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Subscription Cancellation in OTT Multihoming Users: An Exploratory Study Based on Experienced Benefits and Behavioral Costs

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Subscription Cancellation in OTT Multihoming Users: An Exploratory Study Based on Experienced Benefits and Behavioral Costs

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Abstract

With the rapid growth of the OTT service market and increasing competition among platforms, the phenomenon of ‘multihoming’—subscribing to multiple OTT services simultaneously—is becoming increasingly prominent. Surveys indicate that while users experience benefits such as access to diverse content through multihoming, they also experience subscription fatigue due to managing multiple services. This study aims to examine how the benefits and costs experienced through multihoming influence the decision to discontinue use, based on the ‘Rational Choice Behavior Model’. Particularly, this research explores the role of ‘coupling’, a psychological factor, in the discontinuation of multihoming. It analyses how the benefits and costs experienced by users in OTT multihoming can lead to discontinuation through psychological coupling. By applying the Rational Choice Behavior Model to OTT research, this study seeks to understand the decision-making process behind users’ discontinuation of OTT multihoming. Practically, it offers insights for OTT providers on strategies to reduce the rate of multihoming attrition.

Keywords: OTT Multihoming, Subscription Fatigue, Intention to stop multihoming, Coupling

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1. Introduction

As the OTT (Over-The-Top) market continues to experience rapid growth, providers are increasingly focusing on adding original content to their portfolios. Influenced by the success of global giants such as Netflix, domestic OTT companies in Korea are also intensifying their investments in original content (Korea Content Promotion Agency, 2023). The entry of international OTT firms into the local market and the rising number of domestic platforms have intensified competition to secure unique original content (Lee Sung-min, 2023). For example, ahead of its Korean market launch, Disney discontinued content-sharing agreements with other companies such as Wavve and Netflix to exclusively offer its original content on its platform, Disney+.

The trend of exclusive content provision is becoming a key competitive strategy among OTT platforms, driving users to engage in 'multihoming'—subscribing to multiple OTT services simultaneously—to access a wider variety of content. A survey showed that, as of the first quarter of 2021, U.S. OTT users on average subscribed to 3.4 paid OTT services, while in Korea, the average number of OTT services per paid user was 2.83 (Kang Jun-seok, 2022). However, multihoming can lead to increased economic, time, and psychological burdens, potentially causing 'subscription fatigue'. Nearly 41.8% of multihoming users find the process of searching for content mentally burdensome, and 46.1% perceive the subscription costs as high (Kang Jun-seok, 2022).

The fatigue caused by subscribing to multiple OTTs may lead to platform discontinuation. Previous studies have primarily focused on discontinuation intentions for single media platforms like IPTV, OTT, YouTube, and social media. Kim Yoon-hwan and Choi Young (2009) analyzed factors influencing resistance to adopting IPTV, finding that perceived risk and complexity reduce intentions to use IPTV. Seo

Sung (2023) found that while positive perceptions of Netflix, such as tailored recommendations and reliable quality, reduce discontinuation intentions, high subscription costs and the challenges of returning to daily tasks after excessive viewing increase the perceived risk of discontinuing Netflix use. Research on YouTube discontinuation intentions showed that complexity in use, misalignment with lifestyle, and high perceived risk lead to higher discontinuation tendencies (Kim Hye-su and Kim Sung-tae, 2022). Park Hyun-sun and Kim Sang-hyun (2014) found that information overload and resulting fatigue from social media use could lead to discontinuation. However, these studies did not clarify why the use of multiple media leads to subscription cancellation.

This study aims to explore the factors influencing OTT multihoming subscription cancellation from a behavioral economic perspective, based on the 'Rational Choice Behavior Theory' (Simon, 1995). Contrary to the neoclassical assumption that humans are rational and selfish, this theory from behavioral economics argues that humans often make irrational and emotional choices. It applies this understanding to marketing and social sciences, proposing that while people tend to make rational decisions even in uncertain situations, actual rationality is limited. Specifically, the Rational Choice Theory highlights that the biggest obstacle to rational decision-making is the limited capacity to process information. As a result, people rely on intuitive thinking, focusing on a few viable options that they can manage rather than considering all available alternatives. This often leads to settling for a "good enough" choice. According to Zeithaml (1988), when adopting new information technology services, users continuously weigh the benefits against the costs and experience a constant psychological conflict (Simon, 1955).

Thaler (1980) also pointed out that normative economic principles do not fully explain user behavior and introduced the concept of 'mental accounting' to understand the

relationship between costs and benefits incurred by service use. According to this theory, when users make a purchase, a 'mental account' for that product is activated, but it closes once consumption ends. Generally, people aim to maximize the benefits relative to the costs incurred, continuously seeking to gain from the product to avoid closing their mental account with a deficit. During this process, users engage in 'coupling', comparing the costs paid against the benefits received. Thaler (1999) noted that the more frequently or intensely the costs are perceived, the more likely individuals are to connect costs with benefits to avoid perceived losses. Applying this coupling process to multihoming users, those who feel burdened by the costs of subscribing to multiple OTTs may evaluate whether the expenses are justified by the benefits experienced, and choose to optimize their subscriptions by selecting platforms that maximize benefits while minimizing costs. As the effort to align costs with benefits increases, so does the fatigue from multihoming, leading to potential discontinuation of certain platforms. Essentially, the continuous comparison of costs and benefits can induce fatigue and lead to decisions to cancel some platform subscriptions. This study seeks to empirically explore the psychological decision-making process that leads OTT multihoming users to cancel their subscriptions, based on the Rational Choice Behavior Theory and Thaler's (1980) mental accounting theory.

