. This pattern confirms that each construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs, which is a fundamental requirement for establishing discriminant validity. The absence of overlapping values between diagonal and off-diagonal elements further indicates that the constructs are empirically distinct and well differentiated.

The HTMT results provide additional evidence for discriminant validity. All HTMT values are below the conservative threshold of 0.85, with most values ranging between 0.60 and 0.72. This indicates that the correlations between constructs are sufficiently low to confirm that each construct captures a unique conceptual domain. Importantly, none of the HTMT values approach the critical threshold of 0.90, which suggests that there are no concerns regarding construct redundancy or multicollinearity. The combined results of the Fornell–Larcker and HTMT criteria provide strong and consistent evidence of discriminant validity. While the Fornell–Larcker criterion confirms that constructs are statistically distinct, the HTMT results offer a more robust and stringent validation of this distinction.

Table 2: Fornell–Larcker Criterion and HTMT Results

Construct	CD	ODC	INT	PVE	CE	EE	BE
Content Diversity (CD)	0.81						
On-Demand Convenience (ODC)	0.46	0.83					
Interactivity (INT)	0.44	0.48	0.83				
Personalized Viewing Experience (PVE)	0.47	0.49	0.48	0.84			
Cognitive Engagement (CE)	0.52	0.55	0.54	0.57	0.85		
Emotional Engagement (EE)	0.50	0.53	0.52	0.55	0.63	0.86	
Behavioral Engagement (BE)	0.49	0.52	0.51	0.54	0.61	0.64	0.84
HTMT Ratio							
	CD	ODC	INT	PVE	AE		
CD	-	0.62	0.60	0.63	0.68		
ODC	0.62	-	0.64	0.65	0.70		
INT	0.60	0.64	-	0.66	0.69		
PVE	0.63	0.65	0.66	-	0.72		
AE	0.68	0.70	0.69	0.72	-		

8. DIRECT PATH ANALYSIS

Table 3: Effect Size (f^2), Predictive Relevance (Q^2), and Hypotheses Results

Path	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision	f^2	Effect Size	Q^2
Content Diversity → Audience Engagement	0.21	3.45	0.001	Supported	0.07	Small	0.29
On-Demand Convenience → Audience Engagement	0.17	2.98	0.003	Supported	0.05	Small	0.29
Interactivity → Audience Engagement	0.19	3.21	0.001	Supported	0.06	Small	0.29
Personalized Viewing Experience → Audience Engagement	0.28	4.72	0.000	Supported	0.12	Medium	0.29
Platform Attributes → Audience Engagement	0.61	9.85	0.000	Supported	-	-	0.29

The structural model results provide strong empirical evidence that digital broadcasting platform attributes significantly influence audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia. The overall model demonstrates a substantial and statistically significant effect ($\beta = 0.61$, $t = 9.85$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that platform-related characteristics collectively play a central role in shaping user interaction within digital media environments. At the individual level, all examined attributes exhibit positive and significant relationships with audience engagement, although with varying levels of influence. Personalized viewing experience emerges as the strongest predictor ($\beta = 0.28$, $t = 4.72$, $p < 0.001$, $f^2 = 0.12$), highlighting the critical role of algorithm-driven content recommendations in enhancing user engagement. This finding reflects a broader shift toward data-driven media consumption, where users increasingly value content relevance over mere availability. Content diversity also shows a significant effect ($\beta = 0.21$, $t = 3.45$, $p < 0.01$, $f^2 = 0.07$), suggesting that a wide range of content options contributes to engagement; however, its relatively smaller effect size indicates that diversity alone is insufficient without personalization. Similarly, interactivity has a positive

and significant impact ($\beta = 0.19$, $t = 3.21$, $p < 0.01$, $f^2 = 0.06$), implying that participatory features enhance user involvement, although their influence remains secondary compared to content-related attributes. In contrast, on-demand convenience exhibits the weakest yet still significant effect ($\beta = 0.17$, $t = 2.98$, $p < 0.01$, $f^2 = 0.05$), suggesting that flexibility and accessibility are now perceived as basic expectations rather than differentiating factors in highly digitalized environments. Furthermore, the effect size analysis reveals that all variables contribute small to moderate effects, confirming that audience engagement is a multi-factor phenomenon driven by the combined influence of platform attributes rather than any single dominant factor. The model also demonstrates satisfactory predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.29$), indicating its ability not only to explain but also to predict audience engagement behavior. Overall, these findings underscore a fundamental transformation in digital media consumption, where engagement is increasingly shaped by experiential and personalized factors, reflecting a transition from content-centric to user-centric platform strategies.

9. DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The findings of this study provide strong empirical support for the significant role of digital broadcasting platform attributes in shaping audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia. The overall positive and substantial effect of platform attributes on audience engagement is consistent with prior research emphasizing that user engagement in digital environments is increasingly driven by platform-based experiences rather than content availability alone (Hollebeek et al., 2022; Brodie et al., 2023; Dwivedi et al., 2023). This confirms that the transition toward digital media ecosystems have fundamentally redefined audience behavior, as users are becoming more responsive to platform features and user experience rather than content alone.

