

Examining Gen Z's Commitment to Ritualized Streaming During Ramadan: An Extension of the Investment Model

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Abstract

By applying the investment model, this study aims to understand Gen Z's commitment to ritualized viewing on streaming platforms during the month of Ramadan. The investment model was originally applied to the context of romantic relationships and has since been applied to various other contexts, including online gaming and influencer-follower relationships. Therefore, it is relevant in the context of digital media. According to the investment model, commitment is determined by the level of satisfaction, the quality of alternatives, and the size of the investment. As a result, commitment influences the intention to continue. We added two concepts to the investment model to better reflect the context of streaming platform usage during Ramadan: family cohesion and audience genre preferences. The survey was administered online to respondents who subscribe to streaming services (N = 201). Structural equation modeling (SEM) was conducted using Amos 26.0 software to test the research model. Results show that investment size and satisfaction level have positive impacts on commitment, which in turn positively impact continuance intention. Furthermore, we demonstrated that family cohesion has a negative impact on commitment, and that users of streaming platforms who prefer family-friendly content are less committed to ritualized viewing during Ramadan on streaming platforms.

Keywords: commitment, streaming platforms, Investment model, Gen Z, media rituals.

1.Introduction

Many brands strive to establish a self-brand connection with consumers by creating and promoting rituals that strengthen emotional bonds through targeted marketing strategies (Liu et al., 2022). Prior research defines ritualized behavior as a symbolic and expressive form of action associated with brand attachment, word-of-mouth communication, and purchase intention (Sharma et al., 2017; Amati and Pestana, 2015; Liu et al., 2022). This connection becomes even more salient when consumers engage in hedonic or entertainment activities—such as watching television series, playing video games, or participating in online communities centered around shared interests (Liu et al., 2022).

Grimes (2004) proposes that behaviors can be considered ritualistic to varying degrees based on three dimensions: performance (active engagement in specific activities), formalization (adherence to a structured schedule), and condensation (the attribution of symbolic meaning to these activities). Similarly, Rook (2004) observes that the boundary between habitual and ritualized behaviors is “fuzzy,” emphasizing that rituals are dynamic and evolve according to their cultural context. This broader conceptualization extends beyond traditional rites of passage to encompass daily or individual activities, highlighting their scripts and audiences (Curasi et al., 2004; Rook, 2004).

In many Muslim-majority countries, the month of Ramadan exemplifies such ritualistic engagement. Beyond fasting and religious obligations such as prayer, almsgiving, and self-reflection, cultural practices like collective television viewing also intensify during this period (Alhgafli et al., 2019). Most Ramadan activities occur within the home environment—fasting, sharing meals, and watching television together. Over recent years, however, media consumption patterns during Ramadan have evolved due to shifts in religious observance, social dynamics, and technological advancement. As individuals adjust their routines around fasting, prayer, and community activities, streaming platforms—offering vast on-demand libraries—have become deeply integrated into Ramadan rituals by providing diverse programming that aligns with viewers’ spiritual and entertainment needs (Khanna et al., 2025).

The proliferation of streaming platforms has reshaped media consumption habits, particularly among younger audiences such as Generation Z (Soren and Chakraborty, 2024; Pilipets, 2019). This transformation transcends mere access to content, influencing broader cultural and social practices, especially during significant periods like Ramadan (Kaur and Ashfaq, 2023). Ritualized viewing, characterized by consistent and patterned engagement with media, has emerged as a defining behavior (Audyta and Hidayat, 2021). It represents more than passive watching; it integrates into everyday routines, social interactions, and even spiritual observances—revealing a deeper connection between media use, personal identity, and cultural values. Moreover, streaming platforms—through personalized recommendations and

continuous play features—encourage immersive and ritualized viewing experiences (Pilipets, 2019).

Notably, Generation Z's engagement with streaming media is active and participatory rather than passive. They curate personalized experiences that emphasize authenticity, interactivity, and self-expression (Elkatmış, 2024). Consequently, traditional family rituals of collective television viewing during Ramadan are being redefined by younger generations, reflecting a long-term cultural transformation (Matbouly, 2024). As Xie (2022) notes, media have the capacity to reshape traditions and generate new symbolic practices, often revealing intergenerational differences (Steiner and Xu, 2020). During Ramadan, diverse viewing modes coexist—some individuals maintain family-based television rituals, while others engage in personalized, ritualized streaming consumption.

This observation raises a key question: Why do some members of Generation Z shift from family-oriented ritualized TV viewing to individualized ritualized streaming, while others do not?

To address this, our study proposes that commitment to ritualized streaming depends on three key factors—user satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size—as conceptualized in the investment model. Although this model has been applied to predict consumer–brand relationship continuance, its use in digital media contexts remains limited (Kim and Baek, 2022; Chiu et al., 2021). Moreover, Liu (2022) notes that brand ritual effectiveness has primarily been examined in relation to food products, suggesting a need to explore its implications for hedonic digital products such as streaming media (Kim-Vick and Cho, 2024).

Accordingly, this study aims to address existing research gaps by examining Generation Z's engagement with ritualized viewing on streaming platforms during Ramadan—a culturally significant period that emphasizes family unity and community integration (Rohmadi et al., 2025; Jodén and Strandell, 2021).

We therefore propose the following research questions:

RQ1: What factors predict commitment to ritualized streaming consumption among Generation Z viewers during Ramadan?