2. Theoretical background

2.1 OTT multihoming and platform subscription cancellation

Multihoming refers to the behavior of users subscribing to multiple OTT services simultaneously (Korea Communications Commission, 2020). Recently, as multihoming becomes a norm, users are increasingly choosing multiple platforms that suit their tastes and needs. Recent surveys indicate that OTT users are now

using an average of 2 to 3 OTT services concurrently (Kang Jun-seok, 2022; Sung Yu-jin, 2024). While Netflix has a 34% market share in the domestic OTT market (Lee Jung-hyun, 2024), it commands a 35% share globally (Korea Export-Import Bank, 2023), suggesting that many users opt for Netflix as their primary OTT while subscribing to additional services (Kang Jun-seok, 2022). In response to Netflix's continuous growth and market dominance, other OTT providers are exploring strategies such as mergers or collaborations (Jessica, 2023). Moreover, the entry of new OTT players has increased the number of platforms available to users, intensifying content differentiation strategies among OTT providers (Korea Communications Commission, 2020). This fierce competition among OTT providers is beneficial as it offers users richer and more diverse content.

Despite the benefits of accessing various OTT platforms, the issue of subscription fatigue due to multihoming is becoming increasingly prominent. Subscription fatigue is primarily attributed to the financial burden of multiple subscriptions and the overload of choices (Kang Jun-seok, 2022). The rising costs associated with subscribing to multiple OTT services can lead to subscription cancellations. Additionally, users experience decision fatigue as they navigate through an even larger amount of content due to multihoming (Korea Content Promotion Agency, 2021). Users spend considerable time and effort to find the content they want, and the associated stress and uncertainty can diminish their satisfaction with OTT usage and increase fatigue (Moschis, 2007; Fu et al., 2020). Having too many options can lead to not making a choice at all, or to regret after making a choice, thereby decreasing satisfaction with OTT usage (Charles, 2023). Unfortunately, empirical studies analysing why multihoming users feel fatigued and why they cancel subscriptions are scarce.

Existing research on OTT multihoming has focused on characterizing the users. Byun Eun-ji and Baek Hyun-mi (2021) examined the reasons

for multiple OTT subscriptions based on demographic characteristics and OTT content viewing habits. Their study noted that younger viewers with a high proportion of TV VOD usage and a preference for original content are more likely to subscribe to multiple OTT services. Han Ju-hee (2023) found that multiple OTT subscribers prefer exclusive content, genre diversity, and curated services, and that market diversity (number of providers) and market concentration (Herfindahl-Hirschman Index) positively affect multiple subscriptions. Lee Hyun-jong (2023) reported that multihomers tend to be younger, watch more VOD, and engage more frequently in various content viewing and binge-watching behaviors (Lee Hyun-jong, 2023).

However, focusing primarily on a single platform such as Netflix limits the ability to analyze the increasingly complex behavior of using multiple OTTs (Chan and Chiu, 2023). Users who subscribe to multiple OTT platforms simultaneously may have complex reasons for discontinuing a platform. Therefore, the benefits and costs associated with subscribing to multiple OTTs should be understood differently from those associated with a single service. From a benefits perspective, users who subscribe to multiple OTT platforms can access a variety of content, enriching their content experience and likely reducing their intent to discontinue. However, users with multiple platform subscriptions may also have high intentions to discontinue multihoming due to the financial burden of high subscription fees. This study focuses on the discontinuation of OTT multihoming, examining how the experienced benefits and costs lead to subscription cancellations differently.

Research Question: Why do OTT multihoming users cancel their platform subscriptions?

2.2 Benefits and costs associated with OTT multihoming

According to Simon (1995), humans possess limited cognitive capabilities, leading them to

make decisions that are satisficing—sufficiently satisfying within the constraints of reality rather than optimal. Simon's research underscores the practical conditions and limitations inherent in the decision-making process and explains behaviors aimed at achieving satisfactorily rational decisions. Applying this to multihoming behavior, the act of using multiple OTT platforms is not merely driven by curiosity to explore various services. Instead, it reflects a strategic choice made considering constraints such as limited cognitive capacity, time, and financial resources, aiming to select the OTT platforms that best match individual tastes and needs. Users evaluate the value and cost provided by each OTT, thereby choosing the platforms that best meet their preferences.

From a behavioral economics perspective, individual actions can be influenced by experiences, emotions, or instincts (Ahn Kwang-ho and Kwak Jun-sik, 2011). While the behavior of using multiple OTT platforms might appear as a rational action to experience various services, it can also lead to irrational decisions where similar OTT platforms are overvalued, incurring unnecessary costs. Subscribing to multiple platforms serves as a safety net to ensure no desired content or benefits are missed. However, too many options can complicate the decision-making process, leading to fatigue and ultimately, subscription cancellations.

This study aims to concurrently consider the benefits and costs associated with OTT multihoming, comparing the experiences gained from subscribing to multiple platforms (diverse content experiences, enhanced content curation, platform variety vs. increased subscription fees, difficulties in content selection, differences in interfaces) against relying solely on single-homing. When subscribing to just one platform, content selection is relatively straightforward, and the interface is familiar, making the usage simpler. By comparing the experiences of multihoming and single-homing, while focusing on aspects of OTT experiences often overlooked in existing studies, this research will propose strategies for platform

providers to counteract the cancellation of subscriptions by multihoming users.

2.2.1 Benefits of OTT multihoming and subscription cancellation

The benefits experienced by OTT multihoming users from subscribing to multiple platforms can be summarized into three main aspects: content diversity, enhanced content curation, and platform diversity. First, ‘content diversity’ refers to the benefit of experiencing a wide range of content through multihoming. OTT subscribers who engage with multiple platforms perceive a greater diversity in the content offered, which may reduce their intention to discontinue multihoming (Byun Eun-ji and Baek Hyun-mi, 2021; Han Ju-hee, 2023).

Second, the ‘content curation efficiency’ pertains to how effectively consumers can be provided with content that suits their preferences across various platforms. Multihoming users can efficiently utilize personalized recommendation systems from different OTT platforms, enabling them to find content that aligns closely with their tastes and interests. Effective use of each platform’s recommendation system can foster positive attitudes towards multihoming and enhance the intention to continue using each platform. Research by Kim Ga-hye et al. (2020) and Liang et al. (2006) found that personalized recommendations provided by OTT recommendation systems positively influence service satisfaction and increase users’ intentions to continue using OTT services. Han Ju-hee (2023) showed that multihoming users tend to watch recommended content or programs more frequently than single-homing users, given their relatively higher content consumption, which allows them to access a variety of curation experiences across multiple OTT platforms. This likely enables recommendation systems to more accurately match content to user preferences, offering a more customized experience.

