

TÜRKİYE CUMHURİYETİ
ANKARA ÜNİVERSİTESİ
SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ
MEDYA VE İLETİŞİM ÇALIŞMALARI
ANABİLİM DALI

COMMUNICATION VIA INTERFACES FOR VOD
SERVICES: NETFLIX

Tezli Yüksek Lisans Tezi

Fatma Kübra Şahin
Ankara, 2021

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Tez Danışmanı

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eksiksiz olarak gösterdiğimi, çalışma sürecinde bilimsel araştırma ve etik
kurallarına uygun olarak davrandığımı ve aksinin ortaya çıkması
durumunda her türlü yasal sonucu kabul edeceğimi beyan ederim.**

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ABBREVIATIONS

ABC	: American Broadcasting Company
AGB	: Audit of Great Britain
BBC	: British Broadcasting Corporation
DW	: Deutsche Welle
FAQ	: Frequently Asked Questions
GGTAM	: Global Guidelines for Television Audience Measurement
HD	: High Definition
HBO	: Home Box Office
ISP	: internet service provider
ITU	: İstanbul Technical University
JIC	: joint industry committees
MIT	: Massachusetts Institute of Technology
MOC	: media owner contracts
NBC	: National Broadcasting Company
OS	: own services
OTT	: over the top services
PGS	: play and game sites

RTÜK	: Radyo Televizyon Üst Kurulu
SMS	: Short Message Service
SNS	: social networking sites
SVOD	: subscription-based video-on-demand services
TİAK	: Televizyon İzleme Araştırma Komitesi
TMS	: trading and marketing sites
TRT	: Türkiye Radyo Televizyon Kurumu
TVOD	: transactional video-on-demand services
UGC	: user generated content sites
VCR	: Videocassette Recorder
VOD	: video-on-demand services
WFA	: World Federation of Advertisers
VR	: virtual reality

INTRODUCTION

The subject of the dissertation is the newest media form: interfaces. Even though throughout the emergence of media to now, the media has had several shapes and forms, from newsletters to VRs; they have one thing in common: intermediary, hence the name. Intermediary has been the gist of the media. It was not limited to content or traditional media. Even though the traditional media is almost completely digitalised now and new digital media forms are appearing rapidly, and they have another transmitter: interface.

The dissertation aims to explain the way Netflix communicates with its customers via its interface.

While the media tools are the main intermediary, contemporary Video on Demand (VoD) services' interfaces operate like intermediary between themselves and the users to construct communication with them, resulting in keeping customers in their system. Especially when it is thought that media companies also create their customers in addition to the content, it becomes clearer that understanding communication via interface is essential.

Of all the VoD services, the most popular one was Netflix; The others were either not known or not as comprehensive. According to Data Reportal's January 2020 Report, 90% of the internet users aged 16 to 64 watch online videos, and 67% watch TV content via a streaming service each month ("DataReportal," 2020). Netflix is the 20th most visited website according to Amazon's Alexa, as stated in the same source ("DataReportal," 2020). Customers tend to choose paid video subscriptions instead of conventional media, leading to the growth and market competition between services. Considering these statistics and CoVid-19 lockdown's effect on paid video subscription services, their growth is inevitable, and Netflix got 16 million more subscribers ("Netflix gets 16", 2020). Netflix has 11% of global internet traffic in 2020 (Sandvine, 2020). When the growth during the pandemic in the year of 2020 is considered, it is clear that Netflix was grown the most, when compared to the others. Thus, the case chosen was Netflix.

The interface is a transmitter for VoD services, and it is where media companies create curiosity, tension, and expectation too, which is also expected from Netflix. While all these things happen, the research wanted to scrutinise Netflix's interface, aiming to explore how Netflix adapts its browse page, making it customary for every user. Thus, making the research question "How does Netflix communicates with its users by

changing its interface (transmitter) to keep customers in its system?”.

The most suitable method to explore user experience for online services is the walkthrough method. The method was being used for testing several softwares, but now it is adapted to social studies. The example taken was Ben Light and Stefanie Duguay's joint article (2018). They examined the period tracking app Clue with the walkthrough method, and the research explored Netflix in a similar way. The method originally includes exploring of signing up for an account, the daily usage and deactivating the account to understand its vision, operating model and governance of the platform. It also allows merging of two models. The study only focused on the ways that Netflix attracts more users to its ecosystem and keeps them in it. It will mix the walkthrough method with content analysis, since the changes of the interface is crucial.

The research opted for creating three profiles to examine. Those profiles act according to different themes chosen. The reason behind this was to detect both different and similar changes on the interface after certain actions. Several contents will be watched and the changes will be recorded. Then, deductions will be made.

The As for the beginning, the literature review will start from the television to display a clear vision for the evolution of audio-visual content in, then, the adaption of content to web will be mentioned with the background of digital media in the first chapter. After that, Netflix and the change of the audience experience will be explained in the second chapter. Methodology will elaborate the methods merged, followed by results section that includes the actions and changes day by day. Discussion and conclusion chapters offer a clear explanation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

CHAPTER I – TELEVISION AND DIGITAL MEDIA

1. Television

1.1. Introduction of Television

After the radio gained a place in society and household, another mass media was invented: television. Experimental broadcasts started in 1930 by BBC in the United Kingdom and 1931 by NBC in the USA, though it took some time for the television to be used commonly. The experiments had to be kept on hiatus due to World War II; the studies proceeded shortly after. BBC commenced the first high-definition TV in the UK. In 1943, coloured TV experiments began. In 1948, ABC company broadcasted for the first time. In 1956, the USA had three various channels already competing in the market. In the 1950s, an American person watched TV for 3,5 hours a day, on average.

Compared to radio, television made an addition to ancient human nature's resurfacing by adding expression, while radio brought humanity's oral culture back after the press's proliferation. In addition to voice, TVs offered something different than radio in addition to the voice: image. The TV made icons visible and brought symbols forward, being a device to show and express rather than forcing the audience to concentrate on either voice or words. One of its prominent characteristics that made TV unique was that the components were mutually supportive without requiring the audience to focus. Thus, the audience was passivated, leading them to be more lazy, asocial, thinking less and made them waste their time (Aziz, 2013). It was even considered that people choose TV over reading, some of them until became heavy viewers, by watching more than 4 hours a day, they were also picking up habits, good and evil (Tarshis, 2017). It was not always pessimistic how people consider the latest addition to their home; there are several positive perspectives of the audience on the matter. For instance, the children were

learning from TV shows, and the audience also used to think that the TV brought some kind of union to the society based on the fact that they were exposed to the same or similar messages (Tarshis, 2017).

Television is still considered an essential device in a home environment. It is still considered the "primary medium of what we can still call 'mass' communication" (Kompore, 2010: 1) and is "at the epicentre of the household media consumption" (Tseklevs et al., 2011). Mass media, especially television, was so internalised that it grew extremely fast into its industry, became considered public sphere itself, made its own rules, and created a new dimension of sociality by "penetrating every public domain," as van Dijk and Poell put it in their joint study (2013). It offered several kinds of standardized content that are produced professionally (Kompore, 2010). Another thing that was uncovered that the impartiality notion of the mass media: a content was broadcasted and the audience was told to believe it because it was presented as something neutral that the audience was tricked into believing that it was utterly nonpartisan by broadcasting the ideas of "experts" whenever the media company has the chance. They also expressed that mass media actually changed several aspects of the social field of work, especially commercials. Everything was prepared as a show, and the presentation is so in the centre of things those public relations are customary, and even election campaigns are extremely media centred. The line between media content and commercial became blurry.

The business of media was not necessarily only about producing the content. Another unignorable form of the media business is media delivery. Most of the content seen on television, mostly except for the news, is produced b/y others, and channels only deliver it to the audience (Chalaby & Plunkett, 2020). Rather than coming up with a creative and attention-grabbing idea, planning, writing, and directing; buying a readymade content is more convenient. Especially the national nature of broadcasting

allowed media delivery as a branch of business. Every level of media streaming, starting from preparing to produce to actual producing, agreements, and run, happened in the same country.

1.2. Television Studies

The relation between technology and society always intrigued people, some think that mass media devices must have a particular effect on the audience, but the main focus should have which one has precedence over the other (Güngör, 2013). It is not a secret that society did not stay the same after television became widespread. It was considered a public space (Dijck & Poell, 2013) and even became "the social space where power was decided" (Castells, 2007). However, to some, technology was the cause of every single change in the world, good and evil, and it would be possible to read the whole history by just understanding it, especially for the Western societies (Innis, 2008). History was started to be interpreted through communication instruments history gaze. Even though communication is as old as humanity itself, keeping means of communication in the centre of life was considered extreme. Media centric view sees every aspect of life based on dominant means of communication. While circling around mediums, a myriad of changes throughout human history was undoubtedly based on the dominant means of communication, even if it leads to founding democratic regimes or cause huge inequalities. Empires were founded and perished, due to their communication strategy, or the lack of it. Especially the material of the means was the main determinant of the characteristics of the civilisations (Laughey, 2007). Lighter materials allowed people to travel; thus, they were suitable for space expanding empires, on the other hand, heavier ones were sturdy and had to carry, which also can bear corrosive weather conditions, or even human act was time-biased -as Innis stated- and durable (Innis, 1949). Materials determined the qualification of the empire's power in the sense of centralising (Laughey,

2007). The material was crucial, no doubt, but everyday language was another timebiased means of communication; it is also carried from one generation to the next, and it cannot be changed drastically, resulting in existing for a longer time than space-biased media.

Innis did consider the printing press almost the most powerful technology. While other philosophers believed dissemination of information was the reason lies behind revolutions, Innis based social movements on the printing press's mere existence. It was also put forward that the printing press was the main force to collect and unify several dialects of a language, and they were named as "print languages" by Anderson (1991, as cited in Laughey, 2007). Another raisonneur Ivins contributed to those ideas by explaining the difference between manuscripts and printed books (Güngör, 2013). Moreover, he thinks that there is a relation between technology usage, especially means of communication, and societies' level of development.

McLuhan also agrees with Innis' point that language is a means of communication and builds his whole argument and theory on that point. From the starting point of how languages shape our minds and thoughts, it goes further to the effects of the writing system on people and then reaches the end of building whole humanity on those (McLuhan & Logan, 1977). McLuhan also agrees with Innis by pointing out that "any advanced modern society is shaped by the various media technologies that are available to it" (Laughey, 2007). By expressing it, he also recites the narrative of the distinction between the Western and the Eastern societies and builds his civilisation debate on the specific contrast. Nevertheless, his classification of means of communication was a bit different from Innis'. He separates them as hot and cold media depending on the level of participation of the audience, rather than distinguishing them according to the materials.

As McLuhan declares, hot media is easy to understand and does not require too much attention; cool media is more demanding and harder to comprehend. While he does

not base the classification on the material, it looks like it is mostly about form. However, it does not ignore the content. It also supports McLuhan's ideas of content as a form of means, and the form is more prominent than the message (Güngör, 2013). He then takes it further to say his famous apothegm "the medium is the message" (McLuhan, 2012). He ignores the purpose of the technological device or the outcome of some technology for that matter, to emphasise the material of technology matters more than anything else. With his highly original breakthrough, he profoundly influenced studies that it is even interpreted as "the network is the message" in more recent times (Gow, 2010).

Another trademark of McLuhan is observing media as extensions of human beings. He does not consider media something that does not depend on human body. For him, those heavily rely on bodily functions. Instead of using them to the extent permitted by human nature, McLuhan considers media somehow invisibly attached to human body. For instance, radio is an extension of users' ears, and television is of users' eyes. Thus, "media become extensions of [...] [human beings]; extensions of [...] human senses", making the devices more important than their content effectual (Laughey, 2007: 33).

While accepting the perspective wholly and considering technological developments as only determinants of society is absurd, it is equally preposterous to overlook the effects of the most recent additions to the collection of the means of communication. The notion of determining is too complex to decide to resolve. Television is not only a means of communication but also an industry. It also has relations with politics, as well as other aspects of society. On the one hand, it can change our habits; on the other hand, broadcast, its characteristics, and even its message can be regulated by politics. Thus, it is necessary to point out that both technological determinism and ignoring communication technology and its cause or consequences. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that while technology does not entirely determine society, society does

not shape technology ultimately, either: "In other words, while we have to reject technological determinism, in all its forms, we must be careful not to substitute for it the notion of a determined technology," as Raymond Williams states (2003).

For starters, Williams thinks that the relation between technology and society is too complicated when their too many components and their relations are considered. He does not deny that the possibility of one thing leading to the other, but he expresses that while even the process behind the invention of technological devices is almost a result of an intricate historical chain of events, it is not reasonably possible to downgrade the whole cluster into a cause of one material being (2003). Moreover, only the medium itself does not determine the content. When peeked in on, it is clear that the content varies according to culture, time, audience, and so on. Even if it did, the content might have countless possibilities of "effect". Thus, it would not be realistic to reduce it only to cause and effect relation.

When it comes to television in Turkey, it is only fair to say that it took almost two decades after the first experimental one for people to start with experimental broadcasts. The first TV program in Turkey was broadcasted in 1952 by Istanbul Technical University (ITU) (Tutuk, 2002). ITU TV later had to be terminated when Turkish Radio and Television law came into force in 1970 with broadcast prohibition, handed its transmitters to the TRT, and from then on only TRT channel was allowed to broadcast starting with three days a week, three hours a day, later increasing to 4 days a week after a year (Türkiye Radyo-Televizyon Kurumu Kanunu, 1963). TRT has been a lawful monopoly for 20 years. Thus, Turkish society was bound to watch the government-led channel until 1990. Then, commercial channels would start their broadcasting life unlawfully; the abundance and insistence forced the law to be changed in favour of themselves. Later on, the number of TV channels increased and increased.

1.3. Audience Studies

The concept "mass" is a historical term and is social positioning itself. The usage of the term links back to the 19th and goes further to the 20th century. Rooted in mass society theories, theorists started to use the term linked to the media. Those words "involves particular assumptions about the nature of [mass] media," and it was comprehensive and lacked differentiation in traditional texts, as Bennett explains (1982: 1). There was no distinction between several classes, genders, provinces, or any other demographical features: the mass was one, rootless, in bulk, and stiff. The masses were considered an enormous group that believes whatever they are told and ready to act as so. It was used to explain what the theorists meant for some time and until they went by the wayside (Lang & Lang, 2009). The mass society theories constituted a whole that circles around the atomised mass man and its inorganic community: the masses were clearly distinguished from the elite; they were to be led, crowd but not a society (Bennett, 1982).

The further usage of the term "mass" is the mass media. What the mass media and mass communication are crystal clear, but the wording is not pleasant. The term is allegedly used in 1940 for the first time (Napoli, 2010). Referring to the communication from one source to multiple recipients, mass communication still carries the connotation of the "élite" and "mass" duality. Mass communication and mass media were at the centre of media researches. Until after World War II, the term would not be criticised for being undescriptive of modern society, audience, and the understanding of the media (Lang & Lang, 2009).

Audience research of mass media started with listeners' going wild after the radio play "Invasion of Martians" by H.G. Welles in the USA in 1938. The play was broadcasted as if it is a live news program that includes segments of people in havoc after the invasion and their homes are levelled. Despite the warnings at the beginning of the

program, the audience assumed that it was real then spilled out onto the streets. The incident proved that mass media affected the masses peremptorily. It was the groundwork to incite the audience research. Starting from this point, it further led researchers to study propaganda and politicians' statements' effect on people. Later on, audience measurement broadens into other types of mass media.

