

Web Series: The Impact of Age on the Time of Watching Web-Series (An Empirical Study of the Relationship between the Preference of Time to Watch Web Series and Age Factor)

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Abstract

Today web series is considered to be a major source of entertainment and leaning for many especially the young. All internet television programmes affect people of all ages in different ways. Web series are a comfortable source of entertainment due to which not only youngsters but every age group is accepting it with open arms. This study aims to establish a relationship between the age group and their choice of time of watching web series. It also focuses on the viewing habits and the reasons associated with it. A sample size of 300 respondents was taken for the purpose of this study from Delhi-NCR region.

Keywords: *Web Series, Age, Young, Middle-aged, Elderly, time of watching web series, web series viewing habits, internet television, online entertainment*

Introduction

It has been close to a decade since the concept of web series hit the internet. Internet savvy people have accepted this trend with open arms and in many cases they have switched their preference from television-episodes to webisodes. The production and telecast of films and shows on television are subject to a lot of blue-penciling and censorship, and thus they are gradually failing to establish a connection with today's audience. The practice of cuts, revision and control is not present in case of webisodes. And hence, the

producers/directors have complete autonomy in the choice of theme and script of webisodes. Thus, web series are providing a fresh air to the viewers.

The popularity and acceptance of web series is not only due to the choices and liking of the masses but also due to the infrastructure supporting it. As per the report published by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India on 3rd Oct 2018, the number of Internet subscribers in June 2018 is 512.26 million showing a 3.7% increase from that of March 2018. Out of the 512.26 million internet subscriber base, 66.15% are from urban areas and the remaining 33.85% are from rural areas. Thus, the availability and usage of internet plays a major role in the popularity of web-series in India. The concept of Net Neutrality has also added to the viewership, ease and confidence of rolling web series into the market.

Another reason could be the “on-the-go” nature of web series. If we want coffee on wheels then why not entertainment also.

The inclination towards web series has been observed across age groups and not just the *freshly landed into teenage buds*. This study aims to focus on the time that the respondents in question prefer to watch web - series during the 24 hour span.

Those were the days when the only source of entertainment for the Indian millennia was their favourite TV shows on popular youth channels like that of MTV and Channel V. Ever since the technological boom hit the Indian subcontinent, there has been a rapid and steady increase in the use of internet across the nation. India has the world’s largest youth population and comes second only to China in terms of active internet users, this potentially led to the need for creating alternate source of entertainment online in order to engage this huge audience who sought for newer, more flexible sources of entertainment and in turn creating a giant market for both data providers and online advertisers alike.

The last half decade has perhaps brought a radical change to India's online entertainment sector. India, not online saw a sea change in the popularity of YouTube channels such as AIB, EIC and Y-Films, but also witnessed several telecom giants such as Sony Entertainment and Star Entertainment launch their online subsidiaries, Sony LIV and Hotstar, respectively. This move made it clear that the future of entertainment in India was for certain online. Following the surprising success of Hotstar and other platforms, it was not much later that online entertainment mega giant Netflix, announced its plans to expand into India, following the landmark deal of Netflix, India saw the arrival of Amazon Prime Video into the country. There are several reasons for the popularity of this immense popularity of sources of online entertainment in our country:

- **Diverse and Rich Content:** Perhaps the most important factor in the rise of the popularity of these mediums in our country is the kind of content they source and create. Never in the history of country's entertainment industry were the audience exposed to such a wide range of content options all at one place. Moreover, these online platforms bought to Indian, much loved Hollywood sitcoms and movies, which weren't so readily available to us, with the exception of dedicated Hollywood channels such as Star World. Adding to their benefit, it was both refreshing and ground breaking to be exposed to content which not online was relatable to the Indian youth but also dealt with topics such as homosexuality and live-in relationships, which were largely left untouched before.
- **Availability and Accessibility:** Unlike television or radio, online sources of entertainment are available at any point during the day. Any person can access these portals and catch up with their preferred sitcom or movie, at instance during the day. Considering the fact that every person has a different schedule they operate with, online sources

provide the opportunity to the users to watch content anytime they desire. In addition to this, these portals can be accessed anywhere as long as an active internet is present allowing the viewers to view content even while on the go and not just a fixed spot unlike television.

