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Building OTT brand loyalty and brand equity: Impact of original series on OTT services

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A B S T R A C T

Since streaming over-the-top (OTT) services may make recommendations to consumers regarding what to watch, OTT services customize not just OTT original series consumption experiences, but OTT brand personality perceptions. This influences how brand equity and brand loyalty are built for these OTT brands. This study is interested in understanding a) How original series help build consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) toward OTT services and b) How the consumer-based brand equity model can explicate how OTT services build consumer brand loyalty and brand equity. The study includes a structural equation model that demonstrates that original series can be incorporated into a consumer-based brand equity model for OTT services. This offers further implications for creative arts management in building brand equity and brand loyalty.

1. Introduction

Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, HBO Max and other streaming over-the-top (OTT) services offer hundreds of thousands of hours of content stemming from licensed and original video series and movies. Disney + boasts over 7,500 TV show episodes and 500 movies, and Netflix has over 47,000 TV episodes and 4,000 movies (Spangler, 2019). Since OTT services also encompass design, style, and performance, OTT services customize not just OTT original series consumption experiences,but OTT perceived quality, brand personality perceptions, and ultimately brand equity and brand loyalty toward OTT brands. This study is interested in understanding a) How original series' brand salience helps build consumer-based brand equity (CBBE) toward OTT services and b) How the consumer-based brand equity model can explicate how OTT services build consumer brand loyalty and brand equity.

Previous studies have looked at brand and consumer personalities across other media and entertainment brands, but few have measured for these variables against OTT services, or considered how the CBBE model can explicate how OTT services can build brand loyalty or brand equity. A study by Kübler et al. (2021) offered a conceptual ROI content valuation framework, demarcating how content can influence subscription fees as well as retention on OTT services. A study by Chan-Olmsted and Cha (2008) looked at brand personality traits of television channels, finding that different news outlets, including MSNBC, CBS news, and NBC news all have unique brand personalities. Consumer personalities have also been examined to further understand movie consumption behavior, and have been found to predict movie genre consumption (Palomba, 2020). In contrast, OTT services offer a multitude of original series for consumers, and make recommendations for particular consumers to consume certain types of original series. Following what consumers desire also aids OTT services in understanding which content to continue to renew or relicense or shutter or allow to lapse. This means that OTT brand personality perceptions likely vary across consumers.

This study seeks to further the academic literature regarding how the consumer based brand equity model may be applied to

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explain this phenomenon. It will explore how original series consumption may influence consumer perceptions of OTT brand personalities and how OTT brand personalities may influence OTT brand loyalty and perceived quality of OTT services, ultimately impacting OTT brand equity. Since OTT consumption involves navigating massive content libraries, finding original series, as well as illustrating consumer self-evaluations of their user experiences, this will aid academics in viewing how consumers perceive OTT consumption, and consider how this model may be applied to other digital ecosystems in business. This will illuminate the added equity original series employ, and how OTT services should strategically shape internal original content libraries. For practitioners, this study will aid in OTT brand health management, and illustrate a manner in which to track consumer perceptions of these brands.

2. Literature review

2.1. OTT marketplace

The OTT marketplace has experienced a massive groundswell over the past decade. Legacy OTT services such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime, have faced escalated competition among themselves and with recent entrants including Peacock, Disney+, and an enhanced HBO service entitled HBO Max, which bundles HBO, Cinemax, and Warner Bros.-owned movies and television (Alexander, 2020; Nguyen, 2019). OTT consumption is responsible for 19% of all television viewing, and 91% of U.S. adults subscribe to a streaming video service. Notably, 30% of U.S. consumers are inclined to subscribe to at least three OTT services (Spangler, 2020).

To further illustrate OTT original series popularity, and justify its inclusion in this study as a measure of brand salience, it is necessary to consider all phases of the consumer journey. Parrot Analytics Demand 360 platform measures average consumer demand, which is calculated as consumer action touchpoints across search, discovery, viewing, and social media posting related to original series across OTT, cable, and network. Consumers reveal interest in research (e.g. searching for a show, looking up ratings), viewing trailers (e.g. Facebook video, Daily motion), downloading content (e.g. Popcorn, BitTorrent) to view, and engaging via social media (e.g. Instagram, Facebook, Twitter), all combined into a standardized weighted metric, weighed against the amount of time each consumer action requires (Parrot Analytics, 2021a). Each show is assigned an average demand score and a score of 1 serves as the average demand baseline. An examination of the top 20 original series on August 12, 2021 included OTT original series such as *Game of Thrones* (HBO Max, 74.92x avg. demand), *Stranger Things* (Netflix, 65.94x avg. demand), *Loki* (Disney+, 67.57x avg. demand), *WandaVision* (Disney+, 52.09x avg. demand), *La Casa De Papel* (Netflix, avg. demand 42.94x avg. demand), *The Boys* (Amazon Prime Video, 41.91x avg. demand), *Ted Lasso* (Apple TV+, 40.63x avg. demand), and *The Falcon and the Winter Soldier* (Disney+, 42.4x avg. demand) (Parrot Analytics, 2021a). In comparison, network and cable television shows such as *Rick and Morty* (Cartoon Network/Adult Swim, 67.61x avg. demand), *The Walking Dead* (AMC, 62.24x avg. demand) and *The Good Doctor* (ABC, 46.81x avg. demand) perform moderately well against original series (Parrot Analytics, 2021b). Ostensibly, OTT shows perform extraordinarily well in the marketplace.

In the past, OTT services relied on licensed network and cable channel content to flesh out content libraries, but have increasingly spent time and resources on producing original and exclusive content (Wayne, 2017). Against vigorous competition and diminished consumer appetite for additional OTT services (Feldman, 2019), the current OTT market atmosphere has forced member firms' marketing budgets to exponentially rise.