The main reason lies beneath audience measurement is considered "it is not possible to manage what is not measured" (Şahin, 2015: 92). Especially for major or growing industries, it is crucial to manage, that is, measure as much as possible to ensure income for mass media and advertisements. Hence, audience measurement is one of the systematised constituents. Since television's economy relies on the audience, it never loses its significance (Jennes et al., 2014). Arthur C. Nielsen founded the first audience measurement company Nielsen in the USA in 1923 (Deliver the truth., n.d.) and started experimenting in 1939, partnering with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). The company was basically collecting audience data and selling it to the customers who need big data. It measured several distinct branches of marketing and extended them to mass media. Their audience measurement methods were later regulated for televisions in 1950, people meter which is still currently in use would later appear in 1987.

There are several types of audience research depending on its time, massiveness, and method. Some examinations are conducted before a program to understand the intended population and build a program accordingly -can also be named as preliminary researches- other researches are undertaken during the air, the final one is carried out after the broadcast. Primary researches help comprehend the needs or want of the target audience. Audience profiles can also be constructed with the help. Then, the broadcasting stream is structured and renewed accordingly. It is also beneficial for channels to explain their audience to the advertisers. Researches during the air are currently conducted on

social media as cross-platform researches (Green, 2016). Audience measurement after the program ends is the most common one, and it has several types.

1.4. Audience Measurement

Several types of agencies are suggested to be performing audience measurement according to Global Guidelines for Television Audience Measurement (GGTAM) principles regulated by the World Federation of Advertisers (WFA) (Şahin, 2015). Those organisations are own services (OS), media owner contracts (MOC), joint industry committees (JIC). The OSes are the corporal organisations that carry out every single research step by themselves, gathering any capital and labour necessary together. Since it carries out the whole process and there is no predetermined price beforehand, it can be costly for customer companies. Moreover, it carries a high risk of being a monopoly. MOCs are the system where one or more broadcaster committees benefit from the research provider. JIC is the system that the whole measurement process is carried out by including all sectoral stakeholders such as broadcasters, advertisers, and agencies.

Audience measurement is not a monotype; it can easily be classified as analogue and digital. Analogue audience measurement was often applied to radio research. It consisted two different techniques: phone calls and dairies. After the television was spread, the analogue audience measurement was used for the television, too.

Telephone calls started with Crossley telephone recall (Buzzard, 2012) and this method and Archibald Crossley's measurement technique based on quota sampling conducted circa 1930 (Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, n.d.). The method was chosen because it was suitable since people who own telephones had radios at home, and it was cheaper, too. Crossley's method was calling the houses of the samples and asking questions about the shows they listened to the day before or the ones that they are listening to right before the call. It was popular during the early 1930s, and later it was changed

due to its inefficiency. The main reason behind the inefficiency was not the data collection style; it was instead the data collection and analysing method. The sampling method ignored the unknown features of the sample; thus, it was not as accurate.

Despite Crossley's telephone recall's flaws, it was later war improved to telephone coincidental method -Hooperating- (Buzzard, 2012) and became one of the most accurate measuring methods (Webster, 2001). Again, it did not change the data collection aspect of the Hooperatings method, but what it did was regulate the analysing system to make the method more accurate in terms of reflecting the audience. The next one was dairies which started circa 1940 and were short-lived (Webster, 2001). The audience was asked to keep notes on what they are watching, their feelings and thoughts about the matter. They were cheap yet prone to subjectivity. People could They were unwanted, and many people were not willing to keep one.

Digital audience measurement was conducted by meters that were developed in the early 1940s by Nielsen. They are expensive and do not convey human thoughts or feelings compared to analogue measurement methods, but they also eradicate human memory flaws (Webster, 2001). Meters are later developed to be installed to the television and convey the audience information. Those are explained below with the more common name *peoplemeter*.

There is another way to classify audience research. It is according to the needs of the industry/media companies. Audience measurement can be divided into three: rating, share and reach (Şahin, 2015). Rating is a type of measurement of the audience's density; share shows the proportion of the audience a channel attracted in the total audience universe, and reach is the ratio of people who watched at least one minute of a channel in a time frame (Aziz, 2013). Those are all systematised and arranged for economic purposes. The research will be focused on rating mainly.

Rating is what determines and shapes broadcasts and the policy of content settlement. It is "in the constitutes a fundamental position in the planning of the market" (Tansel İlic, 2015: 112). Rating represents the mean number of TV viewers per minute, and it is what attracts advertisers. Woodford, Goldsmith, and Bruns explain purposes of rating as "measuring the popularity of particular programs, providing guidance in program planning and scheduling, informing service delivery, keeping abreast of change in audience tastes and practices, and establishing the value of time sold for advertising" (2015). The measurement is balanced between the volume and value (Arnold, 2016). The earlier rating and audience measurement consisted of either inserting another device named people meter to the preconcerted TVs or by telephone, calling the audience members one by one, and asking what they watched and their opinions. Then, the data gathered would be analysed through software called Pollux (Aziz, 2013).

Recently, audience measurement companies operate according to GGTAM principles regulated by WFA (Şahin, 2015). There emerged several audience measurement companies sometimes under the name of market research companies, such as Nielsen in the USA and Audit of Great Britain (AGB) in Europe.

For Turkey, the pioneer audience measurements company is AGB Anadolu. A branch of AGB Nielsen Media Research opened in Turkey in 1989 and did its first formal research in 1993. Its measurements were conducted according to the agreements concluded with TİAK (Televizyon İzleme Araştırmaları Komitesi), which was founded in those years. AGB Anadolu and continued its further researches until the end of 2010.

The AGB Anadolu's first action was to start measurement was database research conducted by another committee called TİAK. Although its name was research, the database was created to explore the people's demographical features to be researched. The age, gender, education, job, occupation, and socio-economic characteristics of the chosen

region's inhabitants is recorded. Participant families were chosen based on their ability to represent the community they are in to make an accurate sample of society; it was also required for panel families to consent to engage in. Then, the measurement devices were mounted to collect the data about watching behaviours. Those were designated to ask questions about the identity of the ones that watch the particular TV with the help of predesigned numbers for each family member, and the question is repeated every nine minutes (Aziz, 2013). When the television was turned on and off, the channel on the information of those who watch TV, the time that one is preferred over another was gathered and stored. The data was transmitted to headquarters between 02:00 and 06:00. The sorted and analysed information was ready for the customers of the AGB company. It is crucial to point out that the audience measurement methods that are mentioned earlier were not wholly accepted either. The critiques were directed to the lack of measuring the interest or guaranteed presence of the audience right in front of the TV rather than somewhere else, or reflecting the interest that has been invisible so far due to the families' power relations. It was highlighted that those points were too essential to ignore in grasping the concept of the audience measurement, whether it is enough for the market or not. Despite those critiques, the method is still supported entirely since its system is accepted worldwide (Şahin, 2015). Then other methods became popular, such as surveys, focused group interviews, and asking participants to keep a television diary, a common practice in worldwide audience measurements to overcome the shallowness of the consuetudinary audience measurement (Arnold, 2016).

Rating in Turkey got into fallacies now and then. In 2011 and 2012, there were revealments of infractions. At the end of 2011, a police operation regarding television and audience measurement company AGB Anadolu was performed. It was announced that the addresses of the panel families being measured were leaked to the producers ("Reyting

şoku", 2011). The most influential production companies meddled ("Reyting'de şike operasyonu!", 2011). Some of the detainees offered "presents" and money to the ones whose television was being measured in exchange for watching their programs ("Beni izle, ayda 200 TL kazan! Reyting için neler yapmışlar...", 2012). Even TRT was swindled by the issued guarantee of rating for the TV series, Ayrılık ("Beni izle, ayda 200 TL kazan! Reyting için neler yapmışlar...", 2012). People in the commercial business doubted that the study's part revealed to the public the whole rating fallacy; they still thought that the matter would go more profound than seen ("Reyting şoku", 2011). In September 2012, another rating fallacy was mentioned, yet it was not emphasised as much. TV series of ATV, Krem, which was allegedly breaking rating record, was detected to be in the centre of the fallacy due to its producer, who was both Deputy Chairman of the Board of TİAK and the representative of the Advertisers Association; even the ones who work for the audience measurement company that was currently the main one, TNS meddled ("ATV'nin Krem dizisinde reyting şikesi mi var?", 2012).

The reactions of the industry to the fallacy varied interestingly. Even though the company was in the fallacy was the most well-set and the oldest one, some producers expressed their discomfort about small companies ("Ünlü Yapımcılar 'Reytingde Şike' Operasyonunu Değerlendirdi", 2012). On the other hand, one of the columnists stated that even the measurement companies were struggling to deal with the rating fallacy for some time (Özdil, 2011). Nevertheless, it does not explain why they did not compensate for the leakage of the panel families' addresses. It is only fair to deduce that companies' priorities were settled to prevent their fallacy's appearing, rather than stopping working with the panel families and finding other contributors, or finding different solutions for that matter.

It is crucial to remark that TRT had written a contract about TİAK and left its measurement system in April 2009. That year in September, Competition Authority

concluded that it was against the nature of the free market the way TİAK was acting. In March 2011, Radio Television Supreme Board (RTÜK) was assigned with the duty of Regulation on the procedures and principles regarding the monitoring and rest measurement of broadcasting services and determining the sanctions to be applied to companies and organizations that do not comply with those procedures and regulations (Radyo Ve Televizyonların Kuruluş Ve Yayın Hizmetleri Hakkında Kanun, 2011). Then

TİAK was done away with, and TİAK Incorporate (TİAK A.Ş.) was founded in the structure of JICs. It is necessary to point out that AGB and TİAK A.Ş. terminated contracts in 2011. TİAK A.Ş. now works according to GGTAM. Its stakeholders are Reklamverenler Derneği –Association of Advertisers- (RVD), Reklamcılar Derneği Association of Publicists- (RD), and the channels that are being measured, either fulltime or part-time (Şahin, 2015). The committee consists of 19 members, with 13 of them from TV broadcasters, three from advertisers, and three from advertising agencies. The head of the management board must be a broadcaster, two deputy chairmen must be from RD and RVD, and a general manager. TİAK A.Ş. started to work with Taylor Nelson Sofres thenceforward. Partnered with Kantar Group, TNS works in Turkey since 2012, and it was the company to actualise measurement innovations.

1.5. Effects Studies

Just like radio, it soon became a part of everyday life. As for families, television was in the heart of the home. It is thought that TV brought family members together by collecting them to watch. People even regulated their household chores, and for Turkish society's family visits were designed according to broadcast streams (Aziz, 2013). Some even rushed their meals to catch with their favourite shows (Tarshis, 2017). People did not go to the cinema to watch films or other public houses as much as they used to, and

they opted for staying in and watching the TV (Aziz, 2013). As for children, their sleep schedule has deteriorated, and their studying habits were defective.

It was quite a popular idea for television to affect social life and behaviours, especially during WWII and Cold War, most probably due to requiring believing the possibility of behavioural and cognitive change. Especially in the USA, there are several types of research conducted concerning the effect paradigm. It also shaped the beginning of communication studies, examining shopping and voting behaviour. Mass persuasion was the first subject of media studies in the USA (Scannell, 2020: 64). The pre-USA life of the German-originated researchers made them prone to overestimate the power of the mass media. They tend to be certain that mass media had specific behavioural effects on the audience, with or without intermediary steps. The US academy's pragmatic understanding also allowed them to research propaganda and strong effects paradigm (Gitlin, 1978). They considered media as an active, message-producing source and the masses as passive, absorbing and accepting whatever was presented to them at first (Scannell, 2020: 82). Even after researching further, hypodermic needle theory was criticised, eliminated, and the two-steps-flow theory as a part of the effects paradigm was settled. It stated that most people were influenced by those who can build their opinions on the matters presented by the media. Besides, to be criticised for its relations with the market, there are several assumptions that the study made, "commensurability of the modes of influence, power as distinct occasions, the commensurability of buying and politics, 'attitude change' as the dependent variable" and finally "followers as 'opinion leaders'" (Gitlin, 1978: 212-217). Those unrealistic assumptions and contradictions made the research less credible and did not allow the theory to be matured, with several more components. Since the research initially aimed to theorise mass media, it was not positioned in a historical, social, or political context, making it more empirical but less

plausible. Later on, it was concluded that effect studies were not as verisimilar as it is thought. Then, not wholly, but the academy did not emphasize it anymore and gravitate towards other aspects of media studies.

Although the academy inclined to ownership studies, the audience maintained its importance. Whether it is for understanding one specific audience's preferences or for the whole industry, audience measurement is still considered crucial. As Arnold cites, "audience measurement is important to judge the performance of programs, to guide decisions about program scheduling, and for advertising planning and trading" (Gunter, 2000 as cited in Arnold, 2016: 73). Audience measurement is fundamental for before, during, and after broadcasting a program. One reason for the importance is that "media industries are not simply producers of the content; they are at the same time producers of the audiences" (Napoli, 2003, as cited in Arnold, 2016: 72). To be informed about the audience requires understanding, thus, researching the target audience. Whether educational, public, or entertainment purposes the media has, it is compulsory to notice the characteristics and needs of the audience.

2. Digital Media

2.1. Computers and Internet

Computers were the following stations for the revolutionary devices. Just like the radio and the television, it soon became widespread. Then, ARPANET and the internet joined. Despite the fact that they were invented solely for military purposes, it was shortly introduced to the masses as a new way of communication by connecting the devices. Even though computers were personal devices, the internet made it more similar to mass media, starting with bulk e-mails or newsletters (Lüders, 2008).

Internet and its perks reshaped the way people watch TV. Along with the practices of the audience, the measurement is evolved (Napoli, 2012). As named, the second

screening means being online on another platform while watching a show and expressing thoughts on other platforms simultaneously (Hill, 2014). The visible example for second screening was voting through SMS ("TV companies still unclear on mobile business models. (Television 2.0: bridging the gap between content and technology)", 2003). Another one is applying to TV shows via SMS again ("Celador launches mobile play along Millionaire. (Television 2.0: bridging the gap between content and technology)", 2003). The current stage of conventional television allows for multiplatform measuring through social media metrics.

Nowadays, the modern version of second screening can be seen as people tweet or post while watching TV. The better part of the second screening for broadcasters is people share online about the shows they are watching meantime. It is a perk for audience measurement, and now cross-platform audience measurement is strongly suggested due to the overlapping nature of current media platforms (Green, 2016).

One of the epoch-making consequences of the second screening measurement is social rating. It is different from social television, which is actually notifying the channel through its own platforms like online surveys, votes, or ideas; or asking questions to the audience. With no determined etymological origin, the social rating is widely assumed that the concept "social television" stems from George Orwell's 1984 (Tansel İlic, 2015). Social rating refers to the audience measurement performed on the social media sites due to it. It catches and regulates Big Data in several forms and with thorough information and provides a broadcasting business strategy (Kelly, 2019). The social media reaction is already produced, recorded, and is ready to be analysed and reported. It includes the frequency of mentioning a show per second and the emotions contained in it. One local company in Turkey, Ynklabs, has the artificial intelligence convenient for Turkish language semantics to detect emotions regarding those reactions about the relevant shows

(Tansel İlic, 2015). It is much more different from a consuetudinary rating system since it did not consider emotions and engagement. Nowadays, it is almost a norm for any kind of show to urge the audience to follow their social media accounts, recommend asking questions through those, and suggest them to tweet using hashtags for every episode. This way, it is easier to trace who likes shows and the reason behind the admiration, which episode gets the attention most, and when it is decided not to watch a show.

