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Title: Research Proposal: “The Perception of BTRC Regulation for Digital, Social Media and OTT Platform, 2021 (Draft) among Content Creators and Communication Experts”

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INTRODUCTION

Focus Idea:

Nowadays, any kind of video content such as short videos, infotainment videos, vlog and art based contents like movies and web series could be published on internet based platforms and people from anywhere can experience this contents through some processes. These platforms are called digital, social media and OTT platforms. OTT platforms are a very important medium in today's world for Web films and series. People have been engaging with these platforms continuously for the last decade. So, The Government of Bangladesh has decided to regulate online contents and platforms to stop propaganda over internet, national threats and sharing child sexual abuse material and to protect the consumer from fraud (BTRC, 2021). With this goal, BTRC had published a draft of the regulation in 2021.

This paper focuses on the perception among content creators and communication experts on ‘BTRC Regulation for Digital, Social Media and OTT Platform, 2021 (Draft)’. Before going into the depth of the research it is important to have a clear understanding of the regulation draft.

Context:

In this twenty-first century, the world is becoming a single global village where anyone could experience anything through some processes using the internet. So, the contents published on digital, social media and OTT platforms becomes the new way of entertainment. “Over-the-top (OTT) content is distributed over the Internet rather than traditional channels, such as cable, broadcast television companies, or over-the-air live TV broadcasting. “Over-the-top” implies that it stands on top of the traditional media corporation's distribution infrastructure. The OTT trend began in 2007, but picked up steam in 2012, when premium services such as Netflix, Disney+ and Amazon Prime Video started distributing content directly to customers” (Enfroy, 2022).

Today, OTT services are quickly gaining popularity and completely taking over the entertainment industry and simultaneously digital and social media are vastly used to

communicate with audiences through interesting contents like short videos, infotainment videos, vlog and art based contents like movies and web series. These contents could reach a big number of people through the internet with some legal processes. Easy access to people sometimes could cause trouble to society or the country. Troubles are like reaching inappropriate contents or topics to the audience or publishing restricted topics openly. The internet is becoming a crucial aspect of people's life in Bangladesh because of digitalization. Numerous digital, social media and OTT platforms have been able to increase their presence in Bangladesh because of the widespread use of mobile phones, gadgets, the internet, etc. We should not disregard the real dangers that people encounter daily online, despite the fact that the internet is still developing and changing our lives often for the better (BTRC, 2021). To prevent these types of troubles BTRC (Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission) had decided to control online contents and platforms, so they published a draft of the regulation called 'BTRC Regulation for Digital, Social Media and OTT Platforms, 2021'. But many experts think that this regulation could hamper the independence of content creation. Filmmakers may not express their thoughts independently through their films or series if the regulation is passed and the other content creators too. The regulation of BTRC could be a barrier for filmmakers and independent content creators. Any kind of content which spreads out to a large number of audiences works as a message of mass communication. So, the communication experts have their own perception on the regulation and its effects.

As the Regulation says that it will be applicable to web-based service providers who offer –

- i. Content,
- ii. A service,
- iii. An application that is provided to the end-user over the public internet.

This research paper will just focus on the regulation for contents provided on Digital, social media and OTT platforms and the perception of content creators and communication experts about it. "Draft of the regulation mentions objectives, eligibility to get certificate/permission, responsibility of intermediaries, code of ethics in relation to digital media, performance and loyalty to the code, blocking of information (based on section 8 of Digital Security Act, 2018) and penalty of violations of certain regulations" (BTRC, 2021).

Topic Relevance:

Digital, social media and OTT platforms had established their presence over the last decade. People are engaging with these platforms due to its easy accessibility. At a time, many countries are publishing regulations for these platforms and its contents with a common reason of protecting people from harmful contents and fraud/cheating and to maintain national security. The government of Bangladesh also decided to regulate these digital, social media and OTT platforms. But the effect of the regulation on the making of online contents such as vlogs, infotainment videos and even web-films and series is a topic to be concerned about. Will the BTRC regulation have a positive effect or a negative one or both, this is the main thing to be concerned about. As we mentioned before, these contents work as a message of mass communication and a single or multiple messages or emotions are expressed by the film or any kind of creative content. So, the regulation could hamper the independence of expressing emotions or any messages that the creator wants to say through their contents. From this concern, the topic of the research arrived and it is to predict the effects by analysing perceptions among content creators and communication experts.

Research Objectives:

1. To know the overall perception and the acceptance of ‘BTRC Regulation for Digital, Social Media and OTT platform, 2021 (Draft)’ among content creators and communication experts.
2. To predict the effects of the regulation on digital contents and platforms.
3. To get clear about the need and importance of the regulation.