Original series are marketed as unique selling propositions for consumers to subscribe to OTT services to not only gain access to them, but to also consume other content from vast OTT libraries. Most licensed content is brandished with its original parent channel's logo in OTT search queues, so that consumers know that a Hulu streamed TV episode of *How I Met Your Mother* is originally from CBS, or that a Netflix streamed TV episode of *The Office* is originally from NBC. Increasingly, OTT services have invested in original series, as licenses for network and cable channel content lapse and media legacy firms are in various stages to launch their own OTT services (Patches, 2019). As it is difficult for new consumers to gauge content libraries that are replete with licensed content, original series serve as a way for an OTT service to make a case to consumers to subscribe to it. This is the first step in creating added brand equity toward an OTT service.

2.2. Consumer-based brand equity

Extant research suggests that superior brands provide added or differentiated value to a product or service, providing a robust theoretical framework for this study. Consumer-based brand equity is defined as "the degree to which a brand's name alone contributes value to the offering from the perspective of the consumer" (Leuthesser et al., 1995, p. 57). Falkenberg (1996) suggests that for consumer-based brand equity to be substantial, the product has to provide unique value to the customer. Keller (2013) states that brand identity, brand meaning, brand response, and brand relationship are four crucial steps toward building brand equity.

The consumer based brand equity model (Keller, 2013) is measured for in the following manner. First, to account for brand salience, original series will be used here, as consumers tie exclusive OTT original series to OTT brands. Second, to account for brand meaning, this study will use brand personality perceptions of OTT brands. Third, brand response concerns how consumers judge and possess feelings for the actual interaction with the brand, which will be measured by perceived quality. Finally, brand resonance will be measured for by brand loyalty and brand equity measurements (Qualtrics, 2020). Previous studies have used brand loyalty, perceived quality, and brand awareness/associations along with brand equity to account for consumer-based brand equity (Schivinski and Dabrowski, 2015; Yoo and Donthu, 2001).

2.3. Brand loyalty

For consumers to perceive brand equity from an OTT service, they must possess brand loyalty toward it. Brand loyalty considers consumer interest to continue to consume products or services from a brand (Oliver, 1999), and is used to capture brand resonance among consumers. The OTT is still in its maturation phase in its product lifecycle, in which competition increases as output expands (Porter, 1985). Therefore, it is critical to understand not just brand equity, but also brand loyalty, and to note that both function as outcome variables in the consumer-based brand equity model in this study. Brand loyalty is operationalized as attitudinal loyalty which captures commitment, trust, and other similar dimensions toward a brand (Back and Parks, 2003; Day, 1969). High brand loyalty consumers are inclined to voice positive notions about a firm and pay higher prices (Boulding et al., 1993; Bowen and Shoemaker, 1998).

Past studies have investigated the antecedents of brand loyalty as well as how brand loyalty may influence brand equity. Several studies have illustrated that brand loyalty is a key antecedent of brand equity (Aaker, 1991; Gil et al., 2007). One media study illustrated that brand loyalty is informed by brand relationships and credibility of the organization for magazine brands across print and online platforms (Nienstedt, et al., 2012). As a consumer builds loyalty toward an OTT brand, he will begin to differentiate this service from others, possessing positive affirmations and attitudes toward his primary OTT brand. Over time, this will build brand equity, as the consumer will perceive added value from numerous engagements with an OTT brand. Brand loyalty is the heart of the brand (Aaker, 1991), and it can be an important step in raising brand equity among consumers (Bashir et al., 2020). Brand loyalty can influence price premiums and other brand equity key performance indicators (Aaker, 1991; Yasin et al., 2007). A study by Chaudhuri (1999) examined how brand loyalty mediates relationships between brand attitudes and brand equity as well as brand habits and brand equity. The model explicitly illustrated that brand loyalty can influence brand equity indicators, including market share and price. Yoo et al. (2000) found that brand loyalty influenced brand equity, illustrating that brand loyalty could drive brand equity value for firms and consumers.

H1: OTT brand loyalty is predictive of OTT brand equity.

2.4. Original content

OTT original series are branded products from an OTT parent brand, aiding OTT services in shaping consumer brand perceptions. These series are defined as those that are produced in house and/or exclusively distributed by an OTT series. OTT original series have garnered awards and accolades, serving as unique selling points for consumers to subscribe to these OTT services. Consumers' original series brand salience is based in identifying the category in which the brand competes against other brands, as well as how the brand satiates consumer needs (Keller, 2013). A brand with tremendous salience is top of mind for consumers and is accessed for different needs. Programs such as *Orange is the New Black* (drama-comedy*)*, *Stranger Things* (science fiction, horror), *The Path* (drama) and other series have earned Emmy nominations and awards as well as represented unique sub-genres (Framke, 2017). The range of these original series spans not just numerous sub-genres, but are also voluminous in number. In 2018, streaming platforms mushroomed to over one hundred sixty series, compared to one hundred and forty six by networks and one hundred and forty four by basic cable (Koblin, 2020). One study by Parrot Analytics (2019) demonstrated that Netflix needed to release exclusive dramatic and children's content to get new subscribers, but should focus on documentaries and timely content to maintain subscribers. Since consumers are able to consume any type of original content they wish, different perceptions of OTT brand personalities may be produced, creating brand management opportunities for practitioners to meet varied desires of consumers.

2.5. Brand personality

Consumers make inferences about brands based around perceived human personality traits they may possess, resulting in evaluative self-expression rather than acknowledging technical attributes (Keller, 1993). Brand personality examines perceived human traits espoused by a brand. Aaker (1997) illustrated that there are select brand personality dimensions that include down-to-Earth, honest, wholesome, cheerful, and imaginative. These human trait cues can aid consumers in formulating bonds with brands (Fournier, 1998).

