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WHAT MAKES US CLICK 'PLAY'? AN EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS OF CONTENT-RELATED SUCCESS FACTORS FOR STREAMING SERVICE ADOPTION IN GERMANY

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ABSTRACT:

Faced with intense competition in the video-on-demand (VoD) market, providers are under increasing pressure to understand the determinants of user acceptance to justify significant investments in content and infrastructure. Based on the stimulus-organism-response (S-O-R) model, this study examines the influence of specific content-related characteristics on consumers' intention to use VoD services. The conceptual model was empirically validated using data from a quantitative online survey of German consumers (n = 200). The results reveal that the intention to use is massively driven by perceived content value. Specifically, content quality and platform design emerged as significant antecedents of content value, whereas content variety showed no significant impact, suggesting a shift in user preference from quantity to relevance. The paper concludes by deriving actionable managerial implications for VoD providers as well as recommendations for future research in digital service adoption.

KEYWORDS:

Video-on-demand (VoD), Stimulus-organism-response (SOR) model, video streaming, intention to use, determining factors, streaming service

JEL classification: L82, L86, M15, M16

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Introduction

Video-on-Demand (VoD) services, commonly known as video streaming services, have long established themselves as a viable alternative to traditional television broadcasting. Subscription-based providers such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, AppleTV, and Disney+ have become indispensable in many German households. According to a survey by market research institute Nielsen (2024a), around 77 percent of the German population uses VoD services on a weekly basis, which corresponds to a market volume of around €6 billion (Statista Market Insights, 2025), and the trend is rising. However, as market attractiveness increases, so does competitive intensity, thereby necessitating that VoD providers invest more heavily in the content-related quality of their services. For instance, Netflix developed the ‘Cinematch’ algorithm to suggest similar series and films based on user preferences (Kwak et al., 2021). A further approach involves the increased deployment of original content exclusively available on the respective proprietary platform. Consequently, PwC (2023) estimates that in 2022 alone, Netflix and Disney+ invested up to 16.7 billion and 22 billion US dollars, respectively, in the production of original content.

Against the backdrop of this intense competition and the resulting need for differentiation, VoD providers are faced with uncertainty in every strategic decision they make as to whether their investments in content and platform infrastructure will meet market requirements. Specifically, the question arises as to which content features are most effective in increasing consumers' willingness to use a VoD service.

Parallel to the rapid adoption of video streaming providers in the market, academic research on VoD services has also proliferated in recent years. One stream of research focuses on the consequences of VoD service usage. In this regard, Hadida et al. (2021) observed that due to their broad and conveniently accessible offerings, VoD services primarily represent a competitive substitute for conventional film sales and rentals. Kaur and Ashfaq (2023) demonstrated that subscribers utilize the streaming service Netflix specifically to search for new series, thereby substantially altering their streaming preferences. Other studies address brand loyalty in the context of streaming services. Felicia and Widyastuti (2024) proved that variety-seeking behavior, alongside factors such as dissatisfaction or service quality, acts as a significant driver for switching VoD services. To prevent such user churn, Khan (2023) argues for a strategic shift toward user-centricity in streaming services. For example, a user-centric algorithm can utilize metadata and machine learning to suggest content that corresponds to users' individual preferences.

Regarding the potential antecedents of VoD service usage, current research remains fragmented. While there are studies addressing dissatisfaction as a driver of consumer switching intention (e.g., Felicia & Widyastuti, 2024) or demographic and socioeconomic characteristics as predictors of VoD usage (e.g., Elsafy & Boghdady, 2022; Kwak et al., 2021), there is a lack of a broad empirical basis concerning content-related features as influencing factors on the consumer's intention to use. Yet, knowledge regarding these factors offers VoD providers a crucial foundation for the strategic alignment of their offerings. The Uses and Gratifications approach (Katz et al., 1973) suggests that users select VoD media specifically based on the extent to which they satisfy specific needs. In the literature, the relevance of content quality and content variety are indicated as important determinants of streaming platform attractiveness (Wayne, 2018). Drawing on User Experience research, it can further be posited that the content-related platform design of a VoD service serves not merely aesthetic purposes but acts as a ‘compass’ facilitating the accessibility and discoverability of content (Gomez-Urbe & Hunt, 2016). Although high

practical relevance can be ascribed to these features for VoD providers, to the authors' knowledge, no empirical investigation exists examining whether and to what extent these three causes form a content value that is distinct from purely technical process value (e.g., Dhiman et al., 2022; Zhu, 2019).

