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The Influence of Digital Transformation on the Evolution of the Audiovisual Industry

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Małgorzata Kotlińska[1]

Abstract:

Purpose: *The rapid evolution of digital tools, including streaming platforms like Netflix, which provide Video-on-Demand (VOD) services, has significantly transformed the audiovisual landscape. This study examines the impact of digital transformation on audiovisual business models.*
Design/Methodology/Approach: *Correlative and qualitative thematic analyses are also conducted to explore trends and perceptions related to digital tools and platforms in the audiovisual sector. The results show that content customization, crowdfunding efficiency, and digital transformation are the key factors that influence the evolution of the industry's business model. The study emphasizes the importance of adapting to new media consumption trends and continuous adaptation to dynamic digital sustainable environments.*
Findings: *The findings are important for content creators, distributors, and platform providers, and highlight the need to optimize recommendation algorithms, strengthen audiences' participation, and integrate sustainable practices into audiovisual production.*
Practical Implications: *The research also provides practical advice on how to adapt to changing technological landscapes, also taking into account the possibilities of using artificial intelligence (AI).*
Originality/Value: *This study contributes to the field of audiovisual management by linking digital transformation with sustainable practices and innovation in business models, providing actionable insights for the industry's stakeholders.*

Keywords: *Content personalization, crowdfunding, virtual production, recommendation algorithms, technological innovations, management.*

JEL Codes: *Z11, L82.*

Paper Type: *Research paper.*

[1]*Dr., Department of Management, Faculty of Management, University of Lodz, Poland, e-mail: malgorzata.kotlinska@uni.lodz.pl;*

1. Introduction

The audiovisual industry is characterized by the dynamics of technological development and adaptation to changes in social preferences. Recent years, following the crisis related to the COVID-19 pandemic (2020), have brought macroevolution that affect the traditional processes of production, distribution and consumption of media content. Streaming platforms have taken a dominant position in distribution channels by introducing the subscription model (SVOD - Subscription VOD) as the foundation of a modern approach.

The implementation of advanced recommendation algorithms has revolutionized the ability to match the offer to viewers' preferences, which had a direct impact on increasing user experience, engagement and improving their loyalty to platforms (Lobato, 2020). In turn, crowdfunding, as an alternative way of financing projects, allows independent creators to obtain financing from the community, while building audience engagement before the film's premiere (Paul, 2024).

On the other hand, virtual production, using technologies such as LED walls, motion capture, CGI and live-action, previs, real-time rendering or video game engines, not only provides financial savings, but also allows experimenting with new forms of narrative (Reyes *et al.,* 2019). The above innovations have significantly influenced the global reach of content, transforming traditional business models, methods of media consumption and redefining distribution channels (Roy *et al.*, 2024).

The research problem of the article is the identification of key innovations in business models and their impact on the processes of production, distribution and reception of the content. The leading research problem is the assessment: *How does digital transformation shape contemporary business models in the audiovisual industry?* The key aim of the study is to understand how innovative business models support the development of the industry. The research focuses on analysing the impact of digital transformation on business models, including the adaptation of new technologies, financing and distribution processes.

An important element is content personalization, which, thanks to the use of machine learning and artificial intelligence (AI), allows the user to be provided with content tailored to their needs. The process of adapting the content offer to the user's individual preferences using recommendation algorithms. Research shows that personalization not only increases audience satisfaction, but also promotes the development of new financing models (Ahmed, 2024; Eg *et al.*, 2023).

In turn, a diverse offer engages viewers and fosters innovation, responding to the needs of niche but important segments; However, the growing availability of VOD content carries the risk of trivializing due to their global excess (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2023). As predicted by the report processes powered by artificial intelligence (AI) will be a key element in the transformation of the production process and access to content.

It was pointed out that AI can significantly change the way projects, workflows and content availability are managed, which will allow the industry to adapt to contemporary challenges, such as content overload and changing viewer preferences.

AI supports the process of adapting to new standards of sustainable development, which are changing both the methods of creating and exploiting films. Considering the huge number of film productions and the wide range of content on VOD platforms, AI-powered solutions which are seen as essential to effectively manage them, both in terms of their quality and visibility.