For some, the social rating is considered emancipating since the audience can explain many things about TV shows with no restriction. People can express their passion, enjoyment, or hatred for anything they see on the TV, and this may give people a false sense of freedom or feel like they are conferred on. With the content broadcasted online on the websites or YouTube channels, people could watch the content whenever they want and feel empowered (Jennes et al., 2014). However, several facts and possibilities contradict this so-called freedom, according to Tansel İlic (2015). First and foremost, the opinion asked is always about the shows that already exist, with no exception: what people "choose" to watch is actually a choice of what they were given; television is still a supply-based industry.

Moreover, people are never enquired about what they want to see next, whether as a context, type, or untested form; the curiosity of the broadcasters is always focused on a show that already exists. Secondly, not every single person in the audience does not have a social media account or does not prefer to express their thoughts or feelings about shows online; the information does not include every single individual who watches a particular show. Last but not least, referring to a show online only makes people tracked and surveilled. These contradicting factors prove that social rating only strengthens the broadcasters and audience measurement companies in a more detailed, intricate, and accurate way with no reality of freedom for the audience. Emancipation is only an illusion;

social rating is repetitive and far from changing anything in the already measurement system. Furthermore, as for classical rating, it is predicted that it will still be demanded for a long time, for it is the coin of the realm of broadcasting (Woodford, Goldsmith, & Bruns, 2015). For social rating to be achieved well, it is required to understand the internet and what it brought.

2.2. Internet and Social Web

The internet was a ground-breaking invention for communications, as well as the other fields of the social realm. Anything and everything could be digitalised, including culture and entertainment. It is seen as empowering due to the benefits supplied for the individuals (Van Dijk et al., 2018). People can reach whatever information they desire now, although it is not how it has always been. They can fix a task or even build a business. Before new internet developments, it was only possible to convey written messages via the internet; even interfaces could not have images. A myriad of constraints of the web were eliminated in time; firstly, photographs could be published, which was the turn for the video. Visualising changed a couple of things; now, with the newest elements that the internet brought, the image of pages changed utterly. Rather than being a page full of words, now visual media took most of the space. Especially news platforms have been using those attributes with exaggerated word arts and shapes attached. Multimedia was the ground-breaking level of the internet for many things to change.

The invention of web 2.0 tied all computers together, instead of tying them to a central one individually. When it was improvised, it allowed the message and the feedback to share the same channel, "it became interactive" (Dijck, 2013). Blogs made it easier for individuals to share their ideas and interests, and they also could get responses to what they expressed. They could also be the only respondents with not igniting anything from the beginning. Now people can rent rooms, join university lectures, buy and sell goods. (Van Dijk et al., 2018). The opportunities of web 2.0 were so vast that people even

forgathered for making their own broadcast new media online (Jenkins, 2006). Then, microblogs emerged, and users could share the same platform while communicating. Those responses are not monotone; they are in several types and forms of expression, including multimedia. Microblogs laid the foundations of the current participatory culture (Van Dijk et al., 2018), which refers to a community that grows by enabling the access of every participant rather than a commercial platform (Jenkins & Ito, 2015). Especially for the ones that internet means more to them -like younger users-, participatory culture's qualities are arranged by Jenkins:

- "1. relatively low barriers to artistic expression and civic engagement,
2. strong support for creating and sharing creations with others,
3. some type of informal mentorship whereby what is known by the most experienced is passed along to novices,
4. members who believe that their contributions matter, and
5. members who feel some degree of social connection with one another (at the least, they care what other people think about what they have created)." (2007).

Thus, participation culture is inclusive, and unlike the culture that mass media imposes, it does not notice the differences between participants such as expertise or veteran. They all are allowed to state their opinions and share anything on a predetermined subject.

What those microblogs have in common apart from conveying the message and receiving feedback at the same level is that the algorithms that code all of the possibilities can be done. Van Dijk, Poell, and De Waal chose to use the word *platform* and define it as "a programmable architecture designed to organise interactions between users- not just end-users but also corporate entities and public bodies" (2018: 4). Just as aforementioned, platforms or microblogs, also known as social media, are, in Bruns' words, "user-driven environment[s] into which a corporate presence is accepted only if it leaves its mass

communication approaches by the door" (Bruns, 2010: 1). They cannot consider users mass; they cannot target them in bulks or communicate vertically.

As a result, horizontal communication became widespread, and consumers became producers of their own content. Named as *produser* by Axel Bruns, it refers to the users who both produce content and use the platform simultaneously (Dijk, 2013). It seemed both communal and collaborative to produce one's own knowledge; it was as if people were not given media to consume, and they were making their own. Users started to shape their own media (Bruns, 2008). A self-built or self-regulated platform is unique and easy to interiorise and claim. It made it easy to think of the duality and contradiction as social versus mass media.

The phenomenon named social media can be divided into four categories, according to Dijk: social network sites (SNS), user-generated content (UGC), trading and marketing sites (TMS), and finally, play and game sites (PGS) (Dijk, 2013). SNSes claim to connect people and bring forth new communities like Facebook and Twitter, which Dijk also disagrees with by distinguishing connectivity and building collective communities (Helen et al., 2015). UGCs promote original content production, whether it is amateur or professional such as YouTube and Wikipedia. TMSes are basically online stores whose relation with the economy is apparent, like Amazon and Etsy. PGSeS are online games that with a changeful popularity level. However, even though that is a distinct classification, the lines that separate them are blurry. The nature of those websites makes it impossible to use them single-mindedly. It is currently possible to buy some coins from gaming sites or playing playable games on UGS advertisements.

Just like mass media, social media needs some customers to continue existing. While mass media bombards its audience with content all the time, social media cannot just offer a structure and wait for users to do something. So, it has to differentiate itself,

starting with forms (Bruns, 2014). It is not possible to find two Facebooks or more than one Twitter. While their content shares similarities, they offer something completely different, and upcoming social media platforms must follow this rule.

Unlike mass media, social media is available for everyone with no requirements of the formal permit, apart from totalitarian regimes. While mass media requires national and international institutions' regulations, rules are not applicable for social media; it is known for being freer. One would explain themselves through social media, and the expression is open to everyone on the web. Thus, Castells names internet communication as "mass-self communication" and explains the reasons as "It is mass communication because it reaches potentially a global audience through the p2p networks and Internet connection [...] And it is self-generated in content, self-directed in emission and selfselected in reception by many that communicate with many" (2007: 11). Even though he criticised some aspects of social media, the naming is completely based on the potential and ignores its practice.

The flexible environment design of social media allowed users to reach almost anything at almost any time. Users "can gain more control [...] over their media experiences, as they can determine themselves which content they access anytime, anywhere and on any device" due to the less structured environment of social media (Jennes, 2014: 3). It gives the audience some power, even though it is limited (Castells, 2007).

There is another type of potentials of social media. For instance, those platforms overcome geographic barriers and make it possible to communicate without spatial difficulty due to being designed to be shared by countless people (Munday & Chandler, 2018). Those are the ones who also produce and consume the content simultaneously. Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter can be exemplified for that matter. If

YouTube is taken, for example, it would be seen that the ones who actually have their own channels also watch videos produced by others, subscribe to other channels, and comment on others' videos.

As van Dijk and Poell systematised, four essential characteristics make social media (2013). Those four elements work together by supporting each other and making a whole digital system. Programmability refers to build website traffic via making the platforms operate like clockwork by urging users actually to use the platform by sharing any type of content; popularity is the exact reason being a platform is used, just like any other means of communication with a twist: popularity on the social media platforms are measurable by the number of followers, likes, dislikes, retweets, quotes, shares, mentions, and comments; connectivity is what makes social media social, by connecting "users to content, users to users, a platform to users, users to advertisers, and platforms to platforms"; datafication is the primary source of income, and even though it used to be considered as a by-product, now it is the main point (Dijck & Poell, 2013). It is necessary to highlight that those characteristics are what shapes user experience. Relationships, culture, thrill, passion, admiration, and even people are also programmed, made famous, connected to another, and datafied (Bellanova, 2017). Also, if the products, whether they are websites or cultural media, are not suitable for programmability, popularity, connectivity, or datafication, they are entirely abandoned.

In the core of everything digitalised, there are code and programming. Computers, devices based on computer mentality such as smartphones, and anything found on those devices is programmed. Every action is managed by commands conveyed through coded algorithms, and those devices are waiting for another command to work. A code and software are different from each other; while code references the production process, the software is the main product. Software is built to rule commands and transact. It is

possible to say that when a button is clicked, the code is the main reason for a window to open, but the whole application that the button is clicked is software, to put simply. In other words, as Berry defines, "code and software are two sides of the same coin, code is the static textual form of software, and software is the processual operating form" (Berry, 2011a: 32).

Softwares are considered dangerous and mysterious due to their invisibility; even though it is possible to understand what it has done by results, the process is still hidden (Chun, 2011). Even the users, the ones that actually carry the applications, are not allowed to have a glimpse or get an explanation about it unless they create a huge ruckus like Occupy Wall Street movement. The hidden software either has or has the potential to possess unknown agendas and concealed assumptions (Alexander, 2016). They are strictly protected "with patent and trade secret laws, non-disclosure agreements, non-compete clauses, and other legal instruments" (Bottando, 2012; Gillespie, 2007, 2011; Vaidhyathan, 2011 as cited in Hallinan & Stripas, 2016: 2). They are not open to any government intervention or "democratic control," making them utterly opaque since their base on those devices and their software, social media, and so-called online socialisation is relatively obscure, too.

The platforms also seem like neutral intermediaries, yet the reality is far from it. While they are offering ground for users to interact, or maybe a public sphere for people to join, the ground that was offered is not built upon a smooth surface. It is built with the goal of financial benefit and shaped to fit it. The platforms are clearly not neutral or objective, especially when the choices made according to build them, that is, the algorithms they consist of considered (Van Dijk et al., 2018: 29). The unrevealed sets of algorithms are the operating systems that process users' information and somehow shepherd users to certain acts within and outside the platforms. When it is remembered

that even culture, admirations, and relations are also programmed, they are "assembled, dismantled, bundled, and dispersed within and across contexts" (Mackenzie, 2006) -even if the programming has nothing to do with the production stage, what takes users to those are coded- it becomes more apparent that user's preferences and relationships are actually predetermined. If users are not highly interested, it is almost impossible to encounter something that is not popular online, which decreases the chance of reaching alternative forms of anything, including social subjects, imaginable. It is only fair to rediscover that even the platforms seen as "the freest" are actually not free at all. Rather than being liberating minds, it leads people to build a bubble that consists of mere interests. Furthermore, it does this using whatever the users allow: the user data.

Algorithms operate using the data that they are allowed to reach. Data does not exist by itself; it is created by tracking online user behaviour (Villars, Olofson, & Eastwood, 2011). Since coming into service, any kind of online user act was systematically trackable due to the structuring of the internet, even if it is the pointer's movements. The websites automatically collect both the user and content data (Van Dijk et al., 2018). When they both combine, the captured data offers an illuminating insight. Even though it was considered a by-product, it is now in the centre of online networks and businesses (Bellanova & González Fuster). Moreover, it is what makes it more prominent now than ever: it is discerned that big data is actually profit-generating. Social media and unpaid subscriptions feed of those structural advantages, and after the acceptance of the famous, long, and comprehensible to some "Terms and Conditions," they are set to use the data they are going to collect to sell for their advantage. Currently, any kind of user interaction can be secured as data, forms, locations, friending or searching, and so on (Van Dijk et al., 2018). Every form of online behaviour of a person is literally recorded and stored, ready to be evaluated and used. Users are more eager to

share their data instead of paying for the things they used to not pay for help the data collection process, whether they are aware or not (Evens & Van Damme).

Especially the platforms that do not enforce a charge for users do capture the user data to earn from it, due to the absence of payment. The dual structure of conventional media can be seen here, too. Those platforms collect data and offer their users' advertisements to the people that are already and definitely interested. Instead of content, the platform itself is offered as a groundwork for people to use freely by producing content and engaging in several actions like consuming, commenting on, liking, and disliking content. They consist of whatever the users produce or share. They seem like a community platform that is built and carried by solely users- especially UGCs such as YouTube. However, the usage of user data completely alters the perception behind it.

In addition to those, other kinds of video platforms only deliver the already produced media and receive payment with several prepared plans. Especially top-rated video streaming services carry this feature. Before jumping to that, it is necessary to mention video streaming services that are classified by Lobato according to their characteristics:

"online TV portals; [...] subscription video-on-demand (SVOD), [...] transactional video-on-demand (TVOD); [...] hybrid TVOD/SVOD/free portals, also explained as UGCs by Dijk (2013), [...] video sharing platforms that is only open to amateur videos unlike hybrid TVOD/SVOD/free portals; [...] informal on- demand and download services; [...] unlicensed live, linear channel feeds; [and finally] recommender and aggregator apps" (2019: 7-8).

Just like the types of social media, the lines between online video platforms are blurry, too. The almost unlimited potential of the internet causes the nature of those platforms to be fluid and allows them to turn into each other from time to time or carry similar characteristics; they can even share some of them with regular television. To refer

to all of these platforms and "closed and editorial content," the term "internet television" is also used as an umbrella concept (Johnson, 2017: 10 as cited in Lobato, 2019: 10).

This study will focus mainly on subscription video on demand services. Named also as Over the Top (OTT), SVODs are services that operate via paid video subscription and open to everyone. While both of them mean the same system, OTT is named from the perspective of the service, and VOD is from the users' point of view. They deliver audio-visual content online. It is possible to subscribe by writing down several pieces of information about oneself and a credit card and choosing a system for payment.

Internationally, Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney Plus, Hulu, and Mubi; and locally in Turkey, BluTV, PuhuTV, Exxen, and Gain Medya delivers the content.

When the dissertation was started to be written, the pandemic was almost at its peak in the world and Turkey. This fact is also what underlies the dissertation. In 2020, Netflix achieved its most significant growth during the pandemic by almost 4 million subscribers, with a 31.4% increase compared to 2019 (Dean, 2021). Netflix brought other SVOD platforms along with itself. Several platforms were either founded or earned a reputation around the world. In Turkey, BluTv was founded in 2015, a year before Netflix was launched its Turkey branch, but became particularly popular after that. PuhuTv was founded in 2016, the same year as Netflix, but in December, 11 months later than Netflix Türkiye. In December 2020, Gain Medya began broadcasting. In 2021, Exxen was introduced. Netflix inspired a lot of media companies to be like itself. Most of those getting popular or founding happened during the pandemic. The 2020 pandemic was advantageous for Over the Top companies.

Those services are growing in numbers and comprehensiveness. They aim for both children and grown audience; they include reality competition shows and remaking of older cult content; some are streaming concerts like Gain Medya, BluTV offers sports

events. Contents are easier to find, too. It is no longer necessary to zap for some time; it is enough to type down the qualification of the content that is desired to watch. In total, SVOD services offer anything conventional media has, and SVODs are easier to access. Streaming almost identical content with effortless access is a massive advantage for SVODs. They cover every aspect of television, and due to the propagation of those services, it is expected and assumed that the TV channels will no longer exist after 2030 (Doyle, 2016), and Netflix's CEO Hastings expects so, too (DLDconference, 2016).

2.3. Television and Its Evolving

To delay the inevitable end or not to vanish, TV channels had to adapt or evolve. The competition will include other platforms; thus, the best solution is to have at least a couple of their features to keep their audience for themselves. First, even though television and SVODs are distinct platforms, they are not entirely different from each other. Nevertheless, they had to have some similarities. They both "frame reality" and turn it into consumable products; they also present an incessant stream of information (Dijck and Poell, 2013). That way, both media were able to keep their customers coming back to them the similar reasons. Another similarity is that social media has penetrated all domains of life like mass media, and just like other areas, mass media needed to adapt to those changes.