Third, ‘platform diversity’ refers to the degree to which multihoming allows users to

maximize the unique characteristics and advantages of each platform, enriching their media consumption experience. By using multihoming, users experience unique content and services provided by different platforms. For example, one OTT may specialize in movie genres while another excels in animation. By subscribing to both, users can enjoy the strengths of each platform, leading to a satisfying media experience. This process enables multihoming users to customize and adjust their media repertoire to fit their tastes and circumstances optimally. This expands the discussion of content diversity beyond just the content itself to include the diversity of service platforms, a new dimension of diversity that considers the unique offerings of different platforms (Kim Soo-yeon and Koo Hye-kyung, 2023). Extending Napoli’s (1997, 1999) notion of media diversity in supply terms, users perceive each platform as offering distinct goods and recognize the value of experiencing exclusive content areas provided by different platforms. Thus, users who perceive high platform variety are less likely to discontinue multihoming.

Research Hypothesis 1. The benefits experienced by OTT multihoming users (content diversity H1-1, content curation efficiency H1-2, platform diversity H1-3) will decrease their intention to stop multihoming.

2.2.2 Costs of OTT multihoming and subscription cancellation

The costs associated with using any product or service can negatively impact decision-making. Porter and Donthu (2006) define ‘economic cost’ as an access barrier, noting that even if a service is perceived as useful, high costs can deter usage. Baek Hyung-geun, Jeon Beom-soo, and Lee Jung-ki (2013) found that the financial burden of paying for a service can reduce the intention to use it. In the context of OTT services, cost is a crucial predictor of user satisfaction and continued usage. Yu Ji-hoon and Park Joo-yeon (2018) showed that providing diverse content and reasonable pricing

enhances users' intentions to continue using a service. According to Seo Sung (2023), if the pricing of an OTT service is perceived as uneconomical, the intention to discontinue its use increases. Especially for multihoming users who subscribe to multiple OTTs, the economic burden increases with the number of subscriptions. The greater the economic burden compared to the benefits received, the higher the likelihood of discontinuing multihoming.

Additionally, multihoming users must invest significant time and effort to understand the original content and genres offered by various OTTs (Kwak Dong-kyun, 2019). The vast amount of content available across OTTs necessitates considerable effort to grasp the nature of the content each OTT provides. This can be seen as information 'search costs'. Typically, acquiring information and knowledge about a service or product requires an information search process (Beatty and Smith, 1985), during which users actively collect information that aids decision-making. In the context of OTT services, the information search process is crucial for effectively finding desired content and deciding whether to continue using a platform (Kwak Dong-kyun, 2019). If it is relatively easy to understand the characteristics of the content provided by each OTT (e.g., genre, ratings, storyline, actors, directors), the intention to discontinue multihoming may be reduced. For example, if OTT platform providers use content recommendation systems to help users easily discover and understand content of interest, the intention to discontinue multihoming could decrease. Conversely, if the non-economic costs associated with the usage process (e.g., content search costs) are high, the intention to discontinue multihoming will increase.

For multihoming users to efficiently utilize various OTTs, they need to familiarize themselves with the interfaces and functionalities of each platform. 'Learning cost' refers to the expenses incurred in learning how to use a product or service or understanding its features (Klemperer,

1995). Previous research indicates that learning costs, which include the behavioral and cognitive efforts expended to become accustomed to a new service, can increase if the platforms are not user-friendly or the interfaces are not intuitive. Additionally, multihoming users may face high learning costs as they create new accounts on different platforms and adjust necessary personalization settings, which might prompt them to seriously consider discontinuing multihoming.

Research Hypothesis 2. The costs experienced by OTT multihoming users (economic costs H2-1, search costs H2-2, learning costs H2-3) will increase their intention to stop multihoming.

2.3 Coupling and fatigue in OTT multihoming

According to the mental accounting theory (Thaler, 1980/1999), individuals assess their transactions by considering the costs they incur and the benefits they receive. For instance, when utilizing a product or service, consumers form a mental account based on a cost-benefit evaluation. If they are satisfied with the costs paid and perceive that they have gained adequate benefits, the mental account is closed, a positive attitude towards the service is established, and the likelihood of continuing to use the product or service is high (Kivetz, 1999; Prelec and Loewenstein, 1998). Conversely, if the satisfaction with the product or service is lower than the cost incurred, the mental account may remain open, leading to dissatisfaction with the service. Generally, people engage in behaviors to avoid losses and enhance benefits (Decision framing: Kahneman and Tversky, 1984). During this process, individuals naturally engage in 'coupling', where they link the costs paid to the benefits received.

Applying mental accounting to the phenomenon of OTT multihoming, multihoming users assign each individual OTT to a separate 'mental account' and assess the costs and benefits for each. If multihoming users find each mental account satisfactory, they will continue to use all OTT platforms; otherwise, they may cancel the

subscription to specific OTTs. Essentially, they choose platforms that maximize their benefits and minimize costs. Particularly for OTT multihoming users who constantly compare benefits and costs across multiple platforms, people faced with such a coupling state must make rational decisions by repeatedly going through the coupling process.

Research by Prelec and Loewenstein (1998) indicates that the more acutely users perceive the costs associated with a purchase, the stronger the coupling tendency. In contrast, recognizing higher utility can mitigate coupling effects. In other words, when users feel the costs intensely, they pay more attention to the associated benefits and link costs to benefits. Conversely, if users perceive high utility relative to the costs, their sensitivity to costs decreases (Rupp et al., 2018), leading to a looser psychological link between costs and benefits (decoupling: Prelec and Loewenstein, 1998). For example, if consumers need to pay each time they use a service, they re-evaluate their consumption behavior, and strong coupling occurs (Prelec and Loewenstein, 1998). In summary, when consumers perceive high costs, coupling is strongly induced, leading them to seek benefits that offset the costs. When utility is perceived as high, the focus shifts to the benefits derived from service usage, leading to a reduction in coupling.