The OTT service subscription model encourages long-term relationships with consumers, allowing them to customize content consumption and, in turn, their own brand personality perceptions of OTT brands. One study found that video game genres influenced aggregate brand personality perceptions of video games, which in turn was a positive predictor of brand loyalty (Palomba, 2016). However, video game consoles require consumers to spend roughly $60 per video game, and television channels, aside from video on demand, offer linear time-appointment viewing that allows for one show at a time to be available to consumers. Differently, OTT services grant consumers perennial opportunities to customize video viewing experiences. If consumers can watch unlimited original series, which typically span many different genres, for the same monthly subscription price, then they may also have markedly different perceptions of an OTT brand (Kim, 2017). Finally, brand personalities that are reinforced each time the consumer engages the brand will likely energize them to return to the OTT service, harnessing loyalty toward the brand itself. Netflix uses social media marketing to further its brand through marketing select original series along with pithy and sometimes witty comments, gifs, and short clips (Beer, 2019; Follmer, 2014).

RQ1: Does viewing certain OTT original series influence OTT brand personality perceptions?

H2: OTT original series are a positive predictor of OTT brand personality perceptions.

H3: OTT brand personality perceptions are a positive predictor of OTT brand loyalty.

2.6. Perceived quality

Consumer OTT brand personality perceptions is a key dimension to understand perceived quality on an OTT platform. Perceived quality involves the perception that the product or service meets standard specifications (Garvin, 1984). Unlike traditional broadcast and cable channels, an OTT platform is digital in nature, and part of the consumer experience constitutes expeditions into voluminous libraries. In accessing an OTT service, consumers arrive to a digital menu that allows for key search terms including creatives, genres, and content, tabulated video and television shows along horizontal queues, as well as manual and automatic trailers. OTT brands therefore are both symbolic and utilitarian in scope (Aaker, 1997). These mechanisms shed light on the product-related attributes, and serve as a complement to the symbolic and expressive associations captured through brand personalities (Keller, 1993). Introducing perceived quality as a viable variable in media consumption helps advance empirical understanding of how technology elements across design, style, experience, performance, and language used inform streaming experiences. As broadcast networks such as NBC and CBS have traditionally been evaluated based solely on content, digital streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, and HBO Max offer digital carousels, search menus, recommendations and other structures that are far more interactive than past TV Guide menus on cable and satellite systems, offering individual customization experiences.

In past studies, perceived quality has been linked to influence brand equity and brand loyalty. Perceived quality has been found to be a key predictor of brand loyalty in fashion (Yang and Lee, 2019) and brand loyalty on social media platforms (Shanahan et al., 2019). Additionally, perceived quality has been found to be a key predictor of brand equity toward generic drugs (Sanyal and Datta, 2011) and on Internet banking (Loureiro, 2013). Content consumption experiences influence perceived quality of the overall OTT service itself. OTT brand personalities should positively influence perceived quality, as the characteristics and traits espoused by a brand should also inform whether the consumer perceives the service to be user friendly, offer engaging content, be free of defects, and provide an overall good experience. Consumers should extract added value from an OTT platform that can provide visually pleasing

Table 1
Measurement of constructs.

Constructs		
Brand equity	(α: 0.90)	Source: (Aaker 1991; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).
The likely quality of [OTT service] is extremely high		
I can quickly recall the symbol or logo of [OTT service]		
I can recognize [OTT service]		
I consider myself loyal to [OTT service]		
Perceived quality	(α: 0.89)	Source: (Garvin, 1984; Keller, 2013).
[OTT service] performs well for watching video shows		
[OTT service] is free of defects and functions as advertised		
[OTT service] consistently provides a good video streaming experience, no matter how much time has passed		
[OTT service] is well-designed and stylish		
The information I want is easy to find within [OTT service]		
[OTT service] displays a visually pleasing design		
[OTT service] uses terms that are familiar to me		
Brand loyalty	(α: 0.83)	Source: (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Russell-Bennett et al., 2007; Wei-ping et al., 2008; Yoo & Donthu, 2001).
I have the intention to continue using [OTT service]		
Based on my experience, I am very likely to continue my relationship with [OTT service]		
I am likely to be persuaded to view other video shows from [OTT service]		
Brand personality	(α: 0.95)	Source (Aaker, 1997).
Intelligent		
Technical		
Corporate		
Successful		
Leader		
Confident		
Upper-class		
Glamorous		
Good-looking		
Charming		
Feminine		
Smooth		
Outdoorsy		
Masculine		
Western		
Tough		
Rugged		
Dark		
Visually Striking		
Feel-Good		
Classic		
Suspenseful		
Gritty		
Independent		
Romantic		

aesthetics, easy to find information, and consistent performance. Positive perceived quality should influence consumer brand loyalty, as the reliability and ability to provide a useful experience should motivate consumers to return to an OTT platform.

H4: OTT brand personality perceptions are a positive predictor of OTT perceived quality.

H5: Perceived quality of OTT services is a positive predictor of OTT brand equity.

H6: Perceived quality of OTT services is a positive predictor of OTT brand loyalty.

3. Methods

3.1. Measures

All measurement indicators are listed in Table 1, and are subsequently broken down in the following sections. To measure for OTT consumption, consumers were asked which OTT services they pay for, and which they only have a user account for across Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime Video, and HBO Max. These brands were selected because they have existed for at least three years (HBO, HBO Max's predecessor has existed for just over forty-five years), and consumers have been able to establish strong relationships, brand loyalties, and related brand perceptions.

To measure for consumer based brand equity, a scale was used based on Aaker (1991) and Yoo and Donthu (2001) multidimensional consumer based brand equity scale. Some of the indicators included "The likely quality of [OTT service] is extremely high" and "I can recognize [OTT service]." This 4-item Likert scale ranged from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha scores for brand equity was α = 0.90, scoring above the 0.70 threshold for acceptable scores (Hair et al., 2013).

To measure for perceived quality, a scale was used that drew from Garvin (1984) and Keller (2013). This scale is meant to evaluate how consumers perceive the durability and quality of the product. The perceived quality scale included measurements such as "[OTT service] performs well for watching video shows," and "[OTT service] is free of defects and functions as advertised." This 4-item scale ranged from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha scores for perceived quality was α = 0.89, scoring

Table 2
List of original series.