The prevailing state of research on content value drivers shows promising approaches but requires further quantitative-empirical validation. There is a lack of empirical work that captures content-related influencing factors on consumer-perceived value. Furthermore, scholarships have yet to determine the extent to which content value represents decisive variables influencing the final intention to use a VoD service. The present study addresses these research gaps and thus contributes to the ongoing academic discourse. Specifically, content quality, content variety, and (content-related) platform design are examined as potential determinants of perceived content value. Content value, in turn, is tested as antecedent of the intention to use.

Methodologically, the direct effects are tested using a structural equation model (SEM). Conceptually, the research framework follows the S-O-R model (Mehrabian & Russel, 1974). The fundamental premise of this model is that exogenous *Stimuli* first evokes an internal state (*Organism*), which subsequently leads to an individual reaction (*Response*) (Vieira, 2013). The S-O-R model is well-established in consumer behavior research (e.g., Lin & Shen, 2023; Prashar et al., 2017). It has also found application in research on streaming services to investigate causal relationships in the usage of VoD services (e.g., Dhiman et al., 2022).

Theoretical Background and Hypotheses

DEFINITION OF STREAMING SERVICES

Streaming services are platforms that provide content such as videos, music, or photos via the Internet, either in real-time or on-demand (Tao et al., 2014; Yang & Lee, 2018). In the context of video streaming, the term VoD (Video-on-Demand) generally refers to an "interactive service that allows audiovisual media content to be accessed individually at any time" (Kaumanns & Siegenheim, 2006, p. 622). VoD services differ not only in terms of their content but also regarding their access models, which may be subscription-based, transactional, or ad-supported. 'SVoD' (Subscription Video on Demand) encompasses all streaming services where users gain access to the platform's entire library for a monthly or annual fee (McDermott, 2022; Nielsen, 2024b). Prominent examples include Netflix, Disney+, and HBO Max. 'AVoD' (Ad-supported Video on Demand) refers to advertising-based streaming services (McDermott, 2022). This implies that users receive (limited) access to content in exchange for viewing advertisements (Nielsen, 2024b). 'TVoD' (Transactional Video on Demand) describes platforms that offer their content on a pay-per-view basis (Nielsen, 2024b); thus, users can view content for a (in)determinate period in exchange for a one-time payment. Examples include iTunes and Google Play. Frequently, streaming services employ a hybrid approach combining several of these models. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the term 'streaming services' in this paper refers specifically to VoD services.

DETERMINANTS OF CONTENT VALUE

Content quality

Product and service literature has long indicated that service quality constitutes a decisive determinant of consumer satisfaction (e.g., Arora & Narula, 2018; Naini et al., 2022). A fundamental component of this quality is the high standard of content delivery. In the context of social media, Carlson et al. (2018) identify the accuracy, completeness, relevance, and timeliness of content as drivers of positive consumer perception. Regarding mobile TV usage, Jung et al. (2009) identify the perceived relevance, timeliness, and sufficiency of content as critical factors for quality. The influence of high-quality content on VoD service users has also been examined in academic literature. A study by Haqqo et al. (2024) demonstrates that content quality has a positive, significant influence not only on the perceived value of the streaming service but also on the intention to subscribe continuously. Lo et al. (2024) arrive at a similar conclusion, finding that content quality in Over-the-Top (OTT) services influences both hedonic value and user attitudes. Further studies confirm the importance of content quality for the use of VoD; high-quality content influences not only the intention to use, but also the intention to repurchase (Moreno et al., 2023). A comparable effect can be observed in the music streaming industry. A study by Hsu et al. (2021) shows a significant relationship between quality content and positive user emotion. Considering the findings from existing research and synthesizing the influence of high-quality content on the user, the following first hypothesis is proposed:

H1: The higher the content quality of a streaming service, the higher the user-perceived content value of a streaming service.