The report also emphasizes that in an era of growing competition between different forms of entertainment (such as video games, streaming or social media e.g., YouTube), technological innovations, including AI, will play a main role in maintaining cinemas as places of special experiences. AI-based solutions can also support audience targeting and personalize the experience of viewers, which will help increase the attractiveness of cinema compared to other forms of entertainment.

At the same time, it was noted that AI can enable new forms of accessibility to content, e.g. automatic creation of subtitles, dubbing or translations, which improves their accessibility on a global scale (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2023). The uniqueness of this research results from the combination of theoretical and practical analysis in the context of the dynamic digital transformation in the media production industry. In turn, its relevance is justified by the growing popularity of streaming platforms.

An equally important aspect is the technological development supporting content personalization, virtual production and interactivity. The study is based on a review of the subject literature and the analysis of causes related to leading streaming platforms. Research limitations result from the dynamics of the market and the speed of introducing new technologies.

The main area of analysis is the audiovisual industry, with particular emphasis on VOD platforms and independent artists. The concepts introduced in the article refer to the theory of innovation in business models and organizational adaptation in the face of digital transformation (Christensen, 1997), which is a significant contribution to the development of management and quality theory in the audiovisual market.

2. Literature Review

The literature review highlights key areas such as subscription platforms, crowdfunding and innovative production methods that transform this creative field. The Netflix Nation (2019) examines the geographical impact of digital platforms and shows how subscription services have democratized global audiences. Ambros (2022), Clement et al. (2018) examined the economic viability of these models, highlighting their ability to generate stable revenues and redefine audience participation.

Paul *et al.* (2024) and Świerczyńska-Kaczor *et al.* (2019) emphasize the dynamic role of crowdfunding to support independent creators by providing financial support and building a committed community before production even begins. Mun *et al.* (2024) confirm these findings, showing how platforms such as Kickstarter promote transparency and collaboration between filmmakers and audiences. Reyes *et al.* (2019) examined user experiences on digital platforms in a digital business journal.

They argue that machine learning algorithms supported personalization not only increases the satisfaction of viewers, but also strengthens their loyalty. Eg *et al.* (2023) extended this theory by examining how personalized recommendations affect consumption patterns in broadcast media. Swords *et al.* (2024) evaluate the impact of virtual production technologies such as advanced digital backdrops and on-the-fly rendering tools, emphasizing the potential to reduce production costs and environmental impacts.

Ning and Beilei (2024) presented similar findings and highlighted the creative possibilities these technologies offered for storytelling. Ogden (2019) discusses the evolution of viewer interaction. An example is the TV serial “Black Mirror: Bandersnatch” (2018), which demonstrates how participatory narration can significantly enhance audience engagement. These innovations signal changes in the way content is consumed and viewers become co-creators of stories.

Nevertheless, literature highlights significant advances in the business model, but in understanding the long-term sustainability of these innovations, especially in the context of cost-balancing and public acquisition, there are still gaps. Future research could explore the hybrid model that combines traditional and digital paradigms to maximize the impact on various audiences.

This study provides the basis for further analysis of how these innovations collectively affect the audiovisual industry. The integration of these findings will further explore the challenges and opportunities associated with the adoption of these business models.

3. Research Methodology

The literature review is a key element that allowed us to systematize the theoretical as well as practical aspects of the subscription model. One of the elements of the study was also an analysis of the reach and popularity of the Netflix platform, using data from the report "What We Watched: A Netflix Engagement Report. Hours viewed from January to June 2023".

The aim was to understand the impact of content diversity and viewing trends on user engagement and viewer preferences. Analysis of the popularity of individual titles on the platform reveals that some series, such as "The Night Agent: Season 1" (2023), have achieved global popularity, gaining 812 million hours of viewing, which indicates the platform's great global reach and ability to attract audiences around all the world. The study shows that both newer and older titles enjoy the interest of viewers.

For example, the newer series “Ginny & Georgia: Season 2” (2021) and the slightly older production “The Glory: Season 1” (2022) have achieved 665 million and 623 million hours of viewing, respectively, which indicates the diversity of viewers’ preferences and that both new and old productions can be equally appealing.

Analysis of the diversity of content on Netflix indicates that viewers are interested in different genres and the home countries of productions. Examples such as “Wednesday: Season 1” (2022) and “The Glory: Season 1” (2022) show that both American and international productions can be successful, which highlights the importance of cultural and genre diversity in the platform’s programming.