Amazon
Transparent
The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel
The Main in the High Castle
Mozart in the Jungle
Catastrophe
HBO Max
Veep
Barry
Curb Your Enthusiasm
Game of Thrones
Insecure
If You're Not in the Obit, Eat Breakfast
Silicon Valley
Westworld
Ballers
Big Little Lies
Hulu
The Handmaid's Tale
The Path
Netflix
Stranger Things
Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt
House of Cards
The Crown
Glow
Ozark
Grace and Frankie
Godless
Orange is the New Black
Black Mirror
Queer Eye
Mindhunter
Bill Nye Saves the World
The Ranch
End of the F***ing World
A Series of Unfortunate Events
13 Reasons Why
Master of None

above the 0.70 threshold for acceptable scores (Hair et al., 2013).

To measure for brand loyalty, a scale based on previous attitudinal loyalty studies (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001; Russell-Bennett et al., 2007; Wei-ping et al., 2008; Yoo and Donthu, 2001) was used here. The brand loyalty scale sought to measure consumer intention toward engaging the brand in the future, and curating a perceptional relationship with the brand. This 3-item scale included indicators like "I have the intention to continue using [OTT service]" and "Based on my experience, I am very likely to continue my relationship with [OTT service] in the future." This 3-item scale ranged from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha scores for brand loyalty was α = 0.83, scoring above the 0.70 threshold for acceptable scores (Hair et al., 2013).

To measure for brand personality, a scale by Aaker (1997) was used here. Five major brand personality dimensions were measured here, including sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication, and ruggedness. These factors include brand personality statements such as "original," "honest," and "cool." This 42-item scale ranged from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree. The Cronbach's alpha scores for brand personality was α = 0.95, scoring above the 0.70 threshold for acceptable scores (Hair et al., 2013).

To measure for original series, a list of thirty-five original series from Netflix, Hulu, Amazon, and HBO Max were organized into a list (Table 2). This list was based around TV series that were either Emmy nominated in any category (Television Academy, 2020) or were written up as "buzz worthy" programs (Hornshaw, 2017; Sellers, 2019) from 2010 to 2018. Based on these sources, these original series were selected for this study.

To measure for demographic information, age, sex, education, household income, and political affiliation were measured in this study. Political affiliation was measured from 1 = Extremely liberal to 6 = Conservative. Education was measured from 1 = Less than high school degree to 8 = Professional degree. Age was measured based on asking participants what their current age was in years. Finally, household income was measured from 1 = Less than $10,000 to 12= $150,000 or more.

3.2. Data collection

To fund this study, a research grant was won, and the researcher applied for IRB approval. The survey method was used here to capture consumer tastes and perceptions. It was crafted and pre-tested on Amazon Mechanical Turk. One hundred (N = 100) U.S. adults took the survey, and were asked to comment at the end of the survey. Once the survey was evaluated based on comments, it was disseminated to a national population of five hundred (N = 500) U.S. adults in the Qualtrics consumer panel during the summer of 2018. Only participants who stated that they watch shows on OTT services at least once a month were allowed to proceed to finish the rest of the survey. The survey data was cleaned and participants who did not complete all questions were omitted form the study. This left four hundred and thirty-four (N = 434) participants, or 87% of the original sample left for data analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive analyses

The income dispersion was fairly even, as 51.3% of participants earned $50,000 or more. The gender break down was even, as 50.9% of the sample were males. Across race and ethnicity, 66.1% of participants identified as Caucasian, 13.8% as African-American, 5.9% as Asian-American, 17.9% as Hispanic, and 2% as other. 43.2% of participants earned at least a bachelor's degree. Across paid OTT services, consumers paid for subscriptions to Netflix (81.1%), Amazon Prime Video (50.5%), Hulu (42.4%) and HBO Max (22.8%). Across accessed OTT services, consumers had access to Netflix (19.8%), Amazon Prime Video (13.2%), Hulu (11.3%), and

Table 3
Factor Analysis of Netflix Brand Personality Traits.

Factors	1	2	3
Factor 1: Bold (α = 0.89)			
Rugged	0.80		
Outdoorsy	0.79		
Western	0.77		
Masculine	0.74		
Tough	0.73		
Factor 2: Optimistic (α = 0.84)			
Cheerful		0.65	
Secure		0.62	
Reliable		0.62	
Young		0.61	
Hardworking		0.60	
Factor 3: Cool (α = 0.82)			
Trendy			0.73
Daring			0.70
Exciting			0.58
Unique			0.56
Up-to-date			0.54
Eigenvalues	17.89	4.35	1.65
% of total variance accounted for	36.50	8.88	3.37

HBO Max (4.4%). These numbers are predictably higher compared to how many Netflix subscribers (69.9 million, or 56% of U.S. consumers), Hulu (28 million, or 8.5% of U.S. consumers), Amazon Prime Video (96.5 million, or 29% of U.S. consumers) and HBO Max (34 million, or 10.3% of U.S. consumers) consumers there are in the United States (Alexander, 2020; Feiner, 2019; Feldman, 2019; Lee, 2020).

4.2. Factor analyses

Factor analyses with a varimax rotation were run to reduce and organize the amount of indicators necessary to discern original series and OTT brand personalities. This is a powerful statistical tool that is meant to minimize the amount of indicators necessary and maximize the explanatory power of the remaining indicators (Hair et al., 2013). It was necessary to reduce the amount of indicators for original series and OTT brand personalities to create parsimonious variables for further data analyses (Hair et al., 2013). Factor analyses were run for brand personalities of Netflix (Table 3), Amazon Prime Video (Table 4), Hulu (Table 5), HBO Max (Table 6) as well as grouping Netflix original series (Table 7).

