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Designing a Competition Model for Streaming Platforms (Subscription-Based Video and Audio Services) with an Emphasis on the Future of Media Management

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Abstract

The present study aims to design a competitive model for streaming platforms, specifically subscription-based video and audio services, with an emphasis on the future of media management. In terms of objective, the research is applied, and in terms of implementation, it is mixed-methods (qualitative-quantitative) with a sequential exploratory design. The qualitative population consists of 15 experts in media management in Iran. The quantitative population includes 378 active users of streaming services in Iran (Filimo, Namava, Shadava, and Beeptunes), and the sampling method used in this study was convenience sampling. The data collection instruments were semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. For data analysis, coding was used in the qualitative section, including three stages of basic, organizing, and overarching themes, supported by MAXQDA software. In the quantitative section, structural equation modeling with the partial least squares approach (PLS-SEM) was employed. The findings showed that three dominant competitive models include local exclusive content production, bundling with mobile operators, and a hybrid advertising-subscription model. The phenomenon of multi-homing was observed in more than three-quarters of users and showed a positive and significant correlation with churn rate. The PLS results indicated that bundling with operators has the greatest effect on reducing churn. The qualitative analysis identified seven main categories. The most likely future scenarios are platform consolidation and alliances, or the stabilization of existing platforms. It is concluded that media managers should adopt a combination of retention strategies and prepare themselves for managing integrated and large-scale platforms.

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Extended Abstract

Introduction

The rapid growth of internet communication technologies has transformed the traditional structure of various industries, including media. In this context, subscription-based video and audio streaming services, by offering on-demand and personalized content, have changed audience consumption patterns from linear viewing to non-linear viewing (Aalami et al., 2025). This transformation has not only altered media consumption habits, but also posed a serious challenge to traditional business models based on television advertising and linear broadcasting. Platforms such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney Plus globally, and Filimo, Namava, Shadava, and Beeptunes in Iran, are examples of this paradigm shift. In this new model, users pay a monthly or annual fee to access a large content library, and platforms, instead of generating momentary ad-based revenue, seek stable and predictable income streams through subscriptions (Koul & Suresh Ambekar, 2020). However, this very feature, namely the ease of canceling subscriptions and the low cost of switching between platforms, has confronted media managers with a new strategic challenge: churn rate.

From an academic perspective, the literature on media management and platform economics in Iran requires localized models that reflect the unique characteristics of the domestic market, including the role of mobile operators as gateways for payment and distribution, the high prevalence of VPNs as a hidden competitor, and centralized regulation by SATRA. International studies, such as Tang and Wei (2023), have shown that media management strategies in Western and Eastern contexts differ due to cultural and regulatory differences; Netflix emphasizes global content production and simultaneous release across countries, while Chinese platforms such as Tencent Video focus on local content and adaptation to domestic policy. Therefore, the main research question is: How can a competitive model for streaming platforms, specifically subscription-based video and audio services, be designed with an emphasis on the future of media management?

Theoretical Framework

Streaming Platforms and Subscription-Based Services

Streaming platforms refer to digital environments that provide video and audio content directly via the internet, bypassing traditional broadcasting networks (cable, satellite). By leveraging subscription business models, these platforms have successfully transformed media consumption patterns from “linear viewing” to “on-demand viewing” (Steffiani & Irwansyah, 2021).

The Evolution of Media Management in the Platform Era

The emergence of global streaming platforms has shifted media management from the traditional model of “linear broadcasting and content scheduling” toward “algorithmic ecosystem management and audience engagement” (Khalafi et al., 2019). In this new landscape, media managers must grapple with four primary challenges: changing audience consumption habits (shifting from TV channels to on-demand platforms), competing with cross-border giants, the need for massive investment in exclusive content, and the integration of data-driven marketing strategies (Pandey et al., 2020).