The high number of hours of viewing for individual titles indicates strong user engagement with the content available on VOD platforms, which allows for a better understanding of which content is the most engaging and popular with viewers. This analysis highlights the key role of VOD platforms in shaping modern media consumption trends.

Success factors include content diversity, effective distribution strategies and global audience engagement. Insights into viewer preferences and behaviours were gathered through empirical research involving 110 respondents (55% women, 45% men) aged 25 to 45, including filmmakers and audiovisual professionals, via semi-structured surveys distributed in collaboration with KIPA (Polish Producers Alliance) in late 2023.

The study used a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative techniques, to assess the impact of digital technologies and personalized content on contemporary business models. The study used correlational analysis and multiple regression, and thematic analysis was performed for qualitative data. The next section presents the statistical analysis results.

4. Multiple Regression Analysis

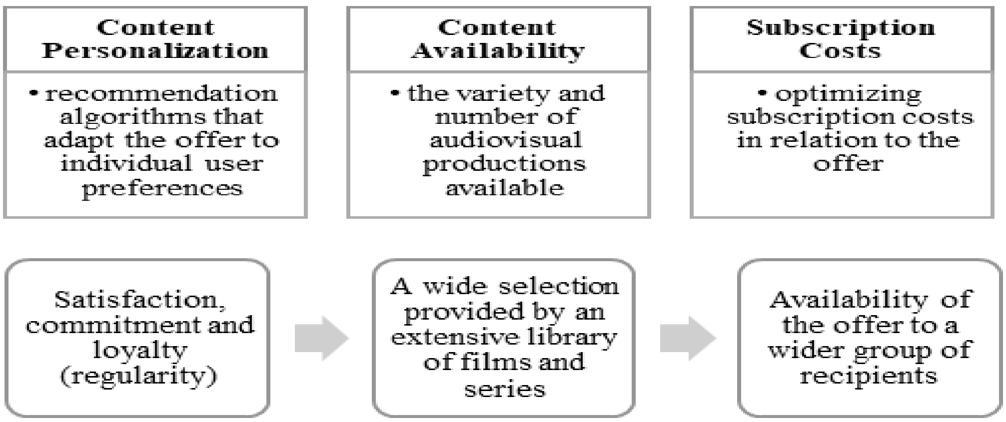
Data analysis used multiple regression models to examine the influence of selected independent variables on key indicators of success of business models. The study shows three key aspects of the success of digital platforms. The retention of subscribers reflects the platform's ability to maintain long-term users, which is an important indicator of user (viewer) loyalty and income stability. Higher the retention rate, the lower the cost of acquiring new subscribers, so that the platform can focus on delivering value to existing users.

The number of consumers participating on the platform and the frequency of use indicates the attractiveness of the content and the ability to attract and retain the attention of users. Platforms with higher levels of engagement can better exploit content through subscriptions and advertising revenues. Meanwhile, the scalability of business models, defined as global content reach, is the key factor in reaching a wide audience and exploiting the scale effect. Global reach increases financial potential, diversifies income sources and minimizes the risks associated with dependence on a single market.

The conclusions of the analysis emphasize that the success of platforms depends on the balance between the three variables. A platform that effectively combines high retention, user engagement, and global scalability can achieve a sustainable competitive advantage. This requires continuous investment in content quality and technology for personalization and user experience optimization.

Flexible and innovative business models are essential for maintaining leadership in a dynamic digital market. Figure 1 illustrates three key success factors for streaming platforms: personalized content through recommendation algorithms, a diverse content library to enhance platform appeal, and optimized subscription costs to balance price with content quality and quantity. These variables jointly shape users' perception of platform value, explored further in the article.

Figure 1. *Independent variables on key indicators of the perception of the platform's value by users*



Source: *Own study based on own research.*

Platforms investing in these fields have the opportunity to develop over the long term and maintain market competitiveness. These variables were identified through regression analysis as the main predictors of user satisfaction and loyalty.

5. Research Results and Discussion

Regression analysis shows that content personalization is the strongest predictor of consumer interest ($\beta = 0.62$, $p < 0.001$) and confirms the theory that recommendation algorithms have a significant impact on viewer loyalty. The scale of the business model demonstrates a strong relationship between the availability of content ($\beta = 0.58$, $p < 0.001$) and emphasizes the importance of a wide variety of content. The correlation matrix analysis revealed important relationships between variables, which indicate key dependencies in the operation of streaming platforms. The strongest correlation between the retention of subscribers and content personalization ($r = 0.68$) emphasizes the role of recommendation algorithms in building user loyalty.