Content variety

In addition to content quality, relevant streaming literature cites the breadth of the offering as a crucial decision-making criterion for the use of a VoD service (Haqqo & Isharina, 2024). In product research, variety is understood as a company's ability to offer a multitude of different options regarding size, price, claims, or comparable product attributes (Navanti et al., 2024). In consumer behavior research, several studies indicate that perceived variety of offerings has a positive influence on consumers. In the e-commerce context, it has been demonstrated, among other things, that the product variety offered promotes consumer satisfaction (Mofokeng, 2021) and the perceived quality of a product (Alanadoly & Salem, 2022). Furthermore, it appears that a high number of product variants leads to a significant increase in purchase intention (Navanti et al., 2024). Although series or films, unlike physical products, do not possess classic product attributes, they can nonetheless be viewed as digital products (Sun & Moon, 2024). Drawing on existing findings, it is therefore assumed in the context of streaming offerings that greater content variety gives VoD users a sense of a good return on their subscription investment, thereby leading to higher perceived content value. This leads to the following second hypothesis:

H2: The greater the content variety of a streaming service, the higher the user-perceived content value of a streaming service.

Platform design

The quality and variety of platform content are differentiation criteria frequently marketed externally by streaming providers. However, the efficacy of these features diminishes if a cluttered or confusing platform design significantly hinders content discoverability (Becerril-Castrillejo et al., 2026; Haqqo & Isharina, 2024). Accordingly, significant importance has been attributed to the so-called User Interface in the usage of virtual offerings for many years (e.g., Garrett, 2011). Elements on the screen should be arranged in a way that is easy for the user to understand and use. A website should, therefore, be well-designed and user-friendly to allow efficient navigation (Zhou et al., 2019). If a website's design meets these requirements, it leads to positive user perceptions. In an investigation of customer loyalty among online-based food delivery services, Wandoko et al. (2024), for instance, conclude that visual design significantly impacts user trust and satisfaction. Another study by Cho et al. (2009) examines the acceptance and use of e-learning tools for self-study and concludes that the user interface design leads to user satisfaction and continued intention to use. Consistent with this, numerous studies can be found that relate specifically to the streaming context. According to Sabat and Bhattacharyya (2024), the user interface of an OTT streaming service has a direct influence on satisfaction and users' loyalty or switching intention. Complementing this, Hsu et al. (2021) conclude that the user interface of music streaming services has a significantly positive influence on users' positive emotions. Existing research clearly indicates a broad consensus in academia regarding the role of design. Previous knowledge suggests that design has a similar effect on users of video streaming services. Thus, the third hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H3: The more appealing the platform design of a streaming service, the higher the user-perceived content value of a streaming service.

CONTENT VALUE AND INTENTION TO USE

In behavioral psychology, it is generally known that certain behaviors can be triggered by the perceived value that can be realized through this behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1975). This perspective is also found in an adapted form in the context of the acceptance and adoption of technical models (e.g., the Technology Acceptance Model; Venkatesh et al., 2012). Technology research repeatedly shows that consumer-perceived value directly influences the intention to use. For instance, perceived value and perceived performance have a significant influence on the intention to use online banking (Shanmugam et al., 2014). Similar effects are also evident in other areas, such as the use of e-government (Hamid et al., 2016), mobile payment methods (Narahdita et al., 2020), or the deployment of technology-enhanced learning methods (Dubey & Sahu, 2021). A further aspect that should be considered is specifically the influence of value in the streaming industry. Kuo and Hsu (2022) demonstrate that user satisfaction in video game streaming is influenced by system quality, information quality, and service quality, and that user satisfaction, in turn, has a significant influence on the intention to use. This is supported by Tsai et al. (2023), who identified a significant influence of perceived value on the intention to use OTT streaming platforms. For the context of this research work, Fishbein's (1975) definition of behavioral intention is adapted such that intention to use is understood as a person's subjective probability of using a