Despite some consensus on the impact of coupling on consumer behavior and purchasing decisions, research on the specific factors that induce coupling remains limited. Especially, studies examining the cost and benefit factors that significantly influence the coupling process are scarce. Understanding the various aspects of coupling requires a more detailed examination of the influencing factors. Thus, this study aims to explore the various benefits and costs that impact coupling in OTT multihoming. On the benefit side, this research will examine how content diversity, the efficiency of content curation, and platform diversity influence the mitigation of coupling among OTT multihoming users. On the cost side, it will explore how economic costs and search

costs enhance coupling.

Research Hypothesis 3. The greater the benefits experienced by OTT multihoming users (content diversity H3-1, content curation efficiency H3-2, platform diversity H3-3), the more their coupling (the linkage between costs and benefits) will be mitigated.

Research Hypothesis 4. The greater the costs experienced by OTT multihoming users (economic costs H4-1, search costs H4-2, learning costs H4-3), the stronger their coupling will be.

The relationship between perceived benefits and costs can have contradictory effects on the intention to use a service. According to prior research on coupling, recognizing the relationship between costs and benefits frequently (strengthening coupling) tends to lead individuals to use a service more extensively in an attempt to recoup the costs incurred (Prelec and Loewenstein, 1998; Thaler, 1999; Park Sojin and Choi Nakhwan, 2002/2004). The behavior to increase usage to make the cost worthwhile is linked to the concept of loss aversion (Moosa and Ramiah, 2017). Typically, people act in a way that maximizes perceived benefits over costs and tend to avoid losses (Thaler, 1980; Verhallen and Raaij, 1986). Therefore, people are inclined to use the service more actively in an effort to recover their expenses. Indeed, research by Soman and Gourville (2001) has shown that the higher the recognition of coupling, the more actively users engage with the service. Thaler's study (1985/1999) explained that when users clearly connect the cost and benefits of a service they've purchased, the awareness of the amount paid increases, motivating them to consume the benefits yet to be utilized within their mental account. Na Kwangjin et al. (2006) found that when strong coupling occurs between costs and benefits, users feel significant sunk costs and are consequently more inclined to consume the service they have paid for. In summary, as people become more conscious of costs, they recognize

the relationship between cost and benefit more strongly and engage more actively in the service to avoid losses.

However, recent studies have shown that depending on the environment in which the service is provided, coupling can lead to reduced service usage. With the normalization of remote transactions and the increase in online consumption, which differs significantly from offline consumption, consumers often face both monetary and non-monetary costs (e.g., time and effort spent accessing the service). In situations where consumers must choose between various services, they may reduce their usage to avoid losses and escape an uncomfortable psychological state (Festinger, 1957). In the context of IT services like social media, the perception of costs has been shown to enhance coupling, which subsequently impacts passive usage intentions (Park Kyungja and Ko Jun, 2014). In the context of OTT multihoming, subscribing to multiple platforms simultaneously can impose significant temporal and mental burdens on users, potentially enhancing the factors that strengthen coupling. As the non-monetary costs, such as high subscription fees and the time consumed by using various OTT platforms, increase, consumers are likely to cancel their subscriptions.

Research Hypothesis 5. Enhanced coupling (the linkage between costs and benefits) among OTT multihoming users will lead to a higher intention to stop multihoming.

During the coupling process, increased fatigue can lead to the cancellation of platform subscriptions. Fatigue generally refers to the decline in mental and physical functions that occurs with repeated activity (Kim Young-soo and Lee Young-jik, 2005). Digital fatigue, a phenomenon that arises from difficulties or an overload of information during digital device usage (Samsung Economic Research Institute, 2008), can lead to discontinuation of digital devices or services. Subscription services like

OTT, which provide various services at affordable prices, offer convenience and cost-effectiveness, satisfying users but can also induce subscription fatigue (Evans, 2017; Kang Jun-seok, 2022). Subscription fatigue arises from various factors such as the challenge of navigating through vast content across multiple platforms to select desired content, understanding how to use each OTT platform, identifying the characteristics of content on each platform, and comprehending the recommendation systems of each platform. Multihoming users, during the coupling process, have to process a plethora of information simultaneously, which can cause significant cognitive load. According to the Cognitive Load Theory (Sweller, 1988), when the brain's processing capacity is exceeded, decision-making efficiency can decrease, leading to a state of analysis paralysis. Multihoming users, overwhelmed by an information overload when they need to make choices, can struggle to decide and might fall into a state of decision paralysis, leading to subscription cancellation. In essence, multihoming users may choose to cancel their subscriptions to escape from subscription fatigue.

Research Question 1. Do the costs experienced by OTT multihoming users (economic cost RQ1-1, search cost RQ1-2, learning cost RQ1-3) increase the intention to stop multihoming, mediated by coupling and fatigue?

Research Question 2. Do the benefits experienced by OTT multihoming users (content diversity RQ2-1, content curation efficiency RQ2-2, platform diversity RQ2-3) reduce the intention to discontinue multihoming, mediated by coupling and fatigue?

2.4 User variety-seeking tendency

Variety-seeking tendency refers to the inclination of consumers to seek diversity in their choices of products or services (Kahn and Isen, 1993; Kahn, 1995). In other words, consumers are likely to pursue a variety of options (e.g., brands, flavors)

when purchasing or consuming products. This tendency has been extensively studied as a significant variable in psychology and marketing (Trijp, 1995; Trijp et al., 1996). The behavior of seeking variety in product or service usage can be explained by experiential or hedonic motives (Holbrook and Hirschman, 1982), which are based on individuals' intrinsic tendencies to seek an optimal level of stimulation (Leuba, 1995). According to previous studies, individuals with a high variety-seeking tendency utilize more information sources and have a higher inclination to seek new stimuli (Raju, 1980). Individuals with a high variety-seeking tendency, due to their desire to explore and experience various types of content, are likely to value the utility of subscribing to multiple OTTs over the cost, leading to a propensity to subscribe to multiple OTT platforms simultaneously. Conversely, those with a low variety-seeking tendency are more likely to concentrate on a few preferred platforms. Individuals with low variety-seeking tendencies find their content needs sufficiently satisfied with just one or two platforms.