RQ2: How do family cohesion and audience preferences interact with the investment model to explain Generation Z's commitment to ritualized viewing on streaming platforms during a specific period such as Ramadan?

The paper proceeds as follows: we first develop a theoretical framework grounded in the investment model and media consumption literature, followed by a presentation of the research model and hypotheses. The methodology section outlines data collection and measurement procedures. Subsequently, the results and discussion sections present and interpret the findings. Finally, we conclude with theoretical and managerial implications, study limitations, and suggestions for future research.

2. Research framework

2.1 Ramadan in Tunisia: A month when religious and media rituals coexist

Watching "Ramadan soap operas" has become an enduring tradition throughout the holy month, one that many Tunisian families have upheld for generations. It is common for families to gather around the table to break their fast while watching television, making this shared experience an integral part of Ramadan¹. The post-iftar period is often extended by viewing hidden camera shows or sitcoms, a highly anticipated event in many households. In recent years, television programming has experienced significant upheaval, with most channels exclusively broadcasting new soap operas and sitcoms during Ramadan while relying on replays for the remainder of the year². Both public and private television channels face severe financial challenges, leading to bankruptcy for several outlets. Consequently, Tunisians typically have access to fresh local entertainment content only once annually. This underscores the importance of the Ramadan television ritual for many viewers. In response, television channels tailor their programming schedules accordingly. Most shows air after the fast is broken, except for cooking programs, which are scheduled for the afternoon. Religious broadcasts dominate the pre-iftar period. Immediately following iftar—a peak time for viewership—channels prioritize "family" sitcoms, typically comedies crafted to align with religious and cultural sensibilities. While soap operas are broadcast in the evening or late at night, in accordance with directives from the HAICA (High Independent Authority for Audiovisual Communication). These guidelines were implemented in response to controversies surrounding certain series deemed by some as incompatible with family and religious values. Advertisers are also highly active during Ramadan, investing significantly to enhance their visibility. The unpredictable nature of television programming throughout the rest of the year, combined with the heightened consumption during Ramadan, has transformed advertising slots during soap opera broadcasts into intensive advertising campaigns³. This phenomenon has, in turn, driven some viewers to seek out social media or streaming platforms to enjoy their favorite series without commercial interruptions. According to Medanet, over 80 million videos were viewed during the first ten days of Ramadan in 2021⁴. These videos largely consist of UGC contents from drama series that are illegally uploaded to social networking platforms. The removal of such content by YouTube has encouraged some users to subscribe to streaming platforms in order to gain full access to complete episodes. Moreover, drama series represent the most popular television content during the month of Ramadan. They are typically broadcast late in the evening, while

¹ <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/1549629/societe/ramadan-en-tunisie-les-telespectateurs-a-la-limite-de-loverdose-publicitaire/>

² <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/457356/culture/teles-privées-au-maghreb-en-tunisie-trop-de-teles-tuent-la-télé/>

<https://www.tunisienumerique.com/ramadan-2025-lexplosion-des-publicites-sur-les-televisions-tunisiennes-agace-les-telespectateurs/>

³

⁴

<https://www.medanet.tn/fr/actualites/detail/80-millions-de-videos-ont-ete-visualisees-sur-les-chaines-tv-durant-les-10-premiers-jours-de-ramadan/all/1>

streaming platforms broadcast the new episode as well as clips from the next episode shortly after the “iftar”⁵.

2.2 Ritualized viewing on streaming platforms

Rituals are symbolic and expressive actions performed at specific times through repeated behaviors characterized by formality and intensity (Rook, 1985; Rappaport, 1999; Sharma et al., 2017). Karl and Fischer (2018) emphasize that engaging in rituals demands time and effort without yielding direct instrumental benefits. Within this framework, ritualistic viewing habits refer to repetitive and structured patterns of media consumption integrated into daily routines. Cui (2019) defines media rituals as cultural orientations that encompass not only communicative processes but also material components—such as technological devices—and social practices that imbue these behaviors with symbolic meaning.

Media consumption rituals, particularly those observed during Ramadan, play a central role in cultural construction and social differentiation by shaping consumer experiences and reinforcing shared values (Pedro-Esteban & Rubio, 2024). Ramadan, the ninth month of the Islamic lunar calendar, is traditionally associated with fasting, prayer, and spiritual reflection. Yet, in recent decades, it has also become deeply embedded within market and media consumption dynamics, altering its cultural and experiential dimensions among Muslim populations (Sandikci & Jafari, 2013). As Bucciante (2016) notes, broadcasters have adapted their schedules to reflect changes in daily rhythms—shorter working hours, family gatherings, and increased community interaction—giving rise to specific Ramadan programming, notably *Musalsalat*, TV dramas produced for this occasion (Khalil, 2019).

Media consumption during Ramadan thus represents a collective cultural ritual engaging nearly entire populations in Muslim-majority societies. Common practices include watching series with family or friends after *Iftar* (the evening meal) or catching up on shows during *Suhoor* (the pre-dawn meal) (Touzani and Hirschman, 2011). These viewing habits merge religious observance with entertainment, generating hybrid ritual forms. Matbouly (2024) attributes the persistence of these practices to long-standing cultural attachments to television as a medium of family entertainment. Since the 1960s, television has shaped social values and collective consciousness across the Arab world, preparing audiences for contemporary streaming habits during Ramadan (Daddouh & Aomari, 2020).