streaming service. If previous knowledge from academic literature is also considered, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H4: The higher the consumer-perceived content value of a streaming service, the higher the intention to use a streaming service.

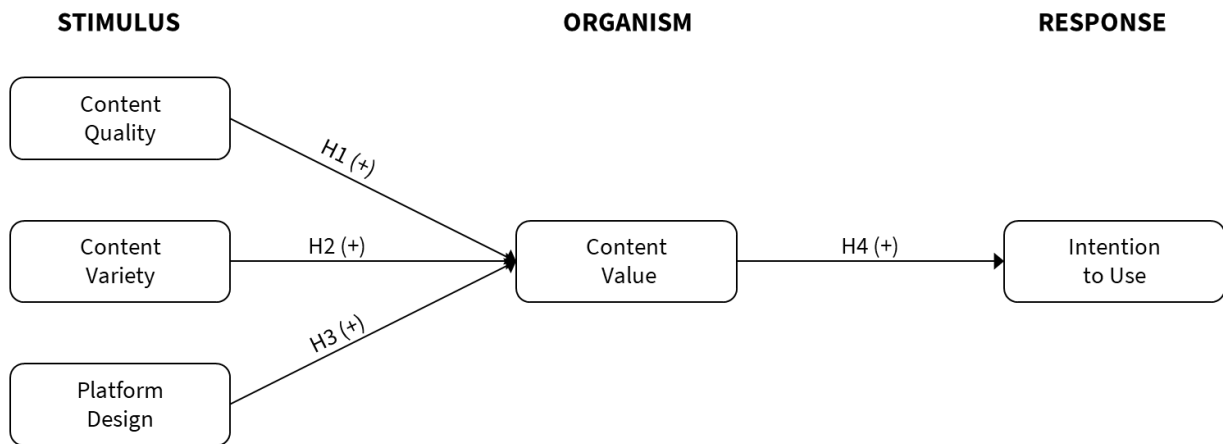


Figure 1: Research framework

Methodology

DATA COLLECTION AND SAMPLE

Data collection took place online between December 2024 and February 2025. Participants were recruited through various virtual channels. Each question was marked as mandatory to avoid missing values. All potential participants were informed in advance about the purpose and relevance of the survey. No financial incentives were offered for participation.

A total of $n = 202$ individuals participated in the survey. Two datasets were excluded due to nonspecific age data. Consequently, $n = 200$ datasets were included in the final analysis. The average age of respondents is 33 years (64 percent female). 96 percent of respondents stated that they actively use at least one VoD service. Thus, sufficient experiential knowledge can be assumed for answering the questions. The sample captured here partially corresponds to other studies on the topic of video streaming. Individuals aged 21 to 30 represent the largest proportion of the sample in both this study and the investigation by Lo et al. (2024). Only the gender distribution deviates from previous studies (e.g., Lo et al., 2024; Shah & Mehta, 2021). However, since gender was deliberately not chosen as a variable of interest in this analysis, deviations from prior studies can be considered negligible.

MEASURES

The operationalization of the research model was based on validated scales from the relevant marketing literature, which were adapted for the streaming context. In total, the measurement instrument comprises 15 items. All items were translated and adapted to the specific context, while maintaining content equivalence with the original scales. All items were measured using a 5-point Likert scale with anchor values ranging from 1 = ‘strongly disagree’ to 5 = ‘strongly agree’.