Research Question 3. Does the impact of coupling on the intention to stop multihoming vary according to the user's variety-seeking tendency?

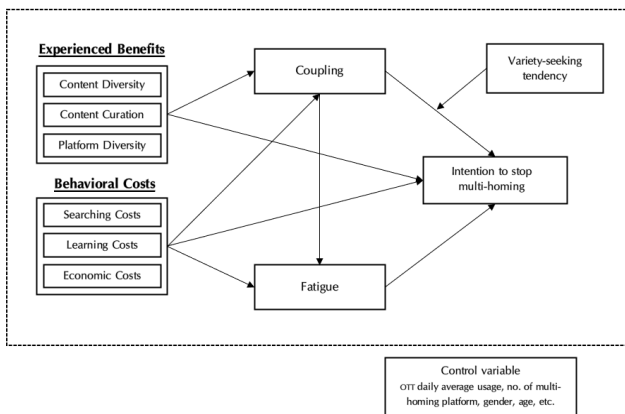


Figure 1. Research model

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Data collection and sample characteristics

The survey was conducted from June 3 to June 5,

2024, targeting multihoming users aged 20 to 50 who subscribe to two or more paid OTT platforms. A total of 330 individuals participated in the survey, and after excluding 56 respondents who provided insincere answers, 274 responses were used for the analysis. Regarding the distribution of respondents by gender, there were 115 males (42.0%) and 159 females (58.0%), indicating a higher number of female respondents (see Table 1). Age-wise, the majority were in their 20s, totaling 112 respondents (73.0%), followed by 151 in their 30s (22.6%), and 11 aged 40 and above (4.4%), showing that the 20s demographic is the most active age group in using OTT services. Among multihoming users, 200 individuals (73.0%) subscribed to two platforms, 62 (22.6%) used three platforms, 9 (3.3%) used four platforms, and 3 (1.1%) used five platforms, indicating that most users typically multihom with two or three platforms.

Table 1. Respondent characteristics (N = 274)

Category		Frequency	Ratio(%)
Gender	Male	115	42.0
	Female	159	58.0
Age	20s	112	73.0
	30s	151	22.6
	40s and above	11	4.4
Number of subscribed platforms	2	200	73.0
	3	62	22.6
	4	9	3.3
	5	3	1.1
	Primary usage device	Smartphone	124
	Desktop computer	87	31.8
	Tablet PC	31	11.3
	Laptop computer	28	10.2
	TV	4	1.4

3.1 Measurement items

In this study, the research model incorporates variables such as the benefits and costs of OTT multihoming, coupling, fatigue, intention to stop multihoming, and variety-seeking tendencies. Each variable is operationally defined as follows. All items were measured using a 7-point Likert scale, and the reliability of the measurements was adequately ensured with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.61 to 0.89.

Table 2. Definitions of key measurement items

Variable	Definition	Reference
Content diversity	Benefits experienced through multihoming in terms of accessing a variety of content	Jeong & Jang (2020)
Content curation efficiency	The efficiency with which vast amounts of content across multiple platforms are utilized to deliver content that users want	Ko (2021)
Platform diversity	The extent to which multihoming allows for maximizing the unique characteristics and advantages of each platform	Napoli(1997, 1999)
Economic cost	The burden of costs associated with multihoming	Seo (2023)
Search cost	The time and effort invested in identifying content and information across multiple platforms	Beatty & Smith (1985)

Learning cost	Costs incurred in learning how to use multiple platforms or understanding their features	Kwak et al. (2012)
Coupling	The psychological process of connecting costs and benefits incurred while multihoming	Prelec et al.,(1998); Thaler(1980)
Fatigue	Cognitive burden caused by fatigue or information overload while using multiple platforms	Kang (2022); Bravo & Farro-Mejia(2023)
Intention to stop multihoming	The intention of multihoming users to cancel subscriptions to some platforms	Rogers(2003)
Variety-seeking tendency	The tendency to seek diversity in service selection	Kahn & Isen(1993); Kahn(1995)

4. Results

4.1 OTT multihoming benefits and costs vs. intention to stop multihoming

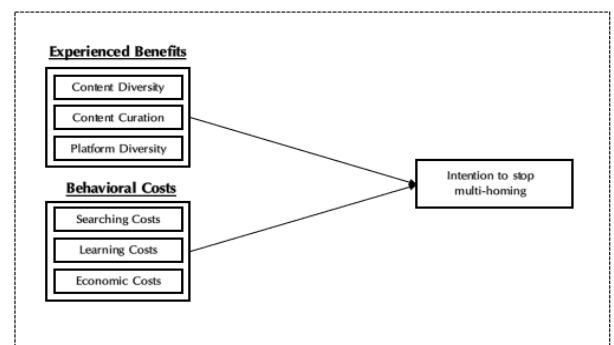


Figure 2. Multihoming benefits and costs vs. intention to stop multihoming

In this study, independent variables including benefits of OTT multihoming (content diversity, efficiency of content curation, and platform

diversity) and cost factors (learning cost, economic cost, and search cost) were analyzed. Demographic characteristics (gender, age), OTT usage time, and the number of multi-homed platforms were used as control variables. The dependent variable was the intention to discontinue multihoming. A multiple regression analysis was conducted³.

The regression model's R2 value was .494 (F=25.643, p<.001), indicating that the independent and control variables explained 49% of the variance in the intention to discontinue multihoming (see Table 3). Benefits experienced through multihoming, such as content diversity $B = -.304$, $p < .01$) and content curation efficiency ($B = -.222$, $p < .05$), negatively influenced the intention to discontinue multihoming. This suggests that the higher the users' perception of content diversity and curation efficiency, the lower their intention to cease multihoming, thus supporting <Research Hypotheses 1-1 and 1-2>. Platform diversity, however, did not significantly impact the intention to discontinue.