The advent of over-the-top (OTT) streaming services has fundamentally transformed media consumption patterns (Chang & Chiu, 2023). With the expansion of online platforms, audiences increasingly subscribe to on-demand entertainment services (Nagaraj et al., 2021). Unlike linear television, streaming offers a personalized and interactive viewing experience (Lüders, 2022). The proliferation of technological devices and connectivity has accelerated this shift. A growing body of research has examined emerging behaviors such as binge-watching and ritualized viewing on social networks (Lüders, 2022; Bartholomew & Mason, 2020). Mason and Bartholomew (2020) argue that rituals within digital environments

⁵ <https://directinfo.webmanagercenter.com/2023/03/25/audience-tv-le-feuilleton-falluja-sur-el-hiwar-ettounsi-le-plus-regarde/>

fulfill social functions by reinforcing group identity and interpersonal bonds, while also structuring the consumer journey. Digital platforms and electronic devices have particularly transformed the media practices of Generation Z (Daddouh & Aomari, 2020). Having grown up in fully digital ecosystems, this generation demonstrates fluency and comfort with technology (Sardanelli et al., 2025). Unlike older cohorts, who transitioned gradually to digital services, Generation Z has never experienced a pre-Internet world (Swartz et al., 2017). As Sutrisno (2023) observes, contemporary media consumption is now a dynamic process of acquisition, engagement, and response, contrasting with the passive and transactional nature of traditional television. OTT platforms capitalize on these shifts through micro-targeting and personalized content delivery (Chalaby, 2024), emphasizing autonomy in selection and access. This evolution has redefined the media landscape, long characterized by the inertia of linear broadcasting (Menon, 2022).

Flanagan (2018) interprets binge-watching as a subversive cultural and technological practice that differentiates its participants from traditional audiences. Beyond facilitating ritualized solo viewing, streaming's ascendancy reshapes collective cultural experiences and redefines community engagement with media (Wu et al., 2024). Streaming platforms thus operate not merely as entertainment providers but as cultural agents influencing language, fashion, social aspirations, and everyday attitudes (Lobato, 2019). Tunisia exemplifies these transformations. The country has recently witnessed a sharp rise in streaming platform adoption, moving away from free content on YouTube. In 2022, two national platforms were launched primarily for Ramadan programming, alongside another that operates year-round to showcase local productions. This shift illustrates how streaming services have become embedded in the cultural and economic dynamics of media consumption, particularly during periods of collective ritual engagement.

2.2 Investment Model

Commitment is the long-term personal perspective of a relationship. It describes the psychological attachment and willingness to continue the relationship (Rusbult, 1983). Rusbult and Farrell (1986) consider that commitment refers to the likelihood that an individual will remain involved in a relationship and feel psychologically attached regardless of whether it is satisfying or not. Stein (2025) explains that commitment and involvement are two states of mind characterized by absorption, dedication, and vigor. Nevertheless, dedication's target differs for commitment and involvement, with the former directed towards the action itself and the latter towards the group. Dahlgren and Hill (2022) emphasize that media commitment is more than simply user interaction or brand loyalty; it is a dynamic and relational experience that incorporates pleasure, curiosity, and even an identity process. Media commitment stems from identity and affect, yet retains utilitarian aspects. The construction of media commitment is further related to the user's material circumstances (time, energy, preference) as well as media attributes (accessibility, infrastructure, originality).

According to the investment model, three independent factors affect commitment to maintaining a relationship with someone or something. Satisfaction is the attractiveness of the relationship (Chiu et al, 2020; Agnew et al, 2008). For example, job satisfaction is the

degree to which an individual assesses their job positively. In that case, the benefits exceed the costs. The level of satisfaction increases when the relationship or social role meets the individual's needs, particularly the need for support, security, intimacy, and belonging (Rusbult et al, 2011). Thus, satisfaction increases commitment. However, dissatisfaction alone does not lead to disengagement, as commitment is a complex concept. For instance, the alternatives' quality and the investment's size also shaped commitment. The investment model suggests that commitment will heighten when the alternatives for the existing relationship are poor. Alternatives to the relationship may include other relationships or no relationships at all (Sherer et al. 2022). In addition, the more the individual invests in the relationship by dedicating internal resources (time, money, energy, shared memories, emotional bond), the greater the commitment. Branch et al (2013) suggest that the stability of the relationship depends on the set of tangible and intangible resources that the individual risks losing or diminishing if the relationship ends.

To sum up, high satisfaction, bad alternatives, and significant investment lead to a greater commitment (Rusbult et al, 1986; Branch et al, 2013). In the same vein, Agnew et al. (2008) explain that commitment to a relationship is high when satisfaction with the relationship is high, perceived satisfaction with alternatives is low, investment in the relationship is high, and subjective norms support the relationship (Chiu et al, 2025). The investment model has been proposed to explain commitment and satisfaction in interpersonal relationships. Afterward, researchers used the investment model to analyze job commitment, commitment to fictional characters or television programs, brand loyalty, and online gaming (Agnew et al, 2008; Branch et al, 2013; Uysal, 2016). According to Soren and Chakraborty (2024), satisfaction with streaming platforms is linked to viewers' expectations and their experience. Furthermore, the intensifying competition among platforms underscores the critical importance of subscriber satisfaction and retention. According to Branch et al. (2013), a significant proportion of variance was explained by the investment model in both relational contexts (such as romantic relationships) as well as non-relational contexts, including commitment to jobs, hobbies, or even fictional characters and television shows. Fulfillment resulting from the consumption of a favorite media influences the commitment to continue using it. The quality of the alternatives, such as watching other media or spending time with family or friends, has a detrimental effect on commitment. Finally, according to the investment model, investments can be material (in terms of money) or immaterial (in terms of time and self-expression) and should be positively correlated with commitment to the preferred media. Therefore, cultivating viewer commitment is essential to maintaining customers. A higher level of consumer commitment is associated with increased platform performance. However, commitment to streaming services is not solely determined by user satisfaction, but also by factors such as content and pricing (Yoon and Kim, 2023). These lead to the following hypotheses:

H1: Gen Z's commitment to a ritualised viewing on streaming services during Ramadan is positively associated with the satisfaction level.