While users interact and get accustomed to the media's new features, mass media had to alter itself to continue existing. One reason for it to change is that social media has already had the existing features of any type of mass media: one can find contents to read, listen and watch, even if it is a live event. That made the rivalry harder for conventional media to compete with whatever social media has to offer. Especially for social matters, one card that mass media played is their "objectivity, fairness and transparency". Mass

media claim that only they are credible due to their rules. These false complements and fake principles that the media takes credit for are their accusations for social media.

On the other hand, social media uses mass media's tools and sticks up for itself by bringing the reality of actually showing things that happen as its self-justification. More interestingly, users now and then even considered social media as the victor in a battle with mass media (Dijck, 2013). However, the reality is much more different.

Even though mass media claims reliability, the audience is getting into the social media world, and they somehow need to keep up with the changes that come with technology. For instance, a newsflash is first seen on social media, and for it to be streamed on TV takes a long time. With the sheer need of customers for their business, mass media had to change, starting with tardiness. They started with changing the direction of their communication, from vertical to horizontal; according to Castells, they had to drift apart from their one-way nature and join the interactive world of new media by starting with links (2007). They use social media platforms with all their aspects or ask for other additional features, and people even build platforms/channels right in between those two: broadcasting only online but with the characteristics of conventional television. For instance, some news platforms such as BBC Türkçe and DW Türkçe use Twitter as in a way that even links that do not take the user to another tab anymore; just open on the same platform, and Medyascope asked for a device for itself to broadcast their news programs on Periscope platform, totally online. Lüders states that even though there are similarities, mass media, and social media -personal media, as he names- are still different means of communication (2008: 3). Castells does not merge them either and names current media as "the coexistence and interconnection of mainstream media, corporately owned new media, and autonomous Internet sites" (2007: 16). It is possible to summarise as follows: new media and conventional media are so similar to each other, but new media

still opens other fields for itself; mass media had to evolve steadily to approach its ways to compete with social media.

Besides, it would not be wrong to say that new media did not only caused mass media to change; it had its ways with society, too. Van Dijk and Poell add society to that equation and describes the change of those three as "co-evolving" (2013). Van Dijk adds that "mediated sociality becomes part of society's institutional fabric" (2013) and explains that features of platformised (he uses the word *platformisation*) social media "disrupts both collective public arrangements and entrenched market structures" (Van Dijk et al., 2018). Thus, it is not precisely possible to describe the social realm as a battlefield for means of communication and assign a winner.

Television has internet platforms as a rival, too, and television is considered unsuccessful (Lindsey, 2016: 223). Especially for video services, its rivals are increasing in number. The rivalry was initiated with time-shifting. The term time-shifting originally referred to VCRs but later, "in general, time-shifting [...] refers to any method of watching television whereby viewers watch programming at a time other than when it originally aired" (Lindsey, 2016: 221). The TV audience decides which show they want to watch later and record it for viewing afterward, or they were systematically allowed to watch previous shows in a predetermined period. After mainstream media's participation on the web, users could view the shows online on mostly channels' website, then on VODs like YouTube (Tansel İlic, 2015); and later, the existence of television content online was going to remodel the whole industry and propped the newest business models to emerge (Chalaby & Plunkett 2020). According to the researches, online TV consumption was "very close to live broadcasting, thus softening rather than breaking the synchrony of traditional TV", according to the research (Abreu et al., 2017).

Another reason for time-shifting to be preferred was that it allowed users to skip commercials (Lindsey, 2016). The opportunity to skip the advertisements upheaves the main financial system of television. It is even emphasised that it "destabilizes the relationship between advertiser, broadcaster, and viewer, separating the scheduled time from the viewing time" (Jenner, 2017: 7). Thus, it shakes the absolute belief about the visibility of a televisual commercial.

Still, some researchers do not agree that time-shifting disturbs the television system and does not consider it a Video on Demand (VOD) service (Abreu et al., 2017). VOD refers to the services that allow users to watch what they want to watch at a preferred time. The contents are already recorded on a physical or online platform and accessible. While television is one-way and strictly organised, a VOD grants the audience some power for choosing their preferred video and its watching time instead of obliging predesignated time and show settings of TV institutions, making it a "24/7 universe" (Chalaby & Plunkett, 2020). Unlike time-shifting, it also offers a myriad of videos/video sets to users. If it is overlooked that DVDs are considered as a VOD service by some (Jenner, 2018), the rest of the VOD services are based on subscriptions, especially paid ones, although it is not compulsory. UGC services like YouTube or Vimeo are examples of VOD services, as in the name, their content is user-generated; thus, they use advertisement as the source of income, with the limited additional allowance of social interaction (Jennes et al., 2014). The ones which enforce subscriptions are named Over the Top services (OTT).

OTT services are VODs that require a subscription, are also named subscriptionbased video on demand services (SVOD) (Matrix, 2014). People tend to see them as social media, and Netflix had tried to locate itself as participatory media a long

time ago, but they are basically "televisions using IP" and not a connective web (Jenner, 2018: 246).

Netflix, Disney+, Amazon Prime, PuhuTV, BluTv, and TV+ are some of the VODs. OTTs offer many videos, films, and TV shows, to users in exchange for a payment based on subscription, instead of relying on adverts for income. Moreover, when the numbers of subscribers are considered, it is somehow proved that "this supposed noncommercialism is (literally) bought and paid for" (Jenner, 2018: 112). People actually purchase not watching disturbing and frustrating commercials willingly¹. For the VOD companies, it makes the process easier that due to the absence of the third party and the users, VOD services are considered worthy of choice since there is no nuisance of commercials.

It seems that OTTs do not require additional support from users apart from a device connected to the internet. Arbitrarily screen and speaker choices may vary and changeable. Even one subscription allows the owner of the account to use it on several

devices. It is one of the conveniences for the users. It is also convenient for secondscreening, which had already become a habit for the audience, regardless of the second device. It allows people to download some content to watch when they do not have an internet connection. Moreover, several users can use one subscription by creating up to 4 profiles under the same account, depending on the chosen payment plan².

¹ Even though people want to buy the lack of advertisements, Netflix has short promotional segments in several chapters of a self-produced reality competition show, Next in Fashion. The celebratory parts of the show offer displays of Samsung fridge and mobile devices, which is the same as embedded marketing of conventional television.

² The abundance of profiles for each account is a widely known phenomenon among users, it is impossible to not be aware of that as a company, especially a company that cares too much about data. It has been a common practice for a decade, but it is now claimed that the company loses \$1.5 billion annually ("Study Reveals Netflix", 2019). However, it is necessary to point out that Netflix does not lose something that is already earned, it earns less, according to the company's estimations. In 2016, even Hastings expressed that password sharing is inevitable, but he did not forget to point out some limits of his terms (Godwin, 2021). However, Netflix now signalled the execution of those terms and decided to test conformation system via e-mail. Even though the test is still on trial, users see the message "If you don't live with the owner of this account, you need your own account to keep watching." and the message is seen while subscribing on the

Unlike users, some researchers focus on choosing time and content as the primary source of empowerment, rather than the lack of compulsory commercial watchings (Jennes et al., 2014). This convenience is essential for one thing: the lives are not designated around the TV device anymore, unlike they used to be. On the contrary, the TV and watching practices are designed around lives. However, the platforms have their own design, too, and it is only expected for them to be designed to keep the customers as more protracted or beneficial as possible for those companies.

CHAPTER II – NETFLIX ECOSYSTEM

3.1. Getting to Know Netflix

There are several hearsays started by the founders of Netflix about the main reason behind its founding. The co-founder and CEO Reed Hastings explained that the thing that pushed him to establish Netflix is being forced to pay a ridiculous amount of late fee to Blockbuster -soon to be a rival of Netflix- for a DVD (Sperling, 2019). However, the reality is a lot different from the narrative. According to the other co-founder Marc

Randolph, the story is a bit different. He explained that their main goal was to build "the Amazon.com of something," and Hastings' words were just a "convenient fiction" (Castillo, 2017, para 2 and 5).

Even though the narratives told by the founders of Netflix about the idea behind varied and Hasting's story changed throughout time (Castillo, 2017), the milestones in Netflix's timeline do not change. Started as the Amazon.com of DVD, selling and renting in 1997 soon focused on only renting DVDs by mail through its website in 1998. People

screen which implies that Netflix is trying to enforce some terms for users. Especially for the North America region where subscription increase is declining, it can be considered a solution to keep increase the number of users ascending (Levy, 2021).

would choose what film they want to hire and ask for it online, then receive it by mail. The returning policy was through the mail, too. Earlier, the renting system was similar to pay-per-view, and they were priced singly until 2000. In 2000, the model was turned into a subscription system, and customers paid only for the subscription without additional fees. It was also the year for the first recommendation system of Netflix (Butler, 2020). The system benefited Netflix well, while other competing companies that offer DVD-by-mail, such as Blockbuster and Walmart -which also allow customers to hire in the stores- could not keep up with their subscribers' demands, while Netflix thrived (Lindsay, 2016). It was not only the recommendation system but also the ability to take the risk, good planning, and big capital were contributing factors (Butler, 2020). Lindsay bases it mostly upon the unwillingness of its rivals for taking a risk (2016).

By 2007, it started to broadcast already-made content online (Novak, 2016). The first original Netflix content, House of Cards, was created in 2013 and received many reactions. Some of its contents were even nominated for Emmy awards, and House of Cards won three, and the documentary The White Helmets of Netflix was the first to win an Oscar. The quality original contents are the ones that actually attract users, and it is predicted that they will be more of an issue (Lindsey, 2016). Later on, producing original content would become another field for competition for VOD services (Matrix, 2014). Moreover, finally, it was reported that the main aim or the obsession of Hastings is making Netflix more like HBO (Baldwin, 2012), which is a content giant on television. Netflix also made contracts with electronic companies to have an in-built Netflix in televisions and have a Netflix button on remotes, making access easy for users ("Netflix'in Hikayesi" n.d.).

3.2. What did Netflix Do to the TV Audience

There was something else that Netflix was successful at: it changed people's watching habits. To begin with, watching Netflix is a habit itself, as Hastings worded (DLDconference, 2016), choosing Netflix instead of conventional television starts with a choice and later turns into a habit. People also were accustomed to watching on their television with a bigger screen; now they are getting used to the computer or mobile device screens, even gaming consoles: Netflix "instilled users with the notion that television does not have to be watched on a TV" (Lindsey, 2016: 228). Creating their own customers and shaping their audience was quite fortunate. Netflix created its own audience just like other entertainment companies and co-evolved with them (Lobato, 2019), but it added a twist to it: it changed their habits drastically.

Even though it broadcasts audio-visual content, it is not television. Television has its own broadcast streaming, yet, VODs offer a myriad of audio-visual content with no time setting. People can watch the shows VODs offer whenever and wherever they want to. Rather than other VOD services like Disney+, Netflix specifically streams the whole season of its shows and allows users to binge on the shows, which is actually a new habit that came with Netflix. The most important feature of it that distinguishes it from television and other VOD services are having no advertisements. Even it is an SVOD, Hulu Plus still forces its subscribers to watch several advertisements (Lindsey, 2016), and in the competition with Netflix, it is expected for Netflix to be in advance.

Even though people used to have movie marathons before Netflix and people used to binge-watch seasons of TV series through DVDs, it put the concept of binge-watching in daily lives. While a movie marathon means watching several movies in a row, bingewatching means viewing several series chapters successively. Even though opinions on this point change, the agreed number of chapters for it to be counted as a binge-

watching is at least more than two. It is also thought that it is a business strategy (Jenner, 2017) and even a "structuring concept" for Netflix (Jenner, 2018: 115). While the concept "binge" has a negative connotation for losing control over consumption, according to Jenner,

"binge-watching implies control more than a dictated number of episodes to watch" (2018: 114). One reason for people to choose binge is the way that Netflix chooses to broadcast shows. Rather than making them wait for a week to watch an episode, it streams the entire season simultaneously, allowing users to watch as much as they desire. Especially when the implications of reality shows, hosts saying that "the next chapter is a click away," "you do not need to wait," or "next chapter will come with the surprise" and "skip intro" buttons, starting of a trailer right after a show ends, the invisibility of pointer right after a show started to play is considered, it is impossible to not agree with Jenner in terms of them being a business strategy.

The root of binge-watching goes as far as Netflix's year of establishment, due to its policy for allowing subscribers to keep the DVDs they ordered as long as they paid monthly fees; users opted for subscribing to Netflix, instead of paying late fees for other rental stores, resulting in marathons and binge-watching (Jenner, 2018). i, when Netflix delivers a series' every episode of a season on the same day, they are watched in short notice, especially by users aged 18 to 34 (Matrix, 2014). Due to the model of VOD, bingewatching is considered a completely different experience from what they get from television despite the cost of "emotional responses, [...] memory for narrative events, and real-world judgements" (Snider, 2016: 151-152). Binge-watching is driven by "the serial form combined with technologies that give viewers the authority to decide when to watch what, with the added benefit of avoiding interruptions by ads" (Jenner, 2017: 7). Especially not requiring changing discs and not waiting between episodes probably affect

them, too (Jenner, 2018); after all, it is not even necessary to click for the next episode to play.

Another point of binge-watching is that it is considered socially acceptable as long as the content is considered binge-worthy, bingeable or quality, and it is seen better than watching television all day, even if a whole season is binged. It shares the similarity to the emergence and early spreading times of television (Aziz, 2013; Tarshis, 2017); the scheduling and planning the binge showcases the televisual nature of SVODs, rather than being social or connective media (Jenner, 2017).

Although it is thought that the reason behind it is about being a community, discussing the shows both online and offline, and fear of missing out (FOMO), the act of binge-watching also appears for the shows that are aimed at children (Matrix, 2014). The reason behind this is thought that tablets are primary screens for the young audience, unlike adults (Matrix, 2014). Notably, when Netflix's CEO Reed Hastings' prediction that the end of the linear television will be generational just like fixed-line phones (DLDconference, 2016) and television as a device -not a content- is actually no more important (Kompore, 2010), it seems quite reasonable.

Binge-watching is not reprimanded as long as it is not watching television for hours, and the content is commonly accepted as quality. Quality or cult content (Jenner, 2017) or popular ones (Alexander, 2016) are considered binge-able or binge-worthy. The acceptance does not require a specific genre. The most important shared feature of those binge-worthy shows is popularity (Matrix, 2014). As Wagman and Barra described, the global audience of Netflix built different Netflix cultures with various approaches (2016 as cited in Lobato, 2019: 14).

There are several reasons concluded by several researchers for what may have given an upper hand to Netflix in the industrial competition: for Lindsey, it was changing

habits and inaptitude of rivals (2016), it was being ad-free and being suitable for binge-watching for Jenner (2018), Matrix thinks that the understanding of community and FOMO was more prominent than others (2014), for Elkins, it was glorifying and criticising controversial norms at the same time (2013), and several algorithms that constitute its recommendation system for Gomez-Urbe and Hunt. They considered the binge-watching model and recommendation system is crucial for Netflix, especially in a brand-new industry, considering the wildness of the competition (Gomez-Urbe & Hunt, 2015). With the Netflix prize in 2009, a software development competition that was open for everyone, a recommendation system was thoroughly developed, and the prediction speed was increased by 10% by Bellkor's Pragmatic Chaos team ("Netflix'in Hikayesi", n.d., para. 11).