At the time of the survey, the OTT brands under examination did not all exhibit numerous original series that received Emmy nominations or buzz. This resulted in limited video shows that were included in this study. There were five Amazon Prime shows (*Transparent*, *the Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, *The Man in the High Castle*, *Mozart in the Jungle*, and *Catastrophe*), two Hulu shows (*The Path* and *The Handmaid's Tale*), and ten HBO Max shows (*Veep, Barry, Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Game of Thrones*, *Insecure*, *If You're Not in the Obit, Eat Breakfast*, *Silicon Valley*, *Westworld*, *Ballers*, and *Big Little Lies*) and so there were not enough indicators to warrant factor analyses. Instead, variates were created that incorporated all shows here based around different brands. All OTT brands scored excellent Cronbach's alpha scores across Hulu original series ($\alpha = 0.78$), Amazon original series ($\alpha = 0.90$), and HBO Max original series ($\alpha = 0.92$).

4.3. Research question results

To investigate the first research question, multiple linear regressions were run (Table 8 and Table 9). Each multiple linear regression incorporated independent demographic information (e.g., ethnicity, income, political affiliation, education, age, and sex) alongside different OTT original consumption patterns (e.g., Netflix TV Saving, HBO Max TV). The OTT original consumption patterns are the product of factor analyses determining which original series consumers are likely to view together, creating different brand personality perceptions of the OTT brand.

For Netflix bold ($F = 8.525$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included African-American ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.014$), income ($\beta = 0.14$, $p < 0.022$), sex-male ($\beta = -0.23$, $p < 0.001$), and Netflix saving ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.002$). For Netflix optimistic ($F = 3.40$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included income ($\beta = 0.15$, $p < 0.024$), sex-male ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.02$), and Netflix unfamiliar ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.016$). For Netflix cool ($F = 3.86$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included age ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.001$), Netflix saving ($\beta = 0.23$, $p < 0.003$), and Netflix persevere ($\beta = -0.016$, $p < 0.05$).

For Amazon gritty ($F = 7.49$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included African-American ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.023$), sex-male ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.001$), and Amazon original series ($\beta = 0.27$, $p < 0.001$). For Amazon optimistic ($F = 5.01$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included income ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.02$), sex-male ($\beta = -0.21$, $p < 0.002$), and Amazon original series ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.003$). For Amazon modern ($F = 4.44$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive predictors included income ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.013$), age ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.01$), and Amazon TV ($\beta = 0.20$, $p < 0.004$).

Table 4
Factor Analysis of Amazon Prime Video Brand Personality Traits.

Factors	1	2	3
Factor 1: Gritty ($\alpha = 0.89$)			
Tough	0.78		
Masculine	0.76		
Dark	0.75		
Western	0.74		
Rugged	0.74		
Factor 2: Optimistic ($\alpha = 0.87$)			
Down to Earth		0.67	
Friendly		0.66	
Secure		0.66	
Family oriented		0.66	
Cheerful		0.65	
Factor 3: Modern ($\alpha = 0.87$)			
Trendy			0.78
Exciting			0.68
Up-to-date			0.63
Daring			0.62
Contemporary			0.60
Eigenvalues	22.90	3.25	1.72
% of total variance accounted for	46.73	6.63	3.45

Table 5
Factor analysis of hulu brand personality traits.

Factors	1	2	3
Factor 1: Durable ($\alpha = 0.92$)			
Tough	0.82		
Western	0.81		
Masculine	0.78		
Rugged	0.78		
Outdoorsy	0.76		
Factor 2: Progressive($\alpha = 0.74$)			
Secure		0.59	
Imaginative		0.57	
Intelligent		0.54	
Unique		0.52	
Corporate		0.52	
Factor 3: Genuine ($\alpha = 0.89$)			
Sincere			0.79
Real			0.75
Honest			0.72
Wholesome			0.67
Original			0.53
Eigenvalues	21.78	3.68	1.64
% of total variance accounted for	44.45	7.52	3.34

Table 6
Factor Analysis of HBO Max Brand Personality Traits.

Factors	1	2	3
Factor 1: Accessible ($\alpha = 0.85$)			
Family oriented	0.74		
Friendly	0.65		
Romantic	0.62		
Wholesome	0.61		
Cheerful	0.61		
Factor 2: Strong ($\alpha = 0.86$)			
Dark		0.74	
Gritty		0.68	
Rugged		0.67	
Suspenseful		0.64	
Tough		0.64	
Factor 3: Sexy ($\alpha = 0.84$)			
Charming			0.77
Good-looking			0.64
Glamorous			0.61
Technical			0.58
Feminine			0.57
Eigenvalues	19.82	2.51	1.87
% of total variance accounted for	41.29	5.22	3.90

For Hulu durable ($F = 5.91$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included sex-male (β = -0.29, $p < 0.001$) and Hulu original series ($\beta = 0.28$, $p < 0.001$). For Hulu progressive ($F = 4.37$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators include Asian American (β = -0.26, $p < 0.01$), Hispanic American ($\beta = -0.22$, $p < 0.036$), and Hulu original series ($\beta = 0.30$, $p < 0.001$). For Hulu genuine ($F = 2.99$, $p < 0.002$), the predictive indicators included income ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.046$) and Hulu TV ($\beta = 0.22$, $p < 0.005$).

For HBO Max accessible ($F = 4.91$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included political affiliation ($\beta = 0.24$, $p < 0.007$) and HBO Max original series ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$). For HBO Max sexy ($F = 6.56$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included Hispanic American ($\beta = -0.25$, $p < 0.041$), political affiliation ($\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.04$), and HBO Max original series ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$). For HBO Max strong ($F = 4.14$, $p < 0.001$), the predictive indicators included HBO Max original series ($\beta = 0.54$, $p < 0.001$).

4.4. Hypotheses results

To further examine the aforementioned relationships, a structural equation model was put together. This method was selected to simultaneously test relationships and reduce type-1 error (Hair et al., 2013). All measurements were combined into aggregate measurements across Netflix, HBO Max, Amazon Prime Video, and Hulu. Cronbach's reliability scores were run for aggregate measures to ensure reliability and internal consistency.