The variables were operationalized as follows: *content quality* was measured using 3 items based on previous research by Hsu et al. (2021) and Lo et al. (2024). Cronbach alpha (CA), as an established measure of internal item consistency, shows a value of 0.785. For this and all subsequent variables, the CA is significantly above the threshold recommended in the literature (> 0.700; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994; see table 1). *Content variety* (CA: 0.730) was operationalized via 3 items from the scales of Chang (2011) and Liu et al. (2008). *Platform design* (CA: 0.855) was measured using 3 items based on Hsu et al. (2021) and Zhou et al. (2019). *Content value* (CA: 0.790) was operationalized and adapted with 3 items from the work of Haqqo and Isharina (2024). Finally, *intention to use* (CA: 0.816) was measured using 3 items from the established scales of Lo et al. (2024) and Sabat and Bhattacharyya (2024).

Construct	Items	IR	CR / CA	AVE
Content Quality	The quality of streaming service content is good.	0.696	0.792 / 0.785	0.561
	The content of streaming services meets my expectations.	0.491		
	Streaming services offer excellent content.	0.496		
Content Variety	The content on streaming services is comprehensive.	0.387	0.731 / 0.730	0.477
	Content from traditional media can also be found on streaming services.	0.513		
	The series and films I want to watch are available on streaming services.	0.531		
Platform Design	The user interface of streaming services is easy to use.	0.832	0.865 / 0.855	0.684
	The user interface is clear and allows me to quickly find what I'm looking for.	0.771		
	The steps are simple and clear, for example, to play a movie.	0.449		
Content Value	Streaming services are easy to use because of the content they offer.	0.278	0.806 / 0.790	0.591
	Streaming services are worthwhile because of the content they offer.	0.801		
	Overall, the content offered by streaming services is highly beneficial.	0.696		
Intention to Use	I would use streaming services for my needs in the future.	0.776	0.836 / 0.816	0.633
	I see myself being able to use streaming services for my needs.	0.692		
	I can imagine using streaming services regularly.	0.430		

IR = Item reliability, CR = Construct reliability, CA = Cronbach Alpha, AVE = Average variance extracted

Table 2: Construct measures

Results

RESULTS OF MODEL FIT ASSESSMENT

To assess the fit of the postulated structural equation model, a confirmatory path analysis was conducted using JASP (Version 0.95.4). Due to the observed violation of the normality assumption for the endogenous variables, a robust maximum likelihood estimator (MLR) was employed, which corrects the test statistics and standard errors for non-normality (Yuan & Bentler, 2000). The assessment of global model fit was based on a combination of the chi-square test and several complementary fit indices to ensure a comprehensive and robust evaluation.

The results of the analysis indicate an excellent model fit. The robust chi-square test yielded a non-significant value, $\chi^2(3) = 3.318$, $p = 0.371$. This indicates that the discrepancy between the covariance matrix implied by the model and the empirical covariance matrix is not statistically significant, and thus the null hypothesis of perfect fit is retained.

To further confirm these findings, additional fit indices were examined. The Comparative Fit Index (CFI) was 0.999, and the Tucker-Lewis Index (TLI) was .998. Both values are well above the recommended threshold of 0.950, which indicates an excellent model fit according to Hu and Bentler (1999). Likewise, the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) was compelling, with a value of 0.015 ($p = 0.611$) that falls clearly below the 0.06 cut-off for a good fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1992). Finally, the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR) was 0.023, indicating a very low average standardized residual and falling well below the recommended upper limit of 0.080 (Hu & Bentler, 1999).

Taken together, the reported fit indices provide a consistent and positive assessment. The high convergence of the various indices confirms that the specified model reliably reflects the underlying covariance structure of the data. This high degree of model-data correspondence justifies the interpretation of the specific path coefficients to test the study's hypotheses.

RESULTS OF HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The analysis of bivariate relationships (Pearson correlations; see Table 2) supports the construct validity for the subsequent path analysis. Significant correlations ($p < 0.01$) are evident along the theoretically postulated paths. At the stimulus-organism level, content value correlates strongly with content quality ($r = 0.618$) and platform design ($r = 0.510$) and moderately with content diversity ($r = 0.389$). In addition, there is a significant positive correlation between content value and the outcome variable of usage intention ($r = 0.555$).