The result indicates that the adaption of the offer to individual user preferences greatly increases the engagement and willingness to stay on the platform. The second important relationship is the correlation between consumer engagement and subscription costs ($r = 0.45$, $p < 0.05$), what indicates an important, although not dominant, role of personalization in building loyalty.

This suggests that low prices can attract more users and make the platform more appealing, but not enough to retain consumers. These results indicate that subscription costs are important to attract new users, but that maintaining them requires additional efforts, such as high quality content customization and content. Qualitative research in turn provided valuable information on the perception of innovative business models.

During the thematic analysis of the responses, three key themes emerged, illustrating the changing needs and expectations of both creators and consumers. The first issue identified was the use of crowdfunding as a financing tool. Filmmakers emphasized both the benefits and challenges of this model.

Crowdfunding provides greater independence from traditional financial institutions, but requires a significant commitment to building and maintaining a community supporting the project. Attention was also drawn to the need for financial transparency, which is crucial to gaining the trust of donors. One creator noted, *"Crowdfunding allows for greater creative freedom, but requires a lot of effort to maintain the community."* The second important theme was the importance of content personalization.

Streaming platform users indicated that recommendation algorithms play a significant role in maintaining engagement and loyalty to the platforms. Personalized recommendations make viewers discover content that they might have previously missed, which translates into greater satisfaction with using the services. One respondent wrote, *"Because of the personalization on Netflix, I discover content that I would not have previously chosen. It keeps me on the platform for longer."*

The third theme concerns virtual production as an innovative method for creating content. Both creators and users have highlighted the benefits such as reducing production costs and promoting sustainability. Virtual production allows technology to minimize physical resources, reflecting growing environmental awareness in the industry. It shows the link between innovative business models such as crowdfunding and virtual production and key user experience aspects, including content customization, and confirms that consumers and creators have great potential for new technologies and operating models to contribute to the development of the industry.

Furthermore, the results of the study demonstrate the complex representation of the use of modern technologies in content consumption, and confirm the dynamic interaction between users and streaming platforms. The data analysis showed that VOD platforms are increasingly important elements in users' daily lives, while Netflix is the dominant player in the market.

This trend reflects changes in the way that media are consumed, with digital platforms taking advantage of traditional channels. At the same time, certain challenges were identified, such as the discrepancy between user expectations and the effectiveness of content recommendation systems on VOD platforms. The preference for independent content searches instead of relying on automated recommendations may indicate the need for further development and adaptation of these technologies.

In the context of financing film projects through crowdfunding, the results indicate limited involvement of respondents in this form of support. This may reflect a lack of awareness of the possibilities of crowdfunding or insufficient confidence in its effectiveness. At the same time, skepticism towards direct distribution as a significant factor influencing traditional distribution channels indicates the durability and strength of existing audiovisual distribution models.

Overall, the survey results indicate a positive attitude of users towards the impact of technology on the industry, while at the same time emphasizing a neutral attitude towards the future in the context of digital transformation. This may reflect uncertainties about the long-term consequences of these changes. In correlation analysis, the strong correlation between the frequency of use of VOD platforms and the willingness to crowdfunded film projects suggests that regular users are more willing to take innovative approaches to funding films. This correlation is crucial to understanding and using the potential of crowdfunding in the industry.

The study also provides an important view of changing audiovisual consumption patterns and shows how digital innovation affects user preferences and behaviour. The growth of VOD platforms, content customization challenges and complex perceptions of film crowdfunding and direct distribution are key elements of the dynamic evolution of the media industry.

These results have an important impact on the future of the industry and emphasise the need to adapt strategy to meet the needs and expectations of modern viewers by producers, distributors and VOD platforms. The conclusions from quantitative and qualitative analysis revealed new details on the key success factors of streaming platforms and independent audiovisual projects. In quantitative analysis, content personalization is a key factor in retaining and engaging users.

These results are consistent with previous studies (Eg *et al.*, 2023; Efendioğlu, 2024), which show the importance of recommendation algorithms to build customer loyalty and increase the time spent on the platform.