Convergent validity is illustrated through KMO and Bartlett's tests of Sphericities along with composite reliability (C.R.) and discriminant validity was tested through average variance extracted (A.V.E.) (Anderson and Gerbing, 1988; Bellini et al., 2017). The

Table 7
Factor Analysis of Netflix Original Series.

Factors	1	2	3
Factor 1: Saving (α = 0.84)			
End of the F***ing World	0.76		
Bill Nye Saves the World	0.73		
The Ranch	0.68		
Mindhunter	0.67		
A Series of Unfortunate Events	0.64		
Factor 2: Persevere (α = 0.82)			
The Crown		0.74	
House of Cards		0.67	
Grace and Frankie		0.66	
Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt		0.64	
Master of None		0.53	
Factor 3: Unfamiliar (α = 0.76)			
Orange is the New Black			0.75
Stranger Things			0.70
Thirteen Reasons Why			0.64
Black Mirror			0.48
Eigenvalues	8.54	2.51	1.87
% of total variance accounted for	47.43	5.22	3.90

minimum threshold for average variance extracted is 0.50, and it is 0.70 for composite reliability (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). Original series was comprised of Netflix (Table 10), Hulu original series (α = 0.78), Amazon original series (α = 0.90), and HBO Max original series (α = 0.92). Brand personalities was comprised of Netflix, Amazon, Hulu, and HBO Max (Table 11). Brand loyalty was comprised of HBO Max brand loyalty (α = 0.79), Netflix brand loyalty (α = 0.76), Amazon brand loyalty (α = 0.84), and Hulu brand loyalty (α = 0.87). Perceived quality was comprised of Netflix quality (α = 0.78), Hulu quality (α = 0.87), Amazon Prime quality (α = 0.89), and HBO Max quality (α = 0.85). Brand equity was comprised of Netflix equity (α = 0.82), Hulu equity (α = 0.84), HBO Max equity (α = 0.83), and Amazon Prime Video equity (α = 0.83).

To properly assess the CBBE model, the structural equation model was deployed in this study. This technique allows for inferences to be made about relationships among constructs, and can infer causality across these relationships (Hair et al., 2013). To assess absolute measure, the chi-square and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) were evaluated here. The model itself produced statistically significant pathways and it also fit the data set: $X^2 = 7.437$, df = 4, $p < .115$ and the RMSEA was 0.045, which is less than the 0.08 ceiling for an adequate model fit (Hair et al., 2013; Hu and Bentler, 1999). To assess incremental fit measures, comparative fit index (CFI) index was 0.981 which was above the 0.90 threshold and the normed fit index (NFI) was 0.961, which was above the 0.90 threshold (Bentler, 1992).

The structural equation model paths were all found to be statistically significant, supporting all hypotheses in this study. Aggregate original series was a positive predictor of aggregate brand personality (β = 0.30, $p < 0.001$) (supporting H2). Aggregate brand personalities of video shows was a positive predictor perceived quality of OTT perceived quality (β = 0.58, $p < 0.001$) (supporting H4) and brand loyalty (β = 0.22, $p < 0.044$) (supporting H3). Aggregate perceived quality was a positive predictor of brand loyalty (β = 0.68, $p < 0.001$) (supporting H6) and brand equity (β = 0.51, $p < 0.001$) (supporting H5). Finally, aggregate brand loyalty was a positive predictor of brand equity (β = 0.44, $p < 0.001$) (supporting H1) (Fig. 1).

5. Discussion

5.1. *Major findings*

This study sought to understand how consumers cultivate brand equity and brand loyalty toward OTT brands, and understand how OTT original series consumption may influence these perceptions. This study furthered the consumer based brand equity model (Keller, 2013) surrounding OTT services. To quantify the strength of a brand is difficult to conceive and measure, as there are numerous parameters to consider. It is necessary to highlight brand equity, as it illustrates the unique influence that a brand has on a consumer base. This consumer affinity can be used to understand brand extensions and product line extensions within a brand. The original OTT shows under examination in this paper served as brand extensions for these OTT services. What began as an exercise in brand extension evolved into a product line extension for each of the OTT services. To ensure consumer acceptance of new line extensions, it is necessary that each OTT service measure for positive consumer-based brand equity (Keller, 2013). Each OTT service is able to market its own shows on its own platforms, even against non-original licensed content, allowing it to achieve greater marketing efficiency and limit costs of promotion and advertisement. This also helps ensure that consumers will have an inelastic response to price increases.

Viewing particular types of programs does creates starkly different OTT perceptions, answering the sole research question in this study. For instance, consumers viewing original shows that take on a heroic bent (e.g., *Bill Nye Saves the World*, *Mindhunter*) perceive Netflix to be bold and cool. However, viewers who view Netflix original shows that involve persevering through hardships (e.g., *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, *Master of None*) are inclined to perceive Netflix as less cool. This variance illustrates how original series' brand salience can serve as a marketing tool to build consumer based brand equity in a series of manners. If a particular entertainment

Table 8

Impact of Demographics and TV Viewing Habits on OTT Brand Personalities.