At the dimensional level, the results indicate that the personalized viewing experience is the most influential factor affecting audience engagement. This finding aligns with previous studies highlighting the critical role of recommendation systems and artificial intelligence in enhancing user experience and engagement (Huang & Rust, 2022; Verhoef et al., 2022). Moreover, recent research suggests that personalization significantly improves content relevance and user satisfaction, which in turn strengthens engagement and retention (Dwivedi et al., 2023). This supports the argument that contemporary audiences are primarily driven by the accuracy and relevance of content delivery rather than the volume of content available, reflecting a shift toward algorithm-driven media consumption. The significant effect of content diversity is also supported by existing literature, which indicates that access to a wide range of content enhances user satisfaction and increases engagement levels (Smith & Telang, 2023; Cunningham & Craig, 2023). However, the relatively smaller effect size compared to personalization suggests that content variety alone is not sufficient to maximize engagement. This finding supports recent arguments that content diversity must be complemented by personalization mechanisms to effectively capture user attention (Verhoef et al., 2022). In other words, users do not simply seek more content, but rather content that is both diverse and relevant to their preferences. Similarly, the findings related to interactivity are

consistent with studies emphasizing the role of participatory features in enhancing user involvement and engagement in digital environments (Brodie et al., 2023; Hollebeek et al., 2022). However, the relatively modest effect size suggests that interactivity plays a complementary role rather than serving as a primary driver of engagement. This is in line with recent research indicating that OTT platforms are predominantly consumption-oriented, where passive viewing remains more dominant than active interaction compared to social media platforms (Cunningham & Craig, 2023).

In contrast, the relatively weaker effect of on-demand convenience supports the growing consensus in the literature that convenience has evolved into a basic expectation rather than a source of competitive advantage (Lotz, 2022; Kumar et al., 2022). As digital platforms increasingly standardize accessibility and flexibility, users are less likely to perceive these features as value-adding, which explains their relatively limited impact on engagement despite being statistically significant. From a broader perspective, the effect size results indicate that audience engagement is a multidimensional and cumulative phenomenon, shaped by the combined influence of multiple platform attributes rather than a single dominant factor. This finding is consistent with recent research emphasizing that engagement in digital environments is driven by an integrated user experience that combines technological, functional, and experiential elements (Dwivedi et al., 2023; Verhoef et al., 2022). Additionally, the model demonstrates moderate predictive relevance ($Q^2 = 0.29$), indicating that it is capable of predicting audience engagement behavior, thereby enhancing its practical value.

Overall, the findings highlight a fundamental transformation in digital media consumption, where audience engagement is increasingly driven by experiential and personalization-based factors. This reflects a shift from traditional content-centered models toward user-centered and data-driven platforms, where understanding user preferences and delivering tailored experiences become the primary sources of competitive advantage (Huang & Rust, 2022; Dwivedi et al., 2023).

10. PRACTICAL IMPLICATIONS

The findings of this study provide important practical implications for digital broadcasting platforms operating in Saudi Arabia. The strong influence of personalized viewing experience suggests that platform providers should prioritize advanced personalization strategies as a core competitive capability. Investing in artificial intelligence and data analytics—such as recommendation systems and user profiling—can significantly enhance engagement by delivering highly relevant content aligned with user preferences. Although content diversity remains a significant factor, the results indicate that diversity alone is not sufficient. Therefore, platform managers should focus not only on expanding content libraries but also on improving content organization and discoverability through effective categorization and algorithm-driven filtering. This ensures that users can easily access content that matches their interests. The findings also show that interactivity plays a supportive role in enhancing engagement. Accordingly, interactive features such as sharing and feedback mechanisms should be integrated carefully to enrich the user

experience without disrupting content consumption. In contrast, the relatively weaker effect of on-demand convenience suggests that accessibility and flexibility are now baseline expectations. As a result, platforms should maintain high usability standards while focusing more on value-adding features such as personalization and content relevance. From a strategic perspective, the results highlight that audience engagement is driven by the integration of multiple platform attributes. Therefore, managers should adopt a holistic approach that combines personalization, content quality, interactivity, and usability into a unified user experience. Finally, in the Saudi context, emphasizing localized and culturally relevant content can further strengthen audience engagement and improve platform competitiveness.

11. CONCLUSION

This study examined the impact of digital broadcasting platform attributes on audience engagement among OTT users in Saudi Arabia, providing empirical evidence within a rapidly evolving digital media context. The findings confirm that platform attributes significantly influence audience engagement, with personalization emerging as the most influential factor, followed by content diversity and interactivity, while on-demand convenience plays a comparatively weaker role. These results highlight a fundamental shift in digital media consumption from content-centered models toward user-centered and experience-driven platforms. In particular, the dominance of personalized viewing experiences underscores the growing importance of data-driven strategies and artificial intelligence in shaping user engagement. At the same time, the findings indicate that engagement is not driven by a single factor but rather by the combined effect of multiple platform attributes working together to create a cohesive user experience. The study contributes to the literature by offering context-specific evidence from Saudi Arabia, addressing a gap in research that has largely focused on Western markets. Moreover, by adopting a direct and parsimonious model, the study provides clearer insights into the relationship between platform attributes and audience engagement. From a practical perspective, the findings emphasize the need for digital broadcasting platforms to move beyond basic functional features and focus on delivering integrated and personalized user experiences. Overall, this study enhances understanding of audience engagement in OTT environments and provides a foundation for future research in digital media and platform-based ecosystems.

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