At the same time, content availability was found to be an important predictor of scalability and highlighted the importance of offering diversity to attract global audiences. With rich and diverse content libraries, platforms can better meet the needs of different audiences and facilitate their development in the global market.

Qualitative analysis provided additional insights into innovative business models. Crowdfunding was evaluated as an effective tool for financing independent projects that allow creators to be more independent. However, success in this model required active community participation, which was seen as a challenge and an opportunity to build a lasting relationship with viewers. Virtual production is seen as a significant step towards innovation and cost-effectiveness.

Respondents pointed out that it could reduce costs, while supporting sustainable development by reducing resource consumption and reducing emissions associated with traditional production processes. In the light of the research conducted, it is important to pay attention to the importance of the relationship between innovative technologies and modern business models.

This is an important factor taken into account from the point of view of the possibility of achieving success by streaming platforms. Factors such as personalization, content availability, crowdfunding and virtual production allow platforms to adapt to the dynamically changing preferences of modern recipients.

The analyzed data collected in survey questionnaires and the statistical analyses conducted, including correlation and regression analysis, indicate that innovative business models based on digital technology are of key importance for the future of the audiovisual industry.

The conclusions from the analyses may have significant implications for the film environment, indicating directions for further development in quality management and innovation in the audiovisual sector. Therefore, based on the described research results, the author proposed a theoretical model that integrates three key pillars (Figure 1).

6. Results of Correlation Analysis

Based on the correlation analysis several important conclusions can be drawn from this research report, which highlights the main trends in the audiovisual industry. The results of the correlation analysis provide useful information on the direction of development of streaming platforms, financing strategies and the future of the industry. The first conclusion is the availability of VOD platforms and viewing preferences. However, a weak correlation ($r = 0.16$) indicates a limited relationship between available platforms and content impacts changes in user viewing preferences. In other words, diversity and easy access to content play an important role in the formation of viewer habits.

For streaming platforms, this is the key information to guide their strategies for expanding content libraries and offering services in new markets. The second conclusion is about content personalization and user experience, with a higher correlation between personalization and recommendation preferences ($r = 0.25$). It indicates that advanced recommendation algorithms not only attract users but also keep them involved.

These results are consistent with previous research (Eg *et al.*, 2023) and confirm that personalization is a key element in promoting viewership. Another conclusion concerns the effectiveness of crowdfunding and community involvement. The clear correlation between the experience of crowdfunding creators ($r = 0.83$) and the effectiveness of the crowdfunding model suggests relationship between the importance of active interaction and transparency with viewers in the financing process, but causation cannot be established without further ezperimental studies.

Creating a good relationship with communities will not only give them a source of capital but also enable people to participate in the film production process, which will lead to better financial results. The final conclusion relates to digital transformation and the future of the audio and video industries. The moderate correlation ($r = 0.26$) indicates that investments in digital technologies, such as virtual production, artificial intelligence or data analysis algorithms, play an important role in the transformation of these sectors.

Digital transformation contributes to achieving cost efficiency, reducing the production resources needed, and sustainable development, and its key role in industrial long-term development strategy. The correlation analysis provides additional indicators for the direction of the audiovisual industry. To understand these relationships, streaming platforms, independent creators, and investors can better adapt their business to user needs and changing technological and social realities.

A multiple regression analysis was conducted to understand the major factors that affect the future of the industry. The results of this analysis can provide valuable insights into the future strategies of streaming platforms and independent filmmakers.

The first important finding was the impact of content personalization on viewer engagement. The results of the analysis showed the statistical significance of this relationship (p 0.01), supporting the hypothesis that the experience of individual users plays a key role in establishing loyalty and maintaining subscribers. Support for content customization by advanced recommendation algorithms not only improves user satisfaction, but also contributes to the long-term sustainability of streaming platforms.

The second important finding is the role of digital transformation in shaping the future of the industry. The analysis shows that new technologies such as virtual production, artificial intelligence, and data analysis have a statistically significant impact on industry development forecasts (p 0.05). Integration of these technologies will increase profitability, improve quality of production, and support sustainable development.

The results show that investments in digital technology are essential for the long-term success of the audiovisual industry. The final important conclusion is the importance of crowdfunding efficiency as a model for funding independent film projects. The analysis shows a strong relationship (p 0.01) between the efficiency of crowdfunding and the possibility of financing independent production.