Predicting and recommending is not something that happens coincidentally. It requires information, power and to build those; it requires a base of a comprehensive dataset. For this, the opportunities of the internet, that is, collected data, is used. This is, as Bellanova and Gonzalez Fuster clarified, “directly based on personal data mining” (2018: 4). When the dataset is ready, it later gets clarified, regulated, and organised. After this step, they are interpreted, and a pattern is looked for, using calculations. Named as artificial intelligence (AI) or machine learning (ML), an algorithm to make sense of data is written. It is then tested for explaining future possibilities to check its correctness. When the model is correctly or precisely constructed, it can predict the upcoming actions, for Netflix's case, upcoming preferences and watching behaviours. It takes a long time to build a correct algorithm to detect what users would like to watch when the magnitude and elaborateness of the big data are considered.

Apart from the blatant surveillance and the usage of personal data, the most disturbing part of the prediction is the secrecy of the software. The system is actually

embodied in Netflix (Bellanova et al., 2018), and every user is exposed to it, but they are not allowed even to be informed (Chun, 2011). The only information exchanged with the users is that vaguely the information is collected, and their information is used and is also probably shared (Gizlilik Bildirimi, n.d.).

Software like Pollux and device like people meter is expected; using other or more intricate algorithms to measure only content consumption is not revolutionary. What Netflix does innovative is adapting algorithms to media production, in addition to media consumption (Napoli, 2014). Especially when the production aspect of Netflix is considered, it is expected for more popular genres to be invested for production.

Some users consume the content on Netflix, some do not or consume less. Since the data is produced by using the "services" or being online on the website, the ones who do not watch anything does not provide data for Netflix, and the more someone watches, so provides their data for Netflix, the more they will remain customers (Jenner, 2017). Furthermore, watching and the accuracy of Netflix's algorithm amplifies each other (Napoli, 2014). To keep customers in the system longer and gather more extensive data, a solution is found: Netflix tries to make customers watch more content by guessing their future likings (DLDconference, 2016), and it is conducted via building a recommendation system grows with watchings.

3.3. Globalisation of Netflix

Even though it started as a national company, it did not take a long time for Netflix to expand its borders and reach a global audience. Before Netflix, transnational channels broadcast to a few countries (Lobato, 2019). Globalisation of a "channel" is a groundbreaking concept because before VOD services, the broadcasting business mainly was "strictly national" (Chalaby & Plunkett, 2020: 52). Apart from those channels in limited numbers, some foreign shows, especially dramas, were marketed and broadcasted

on television. However, streaming an external channel to an audience of different countries was still unusual (Lobato, 2019). While some believed that the broadcasted foreign content brought different societies closer for cultural matters (Chatterjee & Sambit, 2020), as for legal subjects, channels were subject to national laws, and they regulated the shows. National boards conducted inspection and supervision of media companies. Entertainment and political programs were designed according to laws, national culture, language, or even governmental purposes for some cases. They mostly carried the peculiarity of the national society that they were produced in.

Digitalisation of the industry altered the unsettled national nature of the broadcasting business. Streams reached anywhere neither with no need for laws or regulations nor with the laws that can be evaded. Thereby, SVODs open themselves new branches in various countries from the ones they were established, the laws that they are tied to get complicated. Original content would not be much of a burden, but ready-made content that is delivered through SVOD was a complicated peril; local PayTV companies had publishing copyrights in one country, so SVODs could not deliver that show or some seasons of it. Some SVOD services do not prefer to buy out the copyrights of specific contents in one country, or for Netflix's case, while Netflix was not provided in some countries, they sold the copyrights of the original contents to other media delivery companies or did not buy global copyrights (Netflix Yardım Merkezi n.d.). Some countries in European Union have a goal to protect their culture from Hollywood's impact and force a local content quota upon foreign audiovisual platforms (Lobato, 2019).

Subscription systems also depend on the country. Fees vary but do not change daily or within a day according to currency exchange rates. For instance, due to being used corruptly, Netflix's free first-month 30-day-trial system was once cancelled in Turkey, and the cancellation was tested in several countries.

Apart from the legal relevancy, cultural differences and preferences matter for Netflix, too. Netflix is now available in 190 countries ("Netflix nerelerde hizmet veriyor?", n.d., para. 1) and planning to reach up to 243 (Aguiar, 2018)³. The users in one country are exposed to other ones' content, but that does not equal to getting the same kind of reactions for the content. People even may not be able to understand the way that communication works or what message is conveyed. Building a global public opinion about a matter or a show is not possible. It requires a familiarity, "command of a foreign language [...] and familiarity with different cultures [...] emerge as important aspects of the transcultural experience" (Jenner, 2018: 250). The concept "global audience" is not an entirely accurate term for Netflix or any media company for that matter; instead, it is concluded by Jenner that "transnational" is a better term for defining its audience (2018: 241). In his interview in Germany, Hastings explains that Netflix aims to continue producing globally (DLDconference, 2016).

With all that been explained, whether on the internet or not, it is necessary to say that Netflix is the first and major television to be a global one. It is the first one to reach an utterly diverse audience, even though it is defined as not global but transnational.

3.4. Netflix and Data

Just like other online media, it is fair to deduce that SVOD services also rely on those mentioned earlier four fundamental characteristics of social media explained by van

Dijk and Poell (2013). Considering that they are huge businesses, SVOD services need to act according to those principles even more than social media companies.

³ In Hasting's own words, Netflix has reached and is offering service to every country worldwide, except from China, North Korea, Syria, and Crimea (Lobato, 2019). In the criteria of the United Nations the numbers align. However, Aguiar mentions expansion to 243 countries (2018), and according to ISO country standards, there are 249 countries worldwide, including dependent ones.

Programmability, popularity, connectivity, and datafication are vital components that keep the business afloat or above other companies. Thus, it is naturally expected that companies invest in those fields to proceed in the industry, especially when the audience is worldwide. Broadcasting, producing content, and doing both for a wide range of audiences is a monumental task. Aside from delivering the awaited content, mainly producing the content from scratch is a severe duty. To expedite those, the four elements of "social media" are indispensable. Resembling the social media, online video services aim to apply those. While programmability, popularity, and datafication are directly applied, connectivity is a more indirect process that the VOD companies do not predominantly or openly control. Connectivity occurs by connecting mostly fans rather than everyone amongst the audience, and it is built by and for the fans. The producers, actresses, and actors are the points that are also spotted by the fans, yet, those are not the centres for connecting the fans altogether.

Popularity is the one factor that calls users, calls them, especially for bingewatching (Matrix, 2014). Hence, popularity is paramount for a company that rises on the shoulders of binge. To capture a big audience, the culture offered must be popular (Bellanova, 2018). It is also expected by everyone to detect programmability from a website and an application, yet, programmability is not limited to building software or application. It works hand in hand with datafication to sustain the business. One of the reasons for datafication to be crucial for those platforms is the fact that “[d]atafication endows platforms with the potential to develop techniques for predictive and real-time analytics, which are vital for delivering targeted advertising and services in a wide variety of economic sources” (Van Dijk et al., 2018).

It is compulsory to keep customers using Netflix and gaining new ones simultaneously. While gaining new customers is related to popularity, keeping the

customers is about getting to know them, their taste, and what they can probably want in the future. There always has to be some content to offer for the customers, and it is crucial to estimate what content they may want to see in the future. Recommending and predicting the future interests of the audience is where Netflix's algorithm(s) steps in. Backed up by user data, "predictive analysis", as Markman expresses, is the most continuous feature of Netflix by applying an ongoing process of data gathering and analysing (2019). Due to the nature of the internet, it is already possible to track users' movements on the hardware; it is possible to say that it comes with a built-in tracking system (Van Dijk et al., 2018). Just like other companies, Netflix collects and records it, but with a twist: Netflix makes them meaningful for itself.

With the interpreted data, it is now easier to detect what people enjoy watching. Since Netflix gathers customers' data individually rather than working with samples, the data analysis is more accurate now than ever. Netflix does not only collect the data regarding one aspect of the website or application either, but it also collects "all activity pertaining to a particular website or online media platform" (Arnold, 2016: 74). Even though the samples used to be chosen to represent the whole audience, it is not the same as measuring or datafying every individual in the audience. Mainly when the datafying process is within the limits of the Netflix itself considered, it can be deduced that the data captured is wholly convenient and free from any excess information. Thus, the veracity is higher than ever, and reliability is no longer a problem. It is safe to say that big data analysis have already been providing "a better understanding of the audience" (Havens, 2014: 1) as a new form of audience measurement (Arnold, 2016).

Even though Netflix CEO Reed Hastings explained that "gut feelings are more important than big data" (Ferenstein, 2016, para. 1), what is seen that the current actions of Netflix detected by users is the user data being used for the benefit of the company,

and well-intricately. The data is used so deftly and meaningfully that the episode that gets users wholly attracted to the show is detected (Kastrenakes, 2015). Users would already be accustomed to personalised homepage, but now the algorithms are even so intricate and developed that even the trailers (Min, 2019) and posters are personalised (Roth, 2020). After all these revealed usages of user data, it is only fair to expect that the original production of Netflix is planned by tailoring the user's data and succeed at keeping customers subscribed for a long time. Even though there is no admission from Netflix for user's data usage, it is explained on their page that they assisted content producers by using machine learning techniques to detect or decide on titles (Dye et al., 2020). Webster described the process as “structure decision making within certain bounds” (2011: 50 as cited in Napoli, 2014) and it is clearly stated on Netflix's own blog that all the decisions are made by real people, but those decisions are supported by data (Netflix Research, n.d.).

Even though the data is collected individually, personalisation does not occur individual by individual. Rather than aiming atomised users, it is actually planned as niche marketing (Alexander, 2016). The process was intentional and entirely data-driven (Limov, 2020). Niche marketing means detecting similar patterns on several users' using habits and sorting them into small groups according to those patterns. Niche marketing aims at a small group of people and their needs or wants. It is considered more open to success rather than everyday marketing due to aiming at a particular group. It also lessens the advertising expenditure since the target group is actually looking for the product themselves, and the adverts are only targeted to the areas that the audience will undoubtedly be or already is exposed to. This can be related to the disintegration of the media audience. The abundance of media platforms and various contents made this fragmentation possible and opened a range of consumable content and usable platforms

(Napoli, 2012). In addition to the plethora of platforms, the content is also fabricated according to those niches. When the capaciousness of the world is considered, national production can be considered national, which approves the words of Lobato describing Netflix's services as "geographically differentiated and localized" (2019: 14).

Thus, data collection was not the only reason behind niche marketing: it is also about changing the media environment. It also helps Netflix create audiences from scratch for Netflix's original content and expansion (Limov, 2020).

Recommendation and predicting are also regulated according to niche marketing principles. It is conducted via data science and machine learning. Those machine learning techniques would not be limited to movie titles. As it is supposed to be, machine learning or artificial intelligence would be used for predicting the future interests of the users (Havens, 2014), and keeping the Netflix Prize in mind, that recommendation is not the only reason the competition was implemented; it was a way to decide future contents that are going to be produced. Netflix is too into data science that it built its own open-source data science platform that claims to help data scientists with their and their partners' servers ("Why Metaflow", n.d.) with the slogan "More data science with less engineering" (AWS Events, 2019). Understanding human-centred data science made it a little easier to understand: the complex data collecting and analysing process is slightly simplified in classifying the contents into altgenres and levels of altgenres, mathematizing the taste itself (Alexander, 2016). When all these steps are taken towards a kind of social data science, it is quite natural to conclude that this is either what Netflix is already doing or what it tries to implement to the industry for itself.

Digitising means turning something into another that is way too far from its nature. The social realm is not had science; it does not respond to a system that explains past, emotions, intentions, or impulses. Mathematisation or digitising is not discovering human

nature and catering the contents accordingly. It is collecting the data of people's Netflix usage habits and making a pattern out of it. Are watching of the mornings and the evenings different from each other? Do hours and days of the week make a significant difference in the shows chosen? Are shows just started and left or watched over and over again? Information like those makes the data of users and presents a chart of habits. With the help of data techniques and advanced mathematics, a standard is built. The problem of mathematisation, and the programmability of the future lies in "denying contingency and potentiality" of human nature (Alexander, 2016: 120). It does not accept any possible further differentiation.

While the measurement is overrated for the recommending sense, it is clear that the measurement system of Netflix is one step ahead of consuetudinary audience measurement. One of the reasons for that is the consistency and scope of the measurement. It has extended access to confidential information and several pieces of data of the audience, and it occurs second by second, and the datafication aspect of the internet is used effectively via algorithms (Arnold, 2016). The practicableness of the internet tracing reaches the information that used to be overlooked, especially engagement (Alexander, 2016). Another reason for Netflix is one step ahead is that it is now impossible to measure the most fragmented audience ever: it was easy when the channels were only a handful, and people were bound to choose from the small portion of the options (Napoli, 2012).

The predicting system can be possible to identify similarities between chosen contents over time, but it cannot detect the reasons before the patterns: one can be a comfort movie, another series may be chosen to kill time, and those may clash, or they may not be based on any cycle. Unless the routine is strictly repetitive and far from disturbance, the pattern has only a rough meaning, and mathematisation is not the ultimate fix. It offers

only an illusion of knowing the user because "the better Netflix shows that it knows the user, the likelier they are to stick around" (Madrigal, 2014 as cited in Jenner, 2017).

Big data is not only used for managing the audience for Netflix. It is also used for building models to calculate expenditure and benefits of producing original content. Their blog explains that those calculations also rely on the data about the components of products, such as location (Kumar et al., 2018).

3.5. Transformation of Netflix

It is already cleared that Netflix started almost as an anti-television site that broadcasts televisual content. It distinguishes itself as a unique VOD demand service that does not require specific time scheduling from the audience for shows and offered quality content to users (Arnold, 2016); it was personal, it could be watched on personal devices that do not have a place in relatively public spaces of the house like living rooms. However, it shares more similarities now than it did during its infancy. Even though it does not change itself in the sense of change, it is now changing users and turning them into regular television viewers.

The act of binge-watching that was introduced to lives by Netflix goes hand in hand with Netflix itself; binge-watching is even "largely defined by being autonomously scheduled" (Jenner, 2017: 4). People schedule the binge-watching, just like people used to design their life around TV streams. With the binge, It is now seen that people prefer TV content to cinematic movies: "What started out as the ideal home for cinephiles has turned into the digital equivalent to cable television" (Alexander, 2016: 122). It is clearly seen that Netflix have gradually become a mainstream internet television and must be considered one to exactly understand it.

The personalisation aspect of it just turned into myths; now users share passwords with several people. When an account is logged in, it allows users to see and use different profiles freely, except the ones with kids' protection⁴, turning it to something that allows people to reveal themselves, rather than keeping it personal, as Alexander puts it (2016). Also, Netflix buttons are implemented to TV remotes, allowing it to be viewed in comparatively public places. It also suggests previous point that Netflix is not what it used to be anymore. It turned into a form of television that streams via internet with almost no difference except for the way it is broadcasted, making them internet television rather than an alternative content delivery network.

Apart from digitising taste, the algorithmic recommendation system also digitises culture in favour of platform economy. Just like altgenres, microtags that are seen under the name of the movie within the information section catalyses the digitising system and allows the classification of content. Gathering similar movies together and offering a similarity percentage is evidential mathematisation of the cultural products. Whatever the way of connection is, what Netflix does is "connecting algorithms to art and, in doing so, intervening in the conceptual foundations of culture" (Hallinan & Striphas, 2016). It also alters audience identity from something that "culturally produced" to something that is "produced by data and defined by data algorithms" (Arnold, 2016: 70). This may lead to misunderstandings about culture when it is only considered beneficial for economic reasons. The concept of culture can lose its vast meaning about being an art practice (Munday & Chandler, 2018) and high taste of art products (Alexander, 2016) and narrow down to small commercial concepts.