	Netflix Bold		Netflix Optimistic		Netflix Cool		Amazon Gritty		Amazon Optimistic		Amazon Modern	
	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	β	S.E.
Caucasian	0.01	(0.22)	0.002	(0.19)	−0.16	(0.18)	−0.04	(0.26)	−0.09	(0.23)	−0.06	(0.23)
African−American	0.20*	(0.24)	0.05	(0.21)	−0.02	(0.20)	0.22*	(0.30)	0.09	(0.26)	0.09	(0.26)
Asian or Asian−American	−0.01	(0.30)	−0.09	(0.26)	−0.12	(0.25)	−0.04	(0.36)	−0.07	(0.31)	−0.06	(0.31)
Hispanic or Hispanic−American	0.04	(0.20)	−0.06	(0.18)	−0.06	(0.17)	−0.03	(0.25)	−0.06	(0.21)	−0.07	(0.22)
Income	0.14*	(0.02)	0.15*	(0.02)	0.09	(0.02)	0.10	(0.02)	0.18*	(0.02)	0.19	(0.02)
Political Affiliation	−0.004	(0.03)	0.004	(0.03)	−0.02	(0.03)	0.01	(0.04)	0.04	(0.03)	0.03	(0.03)
Education	−0.08	(0.04)	0.03	(0.03)	0.10	(0.03)	−0.02	(0.05)	−0.08	(0.04)	−0.08	(0.04)
Age	−0.02	(0.004)	0.02	(0.004)	0.19***	(0.003)	−0.04	(0.01)	0.05	(0.004)	0.18	(0.004)
Sex	−0.23***	(0.11)	−0.14*	(0.10)	−0.008	(0.09)	−0.21***	(0.14)	−0.21**	(0.12)	−0.14	(0.12)
Netflix TV Saving	0.23**	(0.07)	0.1	(0.06)	0.23**	(0.06)						
Netflix TV Persevere	0.13	(0.07)	−0.15	(0.06)	−0.16*	(0.06)						
Netflix TV Unfamiliar	−0.09	(0.07)	0.18*	(0.06)	0.12	(0.06)						
Amazon TV							0.27***	(0.06)	0.21**	(0.05)	0.20	(0.05)
F	8.53		3.40		3.86		7.49		5.01		4.44	
R	0.48		0.33		0.35		0.49		0.42		0.40	
R^2	0.20		0.08		0.09		0.21		0.14		0.12	
Sig. of Model	$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$	

*= $p < 0.05$.
**= $p < 0.01$.
***= $p < 0.001$.

Table 9
Impact of Demographics and Original Series Viewing Habits on OTT Brand Personalities.

s	Hulu Durable		Hulu Progressive		Hulu Genuine		HBO Max Accessible		HBO Max Sexy		HBO Max Strong	
	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	β	S.E.	B	S.E.	β	S.E.
Caucasian	−0.12	(0.31)	−0.25	(0.23)	−0.09	(0.26)	−0.11	(0.31)	−0.15	(0.30)	−0.02	(0.34)
African−American	0.03	(0.34)	−0.14	(0.26)	−0.06	(0.29)	0.08	(0.34)d	−0.12	(0.33)	0.09	(0.38)
Asian or Asian−American	−0.06	(0.41)	−0.26	(0.31)	−0.15	(0.36)	−0.16	(0.42)	−0.15	(0.40)	−0.15	(0.46)
Hispanic or Hispanic−American	−0.11	(0.29)	−0.22*	(−0.22)	−0.18	(0.25)	−0.12	(0.29)	−0.25*	(0.28)	0.04	(0.32)
Income	0.13	(0.02)	0.14	(0.02)	0.17*	(0.02)	0.14	(0.02)	0.01	(0.02)	0.06	(0.03)
Political Affiliation	0.07	(0.05)	0.13	(0.03)	0.12	(0.04)	0.24**	(0.05)	0.17*	(0.04)	0.14	(0.05)
Education	−0.04	(0.05)	−0.02	(0.04)	−0.05	(0.05)	−0.04	(0.05)	0.09	(0.05)	−0.11	(0.06)
Age	0.06	(0.01)	0.02	(0.004)	0.05	(0.005)	0.04	(0.01)	−0.12	(0.01)	0.06	(0.01)
Sex	−0.29	(0.15)	−0.13	(0.12)	−0.15	(0.13)	−0.13	(0.16)	−0.09	(0.15)	0.002	(0.18)
Hulu TV	0.28	(0.06)	0.30***	(0.05)	0.22**	(0.05)						
HBO Max TV							0.45***	(0.08)	0.54***	(0.07)	0.54	(0.09)
F	5.91		4.37		2.987		4.905		5.01		4.14	
R	0.49		0.43		0.37		0.57		0.42		0.54	
R^2	0.20		0.14		0.09		0.26		0.14		0.22	
Sig. of Model	$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.002$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$		$p < 0.001$	

*=$p < 0.05$.
**=$p < 0.01$.
***=$p < 0.001$.

Table 10
Reliability and correlation matrix for convergent and discriminant validity for Netflix original series.

	α	CR	AVE
Netflix saving	0.84	0.49	0.77
Netflix persevere	0.82	0.42	0.73
Netflix unfamiliar	0.76	0.42	0.61

Note: α = Cronbach’s alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

Table 11
Reliability and correlation matrix for convergent and discriminant validity for brand personalities.

	α	CR	AVE
Netflix bold	0.89	0.59	0.83
Netflix optimistic	0.84	0.38	0.7
Netflix cool	0.82	0.39	0.71
Amazon gritty	0.89	0.57	0.82
Amazon optimistic	0.87	0.44	0.74
Amazon modern	0.87	0.44	0.74
Hulu durable	0.92	0.62	0.84
Hulu progressive	0.74	0.3	0.63
Hulu genuine	0.89	0.49	0.77
HBO Max accessible	0.85	0.42	0.73
HBO Max strong	0.86	0.46	0.75
HBO Max sexy	0.84	0.41	0.72

Note: α = Cronbach’s alpha; CR = composite reliability; AVE = average variance extracted.