H2: Gen Z's commitment to a ritualised viewing on streaming services during Ramadan is negatively associated with the quality of alternatives.

H3: Gen Z's commitment to a ritualised viewing on streaming services during Ramadan is positively associated with the investment size.

Depending on the investment model, commitment is influenced by the level of satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and size of the investment. Furthermore, several studies have demonstrated that commitment to a brand or product creates a strong bond conducive to loyalty and purchase intent (Giovanis, 2016; Tseng and Lee, 2022). In addition, commitment mediates the effects of satisfaction, quality of alternatives, and investment size on behavior and its maintenance (Rusbult et al., 2011). Additionally, Chiu et al. (2025) demonstrated that satisfaction influences commitment and commitment impacts retention. Moreover, satisfaction positively impacts retention. Thus, commitment partially mediates the relationship between satisfaction and retention. Thus, we propose these hypotheses.

H4a: Gen Z's commitment to a ritualised viewing on streaming services during Ramadan mediates the relationship between satisfaction and continuance.

H4b: Gen Z's commitment to a ritualised viewing on streaming services during Ramadan mediates the relationship between quality of alternatives and continuance.

H4c: Gen Z's commitment to a ritualised viewing on streaming services during Ramadan mediates the relationship between investment size and continuance.

2.3 Family rituals and Family cohesion

Family rituals, while requiring investment of resources, play a crucial role in strengthening group cohesion, transmitting values, and reinforcing a sense of belonging across generations. According to Boyer (2006), rituals foster coordination and demonstrate group belonging. These ritualized entertainments require resources, which, according to Stein et al. (2021), implies that group members associate them with social norms and culture preservation. Families understand that their ritualized activities reflect and transmit their values. For instance, family leisure activities, as Izenstark and Ebata (2022) explain, are a time to transmit values and underpin family interaction. Thus, family members' involvement in shared activities and respect for assigned roles contribute to the construction of the family's identity and the reinforcement of family cohesion. Furthermore, family cohesion is reflected in the strength of the emotional bond between its members. Performing family rituals such as family dinners, entertainment like watching TV together, and celebrations enables family members to grow closer together, interact, communicate, and adapt to external challenges (Wang and Zhang, 2024). As opposed to healthy family dynamics based on shared activities and communication, Kim et al. (2024) have found that smartphone addiction and phubbing are associated with dysfunctional family dynamics characterized by a lack of emotional support and a lack of discipline. Moreover, Fiese (2006) and Ratcliffe et al. (2019) explain that the nostalgia felt when performing or recalling family rituals reflects the power of this transformative experience to generate connections between generations and mark the family history. Accordingly, we propose that:

H5: Family cohesion has a negative impact on Gen Z's commitment to a ritualized viewing on streaming platforms during Ramadan.

2.4 Audience Genre préférence

Unlike the scheduled programming of linear television, streaming platforms organize content into genre-specific libraries. Cha and Chan-Olmsted (2024) define genre as a systematic classification of television programs based on their shared attributes. Daw et al (2025) posit that digital media strengthens viewers' agency in selecting and maintaining genre preferences across platforms. Therefore, the stability of audience preferences for media genres shapes their viewing behavior and facilitates the prediction of media consumption patterns (Cha and Chan-Olmsted, 2024). Additionally, intense engagement with a genre (comedy, drama) can be rooted in family rituals and thus build the individual or collective history of a group. Engagement intensity is expanded over time and can be passed on from generation to generation and thus become part of the identity (Dahlgren and Hill, 2022). Kim (2022) explains that consumers' choices in brands contribute to the creation of both individual and collective identities. Local brands, therefore, often rely on heritage and traditional roots to attract consumers. This is particularly evident in media consumption during Ramadan, where there's a clear preference for local or regional series and programs that promote content preserving cultural identity—the shared values, beliefs, and customs of a community—or highlighting Islamic values and precepts, such as piety and family unity (Azizah et al, 2025; Ishaque, 2025). Faced with intense scrutiny from social media, which often criticize programs disrespecting the spirit of Ramadan, conventional TV channels tend to prioritize "family" content. In contrast, streaming platforms have more freedom in building up their libraries (Almahadin, 2011). Therefore, we propose:

H6: Participants who prefer to watch non-family-friendly content during Ramadan will have a higher level of commitment to a ritualized viewing on streaming platforms compared to those who prefer family-friendly content.