Among the costs associated with multihoming, while learning costs were not statistically significant, economic costs ($B = .421$, $p < .001$) and search costs ($B = .250$, $p < .001$) significantly influenced the intention to discontinue multihoming. These findings imply that the greater the economic and search costs perceived by multihoming users, the higher their intention to cease using OTT services. Thus, <Research Hypotheses 2-1 and 2-2>, which predicted that costs associated with OTT multihoming (economic and search costs) would increase the intention to discontinue, were supported.

Comparing the relative impact of OTT multihoming benefits and costs on the intention to discontinue, economic costs ($\beta = .402$) and search

costs ($\beta = .215$) had a higher influence on the intention to discontinue multihoming, followed by content diversity ($\beta = -.179$) and content curation efficiency ($\beta = -.131$).

Table 3. multihoming benefits and costs vs. intention to stop multihoming

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>B</i>	SE	β		
(Constant)	1.793	.791		2.266*	.024
Gender	.194	.154	.062	1.260*	.021
Age	.024	.017	.064	1.356	.176
OTT usage time	-.001	.001	-.021	-0.456	.649
No. of OTT multihoming	.213	.126	.082	1.689	.092
Content diversity	-.304	.114	-.179	-2.657**	.008
Content curation efficiency	-.222	.096	-.131	-2.317*	.021
Platform diversity	.086	.100	.051	0.861	.390
Economic cost	.421	.053	.402	7.924***	$p < .001$
Search cost	.250	.068	.215	3.661***	$p < .001$
Learning cost	.058	.061	.055	0.941	.347
$R^2 = .494$					
$F(10, 263) = 25.643^{***}$					

$p < .05^*$, $p < .01^{**}$, $p < .001^{***}$

4.2 OTT multihoming benefits and costs vs. coupling

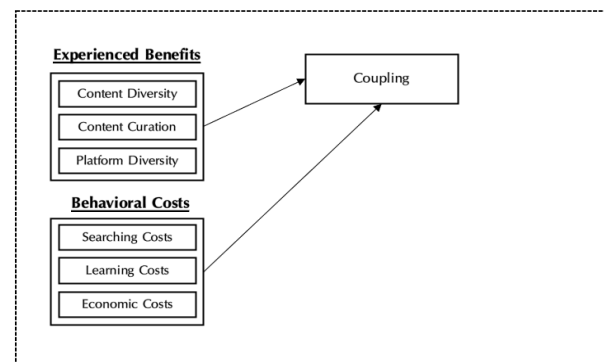


Figure 3. OTT multihoming benefits and costs vs. coupling

³ Prior to the analysis of the research model, a multicollinearity was conducted through verification of correlation, tolerance, and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values. The results indicated that there were no issues with multicollinearity.

To examine the effects of perceived benefits and costs of OTT multihoming on psychological coupling, the study considers benefits factors (content diversity, content curation efficiency, and platform diversity) and cost factors (learning cost, economic cost, search cost) as independent variables. Demographic characteristics (gender, age), OTT usage time, and the number of OTT platforms multi-homed serve as control variables, with coupling as the dependent variable. A multiple regression analysis was conducted to understand these relationships.

The regression model yielded an R^2 value of .619 ($F=42.817$, $p<.001$), indicating that the independent and control variables explain 61% of the variance in coupling (see Table 4). The efficiency of content curation ($B=-.154$, $p<.05$) negatively influenced coupling, suggesting that higher perceived efficiency in content curation is associated with lower coupling. This supports <Research Hypothesis 3-2>, which anticipated that the benefits of content curation efficiency would reduce coupling perception. Content diversity and platform diversity also negatively impacted coupling, though they were not statistically significant.

Conversely, economic cost ($B=.260$, $p<.001$), search cost ($B=.201$, $p<.001$), and learning cost ($\beta=.199$, $p<.001$) positively influenced coupling. These results indicate that higher economic costs associated with subscribing to multiple OTT platforms, increased search costs for finding desired content, and higher learning costs to utilize platform features intensify users' mental linkage between costs and benefits. Thus, supporting <Research Hypotheses 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3>, which predicted that higher costs from OTT multihoming would enhance coupling perception.

Comparatively analyzing the relative influence of benefits and costs on coupling revealed that economic cost ($\beta=.329$), learning cost ($\beta=.250$), and search cost ($\beta=.229$) have a more significant impact, whereas content curation ($\beta=-.121$) exerts a lesser influence on coupling.

Table 4. multihoming benefits and costs vs. coupling

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>B</i>	SE	β		
(Constant)	1.012	.517		1.959	.051
Gender	.364	.100	.156	3.626***	$p<.001$
Age	.029	.011	.103	2.515*	.012
OTT usage time	.001	.001	.046	1.168	.244
No. of OTT multihoming	.149	.082	.077	1.809	.072
Content diversity	-.012	.075	-.009	-1.160	.873
Content curation efficiency	-.154	.062	-.121	-2.461*	.014
Platform diversity	-.018	.065	-.014	-.277	.782
Economic cost	.260	.035	.329	7.492***	$p<.001$
Search cost	.201	.045	.229	4.488***	$p<.001$
Learning cost	.199	.040	.250	4.960***	$p<.001$

$R^2 = .619$
 $F(10, 263) = 42.817^{***}$

$p<.05^*$, $p<.01^{**}$, $p<.001^{***}$

4.3 Dual mediation effect of coupling and fatigue

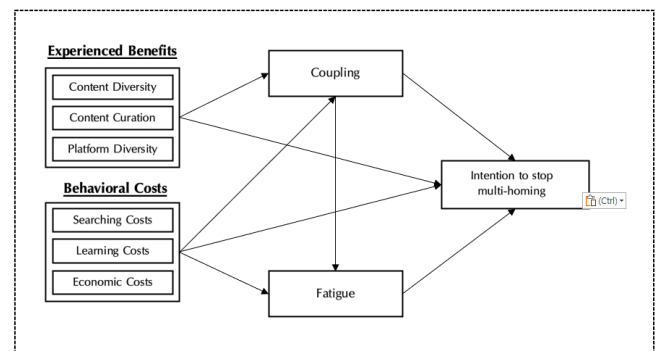


Figure 4. Dual mediation effect of coupling and fatigue

The study explores the mediating effects of coupling and fatigue on the relationship between the benefits and costs of OTT multihoming and the intention to discontinue multihoming. Utilizing PROCESS macro Model 6, a dual mediation model was analyzed to assess these effects.