Research Questions:

1. What could be the effects of ‘BTRC Regulation for Digital, Social Media and OTT platform, 2021 (Draft)’?
2. What do content creators and communication experts expect from the drafted regulation?
3. What might be the new state of content making independence if the drafted BTRC regulation is passed?
4. What are the actual needs of the regulation?

Scopes:

Through this research, the effects of the regulation could be predicted based on the opinions of content creators and communication experts. We could identify the possible positive and negative impacts and then it could help to reduce the negative impacts and protect the independence of content making.

Limitations:

The findings of this research will be mostly predictions and possibilities. There is no guarantee that the findings will match the future reality.

LITERATURE REVIEW**Literature review 1:**

Title: Emergence of Over-the-top (OTT) Industry and Entertainment in Bangladesh: An Analytical Study (Rashid, 2022)

Objectives: The aim of this research is to investigate the origin of OTT industry and entertainment from a Bangladeshi Perspective.

Methodology: This research is based on quantitative methods. Data are found through quantitative content (text) analysis.

Findings: “The research shows the current situation of OTT platforms in Bangladesh and the emergence of OTT platforms over the years and how the contents of these OTT platforms are satisfying the entertainment needs of Bangladeshi audience.” (Rashid, 2022, 95).

Literature review 2:

Title: Methodology for the Regulation of Over-the-top (OTT) services: The Need of a Multidimensional Perspective (Bilbil, 2018).

Objectives: This research had an aim to identify the importance of a multidimensional outlook for OTT regulation in order to uncover different types of OTT service.

Methodology: This research is based on quantitative methods. Data are found through quantitative content (text) analysis.

Findings: This study emphasises the significance of a multi-dimensional outlook for OTT regulation in order to identify various OTT services. This outlook includes the diverse forms of relationship between new and current influencing elements (such as market model, business effect, and infrastructural requirements) and regulatory areas interact.” (Bilbil, 2018, 101).

Literature review 3:

Title: A Literature Review of OTT- related Policy and Regulatory Issues (Hossain, 2016).

Objectives: The aim of this research was to explain the facts behind the necessity of regulation of the tele-communications and OTT service market.

Methodology: This research is based on qualitative methods. Data are found through qualitative content (text) analysis.

Findings: “The findings are economic outcome, regulatory remedies and market conditions of OTT service.” (Hossain, 2016).

Literature review 4:

Title: Regulation of OTT services: An International Perspective (Bais, 2021).

Objectives: The objective of this research was to analyse the regulation of OTT services from an international perspective.

Methodology: This research is based on qualitative methods. Data are found through qualitative content (text) analysis.

Findings: The findings of the research are the type of suitable regulations, laws or acts which won't break the rights of the creators as well as will protect the consumer rights.”(Bais, 2021).

Literature review 5:

Title: Net Neutrality and Impact of Regulation on Over the Top (OTT) Services and Study of Responses of Public and Telecom Service Providers (Jog et al., 2016).

Objectives: The aim of this research is to study many aspects of regulating OTT services and revenue sharing.

Methodology: This research is based on both qualitative methods and quantitative methods. Qualitative survey method was followed for the different operators and quantitative survey method was followed for the public responses.

Findings: “59% of public and 67% of TSPs had responded that it's the right time to establish regulatory framework over OTT services but 55% of Public had responded that OTT should not

be bring under licencing regime so OTT service should be regulated but not bring under licencing regime” (Jog et al., 2016).

RESEARCH DESIGN

Research Approach:

In this research, the objectives are not dependent on numerical data analysis; rather, they are all dependent on multiple perspectives and opinions of the populations covered by this research. So, to know the perception of the BTRC regulation among content creators and communication experts, we will use the ‘Qualitative Method’ as the research approach.

Method for Data Collection:

We will use "in-depth interview" as the method for data collection. An in-depth interview is the perfect method for data collection to understand the perspectives and to know the opinions of an individual. Because each individual in the population may have their own personal viewpoint as a communication expert or an artist. In-depth interviews are the proper method here so that they don't get biased or manipulated by others.

Sampling:

In this research there are two different populations: i. Content creators, ii. Communication experts. But there are no specific criteria or demanded quality for the population. So, we will choose available and easily accessible 10 samples per type of population. This is called ‘Available Sampling’ or ‘Convenience Sampling’. Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling.

Timeframe:

Category	Time required
Background data collection	15 days
Literature review	20 days
Data collection	50 days
Data processing and analysis	20 days
Writing final findings	15 days
Total	120 days

Budgeting:

Category	Category Budget required
Resources (Books, Journals, Publications)	10,000 TK
Stationary (Papers, printing, pen etc)	5,000 TK
Operational costs (Computers, hard drives, Internet etc.)	10,000 TK
Logistics	10,000 TK
Transport	6,000 TK
Remuneration for data collectors	24,000 TK
Miscellaneous	15,000 TK
Total	80,000 TK

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