2.5 The relationship between commitment to ritualized viewing on streaming platforms and usage continuance

Commitment to media is a reflection of increased involvement and results in meaningful benefits for the user (entertainment, relaxation, companionship). Therefore, a high level of media commitment leads to a high level of usage (Workman et al, 2023). As Dahlgren and Hill (2020) explain, media commitment takes the form of a social practice that utilizes media devices and mobilizes skills. Thus, commitment to streaming platforms is demonstrated by continued subscription and use of the platforms. Furthermore, Zhang et al. (2025) state that brand commitment results from attachment and leads to the desire to maintain the relationship through purchasing. Similarly, commitment to an influencer leads to the endorsement of their products and advocacy of their activities (Kim and Baek, 2022). Similarly, in accordance with the investment model, Uysal (2016) found that commitment to multiplayer online games is positively associated with loyalty to the gaming platform and negatively associated with exit from it. Therefore,

H7: Gen Z's commitment to a ritualized viewing on streaming services during Ramadan is positively related to continuance intention.

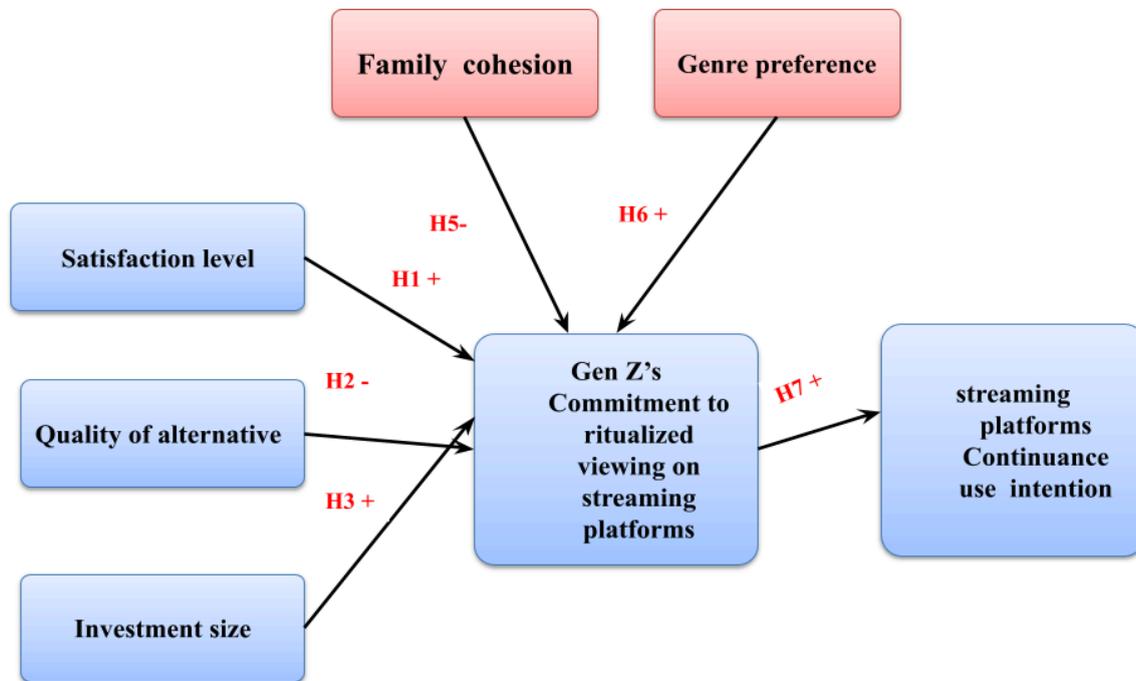


Figure 1: Research model: Extended Investment Model

3. Method

3.1 Sample

An online questionnaire was conducted with Gen Z members who subscribe to streaming platforms operating in Tunisia (Rakcha, Artify, Nessma Play, Shofha, and Elhiwar Ettounsi platform). The survey was conducted in April, May, and June 2025. The final number of usable questionnaires was 201, with 43.3% male and 56.7% female. Participants are undergraduate students at Tunisian universities. Gen Z is often referred to as "digital natives," since they were born between 1997 and 2012 and have grown up with digital media as an integral part of their daily lives. Unlike previous generations, Gen Z has had access to the internet, smartphones, computers, social media, and video games from an early age. As a result, they have never been exposed to a world without these technologies and have assimilated them seamlessly into their daily lives (Reich and Barak, 2018).

3.2 Measures

All the constructs used in this study were measured using a five-point Likert-type scale anchored by "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree," and the items were moderately

modified to fit the context of ritualized viewing during Ramadan. To measure commitment to ritualized viewing, items were adapted from Fei et al (2021). We asked participants to rate the degree to which their streaming services use during Ramadan was ritualistic by answering the following question: “To what extent do you consider this activity to be a ritual? A ritual is an activity that symbolizes values and tends to be done multiple times in the same specific way each time” (1 = not at all, 5 = very much; adapted from Garcia-Rada et al.,(2019). “Is the activity done in the same specific way each time?”(2) “Is the activity meaningful to you?”; and (3) “Does the activity symbolize your values?” (1 = not at all, 5 = very much). We also asked participants to indicate their viewing habits and their favorite programs during Ramadan. Satisfaction with streaming services and continuance intention scales are adapted from Sae-tae and Wang (2024). The quality of alternatives, the investment size, and the continuance intention were adapted from Kim and Baek (2022). Additionally, as part of our study, participants were asked to describe the activities they and their family members participated in during Ramadan, as well as the roles of each member.

Additionally, the works of Tsoutsis & Dikeos (2024) and Fiese (2006) were referenced to measure the construct of family cohesion. Finally, genre preference was operationalized with items proposed by Redfern (2012).