The results of the mediation effects of coupling and fatigue are presented in <Table 5>. Bootstrap analysis confirmed the significance of indirect and direct effects, with none of the bootstrap confidence intervals at 95% including zero, thereby statistically supporting <Research Questions 1 and 2>. It was found that economic costs ($B=.35$) and search costs ($B=.18$) positively influence the intention to stop multihoming, indicating that higher perceived economic and search costs increase the likelihood of discontinuing multihoming. Learning costs did not show a significant direct effect.

In terms of indirect effects, learning costs ($B=.22$), economic costs ($B=.16$), and search costs ($B=.25$) significantly influenced the intention to stop through coupling. Additionally, economic costs ($B=.04$) and search costs ($B=.09$) were found to reduce the intention to discontinue through increased fatigue. Notably, learning costs ($B=.09$), economic costs ($B=.06$), and search costs ($B=.05$) significantly impacted the intention to stop, mediated by both coupling and fatigue. This indicates that higher learning, economic, and search costs associated with multihoming intensify coupling and increase fatigue, leading to a higher likelihood of discontinuing the service.

Table 5. Dual mediation effect test of coupling and fatigue

5-1. Costs associated with multihoming

	Path	B	SE	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Direct effects	Economic cost → Intention to stop	.35	.06	.23	.47
	Search cost → Intention to stop	.18	.08	.04	.33
	Learning cost → Intention to stop	.12	.06	.00	.25
Indirect effects	Economic cost → Coupling → Intention to stop	.16	.05	.07	.25
	Search cost → Coupling → Intention to stop	.25	.05	.15	.35
	Learning cost → Coupling → Intention to stop	.22	.05	.12	.32
	Economic cost → Fatigue → Intention to stop	.04	.02	.01	.08
	Search cost → Fatigue → Intention to stop	.09	.02	.05	.13

Search cost → Fatigue → Intention to stop	.09	.04	.02	.17
Learning cost → Fatigue → Intention to stop	.23	.02	.02	.07
Economic cost → Coupling → Fatigue → Intention to stop	.06	.03	.01	.08
Search cost → Coupling → Fatigue → Intention to stop	.05	.02	.01	.10
Learning cost → Coupling → Fatigue → Intention to stop	.09	.03	.03	.15

Note 1: CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit

The benefits of multihoming, particularly content diversity ($B=-.30$) and the efficiency of content curation ($B=-.25$), significantly negatively impacted the intention to discontinue. This indicates that higher perceived content diversity and curation efficiency are associated with a lower intention to discontinue multihoming. Platform diversity did not show a significant direct effect. The analysis of indirect effects revealed that content diversity ($B=-.21$) and content curation ($B=-.22$) significantly influence the intention to discontinue through coupling. Additionally, content diversity ($B=-.06$), content curation ($B=-.06$), and platform diversity ($B=-.06$) reduce the intention to discontinue through fatigue. Notably, content diversity ($B=-.06$), content curation ($B=-.06$), and platform diversity ($B=-.06$) significantly impact the intention to discontinue, mediated by both coupling and fatigue. This suggests that the diverse provision of content and platforms enhances user experience, reduces fatigue, and strengthens the intent to continue multihoming.

5-2. Benefits associated with multihoming

	Path	B	SE	95% CI	
				LL	UL
Direct effects	Content diversity → Intention to stop	-.30	.09	-.46	-.13
	Content curation efficiency → Intention to stop	-.25	.09	-.42	-.08
	Platform diversity → Intention to stop	-.12	.09	-.28	.05
Indirect effects	Content diversity → Coupling → Intention to stop	-.21	.04	-.30	-.12

Content curation → Coupling → Intention to stop	-0.22	.05	-.31	-.14
Platform diveristy → Coupling → Intention to stop	-.18	.04	-.26	-.13
Content diveristy → Fatigue → Intention to stop	-.05	.03	-.11	-.01
Content curation → Fatigue → Intention to stop	-.06	.03	-.11	-.01
Platform diveristy → Fatigue → Intention to stop	-.06	.03	-.11	-.01
Content diveristy → Coupling → Fatigue → Intention to stop	-.07	.27	-.13	-.02
Content curation → Coupling → Fatigue → Intention to stop	-.08	.03	-.14	-.02
Platform diveristy → Coupling → Fatigue → Intention to stop	-.06	.02	-.12	-.02

Note 1: CI = Confidence Interval; LL = Lower Limit; UL = Upper Limit

4.4 Moderating effect of variety-seeking tendency on the relationship between coupling and the intention to stop multihoming

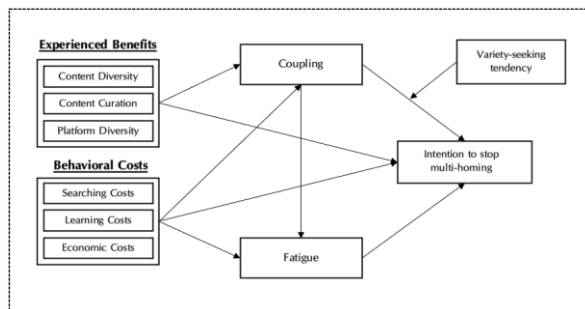


Figure 5. Moderating effect of variety-seeking tendency

This study examined the moderating effect of variety-seeking tendency on the relationship between coupling and the intention to discontinue multihoming. Hierarchical regression analysis was used to investigate how the relationship between coupling and the intention to discontinue multihoming might vary depending on the user's tendency to seek variety. In the first step, when the variable of coupling was included in the model, it was found to positively affect the intention to discontinue multihoming ($B=.508$, $p<.001$), indicating that stronger coupling leads to a higher intention to discontinue multihoming. In the second step, when the variable representing users' variety-seeking tendency was added, it had a

negative impact on the intention to discontinue ($B=-.169$, $p<.001$), meaning that a higher variety-seeking tendency is associated with a lower intention to discontinue multihoming. Finally, when the interaction term between coupling and variety-seeking tendency was added, the interaction term ($B=-.049$, $p=.321$) did not significantly affect the intention to discontinue, indicating that there is no direct effect of the interaction between coupling and variety-seeking tendency on the intention to discontinue. In summary, the frequent comparison of costs and benefits due to multihoming makes people consider discontinuing multihoming. Additionally, the finding that users' variety-seeking tendency negatively influences the intention to discontinue suggests that users who seek variety in service selection tend to continue multihoming.