Variables & Descriptives	CQ	CV	PD	PCV	IU
Variables					
Content Quality (CQ)	1.000				
Content Variety (CV)	0.453	1.000			
Platform Design (PD)	0.391	0.315	1.000		
Content Value (PCV)	0.618	0.389	0.510	1.000	
Intention to Use (IU)	0.431	0.209	0.281	0.555	1.000
Descriptives					
Mean	3.758	3.585	4.255	3.888	4.390
Standard Deviation	0.693	0.759	0.805	0.729	0.714
Shapiro-Wilk	0.965	0.961	0.844	0.952	0.814
Min	1.333	1.333	1.000	1.333	1.000
Max	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000	5.000

Correlations are significant at the $p < .010$ level; Shapiro-Wilk values are significant at the $p < .010$ level

Table 2: Correlation Analyses and Descriptives

The results of the path analyses (see Table 3 and Figure 2) largely confirm the assumptions of the research model and validate the relevance of the dual value approach. Within the content dimension, *content quality* emerges as the dominant predictor of the perceived *content value* ($\beta = 0.461$; $p < 0.001$; H1 supported), followed by *platform design* ($\beta = 0.303$; $p < 0.001$; H3 supported). While *content variety* was also identified as a relevant predictor of the perceived *content value* in this study, its influence proves to be relatively small and not significant ($\beta = 0.085$; $p = 0.153$); H2 not supported). It can thus be concluded that perceived *content value* is driven primarily by quality-related features (here: quality, design) and less by quantity-related features (here: variety). Regarding behavioral influence, a highly significant influence of *content value* on *intention to use* ($\beta = 0.555$; $p < 0.001$; H4 supported) has been identified.

Predictor	Outcome	Std. estimate	Std. Error	z-value	p	95% Confidence interval	
						Lower	Upper
Content Quality	→ Content Value	0.461	0.059	7.818	< .001	0.346	0.577
Content Variety	→ Content Value	0.085	0.059	1.429	.153	-0.031	0.201
Platform Design	→ Content Value	0.303	0.066	4.623	< .001	0.175	0.431
Content Value	→ Intention to use	0.555	0.054	10.194	< .001	0.448	0.662