4. Data analysis

4.1 Exploratory factor analysis

To examine the scales' dimensionality, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using principal axis factoring with Promax rotation, in line with established recommendations for operationalizing constructs (Hair et al., 2019). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy was 0.771, which is above the threshold of 0.60. Furthermore, Bartlett’s test of sphericity is significant ($\chi^2 = 2585.281$, $df = 153$, $p < .001$), indicating the data’s fitting to factor analysis (Kaiser, 1974). All items have a loading greater than 0.5 with no cross-loading (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2013). Six distinct factors emerged, accounting for 83.99% of the total variance. Each factor was interpretable and aligned with the theoretical constructs proposed in the conceptual model. Harman's one-factor test was used to evaluate common method bias (CMV). According to the results (Table 1), no single factor could explain more than 50% of the variance (Zhao et al, 2018).

Table 1: Pattern Matrix Components

	1	2	3	4	5	6
fc1	0.944					
fc2	.0901					
fc3	0.901					
fc4	0.820					
cot3		0.951				

cot2		0930				
cot 1		0.877				
alt2			0.984			
alt3			0.911			
alt1			0.864			
sat3				0.937		
sat2				0.920		
sat4				0.813		
rit1					0.935	
rit 3					0.911	
rit2					0.882	
inv2						0.945
inv3						0.870

Extraction method: Principal component analysis; Rotation method: Promax with Kaiser normalization.

4.2 Reliability and Validity Analysis

Internal consistency of each factor was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. All constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), with alpha coefficients ranging from 0.798 to 0.918, indicating high reliability. Composite reliability (CR) was also computed to further assess internal consistency. All CR values ranged between 0.81 and 0.93, surpassing the minimum acceptable level of 0.70 for the six latent variables (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Reliability and validity Analysis

	Cronbach's alpha	AVE	CR	alternative	investment	ritual	continuance	satisfaction	cohesion
alternative	0,904	0,740	0.894	0,860					
investment	0,798	0,703	0.822	-0,111	0,838				
ritual	0,902	0,723	0.887	-0,196*	0,423***	0,850			
continuance	0,915	0,784	0.916	-0,235**	0,111	0,295***	0,885		
satisfaction	0,882	0,720	0.885	-0,231**	0,132†	0,304***	0,463***	0,848	
cohesion	0,918	0,737	0.918	0,093	-0,340***	-0,546***	-0,106	-0,158*	0,859

Significance of Correlations:

† p < 0.100, * p < 0.050, ** p < 0.010, *** p < 0.001

4.3 Convergent and Discriminant Validity

Convergent validity, as presented in Table 2, was supported by the average variance extracted (AVE), with all constructs exceeding the threshold of 0.50 (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The AVE values ranged from 0.703 to 0.784, indicating that each construct explained more than half of the variance of its indicators. Discriminant validity, which refers to the extent to which construct indicators are distinct from those of other constructs, was established using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, requiring that the square root of each construct's AVE be greater than its correlation with other constructs. This condition was satisfied for all constructs, as shown in Table 2. The highest correlation between any pair of constructs was 0.463, which was lower than the lowest square root of AVE among all constructs, 0.838 for investment size (Bollen, 1990).

5. Results

5.1 Measurement and Structural Models

According to Anderson and Gerbing's (1988) approach, data analysis is conducted in two steps. First, the scales' reliability and validity are evaluated. Second, SEM analysis is employed to test the model's hypotheses. The fit indices of the measurement model revealed an inadequate model fit to the data : ($\chi^2 = 202.687$, $df=110$, $\chi^2 /df =1.843$, CFI 0.963, TLI 0.949, RMSEA 0.065). The indices meet the criteria suggested by Hu and Buntler (1999) (TLI and CFI higher than 0.9 and RMSEA lower than 0.08). Moreover, the proposed structural model fitted the data well since all indices were satisfactory: ($\chi^2=170.476$, $df= 97$, $\chi^2 /df 5 1.757$, CFI 5 0.969, TLI 5 0.957, RMSEA 0.062), which allowed us to test the hypotheses (Hair et al, 2019).

5.2 Hypothesis testing

As reported in Table 3 and Figure 2, satisfaction level has a positive and significant effect on Genz's commitment to a ritualized viewing during Ramadan ($\beta \text{ Satis} \rightarrow \text{Co} = 0.154$, $t = 1.712$, $p < 0.1$). Similarly, investment size has a positive and significant effect on commitment ($\beta \text{ inv} \rightarrow \text{Co} = 0.281$, $t = 3.082$, $p < 0.01$), supporting H2 and H3. However, the impact of the quality of alternatives on Genz's commitment to a ritualized viewing during Ramadan was not statistically significant ($\beta \text{ alt} \rightarrow \text{Co} = 0.03$, $t = 0.285$, $p = 0.776$), and, therefore, H1 was not supported. Further, commitment is significantly and negatively impacted by family cohesion ($\beta \text{ Coh} \rightarrow \text{Co} = -0.531$, $t = -6.123$, $p < 0.001$). Thus, H5 is supported. Concerning the mediating effects of commitment between the quality of alternatives, the level of satisfaction, and the size of the investment on continuance use intention, our results confirm the mediating role of commitment to quality of alternatives, satisfaction level, and investment size on streaming services use continuance intention, supporting H4a, H4b, and H4c. Additionally, to measure the impact of the audience genre preferences on Gen Z's commitment to ritualized viewing on streaming platforms during Ramadan, we used the t-test. In addition, to test the effect of audience genre preferences on commitment, we conduct the t-test (mean comparison test). Levene's test in

Table 6 indicates a significant difference in commitment between the group of respondents who prefer to watch family-friendly content and the second group, who indicate a preference for non-family-friendly programs ($F = 8.140$; $p = 0.005$). Group 2 reports a higher commitment to ritualized viewing on streaming platforms during the month of Ramadan. We then calculated Cohen's d (1988), which equals 0.55, indicating a moderate difference between the two groups. Finally, the path commitment→continuance is significant (β Co → Coti 0.195, t 3.072, $p < 0.01$); as a result, H7 is supported.