⁴ Kid's protection comes with profile building. It is asked users if there will be kids' watching on those profiles and allows them to add a pin code to prevent access.

Earlier in the literature review, it was discussed that programmability shaped and molded everything that has a social aspect, including culture. From the same perspective in the same context, it is only fair to say that codes also determine preferences. Users' predicted future taste is shown before other options and in the shape of what they may

like with personalised thumbnails and trailers, as discussed earlier. Those are micromeasured and micro-designed for the benefit of the company. Those are so intricate that it offers a tableau of people actually being surveilled. The users are actually governed. Thus, that is also named as "exploitation" of some sort of power (Andrejevic, 2011 as cited in Arnold, 2016) and "algorithmic governmentality" by Rouvroy (2013, as cited in Arnold, 2016). Furthermore, apart from the "gut feeling" that Hastings mentioned (Ferenstein, 2016), the audience is mainly treated as big data, but they are nothing but human beings (Limov, 2020).

It is still too early to determine or research whether the predicting and system keeps users in strictly limited bounds, especially when recommendation has a profound influence on users' predictions (Napoli, 2014). However, it is almost fair to assume that when the users are stripped from other surrounding factors, the users most likely will circle around almost identical contents nevertheless, and this would not be for the benefit of Netflix, either. Like Twitter, by watching and informing Netflix about their likes and dislikes, people create their own filter bubble (Axel, 2019) that is unique to Netflix. Moreover, the contents and genres have been existing for a long time, and this system does not promote new forms or genres; it tries to determine the right ones in already existing ones, instead.

3.6. Using Netflix

Even though it seems easy with an e-mail address and a credit card, using Netflix is not just about subscribing. One needs a stable internet connection with specific bandwidth and speed. Since it is also a vast system with visible and invisible features, servers, and other sections, even using Netflix, the mundane act of just watching television means using all of those components simultaneously. According to its own help centre, Netflix explains that several components help to convey the entertainment videos: its servers all around the world, the worldwide web, the internet service provider (ISP), and modems in the house (Netflix, A n.d.). Global VOD services, especially Netflix launch their ISPs all around the world just to reach a wider promotion of the audience, even though it is possible to see it as an action of common good. (Elkins, 2018).

In addition to those three elements, a specific bandwidth of at least 0,5 megabit per second is necessary for a baseline, and 1,5 megabit per second is suggested just for the minor quality broadcast, the further it goes to the HD and ultra-HD, the required bandwidth increases (Netflix, B n.d.). Thus, a user must have all of the components to watch or content on Netflix or download from it. If one of these components is not reached or carries a bug, the whole flow will be disturbed in several ways, resulting in a lag, under the quality video, or not even opening the content. It is apparent that a user who can reach some of these but not one cannot access Netflix. That is, Netflix is not designed to be just for everyone since it may not be possible for everyone. However, when it is considered that its target audience is the young people who live economically in better conditions and can spend more on entertainment, it may not even be considered for the elderly or disadvantaged people to reach Netflix. Especially when the digital literacy of the elderly or even the middle-aged people is considered, it is safe to say that Netflix is creating its future customers.

3.7. Similarities Between Social Media and Netflix

It is concluded and explained in the previous chapters that Netflix carries some essential features of social media due to its embeddedness in the internet environment. It has to have some of its aspects to operate on the web. It has the essential four columns suggested by Dijk and Poell that carry social media as main pillars (2013). Netflix is confused from time to time with social media due to the similarities that carry both of them.

Even though some people tend to consider Netflix as social media, there is no social aspects to Netflix. It is actually an online streaming service that offers televisual content to its subscribers. There is no connection aspect of Netflix, unlike SNSs UGCs, TMSs, or PGSs. Despite all the differences, some still think that Netflix should be considered as social media because it is different from television as we know it, and it shares some similarities in the long-term effects of television. One of them is decentralisation. The “authority” of the television is no longer exists. As thought, people choose their own broadcast stream, or they do not even have to do it. As the founder Hastings puts it, there is no authoritative voice for tv anymore, but there is diversity (DLDconference, 2016). The diversity here dos not only mean the diversity of the shows or actresses/actors but also refers to the diversity of the platforms. They do not come in as a package; there are several SVOD platforms, and users are free to leave and refuse to pay for if one is not satisfactory. So, the only similarity with SVOD platforms and social media is cancelling the centre force (main means of communication) by being not the smallest but not the most prominent platform. It is safe to say that the massive power of television is divided into several smaller online platforms. As for social media, especially Twitter, it is claimed that it is to bring real democracy to the broadcasting news.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to point out that those believed to bring democracy are both the product and the nourisher of the same capitalist system. They both exploit their audience for more customers and more extensive capital. The fact that the central power is disseminating does not mean that individuals hold power, it is still in the hands of vast and ever-growing entertainment companies. Those companies offer less governed and controlled content, but at the end of the day, they offer content aimed at most people to reach the biggest audience. Moreover, diverse content may be altered according to the taste of the majority: cultures may be misrepresented or represented in a way that harms them. Diversity *may be* aimed but in practice, growing the audience and expanding the capital is the main purpose. So, their similarity is creating smaller centres, giving power to individuals in theory but still not in practice.

3.8. Similarities Between Traditional Television Broadcasting and Netflix

To begin with, they both have the same textual forms; they both broadcast the audio-visual content. They also combine the forms in several similar ways, put them together, make cross-overs of genres (Lobato, 2019). It is even considered a form of television, the successor of the first three -TVI as broadcast, TVII as cable, TVIII as digital- as TVIV, the next generation of the television (Jenner, 2016).

As for the audience and metrics, Netflix targets the audience of television. The audience may stop watching TV and lean-to Netflix, or they can watch both. As for the metrics, people who watch VOD content share their ideas and feelings on social media, but social media metrics are not highly essential. For understanding the fanbase or the expectations of the audience, social media and accounts are a favourable tool, for sure, but it is not required for collecting big data. Netflix has its own data collecting tools in the structure of the internet, and it seems like they are using it effectively enough to continue growing. At this point, it is necessary to remember Bruns' words "All media are social,

but their sociality fundamentally defines only a particular subset of all media and thus distinguished (for example) from the mainstream media of print, radio, and television” (2015: 1).

Netflix is not entirely a form of mass media either. Like it shares similarities with social media, it shares similarities with mass media too, but the distinction is more subtle than expected. When it came to television, the main meaning is not the device or content; it is actually a centralised streaming of audiovisual content and produced professionally (Kompare, 2010). Like television, Netflix, too, offers the same content to every person in the audience, more or less, apart from those with copyright problems. Nevertheless, the personalisation aspect and aimed niche marketing do not allow us to name it mass media. It is clear that scholars, especially Bruns had a particular distinction between social and mass media in their works (2019; 2015; 2014). Netflix could be considered an intermediate form, but it would mean that Netflix has some sort of sociality apart from the internet. Thus, it is only fair to say that Netflix is an exact type of media in the category of SVODs. Bellanova and Gonzalez Fuster narrate from Amatriain and Basilico (2015: 390) defining Netflix as an “international Internet video streaming subscription service” (as cited in 2018: 3), and it defines itself currently as “a global internet TV network” which is entirely fair (Lobato, 2019: 20).

3.9. Future of Netflix

The power it comes with this renewal lets us a peek about what may happen in the future: Netflix can change more watching habits of people, especially the young viewers' habits. Considering the tablets and phones are primary screens for the young audience, unlike adults, it seems like it explains the reason (Matrix, 2014). Especially teens highly prefer Netflix; they express their fascination for its quality content and hatred for commercials.

One concern for Netflix is about producing its own content. Its budget has been increased since 2013 -the year that Netflix produced its first own content- from \$2.4 billion to \$17.3 billion according to Statista (2021) and \$16 billion budget according to Bloomberg in 2020 just for content production ⁵ (Klebnikov, 2020). With the everincreasing budget and the number of customers, it scares Hollywood with its potential to be a monopoly (Masters, 2016), also defined by some as a “monster that’s eating Hollywood” (Flint and Ramachandran, 2017 as cited in Lobato, 2019: 21). When the regulations that governments have conducted, there probably will be more in the future.

The other production companies started to establish their own OTTs, and it is expected that they withdraw their content from Netflix for good, making content production more crucial than ever (Lev-Ram, 2019). Thus, being a monopoly in an expanding market does not seem quite probable yet, but Netflix still can remain a media or content producing giant.

Another possible scenario is the increase that has just started in the numbers of SVOD services. Several companies in several sectors establish SVOD services with their own content. Considering Turkey, it is clear that entrepreneurs care about SVOD services and investing in the market. The already existing media owners like Acun Ilıcalı and those who have little to no experience in media ownership started to invest in those and other media moguls worldwide most likely see the opportunity in the market and invest in. Thus, Netflix may have to deal with those new ones and compete furiously, especially with the local ones, when its globularness is considered. It may even come up with other models, just like how it came up with binge model.

⁵ Cost of the content production is not explained by Netflix itself, and other sources are contradictory.

3.10. Data and Users

While the cultural aspect of the audio-visuals is discussed, another point of VOD services is economical, and it is the most influential one. One reason for its significance is in the core of the decision-making procedure. Since businesses are financial institutions and financial benefits are more prominent than others, companies are expected to be financially oriented. Thus, when the artistic and economic outputs contradict, it is expected for economic benefits to be chosen or more focused on. As Van Dijk, Poell, and De Waal named the contrast, it results in the clash between “private benefit and corporate gain versus public interest and collective benefits” (Van Dijk et al., 2018). It is necessary to mention that the platforms grew even before the discussion of the clash started.

Whether they are aware or not, the users are providing their data to Netflix, despite already paying for the service they obtain. While they are already using “free-of-charge” platforms by actually paying with their data (Evens & Van Damme 2016), it is interesting that the platform that is already paid for still utilises the user data. Even though user data is allegedly anonymised, it is explained above that by offering personalised thumbnails and trailers, anonymisation is clearly not what Netflix does. For Netflix’s case, at the cost of privacy violation, user data is undoubtedly processed. Data is made the primary source of information about users, and even though it is not the ultimate decision-maker, it is the base that the decision is made upon. The first and foremost inspiration source is data, and the next steps are detected through data.

When it comes to foreigners, people tend not to disclose anything and carry their distrust all along, but they mostly have no other choice but to comply with online platforms. Even they do not want to expose their own information, they either have their data used under the name of cookies, or remove their ad blockers, or become exposed to

numerous notifications. Eventually, they are coerced into opting for paying with the new currency: data (Nelson & Webster 2016).

As for empowerment, just like explained above, it is stated several times that users either feel or are supposed to feel emancipated due to the available new media system. However, when the construction of algorithms and users are pushed into the platforms that they know nothing about is considered, it is quite evident that the platform aims not to empower users but to commodify their personal data (Jennes, 2014). The revealed situation of those platforms, including Netflix, is far from emancipating. When the recommendation system of Netflix is involved, the chart and commodifying get bigger, and it shows that boredom, friendship recommendation, kill time activities, or even passions are commodified and used for the benefit of the companies, and finally with the recommendation system of Netflix, and even the future self of users are commodified (Alexander, 2016). This brings one to the fact that the capitalist character of content delivery platforms is getting stronger and stronger (Chalaby & Plunkett, 2020), which results in the exploitation of the audience for financial interests.

Since the core of the platforms relies on data too much, it has to be constantly produced. Thus, in several ways, Netflix attracts users into watching content, which is the same as producing data. The most visible way for end-users of platforms to circulate data is through their graphical interfaces (Van Dijk et al., 2018). Also, it should be kept in mind that Netflix has to engage with its users somehow and the only way to do it in its ecosystem happens to be via its interface. That is, the interface acts a part as the mediator between Netflix and the user. To see the relation between the user and the service, the most crucial visible aspect to examine is the interface. Thus, it is quite necessary to analyse interfaces and follow the directions of users. Only then it can be visible to understand the humanitarian façade of the

3.11. Methodology

The chosen method for the research is the walkthrough method. The method is introduced to social sciences by Ben Light and Stephanie Duguay, and it is urged to merge it with other methods (2018). They scrutinised period tracking application, Clue, by mixing it with cultural studies. They examined icons and revealed the underlying implications, made deductions, and exposed the cultural influence on the app.

The study, however, merges walkthrough method with content analysis to observe the changes on the interface. Headlines, content below them, and the thumbnails will be scrutinised. The differences and their ties to the previous user actions will be detected. This way will ensure the accuracy of the research, rather than any other methods.

3.11.1. Research Problem

Companies have to interact with their users one way or another. For the communication to materialise, the transmitter is needed, and for VoD services' case, it is the screen that showcases application and website interface. The interface is the transmitter that conveys the message, it is what offers the main entertainment to the users. It is the core product to attract users and keep them in the ecosystem as long as possible. Users decide upon seeing the interface and thinking that the service might be appealing to them, then decide to join to system or keep using the service. The research question is "How does Netflix communicates with its users by changing its interface (transmitter) to keep customers in its system?".

On the interface, a bunch of content is offered under several headlines. Even before signing up for Netflix, some of the promised content can be seen. Companies expect users to follow a direction into a maze that they either will not manage to get out or will not want to do it, ideally. Since the interface is the one that offers customers entertainment

and the interface is what builds communication with the customers, it is the main point to understand the reasons behind the users' direction and preference. Netflix ecosystem is designed to keep as much as customers as possible and the interface is where it happens. Thus, those features can only be understood by analysing the interface and layers of the website thoroughly.

3.11.2. Aim of the Research

The research will explore the design, vision, operating model, and modes of governance of Netflix. For this, it is required to observe the changes in Netflix's interface. Since Netflix has several features to explore, and it also changes recommended content for several reasons, the obligatory action to take is to scrutinise Netflix to detect both shared and separate features of personal homepages. To understand the shared experience, the researcher must explore standard procedures that the users are going through, and to understand the unique changes, the unique experiences will be created and studied.

3.11.3. Research Design

The main spotlight is on the reflection of those technicalities on what is presented to human beings, making the research carry two façades, one that is based on humanities and the other based on digital studies. The research subject is situated in between both digital and humane territories. It includes and displays artistic media forms to humans; however, the nature of the content is undoubtedly digital *-computational-* and the receivers are humans, which leads the researcher to the second wave digital humanities due to its web-based nature (Berry, 2011b). It is also crucial to keep in mind that the only reason to consider Netflix web-based is not that it is a platform; the production of the content based on algorithmic estimations is also crucial. Thus, the research method should align with these features that the material carries.

Although the research seems like digital research based on software, it will research how one specific software is reflected on those who use it. It is quite accurate to describe it as a combination of both software and social study. Thus, the methodology seen as suitable for the study is a qualitative and descriptive method called the walkthrough method. The method is used initially to rechecking end users' experience for applications and online games by developers, hence the name. People would try the application, and it would reveal whether every nook and cranny are open to exploring, or if the participation of the users, or especially *customers*, can use expected features of the application.

However, the method is also used for digital media and internet studies currently, with several differences. Now it is possible to say that that walkthrough method became a part of digital humanities. What differentiates the technological and social walkthrough method is that the social one marries technology and cultural studies and examines applications on both grounds (Light et al., 2018). While explaining the end users' the expected experience, it also focuses on the cultural assumptions that come within the application. Moreover, it offers a holistic understanding of the application, which allows the user to grasp the concept of the platform and make deductions. Another point is, the researcher can see how and where the application leads the user within the application.