Table 3: Results of path analyses

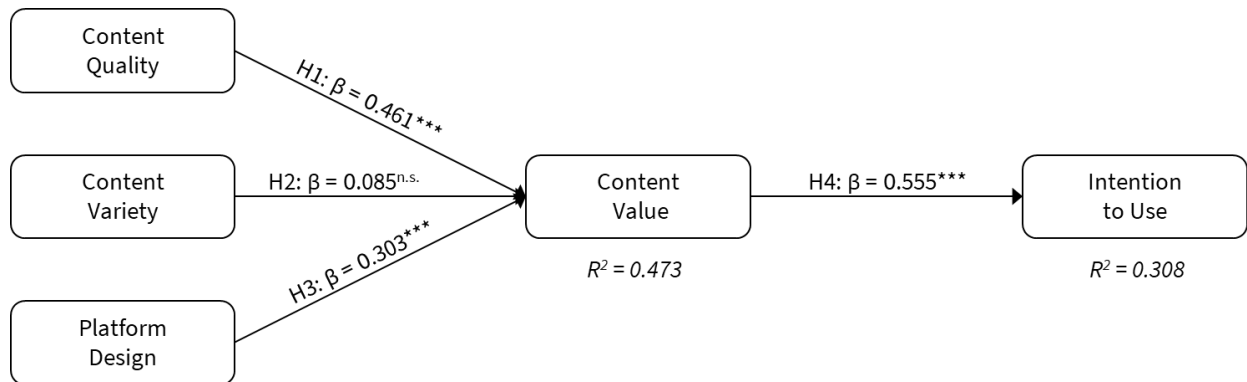


Figure 2: Research framework including results

Discussion

This study offers relevant insights into the determinants of VoD usage. Regarding the content-related drivers, and consistent with prior research (Haqqo & Isharina, 2024; Lo et al., 2024), this analysis confirms that *content quality* exerts the strongest influence on the perceived *content value*. This underscores that the quality of content – rather than its mere quantity – constitutes the central value proposition of streaming platforms. Complementing this, *platform design* also proves to be a significant predictor of the *content value*. In alignment with Wandoko (2024) and Cho et al. (2009), this suggests that an aesthetic and intuitive user interface not only enhances usability but is a prerequisite for enabling users to access content efficiently. A notable finding, however, is the lack of a significant influence of *content variety* on *content value*. This contradicts earlier studies that identified product variety as a key driver of success (Mofokeng, 2021; Alanadoly & Salem, 2022). A possible explanation might be the increasing relevance of personalized recommendation algorithms: As users often see only a fraction of the total catalog due to algorithmic curation, the objective breadth of the offering diminishes in importance in favor of subjective relevance (fit). The study also identifies *content value* as a significant antecedent of *intention to use*. This validates the technology acceptance paradigm within the streaming context and confirms analogous findings regarding the role of perceived usefulness (Tsai et al., 2023; Kuo & Hsu, 2022).

MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

The results of this study provide actionable insights into Video-on-Demand (VoD) services aiming not only to retain existing customers in the long term but also to acquire new ones. To achieve these goals, decision-makers should focus their efforts on high-quality content, cross-platform availability, an intuitive user interface, target group segmentation, and personalization. A VoD service can achieve long-term success and prevail over the competition if management succeeds in implementing targeted measures.

Focus on high-quality content to increase user retention

The analysis demonstrates that high-quality content contributes significantly to the attractiveness of streaming services. Therefore, content strategy managers should explicitly prioritize quality in the selection, licensing, and provision of content. This encompasses not only production quality but also originality and relevance to the target audience. In particular, original productions can play a decisive role, as they not only strengthen the brand identity of a VoD service but also offer unique content unavailable on any other platform. However, this exclusivity comes at a price: Netflix, for example, plans to invest 18 billion US dollars in content in 2025, prioritizing international projects to ensure sustainable success (Sprenger, 2025). To ensure a consistently high level of quality, it is essential for decision-makers to define clear selection criteria. For instance, a standardized evaluation method such as a structured scorecard could help a VoD service achieve a quality standard over the long term.

To account for individual user preferences, customer reviews and usage data should be incorporated into content evaluation. Furthermore, viral trends on social networks should be monitored to identify relevant content at an early stage. If a trend emerges prematurely on social media channels, streaming providers can leverage this to align their own content in the short term. These measures are likely to improve the user experience in the long run, strengthen customer loyalty, and reduce the risk of churning to competing VoD services.

Intuitive user interface for optimal user experience

The investigation reveals a significant contribution of platform design to the perceived content value of the platform. Users expect a platform that enables them to access relevant content effortlessly and navigate quickly. For this reason, UX/UI designers should be equipped with the necessary resources to design the user interface of VoD services as intuitively and simply as possible. A prime example is the streaming service Disney+, which was nominated for the UX Design Award 2024 for its user interface on the Apple Vision Pro (Designpartner Berlin, 2025). Modern UX/UI principles increasingly rely on personalized homepages, intelligent search functions, and interactive recommendations (Stevens, 2024).

The central focus should be on designing intuitive and clear navigation. Utilizing user data and A/B testing, menu guidance can be designed so that users find their way around quickly and discover content effortlessly. The same principle should be applied to the registration and login pages. The simpler and faster the registration process is designed, the lower the drop-off rate. These measures not only lead to enhanced user experience but also increase the dwell time on the platform. Moreover, a simplified registration process could lead to an increase in new customer acquisitions.