Table 3: Results of model testing (SEM)

Hypothesis	Path	Path coefficient (β)	CR	P value	Decision
H1	Alterna→Co	0,003	0,285	0.776	Not supported
H2	Satis→Co	0,090	1,712	0.087	Supported
H3	Inv→Co	0,281	3.082	0.002	Supported
H5	Coh→Co	-0.531	-6.123	0.000	Supported
H7	Co→Coti	0.195	3.072	0.002	Supported

Table 4: Indirect effects

Indirect Path	Unstandardized Estimate	Lower	Upper	P-Value	Standardized Estimate
H4a: alternative --> co-ritual --> continuance	-0,028	-0,066	-0,001	0,089	-0,028 †
H4b: investment --> co-ritual --> continuance	0,057	0,031	0,093	0,000	0,083***
H4c:satisfaction --> co-ritual --> continuance	0,056	0,017	0,113	0,002	0,054**

*** $p < 0.001$

** $p < 0.010$

* $p < 0.050$

† $p < 0.100$

Table 5: Comparison of means for independent samples (group statistics)

Commitment	Preference/gene: Familial content	N1=101	Statistics	Bias	Standard error	Confidence interval 95% Inf	Confidence interval 95% Sup
		Mean 1: 2.8251		-0.030	0.1034	2.6095	3.0172
		SD1=1.01936		-0.0772	0.04729	0.91291	1.10216
	Preference/gene: Non Familial content	N2=100					
		Mean2=3.4500		0.0025	0.1245	3.1867	3.6876
		SD2=1.24034		-0.0959	0.05829	1.11228	1.33722

Table 6: Levene test

Commitment		F	Sig	t	ddl	bilateral Sig
	hypothesis of variance equality	8.140	0.05	-3.904	199	0.000
	hypothesis of unequal variances			-3.900	191.084	0.000

6. Discussion

Generation Z, characterized as digital natives, exhibits distinct media consumption patterns that require a nuanced understanding of their commitment to streaming platforms (Yahya and Mammadzada, 2024). This cohort, born after 1996 and into the early 2010s, has grown up surrounded by digital content and online media that is easily accessible. This environment has fundamentally shaped their expectations and interactions with entertainment services (Vidani 2024). Picerello and Digennaro (2025) state that Gen Z members spend an average of nine hours per day on social media and consume over 13 hours of media each day. In this study, we used the investment model to analyze Gen Z's commitment to ritualized viewing on streaming services during Ramadan. The model (Rusbult, 1980) states that investment size, quality of alternatives, and satisfaction level are the determinants of commitment, which, in turn, predicts the continuance of the relationship (Rusbult & Farrell, 1983). Commitment arises from high dependence, which itself results from a high level of satisfaction, poor alternatives, and the importance of the resources associated with the target. Thus, highly dependent individuals tend to commit. People who are committed express a desire to be involved in the long term and experience psychological attachment (Rusbult et al, 2011). Our results indicate that Gen Z's commitment to ritualized viewing on streaming platforms is

largely determined by the size of the investment and, to a lesser extent, by the level of satisfaction. However, the quality of the alternatives did not appear to have a significant impact on the participants' commitment. This finding aligns with the results of Chiu et al. (2025), who found that satisfaction and investment size influence commitment, which in turn impacts the intention to continue using social commerce. However, the effect of the quality of alternatives on commitment is not supported. Similarly, Tseng et al. (2022) demonstrated that commitment toward branded apps is facilitated by satisfaction and investment size, which, in turn, improve app continuance intention and brand purchase.

To explain the relative role of satisfaction in commitment, we suggest that respondents' experience on streaming platforms during Ramadan was not entirely satisfactory. In this regard, Chenwei et al. (2023) suggest that the quality, variety, and price of content influence user satisfaction with streaming services. Moreover, according to Sae-tae and Wang (2024), satisfaction is an assessment made after consuming or using a service. This ex-post assessment takes the form of a positive or negative emotion varying according to the element of the experiment being evaluated. It determines whether the product or service will continue to be used (Kim et al. 2024). Sae-tae and Wang (2024) found that in music streaming, for example, satisfaction is a critical determinant, driving the intention to continue using the service, and reflecting the desire to achieve goals through its use. Our results show that satisfaction is not the primary predictor of commitment, but rather the size of the investment. Indeed, the more streaming platform users invest in using streaming platforms (registration, payment, preference for ad-free viewing), the more committed they are (Chiu et al. 2025; Uysal, 2016). Furthermore, several studies in the IT context have failed to demonstrate a significant impact of alternative quality on commitment, as opposed to its role in interpersonal relationships. It can be attributed to the place that digital technologies occupy in the lives of users who do not believe that they are capable of being replaced by other alternatives.