These results highlight the potential of crowdfunding to fill financial gaps, especially for independent creators with limited access to traditional funding sources. In summary, multiple regression analysis provides convincing evidence that content personalization, digital transformation, and crowdfunding are key factors that shape the future of the industry.

Integrating these elements into the business strategies of broadcasting platforms and filmmakers will contribute to further development of the industry and to meeting the challenges of the modern audiovisual market.

7. Conclusions, Proposals, Recommendations

The results of the study have confirmed that content customization, crowdfunding efficiency and digital transformation are the key factors that influence the evolution of the audiovisual industry's business model. The strong relationship between content personalization and recommendations indicates that investments in machine learning algorithms are needed. In addition, the efficiency of crowdfunding and its links with community engagement underscore the importance of developing relationships with viewers at the film stage.

The following research conclusions can be drawn on the basis of the results of correlation and regression analysis:

- Streaming platforms should focus on improving personalization systems, which can increase user retention.
- Crowdfunding can be a sustainable source of funding for independent projects, provided that there is transparency and community engagement.
- Digital transformation not only affects the future of the industry, but also redefines its traditional models.

Despite important conclusions, research has its limitations. Firstly, the analysis is based on survey data that can reflect respondents' subjective feelings. Furthermore, the dynamics of the development of digital technologies can bring about rapid changes in the relationships examined. The author suggests focusing future research on qualitative user experience analysis, long-term effects of digital transformation on market structures, and hybrid business models blending traditional and modern technologies.

The statistical analysis of these data shows key trends related to the use of VOD platforms, consumer preferences and filmmakers' attitudes to innovative methods of production and financing of the content. The results show the dominant role of VOD platforms in both creators and viewers' lives. Many respondents admit to using these platforms several times a week, which emphasizes their significant importance in the modern distribution of the content (Netflix, 2023).

Netflix is the most recognized platform and reflects the success of subscription models that allow access to global content (Focus, 2024). However, although recommendation algorithms-based content customization is an important element of VOD platform strategy, research shows that it is not the main factor that attracts filmmakers to these services (Abraham *et al.,* 2024).

The results show that industry professionals prefer more independent and diverse methods of content exploration than algorithms (Frey, 2021). At the same time, crowdfunding is popular for financing independent projects, but is sceptical of respondents. This model allows for community building and additional financial support for the project, but is not yet widely accepted in the mainstream industry (Maciel, 2024).

The study also revealed the significant impact of digital transformation on the future of the audiovisual industry. There is a strong correlation between the impact of digitalization and the future of audiovisual industry, indicating that digital technologies will play an increasingly important role in content of production, distribution, and consumption. Platforms should invest in developing recommendation algorithms that take into account cultural diversity to increase global engagement.

The increase in interest of direct distribution models and the elimination of traditional intermediaries also highlighted the importance of digital technologies such as social media and VOD platforms (Higbee, 2024). The model provides new opportunities for independent artists and media producers to generate income and improve control over the distribution of content.

Virtual production uses technologies as future methods to not only reduce production costs, but also to create new narrative forms (Marañes *et al.*, 2023). At the same time, the differences in the degree of adaptation of these technologies among artists show that it is necessary to better understand the technological and organizational barriers that may limit the diffusion of innovations.

The final conclusions of the research indicate the dynamic development of new business models which transform traditional approaches to the audiovisual production and distribution. The results suggest that digital transformation opens up wide opportunities, but also requires further research on the individual preferences of filmmakers and understanding how innovative technologies can be better used in the industry (Focus, 2024).

In order to obtain funding for media projects, we need to take into account the impact of content personalization on consumers, how crowdfunding (Świerczyńska-Kaczor *et al.*, 2019) can be adapted more transparently and effectively, and what is the long-term impact of digital distribution on traditional distribution channels such as cinemas, festivals and television.

The study highlights key aspects of digital transformation in the industry and emphasizes the importance of adapting to new media consumption trends and continuous adaptation to dynamic digital sustainable environments. These findings provide both theoretical and practical guidelines to support filmmakers, distributors and VOD platforms in more effective response to today's audiences.

This study highlights the importance of innovation, flexibility and cooperation to shape the future of the audiovisual industry, given the rapidly changing media market situation where a new player appeared, AI.

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