The gist of the method is approaching the application as a user, analysing the process that a user is exposed to, and explaining it. The researcher will undergo the process as a user and will explore the stages of app registration and entry, everyday use and discontinuation of use to discover the vision (purpose), operating model ("business strategy and revenue sources"), and modes of governance ("how the app provider seeks to manage and regulate user activity to sustain their operating model and fulfill their vision") of Netflix (Light et al., 2018). The walkthrough method requires the researcher

to immerse in the application to understand both technological and cultural functions and their implications. The researcher will observe and document the steps of use to make it appropriate for analysis and reveal what is latent on the interface. She will undergo the process as a user but will be alert about the application's guidance.

Because reality shows include hosts and have half-scripted nature, it allows them to talk with the audience, thus, steer them. The original method's main subject is both text and picture; however, it is expected for Netflix to require to be analysed in video form, too, even though not entirely. That is, the research will include some parts of audio-visual content, too. Besides, it is not expected that Netflix will carry cultural implications apart from nationally famous content. However, it has implications in personal recommendations. Thus, the parts to be inspected will include those recommendations. The method will provide insight into the Netflix interface and software behind it and will offer an understanding of the users' experience. It is expected for the method to detect what users typically overlook.

3.11.4. Materials and Data Collection

To detect typical and personalised behaviour of Netflix, the user will mimic different individuals. To ensure this, three profiles with different tastes will be created. Those profiles' home (browse) pages on Netflix are chosen as materials to scrutinise. The data will be collected on those applications with several behaviours. To observe the joint actions, they will perform similar or utterly different watching behaviour. The similar ones will lead the researcher to detect the standard behaviour of Netflix, and the different actions of the different profiles will lead to the standard/default ones.

The number of the individuals is decided as three. Thus, it would ensure that the outcome will be accurate. They will have different themes on their account. Different practices are to be followed. The first profile will mimic an educated and empowered

woman who wants to see content similar to her life. Thus, the theme “empowered women” is chosen, and only contents under the exact definition will be watched. Contents will be searched for, and by doing so, hints will be given to Netflix. Even some of the contents can be watched more than once. Their intro or credits will not be skipped from time to time.

The second profile will mimic someone who likes to entertain themselves by watching fun content. The number two will be dedicated to sitcoms and reality shows; there will not be a pattern applied rigorously; however, the times will be designated in a not-so-strict way. Related content from recommended ones will be watched. On weekdays evenings, mostly sitcoms are to be watched; during the days on weekends, the main focus will be on reality shows. In the evenings on weekends, films will be chosen.

The third profile will mimic someone who rarely watches a movie and a person that does not watch Netflix so much. The contents that are to be watched will be chosen from only the ones Netflix suggests. There will be no search conducted, and the recommendation will be enough to settle.

One limitation of the study is that it will start in a reverse way. That is, the research will start with examining the logging off, and discontinuation of the use part since the researcher already had an account and is an active user of Netflix. The same e-mail address will not be used in the study due to the expected identification of Netflix for the same address. The following limitation is that contents will not be watched during the days on weekdays since the researcher is working and the institution does not allow Netflix’s websites, even if it is the help centre. Another one is that the study will only focus on Turkey’s Netflix, probably resulting in features that may be different from other countries’ or users’ interfaces. While this geolocative attribute may be considered as a constraint, it is, on the other hand, expected for it to contribute to the research at the

cultural level, too. Another limitation that may occur is that the research will be carried out only on Chrome browser, and the internet provider will be Turkcell Superonline throughout the research. If there are inevitable changes during the research, they also will be noted and mentioned.

The devices may vary according to programs, and they will be noted down and included in the results. The website researched on the web app and browser will be <https://www.netflix.com/tr/>, and the changes on <https://www.netflix.com/browse> will be observed. Some contents, especially for profiles one and two, will be downloaded from time to time and watched in other places. The circumstances will be noted down as well.

The main concern is how Netflix acts in those scenarios. The change of action, especially the appearance of the interface, is expected. The changes will be recorded carefully, and any change will be noted, even if slightly. The main recording tool will be Go Full Page Screen Capturing add-on on Chrome Browser since it captures the whole page, unlike print screen buttons, yet, from time to time, it might be necessary to record it by using print screen or taking a photo of the screen since Netflix does not allow users to take a screenshot of the shows.² However, when the mobile application is considered, the screenshot method offered by the device is the only option. Any act of the researcher and the platform will be written down in the results section. After everything is noted down, an analysis will be performed and explained in the discussion section.

To observe accurately, the observation will include the home (browse) screen before watching content, the type of content every time a content is watched. The changes -recommended content types, headlines, changes in their places, and thumbnails- will be noted, and any association with searches and watching practices will be explored.

3.11.5. Analysis

As for analysis, materials are visual, yet the mind behind them is either an algorithm or several algorithms that operate together, constructing one operating system. Thus, using visual methods would not be suitable for the study. The reasonable analysis method should not only focus on the visual aspect; it should instead be about the changes of the browse page based on algorithms or how / how fast Netflix identifies the user.

Results will undergo an analysis that is both suitable for the walkthrough method and the material. The original article suggests critical analysis by breaking apart the application to make it suitable for the analysis. While ethnography and Critical Technocultural Discourse Analysis (CTDA) were mentioned in the original article, the research will focus more on the application interface analysis ground. To explain how it operates and gain insight, the research will be conducted with the process analysis. Steps of the processes will be identified as the “browse page” and “what is watched”. After the research time, the relation between what is watched and how it affected the browse page will be explored and explained.

For this, an observation form is necessary. It will be the way it is shown for the first watching below, and the following ones include the changes on the browse page.

The profile that will watch the show:

Description of the browse page:

The show/watched film:

Reason for watching said show:

RESULTS

1. Home Page

On the main screen, there are several components. First of all, when Netflix is opened, the screen is almost entirely covered by a banner based on a single piece of content that turns into a trailer when the pointer is on it. The banner does not coat the whole screen; the header of the personal list is still visible. Play and More info buttons are on the bottom left of the banner -not the page- and on the bottom right, there is the film rating to inform the audience -such as general audience, PG, PG-13, R, or NC-17- of the content, not audience measurement. If the content was left playing before closing the browser that is set for keeping the tabs open after closing, the content directly opens when the browser is opened again.

There are also several buttons on top of the page. They do not draw attention at first look due to their relatively small proportions; they are classified into two. On the top left, Netflix, Home, Series, Movies, New and popular, and My List buttons are finally available. When the pointer is on any of them, there is no movement on the Netflix logo. However, a slight change of opacity of the buttons is seen.

On the top right, there is a search bar, kid section, a gift box icon, bell icon, and the profile photo, respectively. Apart from the last two, there is no movement in those, even the change of opacity does not exist. When the gift box icon is clicked, a sharing page opens, which is not actually expected due to its shape. The familiar icon of sharing -three dots that are connected by three lines- will not appear after the gift box icon is clicked.

On the sharing page, “Tell your friends about Netflix.” is written in bold. Below, “Share this link with your friends, and they can enjoy your favourite TV shows and movies.” is written, followed by the link that is supposed to be copied, “Copy the link”

button in a red rectangular shape and written in white, Email, WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, and Messenger buttons to share on the platform can be seen in a grey rectangular area. Under those, sharing mechanism is explained, and it says that user will be informed if one of their friends are signed up. Under those, Netflix Referral Program Terms and Conditions are situated in grey and underlined. The most attention-grabbing part of the page is the “Tell your friends about Netflix.” part. The page still portrays the profile on the top right side of the page with a small upside-down triangle/downward arrow shape.

The bell button moves when clicked and shows a preview of previous notifications. Under the bell icon, new content notifications are listed. Until it is clicked, there awaits a red dot to alert the user. Notifications consist of recommendations, contents that are added to the personal list and still waiting, and the Top 10: Turkey list is seen. The list has a scroll bar on the left, and it leads the user to previous notifications.

On the far right, the profile icon/photo is situated with the aforementioned arrow. Just like the bell icon, it offers a preview. The preview includes two sections divided by a thin grey line. The top section offers the kid section and Profile Management. Below those, there seen Account, Help Centre, and Sign out of Netflix options. By clicking the kids' option, contents only for children are opened, and it is possible to turn back to the other feed by clicking the same button, a smiley face icon or a chosen photo. When Profile Management is clicked, another page opens, and it showcases both the main and kid's profile on editing (pencil in a circle) icon. On the left of those, an option for adding another profile is seen. By clicking the plus icon, it is possible to add another profile.

To add another profile, it is asked to choose the age range of the profile, and it is necessary to decide if the profile is regular or for the kids. Kids' profile only offers content aimed at the audience under 12, and it is previewed when the pointer is on the option.

Another feature to be decided is the name of the profile. Then, “continue” and “cancel” options are offered. After continued, the new profile is situated on the main opening page. Still on the Profile Management page, if the profile photo with the pencil icon clicked, name, language, adult settings, and autoplay settings about the profile can be edited. While a profile is being edited, “save, cancel, and delete profile” options are offered. After changes, the button “okay” should be clicked.

To watch on the new profile, the language settings are offered and it is expected for the user to choose their preferences and continue. Then, the user is asked to choose three of their favourites from posters of 78 contents offered below by saying, “This process; It will help us find TV shows and movies you love! Click the ones you like!”. The contents vary according to the type, genre, and origin. It is possible to continue without clicking any content.

At the bottom of the page, there are social media icons, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube. They all lead to Netflix Türkiye pages of those social media. Under those, there are voice-over and subtitles, media centre, privacy, contact us, audio description, investor relations, legal provisions, help centre, work opportunities, cookie preferences, gift cards, terms of use, corporate information, and a button that is written service code on.

While all these things are happening, the Netflix logo on the top left, and the logging out section on the top right remain. It is possible to log out with one click. However, when logged out, a big message awaits the user. “Are you logging out? Mind you, you don't need to log out of Netflix every time. Just log out when you log in with a shared or common computer. We will redirect you to the Netflix login page within 30 seconds.” appears, and the “Now go” button in uncharacteristically blue colour is seen. After clicking the button, the typical Netflix page that is offered for users-to-be opens. On

top, it has a Netflix logo, a language section with a globe icon but consists of only Turkish and English, and a red sign-in button. The page mainly offers its contents to the new customers with the message “Unlimited movies, series, and much more./Watch wherever you want. Cancel at any time./Ready to watch? Enter your e- mail address to create or access your membership.” followed by a white bar for entering the e-mail address and a red start button.

If the person is not a user, the page they will see is the previous page mentioned. It firstly showcases several contents with entirely different origins, features, types, and genres. It also seems like a movie theatre entrance/hall, and it seems like it promotes itself like a home cinema. When scrolled, Netflix further explains and advertises itself. The feature that is brought forward is the ability to watch everywhere with a slight undertone of other features such as watching on the TV, offline, and several other devices with no extra payment. On the lower side of the page, frequently asked questions are situated. They are “What is Netflix?, How much does it cost?, Where can I watch?, How do I cancel?, What can I watch on Netflix?”. After the FAQs, the bar for a new account awaits again to enter their e-mail address.

Instead of opening another account, when the red sign-in button is clicked, it opens a sign-in page, and if an account had been logged in before and the “Remember me” box is clicked, it is opened preprepared. Then, when signed in, it leads the user to the main page. One quirky aspect of Netflix is that it alerts the user with an e-mail. The e-mail includes the device, location, and the time that logged in. Then it soothes users by expressing that they can be relaxed if they were the ones who logged in. then suggests password changing if the action was not to the best of their knowledge. It then offers help anytime with the Help Centre or with a phone call or text via Netflix’s own application free of charge. The e-mail is signed as “Your Friends in Netflix,” then offers further help

and company information.

2. Payment

While working on these features, the researcher got lucky, and the credit card used for Netflix payment declined, offering a feature that otherwise would be barely discovered. Apparently, when the card is declined, the user is informed through e-mail and SMS. If the mobile application is downloaded and logged in, the user receives a notification through the application. The e-mail notifies the user that their account was suspended. It also includes credit card information, type of the card -visa- last four numbers of the card number, and validation. It had a red trying the payment again and a soft grey filling in another payment method buttons. The SMS includes the exact same thing with a link attached.

The notification is sent once at the exact moment as an e-mail, and it says: “Reminder: Account update is needed. Please update Netflix payment information. Please click to update or go to help.netflix.com address for help”. When the notification is touched, it opens the browser with the Netflix website logged in. The page displays the same information about credit cards and allows/pushes the user to edit card information or add another payment method. It also offers a number to call in case of questions.

The aforementioned credit card was declined on April the 7th, and on the 15th, the user received an e-mail and a text message informing the user about payment problems. In this case, it would be proper to think that Netflix waited for a week to inform the user. However, when the researcher called Netflix Help Centre via the aforesaid method, it was told that the user is informed when the monthly payment is not received. The date also aligns with the payment plan was the 15th day of every month. Thus, it seems that Netflix did not wait but acted according to the payment dates, and the user was informed, and the account was suspended when the payment was not able to receive.

While the update was still needed, Netflix continues to send e-mails regarding half-watched shows with the “bookmark,” signalling the episode left. It also has a button to see all episodes of the shows. Those are followed by the personal list, For You, Watch Again, and recommendations related to half-watched show headlines.

Even though the user was informed about delayed payment, it was still possible to access contents and watch with no problem, apart from informing pop-ups about payment problems after every new page opens and the message for the same matter on top of the page. When the Help Centre is contacted, it was told that a few days were allowed for the user to update.

It was also observed that when the Wi-Fi connection is not stable enough, the webpage was shorter; thus, the number of the offered content was fewer.

On the following days, an e-mail was received daily from Netflix about the same matter at different times. The second e-mail says that there was a problem with billing, they will try again, and it is advised for the user to update payment information by saying, “Meanwhile, you may want to update your payment information”. The e-mail is received with an embedded red “update my account now” button written in capitals and a bigger punto. The third one was the same as the first.

While the payment problems still present, Netflix still pushes users to continue watching the series that are half watched. On April 22nd, it sent an e-mail that includes one of the shows that were left unwatched, The One -which was not the most recent one- with a vast thumbnail, user’s list, just for you, watch again, and recommendations for the ones who watch The One, the half-watched show. It also has a button for viewing all films and shows. It is actually similar to the way it acts at the earlier times of subscription. However, this needs confirmation, and it will be either confirmed or denied by the facts in the future, based on the future actions of Netflix.

On April 23rd, it was not possible to watch any shows on Netflix; whichever the thumbnail is clicked, the same warning about the suspension of account appeared. It requires a payment update from now on, and the time given for the user is apparently a week. When the account button under the user icon is clicked, it directed the user to the payment update page. While browsing, it is realised that “tests setting” was on with the message “Include me in tests and previews/Turn this option off to switch to the standard experience immediately./Take our tests to help improve the Netflix experience and see potential changes before other members do.”. Since it is not possible to watch anymore, the setting is left untouched, and proceeded to close the account.

3. Cancelling the Subscription

The account page has four sections: signing up and payment, plan details, settings, and finally, profile and parental controls. Signing up and payment section includes “change email, change password, change phone number, manage payment information, invoice details, change billing day, redeem a gift card or promo code, where you can get a gift card” in blue to click. Plan details only show the chosen plan, and it is not possible to click. Settings section include “18+ content access pin, participation in the test, manage devices downloaded content, activate the device, recent monitoring activity of connected devices, log out on all devices, download your personal information”. Profile and parental controls show only profiles that are set and those include “language, watching restrictions, profile lock, tracking activity, score, subtitle view, playing settings (auto-play next episode, auto-play previews, default video, and sound quality), communication settings, communication aimed for marketing”. The kids’ profile does not have communication and marketing aimed communication sections.