Platform personalization to increase content relevance

The results show that users place less value on a diverse range of content and are more likely to be persuaded by high-quality content. Based on this finding, product managers should focus their resources on ensuring that users are recommended high-quality content that is tailored to their individual preferences. Therefore, the focus should be on personalizing the platform. Personalized recommendations based on previous viewing habits and ratings make it much faster and easier for users to find

high-quality content. Netflix is considered the industry leader in personalization: Netflix's personalization system not only considers what content a user interacts with, but also what content appeals to users with similar preferences. In addition, information such as the time-of-day Netflix is used, preferred languages, devices used, and the duration for which series and movies are viewed is included in the algorithm (Netflix, 2025).

This measure ensures that users are not overwhelmed by a nonspecific offering but instead find exactly the high-quality content that appeals to them. This increases the relevance of the content, which boosts user satisfaction and keeps customers loyal to a VoD service in the long term. Users who regularly find high-quality and relevant content are more likely to remain loyal to a VoD service and have little incentive to switch to a competitor.

Finally, the results of this study show that high-quality content and a pleasant, intuitive user interface are decisive factors for the success of VoD services. By focusing on content, users can not only be convinced of the system's merits initially but also be retained in the long term. In the future, technologies such as artificial intelligence and machine learning could play an even greater role. They make it possible to evaluate viewing habits even more accurately and recommend content on a more individualized basis. Those who manage to offer an optimal mix of quality, user-friendliness, and technical innovation will be able to hold their own in the long term – and that is precisely where the opportunity lies for streaming services.

LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Like any empirical investigation, this study is subject to methodological, sample-related, and content-related limitations that must be considered when interpreting the results and, at the same time, offer avenues for further research.

Methodologically, the risk of common method bias must first be noted, as both the exogenous and endogenous variables were measured using the same survey instrument (self-report questionnaire) at the same point in time (Kamakura, 2010). This can lead to an artificial inflation of correlations. Future studies should ideally adopt a longitudinal design or temporally separate the measurement of predictors and the dependent variable (Jakobsen & Jensen, 2015).

The database of this investigation relies on a convenience sample, recruited primarily from an academic environment. This resulted in a homogeneous age structure and limits the generalizability of the findings to the overall population (Etikan, 2016; Andrade, 2021). To make representative statements for the entire German market, follow-up studies are recommended to apply probabilistic sampling methods (e.g., stratified random sampling). In this context, it must also be noted that the sample exhibits an uneven gender distribution with an overrepresentation of female participants. This may also limit the validity of the results. Future surveys should ensure a balanced distribution through quota sampling to validly analyze potential gender-specific differences in the perception of streaming services.

While the S-O-R framework applied here offers a robust structure for explaining stimulus-response patterns, it abstracts complex decision-making processes (Cao, 2023). The study is restricted to the context

of VoD services, making transferability to other digital services possible only with caution. Future research could theoretically extend the model to capture both impulsive and rational adoption decisions.

In terms of content, the present study addresses the intention to use on a generic level without differentiating specific providers (e.g., Netflix vs. Disney+). Since brand perception and prior usage experience can influence response behavior, future work should conduct brand-specific investigations or direct comparisons between competing platforms.

Finally, the research model focuses on selected content-related stimuli. Although this was the focus of the present study, future research should broaden its scope. It would be interesting to observe how relationships change when additional influencing factors are integrated into the model. This raises the question of whether there are other relevant content-related influencing factors. In addition, this study does not consider how technical features affect perceived usefulness and intention to use. In this context, for example, the importance of perceived technical quality or the relevance of device compatibility – i.e., the ease of use of VoD services across different devices – could be examined. Completely different influencing factors, such as pricing models, local language offerings, marketing activities (Koul et al., 2021) or socioeconomic variables such as income or education level (Kwak et al., 2021) could be valuable variables for future studies to gain broader knowledge about the success factors of VoD services.

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