- **Affordability:** Apart from a nominal subscription fee, the online portals demand an internet connected device (which has more or less become a necessity for the India youth) in order to operate which reduces the cost drastically, by eliminating the need to buy a television and pay subsequent electricity bills.

With more and more broadcasters shifting to online mediums and many different online entertainment companies venturing into India, it is only a matter of time the online viewership surpasses its offline counterpart.

Objective of the study

The following are the objective of the study:

1. To know the trend of web series in India
2. To analyse the impact of age of the respondent and his/her preference of time to watch web series
3. To identify the reasons affecting the behavior of the consumer towards web series

Hypothesis

This study aims at testing the following Hypothesis:

H₀ (Null Hypothesis): The time of watching web-series is not affected by the age group

H_a (Alternative Hypothesis): The time of watching web-series is affected by the age group

Research Methodology

The study aims at establishing a relationship between the age and the time of watching web-series. For this purpose Stratified Convenience Sampling technique has been applied in Delhi-NCR region. The data has been collected from the respondents who are familiar with the concept of and also watch web series. For the purpose of this study the respondents have been categorized in three broad categories, namely, Young, Middle-aged and Elderly. The Young depict the respondents of age group 10-30 years, the Middle-aged classification depict the respondents of the age group 31-50 years and the Elderly depicts the respondents of the age group of 50 and above.

A sample size of 300 respondents was taken for the purpose of this study. The data from the respondents was collected with the help of structured questionnaire consisting of both open ended and close ended questions. Along with the questionnaire, data was also collected by one-on-one and telephonic interactions with the respondents to have a better and deeper understating of the behavior pattern. The duration of this study is 3 months.

The research paper is based on two variables, namely, Age group of the respondents and the time of watching web series. Wherein the Age group of the respondents is taken as an independent variable and the time of watching web series is taken as the dependent variable. The time of watching web series has been divided into four slots, namely Morning, Afternoon, Evening and Night. To explain the variables: Morning refers the time before 12 PM, Afternoon refers to the time between 12PM to 4 PM, Evening refers to the time between 4 PM to 8 PM and Night refers to the time beyond 8 PM.

In order to test the hypothesis, Chi-Square test has been applied. The acceptance or rejection of the Null hypothesis is based on the applied test.

Data Collection

The data has been collected from 300 respondents, out of which 166 are belong to the ‘Young’ category, 98 from Middle – aged category and 36 belong to Elderly category.

The time of watching web – series has been divided into four categories, namely Morning (time before 12 PM), Afternoon (between 12PM to 4 PM), Evening (between 4 PM to 8 PM) and Night (beyond 8 PM).

The summary of data has been given below in the tabulated form

Table 1: Summary of Data				
Time	Age Group			Total
	Young	Middle aged	Elderly	
Morning (Before 12 PM)	6	4	6	16
Afternoon (12 PM to 4 PM)	6	24	16	46
Evening (4 PM to 8 PM)	14	18	10	42
Night (Beyond 8 PM)	140	52	4	196
Total	166	98	36	300

(Source: Primary data collected from different age groups in Delhi - NCR region)

Data Analysis

For the purpose of this study, Chi - Square test has been applied for data analysis and test of hypothesis.

The application and calculation of Chi – Square for the data given in Table 1 has been shown in the tables below

Table 2: Contingency Table				
Time	Age Group			
	Young	Middle aged	Elderly	Total
Morning (Before 12 PM)	8.853333333	5.226666667	1.92	16
Afternoon (12 PM to 4 PM)	25.45333333	15.02666667	5.52	46
Evening (4 PM to 8 PM)	23.24	13.72	5.04	42
Night (Beyond 8 PM)	108.4533333	64.02666667	23.52	196
Table	166	98	36	300

The Contingency Table is created before the Chi-square table, in order to calculate the *Expected Frequency* for each observed frequency. The Expected Frequency has been calculated by multiplying the corresponding column total with the row total and then dividing it by the total number of respondents.