Digital natives are adept at navigating complex online content. They utilize streaming platforms for entertainment, education, and social connection (Corbisiero et al., 2022). As a demographic, this group actively curates its content experience. They seek authenticity, personalization, and opportunities for interaction. Their emotional bond with smartphones also facilitates an immersive media experience (Benitez-Markez et al, 2022). Streaming platforms have changed media production, distribution, and consumption. New modes of consumption, such as binge watching and digital rituals, have emerged. During Ramadan, when media consumption and production increase, this enthusiasm is especially visible. The competition between traditional television and digital media has led some channels to create their own streaming platforms. Others broadcast exclusively through digital media. The proliferation of media, diverse genres, and solo over-the-top viewing via smartphones poses a threat to the tradition of watching television collectively with the family during Ramadan evenings. (Duffet and Mxunyelwa, 2025). Our findings show that family cohesion negatively influences Gen Z's commitment to ritualized viewing during Ramadan. This is in line with the analysis of Mangialavori et al. (2021), who suggest that family cohesion and functioning play significant roles in youth smartphone use. Excessive smartphone use is associated with lower family cohesion and more enmeshed family functioning compared to moderate use.

Similarly, Kim et al (2024) have identified family dysfunction as a key factor contributing to adolescents' excessive smartphone use. Furthermore, for a broader context, Elhai et al. (2020) demonstrated differences between excessive smartphone users and moderate users in personal values and social norms adaptability. Moreover, we have demonstrated that there is a difference between users who prefer watching family-friendly content and those who prefer non-family-friendly content. In Ramadan, the former are less likely to commit to ritualized viewing of streaming content. We can assume that these respondents prefer to engage in other activities (Ramadan evenings out) or watch their favorite programs on traditional television channels. According to Damasio et al. (2025), viewers in emerging markets prefer to watch local content on streaming platforms. The choice is driven by the desire to identify with and preserve cultural specificities. Furthermore, according to Redfern (2012), understanding audience preferences is crucial for producers and distributors to determine which films or series to produce and how to market them effectively (Rubenking, 2016). The authors were able to demonstrate that in England, for example, age is a factor that can differentiate audience preferences; thus, the 15-24 age group prefers action and comedy films, while the over-55 age group prefers dramatic content.

7. Implications

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. First, this study develops an integrated model applied to the context of streaming services, which are beginning to operate in emerging markets such as Tunisia, rather than illegal streaming, which has been prevalent for many years. This extended model indicates that the inclusion of IM constructs (satisfaction level, investment size, quality of alternatives, and commitment) cannot adequately explain the complexity of commitments to streaming platforms during the month of Ramadan, when Muslims' lives are characterized by economic and media activity in addition to religious practices. Ramadan is mainly celebrated in families, where gathering around the table to break the fast or watching TV together are rituals passed down from generation to generation. The concept of "ritualized viewing during Ramadan" is motivated by the symbolic meaning associated with this practice, which generally occurs at the same time of day. Cultural anthropologists were the first to take an interest in rituals. Sociologists and psychologists have contributed to the development of this field of study. There may be an interest in studying digital consumption rituals in marketing research, particularly given Ramadan's importance as a crossroads between religious, social, and economic practices.

Furthermore, Generation Z, the first generation to have never known a world without the internet, has an emotional connection to their smartphones, using them for learning, entertainment, and consuming products. Generation Z is facing a dual choice: either consume their favorite media content during Ramadan with their families, as previous generations did, or choose ritualized solo viewing via smartphone. Hence, the importance of the variables "family cohesion" and "genre preferences" can shed additional light on Gen Z's media consumption patterns.

Second, this study identified that investment size is the primary factor in establishing and maintaining commitment. Hence, motivating users to invest more time and effort in using streaming service platforms could enhance Gen Z commitment during Ramadan. Streaming

platforms can reward loyal users to increase the perceived value of their investment by offering discounts or free exclusive content, such as behind-the-scenes footage of series or programs, or interviews with their favorite stars. The relatively low role of satisfaction and the lack of impact of alternatives suggest that streaming platforms need to improve their offerings to increase satisfaction among users who do not already perceive alternatives to their services. Streaming platforms should therefore focus their communication on the safety of viewing compared to illegal streaming sites, emphasizing their broad range of genres—including comedy, drama, action, and religious programs—and highlighting the option for ad-free family viewing, which helps preserve cultural heritage.

GenZ seeks authentic online connections, valuing social proof, creator interaction and active participation. Streaming platforms fostering community, effortless sharing and creator-driven formats like crafting reels and previews appeal to them by enabling belonging and self-expression. Features like ephemeral comments, interactive watch parties and collaborative playlists enhance social presence, interactivity and engagement. This combination of diverse content and social tools drives GenZ's consistent engagement, boosting user satisfaction and commitment.

8. Limitations and directions for future research

The first limitation is its scope. This study exclusively included Generation Z undergraduate Tunisian students and examined their viewing habits during a specific time of year. The second limitation is confirmation bias. Some respondents may deny using streaming platforms even though they are subscribers. This could be due to social pressure to boycott platforms whose owners have faced controversy or prison sentences. Future research could improve the proposed conceptual model by analyzing the motivations of streaming platform users during Ramadan as well as during the rest of the year, and by explaining potential differences in media consumption patterns between millennials and Gen Z.

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