Table 6. Moderating effect of variety-seeking tendency on the Intention to stop multihoming

	Unstandardized coefficients		Standardized coefficients		<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>B</i>	SE	β			
(Constant)	.122	1.014			.120	.905
Gender	.451	.173	.145		2.608*	.010
Age	.014	.019	.039		.762	.447
OTT usage time	-.001	.002	-.018		-.353	.724
No. of OTT multihoming	.049	.132	.019		.372	.710
Coupling	.956	.247	.720		3.862	$p<.001$
Variety-seeking tendency	-.055	.178	-.042		-.307	0.759
Coupling *						
Variety-seeking tendency	-.049	.049	-.247		-.994	0.321
Coupling	.674	.075	.508		8.931***	$p<.001$
Coupling	.721	.075	.543		9.556***	$p<.001$
Variety-seeking tendency	-.219	.066	-.169		-3.307***	$p<.001$
$R^2 = .370$ $F(7, 266) = 22.340***$						

$p<.05^*$, $p<.01^{**}$, $p<.001^{***}$

5. Conclusions

5.1 Summary of key findings

This study comprehensively examines the variables influencing the intent to discontinue multihoming among users who subscribe to multiple OTT platforms, verifying the dual mediating effects of coupling and fatigue. The findings are summarized as follows:

Firstly, economic and search costs have been identified as key factors increasing the intent to discontinue multihoming. The burden of subscription fees and the difficulty in finding desired content when subscribing to multiple OTT platforms are primary reasons prompting users to discontinue multihoming. This supports previous research suggesting that perceived costs elevate the intent to discontinue service use (Koghut and Tabbaa, 2021). Conversely, content diversity and the efficiency of content curation systems are found to decrease the intent to discontinue multihoming, indicating that the provision of diverse content and effective curation are significant factors in sustaining multihoming.

Secondly, economic burden along with search and learning difficulties have emerged as major contributors to increased coupling, aligning with research findings that perceived costs elevate coupling (Son Dalho, 2018). Interestingly, the efficiency of content curation reduces coupling, suggesting that higher perceived efficiency in content curation weakens coupling. This result is consistent with studies indicating that increased perceived benefits reduce coupling (Shin Myeong-gon and Son Dalho, 2018).

Thirdly, the analysis of the dual mediating effects of coupling and fatigue reveals that economic and search costs not only directly influence the intent to discontinue multihoming positively but also do so through increased coupling and fatigue. Content diversity and efficient curation decrease the intent to discontinue through these mediators, enhancing user experience and reducing fatigue, which reinforces the intent to continue multihoming.

Notably, while learning costs do not show a direct effect, they indirectly influence the intent to discontinue through increased coupling and subsequent fatigue accumulation. This indicates that higher learning costs necessitate greater effort in familiarizing oneself with specific platforms, thereby increasing coupling and fatigue, ultimately raising the intent to discontinue multihoming.

Lastly, the finding that coupling positively influences the intent to discontinue suggests that frequent comparison of costs and benefits associated with multihoming prompts users to consider discontinuing. Additionally, a higher tendency to seek diversity reduces the intent to discontinue, indicating that users who favor diverse service options are inclined to continue multihoming. However, the interaction effect between coupling and diversity-seeking tendency is not significant, suggesting a potential offsetting effect between these factors.

5.2 Implications and limitations

As multihoming in the OTT market becomes increasingly prominent, user fatigue and high attrition rates are emerging as significant concerns. This study, utilizing the theories of rational choice behavior and mental accounting from behavioral economics, has analyzed the variables influencing this fatigue and the intent to discontinue multihoming.

The key insights derived from this study are as follows: First, the significant impact of economic costs on the intent to discontinue multihoming underscores the importance of subscription fees in user decisions regarding OTT usage. As multihoming increases, so does the financial burden on users, heightening the likelihood of discontinuation. Therefore, OTT service providers need to implement various strategies to maintain competitive pricing, such as discounts for students or families, long-term subscription discounts, and bundled service offerings (Byun Hwi and Park Jongjin, 2024). Additionally, the finding that higher search costs

increase the intent to discontinue suggests the need for improved content discovery features, including intuitive interfaces and enhanced search algorithms (Son Boram and Choi Jonghoon, 2019; Kwon et al., 2021).

Second, OTT service providers are advised to develop strategies to reduce user subscription fatigue (Deloitte, 2023; Kang Joonseok, 2022). Given the impact of coupling and fatigue on the intent to discontinue, it is crucial to manage the volume of content and information provided to avoid information overload. This could involve enhancing personalized content recommendations based on user preferences and viewing patterns and minimizing unnecessary information exposure. Moreover, analyzing user viewing histories and preferences to strengthen content curation and diversify content offerings could improve user experience, thereby encouraging continued multihoming.

Further, the strong tendency among users with high diversity-seeking preferences to continue multihoming suggests the need for personalized marketing strategies. Users with a high diversity-seeking propensity are likely to maintain multihoming due to their preference for a variety of content sources and genres. OTT service providers should develop strategies to meet these demands by continuously offering new and diverse content.

This study has some limitations. First, the multiple regression models used may not adequately explain the complex interactions among various variables. Given the complexity, utilizing a more sophisticated analysis method, such as Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), could be necessary. SEM would allow for the simultaneous analysis of direct and indirect pathways between variables, providing a clearer explanation of their relationships. Second, while this research focused on the primary factors influencing the intent to discontinue among multihoming OTT users, other potential factors such as social influences, personal motivations, and technological conveniences could also play

significant roles in discontinuation intentions.

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