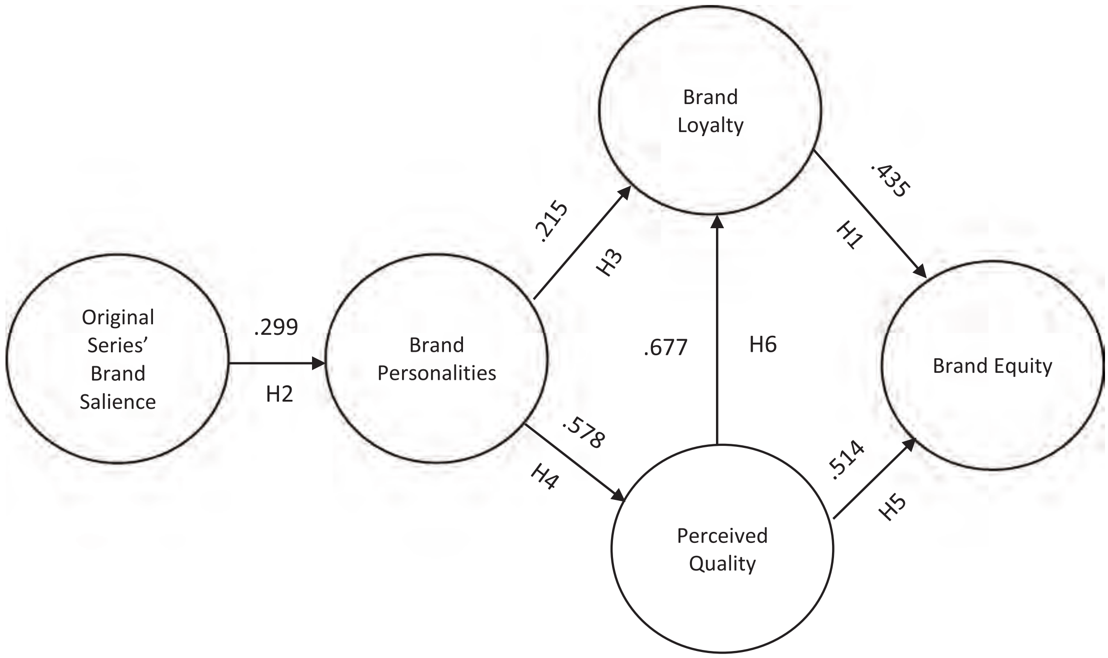

Fig. 1. Structural equation model application of CBBE to OTT service.

brand personality trait resonates deeply with one consumer segment over another, Netflix can deploy original series and targeted social media campaigns that help shore up these perceptions.

The successful application of the consumer based brand equity model isolates key variables for media managers and scholars to consider during assessment of OTT brand prowess and resonation with audiences. First, the original television series consumers view help shape their own outlook on the titular OTT brand. From a strategic standpoint, OTT services are able to pivot their own brand to what consumers envision them to be based around how original content is pushed to consumers. OTT services are able to manage brand personalities through recommendations and content carousels. This allows managers to ensure that an OTT service meets consumer expectations across different consumer segments, and maintains subscriptions. Second, perceived quality is a nuanced dimension here that measures for digital consumer experiences. The digitization of content distribution has merged entertainment, media, and technology across OTT brands. While MVPD distribution through cable and satellite systems did not influence design and style of cable channels like TNT and USA, OTT services essentially combine content, channels, and MVPD system ingredients into one service. Perceived quality captures consumer experiences across search functions, recommendations, content carousels and other elements unrelated to direct content viewing. Finally, establishing brand loyalty among subscribers can over time build brand equity, making it harder for consumers to divest from an OTT service.

5.2. Conclusion

The CBBE hypotheses were all supported as well as allow for an investigation into the research question posited in this study. First, it is clear that viewing certain types of OTT original series does influence OTT brand personality perceptions (RQ1) (Aaker, 1997). Though these brand personality traits may vary across consumer segments, they are able to inform brand loyalty (H3) as well as perceived quality (H4) (Garvin, 1984; Oliver, 1999). Perceived quality influences brand loyalty (H6) as well as brand equity (H5). Together, the supported hypotheses illustrate that this model can be used to measure original series' value toward OTT brand loyalty and OTT brand equity cultivation.

OTT media managers work in an industry that is at the forefront of innovative content creation and distribution. The OTT market will continue to swell with the recent addition of Disney+, which incorporates ABC-owned content, and the addition of Peacock from NBC. In a business model that is reliant on original series to attract consumers to subscribe as well as maintain consumers, original series are used to guide the profitability of OTT services. This model may be used by brand managers to measure for the variables within the structural equation model, but to also understand how these variables may vary over time, and to identify whether certain original series are contributing toward CBBE development more than others toward an OTT service.

5.3. Limitations and future studies

This study relied on a consumer panel sample from Qualtrics, which selects participants to take surveys. This was reliant on a United States population, and therefore generalizability is limited here. Additionally, this study only considered a select set of OTT services. Recently, there has been more attention that has been paid to a wider variety of OTT original shows, including *The Morning Show* on Apple + and *Little Fires Everywhere* on Hulu. There were more Netflix originals accounted for in this study compared to other OTT brand originals. This data was collected right when other OTT brands began releasing originals. Therefore, this study should be replicated again with a balanced offering of originals from OTT services, which can now be expanded to include Apple TV+, Disney+, and Peacock. This study was also reliant on a United States adult sample, and should be tested against other international populations. Additionally, it is difficult to control for endogeneity issues surrounding whether consumers are driven to subscribe to OTT services for original series, or if original series are an ancillary benefit of subscribing to OTT services.

There are a few considerations for future studies. It is important to consider future original series from new OTT services, which should help differentiate OTT services. On the other hand, if all OTT services offer original series spanning all genres, it would warrant an investigation to see if brands have been watered-down or appear to be generic. It appears as though the OTT marketplace is in phase two of its market, which dictates that maturation will soon be achieved and competition will increase. Based on Kübler et al. (2021), a subsequent study should incorporate other facets of the consumer journey (e.g. acquisition funnel, subscription fees, cross-sales, advertising revenues) and account for how this influences firm cash flow. Additionally, there may be certain types of original series or genres that can help an OTT service garner greater brand loyalty or brand equity. Innovation will likely be focused from product innovation (bold, original series) and a bit more toward on process innovation, meaning perceived quality will likely become even more important to consumers (Sraders, 2019).

Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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