Sarbakhsh et al. (2025) conducted research titled “Explaining the Content of Popular Animations on Streaming Media (A Study of Netflix, Amazon Prime, and Disney+ Works).” Their findings indicated that most Netflix animations center on female protagonists or women, often progressing without reliance on male characters. Amazon Prime productions continue to focus on older high-audience content within the themes of adolescence and

maturity, while the newcomer Disney+, relying on the productions of its parent company (Disney), offers fragmented content in the form of spin-offs.
Cheng et al. (2025) conducted a study titled "Advanced Customer Churn Prediction for a Music Streaming Service via Enhanced Deep Learning." The results showed that user behavioral characteristics (such as decreased engagement and changes in listening patterns) and user-experience-related features—by influencing loyalty indicators and perceived satisfaction—significantly impact consumers' churn intention (service abandonment) in online streaming environments.

Research Methodology

In terms of its objective, this research is applied, and in terms of its execution method, it is mixed-methods (qualitative-quantitative) using a sequential exploratory design. The qualitative statistical population includes 15 experts in the field of media management in Iran. The quantitative population consists of 378 active users of streaming services in Iran (Filimo, Namava, Shadava, and Beeptunes), selected through convenience sampling. The research data collection tools include semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Data analysis was conducted using coding (comprising three stages: basic, organizing, and overarching themes) with MAXQDA software in the qualitative section, and structural equation modeling with a partial least squares approach (PLS-SEM) in the quantitative section.

Research Methodology

The research method, in terms of its objective, is applied. In terms of execution, it is a mixed-methods (qualitative-quantitative) approach with a sequential exploratory design. The qualitative population includes 15 experts in the field of media management in Iran. The quantitative population comprises 378 active users of streaming services in Iran (Filimo, Namava, Shadava, Beeptunes), and the sampling method used was convenience sampling. The research data collection instruments were semi-structured interviews and questionnaires.

Research Findings

Data analysis was performed using coding (including three stages: basic, organizing, and overarching themes) with MAXQDA software in the qualitative section. In the quantitative section, structural equation modeling with the partial least squares (PLS-SEM) approach was utilized. The findings revealed three dominant competitive models: Production of exclusive local content, Bundling with mobile operators, A hybrid model of advertising and subscription.
The phenomenon of multi-homing was observed in over three-quarters of users and showed a significant positive correlation with churn rate. The PLS modeling results indicated that bundling with operators has the greatest impact on reducing churn. The qualitative analysis identified seven main categories. The most probable future scenarios involve the merger and alliance of platforms or the consolidation of existing platforms.
It is concluded that media managers should employ a combination of retention strategies and prepare themselves for managing integrated and large-scale platforms.

Conclusion

The present study was conducted with the objective of designing a competitive model for streaming platforms (subscription-based video and audio services) with an emphasis on the future of media management. The results of this research are consistent with those of

Sarbakhsh et al. (2025), Cheng et al. (2025), Wu (2025), Benesbordi & Khalili (2024), Mohammadi et al. (2024), and Yahya Zadeh et al. (2023).

Specifically, Sarbakhsh et al. (2025) demonstrated that the majority of Netflix animations center on female protagonists or women, often progressing without reliance on male characters. Amazon Prime's productions continue to focus on previously popular content within the themes of adolescence and maturity, while the newcomer Disney+—relying on the productions of its parent company, Disney—offers fragmented content in the form of spin-offs.

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Strategic Bundling:** Establishing long-term exclusive contracts with mobile operators to reduce payment friction.
2. **Data-Driven Customization:** Investing in recommendation systems tailored to indigenous behavioral data.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that they have no financial or non-financial, personal, professional, or institutional conflicts of interest relevant to this work.

Conflicts of 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.

Data Availability Statement

The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

AI Use Statement

The authors declare that no generative artificial intelligence (AI) or AI-assisted technologies were used in the preparation, writing, or editing of this manuscript.

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Ethics Approval

All procedures performed in this study were conducted in accordance with the ethical standards of the responsible institutional and national research committee.