Example: The value of the expected frequency of the Young age group corresponding to the Morning time has been calculated as under:

Expected frequency

$$= \frac{\text{Total no. of Young respondent} * \text{Total no. of respondents of Morning time}}{\text{Total number of respondents}}$$

$$= \frac{166 * 16}{300}$$

$$= 8.853333333$$

The chi- Square table has been prepared as follows:

Table 3.1: Chi-square table (Young)			
Time	Young		
	<i>Observed</i>	<i>Expected</i>	$(fo-fe)^2/fe$

	<i>(fo)</i>	<i>(fe)</i>	
Morning (Before 12 PM)	6	8.853333	0.919598394
Afternoon (12 PM to 4 PM)	6	25.45333	14.8676864
Evening (4 PM to 8 PM)	14	23.24	3.67373494
Night (Beyond 8 PM)	140	108.4533	9.1762249

Table 3.2: Chi-square table (Middle - aged)			
Time	Middle – aged		
	<i>Observed (fo)</i>	<i>Expected (fe)</i>	$(fo-fe)^2/fe$
Morning (Before 12 PM)	4	5.226667	0.287891156
Afternoon (12 PM to 4 PM)	24	15.02667	5.358521148
Evening (4 PM to 8 PM)	18	13.72	1.33516035
Night (Beyond 8 PM)	52	64.02667	2.259069832

Table 3.3: Chi-square table (Elderly)			
Time	Elderly		
	<i>Observed (fo)</i>	<i>Expected (fe)</i>	$(fo-fe)^2/fe$
Morning (Before 12 PM)	6	1.92	8.67
Afternoon (12 PM to 4 PM)	16	5.52	19.89681159
Evening (4 PM to 8 PM)	10	5.04	4.881269841

Night (Beyond 8 PM)	4	23.52	16.20027211
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Total Chi Square value = 87.5262406609337

Hence, Observed Chi – Square value = 87.5262406609337

The total chi square value has been derived by summation of all the values in of column 4 $((fo-fe)^2/fe)$ of Table 3.1, 3.2 and 3.3.

Degree of Freedom = (No. of rows – 1)(No. of Columns – 1)

$$= (4 - 1) * (3 - 1) = 6$$

Hence, Degree of freedom = 6

The level of confidence in this study has been estimated at 95%. Hence, the significance level is 5%.

The Critical Chi - Square value for degree of freedom 6 at 5% significance level has been observed as 12.592

Observed Chi Square value > Critical Chi Square value. This implies that Null Hypothesis has to be rejected.

Thus, it is concluded that there is a significant relationship between the age group and the time of watching web series.

Conclusion

The following points can be concluded by the study:

1. The time of watching web series is significantly affected by the age group.

2. It has been observed that Morning time is majorly dominated by the Elderly viewers of web series. The elderly people have ample of spare time in the morning as they are early risers and it has been observed that they prefer utilizing this time to watch information based and spiritually inclined web – series.
3. The Afternoon slot observes more viewership by Middle – aged people as compared to Young and Elderly. The young respondents majorly consist of students, who are busy in their academic routine of the schools and colleges during morning and afternoon. Also, this age group is under the supervision of the parents and guardians who advice and prohibit them to not indulge in any distractions while in school or college. The reason listed by the elderly for not watching web – series during this time slot is that this is their *prime – time* for socializing.
4. The Evening time slot has been more or less equally preferred by the Young and middle – aged respondents. By this time young respondents are free from their academic schedule and they look for entertainment and tune in to web – series which offers them a variety of genres in just a few clicks not only for recreation but also for learning. The major proportion of middle – aged respondents consist of working professionals, who are on their way back home from their respective work places during this time. They preferably utilize this commuting time for watching web – series which offers them their daily dose of entertainment and infotainment on the go.
5. The Night time slot of watching web – series is dominated by Young viewers and on the contrary a very negligible number of Elderly respondents have chosen this time slot. As mentioned earlier elderly

people are not only early risers but also early sleepers and this time slot is way beyond their waking hours.

Limitations of the study

The following are the limitations of the study:

1. The data for the study was collected with the help of questionnaires which were constructed and circulated via google forms. Hence, the respondents above the age of 50 were a bit reluctant to respond as they were not as tech savvy as the younger lot.
2. The sampling technique used in this study (Convenience Sampling) has lot demerits of its own; hence this is a limitation in itself.

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