It is not possible to change the billing date when the account is suspended. The “Manage payment information” section can be opened. When the expired card is tried

again, the user was informed that the process could not be completed and the user was suggested to try again later. When another payment method is added, the user is informed that the method will only be used as a backup and used for withdrawal only when the primary method can not be used. It is possible to use both credit cards and gift cards.

Right after the account headline, there is the button for cancelling the subscription. Compared to other pages, the account page is more serious, less characteristic and as for the “cancel the subscription” button, it is more so. When it is clicked, cancelling the subscription button leads the user to the confirming question. The user is asked to “Complete Cancellation” button to cancel the account. They are informed that the cancellation will take effect immediately, but still, it is possible to restart the account at any time. It is stated that it is possible to use the account with viewing preferences and account details in 10 months. If the user changes her mind, the complete cancellation and going back button is close, and cancelling the subscription is unusually brighter than going back. It gives the impression that Netflix kept its promise when saying it is easy to cancel the subscription when promoting itself on its page.

When the cancellation is completed, Netflix informs that it is cancelled. It also offers a questionnaire for feedback to improve their service regarding the reasons behind cancelling. The page does not allow copying those texts. The options are: buffering takes a long time or is of poor quality, there are not enough good TV shows on Netflix, I do not have time to watch Netflix, there are not enough good movies on Netflix, Netflix is too expensive for me, I will use another service instead of Netflix, my internet connection is a quota or slow and other with a bar to fill in, respectively. It is asked for users to choose all of those that apply for themselves. The message is relatively informal and sincere. It ends with a farewell message: “Thanks. It was good to see you as our member, we hope you will be back soon.”

After the feedback is sent, the account page is open with some differences. There is no plan is shown, and the page is shorter than usual. Then, an e-mail is sent informing that the account was suspended as per request on (the exact date); it is necessary to only re-start the subscription with the button and link that is embedded in the e-mail. When the <https://www.netflix.com/tr/> is open, the page starts as “re-start your subscription”. If not, it is expected for the user to log off just like any other time. It has the tone that Netflix is still waiting for the user at the ready.

After four days, an e-mail from Netflix is received informing the user that it has been four days and it was too much. The promotion and payment plan follow the mail.

4. Signing up for a New Account

To sign up for Netflix, it is necessary to create an account, and it starts with an email address. Then, a password is asked, and personalisation and the ability to watch on any device are emphasised. It is explained that the stems are not a lot, the signing up process will be completed soon, and clearly stated that Netflix does not like being formal. The next step is choosing the plan. On this step, Netflix continues to promote itself, as if it is trying to convince the potential user by saying, “No commitment, cancel anytime. Everything on Netflix is right in front of you for one low price. Unlimited watching on all your devices.”, the button is for viewing the plans. The page is longer than the previous ones, and self-promote remains. Even though the headline is about plans and says, “Choose a plan that's right for you,” the three articles below have only one component about plans. They are “Watch whatever you want. Ad-free./Content recommended just for you./You can change or cancel your plan at any time./Choose the plan you want” and just as seen, only the last one is about payment plans. The table below demonstrates the plans and their features. The basic plan costs 26,99 TL monthly, video quality is good, the resolution is 480p, and it is possible to watch on every kind of device. The standard

plan costs 40,99 TL monthly, video quality is better, the resolution is 1080p, and it is possible to watch every kind of device. The special plan costs 54,99 TL monthly, video quality is the best, resolution is 4K+HD, and it is possible to watch on every kind of device. It is clear that the matter for the page is not only explaining plans, but also highlighting the aspect of watching on several devices, which is the part that shown on the chart as if there will be any difference. At the bottom of the page, the availability of qualities depends on your internet service and device capabilities, and they are not available for all of the content is explained and “This account can only be used by those who live with you. Watch content on four different devices at the same time on a private plan. This number is 2 in the standard plan and 1 in the Basic plan.” is written in light grey and low punto that it almost looks like it is about to vanish.

Even though it seems like every possible feature is covered, Netflix has other attributes published on its help page (Planlar ve Ücretler, n.d.). It includes the number of devices that the content can be downloaded through the application and the number of screens that the content can be watched simultaneously. Just like the chart on the subscribing pages, it includes unnecessary commercial features like types of devices to watch content and unlimited films and shows.

After the chart explains the plans, the standard plan is chosen to proceed to the signing up process by clicking the “Continue” button. Then, a pop-up appeared and delivering the news: a gift from Netflix (gift box illustrations was included) was granted, and it was possible to use it as a premium for the first month of the subscription. Then, the researcher turned back and chose the basic plan due to the aforementioned upgrading policy of Netflix, since the research will only be conducted for two weeks, more or less, between April the 28th and May the 13th, 2021. Thus, the first 30 days of usage will be according to the standard plan instead of the basic one.

After the plan is chosen, the next step is choosing the payment method. Two options are in use: credit/debit card or gift code. For the research, a credit card will be used. Then, it opens a credit card information page. The chosen plan is still seen on the bottom of the information bars, and the changing option is still there and written in blue. The box below should have been selected to have an account, and it ensures that the user had read the Terms of Use and the Confidentiality Agreement. If continued, Netflix asks for the phone number with the excuse that it will be used for important messages in case the password is forgotten. For research purposes, the phone number is put in, and Netflix is allowed to send informing SMS for new opportunities and content.

On the next page, it is asked whether a person under 18 years of age will watch and if the pin is necessary. The pin is chosen on that page, but the researcher opts for choosing only people above 18 will watch and continues without a pin. Then, on the next page, the devices to watch Netflix are chosen. The options are Smart TV or Blu-ray player, phone or tablet, desktop or laptop computer, receiver box, media player, Play station, and Xbox. They can all be chosen, but since the only devices to be used are a phone and a computer, those two are chosen.

The following requirement is creating profiles. The first one comes as the same name as the one put, while credit card information is written as default. Since it is essential for the research to keep the predesigned profile characteristics in mind, the names are chosen as I-Fatma, II-Kübra, and III-Şahin. Every profile except the main one has kids' opportunity to choose. When continued, the preferred language is asked, just like building a profile at the beginning of the results section. Turkish comes as default, and apart from Turkish, the number of available languages is 34, making them 35 in total -English is divided into English and English (United States). In addition to Turkish, English languages are chosen and continued. Then, the user is asked to choose what they like. It

is claimed that this will help the user to find the content they will like. When the researcher chooses what they like, they are addressed with their profile name, unlike the language section. Since the one that is addressed was I-Fatma, so the chosen content is decided accordingly. The first one is Queen's Gambit and the second one is The Crown. Both have women as their leading role, and their thumbnail consists of only the leading role, rather than several hero/ines. It is possible to unlike the contents that are liked. For trying, the third one is not chosen, and the "continue" button is clicked. Then, it says that it is personalising for I-Fatma, and the personal page is prepared with the message "We are looking for movies, TV shows and programs that we think you will love." and got ready.

On the prepared page, many recommendations are classified under some headlines. Those headlines are Popular on Netflix, Trending Now, Top 10 List of Today in Turkey, My List (consists on The Crown and The Queen's Gambit), Netflix Originals, Historical Tv Dramas, Critically Acclaimed TV Dramas, Comedies, TV Dramas Based on Books, New Releases, Sit-Coms, Best Picks for I-Fatma, US TV Shows, Action and Adventure, Dramas, Movies and TV Series for Young Adults, Videos that Share Similarity with The Crown, Documentaries, Children and Family Movies, Thriller Movies, European TV Dramas, Action and Adventure Series, Children and Family series, Romantic Movies, Girls' Night, Real Crime, Emotional American Tv Series, Videos that Share Similarity with The Queen's Gambit, Period Movies, Science Fiction And Horror Series, Award-Winning Movies, Drama Series, Hollywood Movies, Entertainment Reality Shows, Emotional TV Shows, Action Thrillers, Crime Themed Series, Thriller Series, and Emotional Drama Series. While some of the headlines openly express the similarity, others are more subtle. Originals are essential because the two chosen series at the beginning are Netflix Original products. Historical ones are related to The Crown that is based on Princess Diana, and documentaries headline have The Royal House of

Windsor, which is again based on the era of Princess Diana. European Series include Borgen, series about a female prime minister, and Atiye, a Turkish series based on a woman's abilities. Romantic content is stereotypically found as "girly," and even though Girls' Night is obvious, the content that is shown is aimed at younger women.

When the home page for the profile opens, the first thing that is seen is confirming the phone number. Then, the user clicked the confirm the phone number button. Then comes La Casa De Papel's trailer, just as told above under the Home headline. It did not lead to another tab. It opened the new page that requires a code to write down, but the user did not receive an SMS for ten minutes. So, the code is asked to be sent again. Then the code is sent and a message in green appeared on top of the page that the code is sent. When confirmed, the message was still green, but this time is said that the number was confirmed.

Then, instead of clicking the "back" button on the browser, the researcher clicked the Netflix logo at the top left. There were no changes to the content recommended.

For the second profile, II-Kübra, the interest chosen is a sitcom and reality shows. It again starts with language; chosen languages are the same as the profile one. Liked contents are Friends, Leyla ile Mecnun, Modern Family, and Brooklyn 99. Reality shows were not presented as options; thus, they could not be chosen. When the third one is selected, the continue button turns red from pale grey. When the button is clicked, the continuation and personalisation occur.

When the personalised page opens, the banner/trailer seen belongs to the sit-com How I Met Your Mother. Unlike the first one, this is the spot on the mark. For this, the number of the chosen shows and the oldness of the genre may be the reason behind it. The recommended headlines are Popular on Netflix, Trending Now, My List (Brooklyn

99, Modern Family, Leyla ile Mecnun, and Friends, respectively), Comedy Films, SitComs, Best Picks for II-Kübra, Top 10 List of Today in Turkey, Netflix Originals, Comedy Series, Critically Acclaimed Series, Action and Adventure Series, Children and Family Films, Romantic Movies, New Releases, Action and Adventure Series, Fun TV Series And Movies, Turkish TV Series, Documentaries, Movies and TV Series for Young Adults, Romantic Series, American Series, Children and Family Series, Hollywood Films, TV Series, Dramas, Science Fiction And Horror Series, European Movies and TV Series, Reality, Variety and Talk Shows, Videos that Share Similarity with Leyla ile Mecnun, American Sit-Coms, Thriller Films, Anime, Watch in one Weekend, Thriller Series, Considered Odd and Excluded / Witty TV Shows, Blockbuster Movies, Feel-Good Movies, Exciting Movies, Drama Series, Comedy Series with Ensemble Cast. The best pick section contains Sit-Coms, comedy series section is upper than the previous profile. Another section that is different from the first profile is Considered Odd and Excluded, which can be seen as related to chosen content.

The third profile again starts with stating preferred language and taste, Turkish and English languages and chosen. The contents liked are the ones that give an impression of action and thriller. The chosen contents are decided according to the thumbnails, the ones that have guns in. Mosul, Vis a Vis, The Walking Dead, The Witcher, and Extraction. The trailer on top of the page belongs to La Casa De Papel, an action TV series. The headlines shown are Popular on Netflix, Top 10 List of Today in Turkey, My List (Extraction, The Witcher, The Walking Dead, Vis a Vis, and Mosul), Horror Series, Netflix Originals, Crime Series, Action and Adventure Series, Comedy Films, Drama Series, Engaging Series, Action and Adventure Films, New Releases, Gangster Thriller Series, Documentaries, Prison Themed Series, Prison Themed TV Series, Children and Family Series, Dramas, Comedy Series, Action Series, Best Pick for III-Şahin, Science Fiction and Horror Series, Scary Movies, Hollywood Films, Horror Films, Blockbuster

Films, Trending Now, Videos that Share Similarity with Mosul, Gangster Series, Series, Children and Family Films, Hardcore Realistic Films, Romantic Films, American Suspensive Dramas, Films and Series in Arabic, Action and Thriller Films, AwardWinning Films, Movies and TV Shows for Young Adults, Thriller and Mystery Series, and Watch in one Weekend.

On April 25th, the researcher searched for “empowered” on the first account on the application, and the first content suggested was Girlboss. Even though it was under the category of friendship movies and series, the name seemed appealing to the chosen theme, and after reading the description, it is watched three chapters without skipping intros or credits. On the same date, the researcher started to watch Friends, the main banner/trailer on the second profile, but this time, the intros and credits were skipped as if the user was really into the content and intended to binge on it.

When the mobile application was logged in, the user received an e-mail informing that an account was logged. On mobile, downloading part was promoted. On a personal computer, it was not possible to click “next chapter” and try to quit watching right after. After a few seconds, it was possible to click the arrow on the top left and go back to browse, or it is possible to press the escape button and leave full screen and proceed by clicking the arrow.

On April 25th, Friends was watched for three episodes entirely on the second profile. After watching Friends, the header banner was changed, offering Modern Family which is also on the personal list. As for Girlboss, the last episode was left half unwatched. The suggested banner/trailer was not changed, but another section emerged under the headline “II-Kübra, Keep Watching”.

As for the I-Fatma profile, after an hour or so, the same series was continued to watch on mobile since it was left unfinished. At the same time, Modern Family was

watched on profile II on the computer. Not a button was clicked on neither of the series. Even though they were watched for the same duration, Modern Family was stopped playing by Netflix itself after three episodes with a message that covers the whole screen over the series. The message was neither a sentence nor there was a question. The message consisted of three buttons: continue, play it over, turn back to browse. It may be thought that the reason behind this may be not interacting with Netflix -not skipping intros or credits by clicking the next episode. However, the situation did not occur on mobile. It needs confirmation, and it will be confirmed or denied.

After watching those episodes, profile II was recommended to watch How I Met Your Mother, but the rest of the main page did not change at all. It may be due to not scrolling for the profile but clicking whatever is recommended on the banner, yet, confirmation is required.

Since the downloading is only for mobile applications, the content for the profile I was downloaded. When the download “tab” is opened, it offers to download Netflix’s choice, and they are the ones that are already suggested to the user and Netflix Original content. It seems like Netflix pushes really hard for the user to watch recommended content. Since the profile is not designed for accepting whatever is suggested, a few words are searched. Before downloading, “girl power” and “feminist” keywords are searched for a couple of times each. One movie, Moxie, was downloaded from the ones that are right under the search bar. The following content downloaded is chosen based on the best picks for the “I-Fatma” section. The Bold Type was the first one on the section, and it was downloaded. When the download button under the thumbnail is clicked, only the first episode is downloaded. If desired, the rest is downloaded manually. Watching experience is similar to online watching. It also has “skip intro” and “next chapter” buttons. One difference is that it does not automatically skip the “previously on” part, unlike online

watching practice. The downloading continues once Wi-Fi is connected, even though it was not left set to download. In the following days, this non-demanded downloading continues. One day the application tried to download content four times even after denying it. Moreover, once checked, the content that was seen as “related” was downloaded with the following chapters of the already downloaded show.

The next day, April the 27th, profiles were switched, and the first profile was watched on the web, the second was watched on the mobile application. There were no warning screens this time, but this can still be due to not using Netflix full-screen. On both of the profiles, the first recommendation on the banner was watched for three episodes with no interaction. For the first profile, Friends was suggested, and for the second, Brooklyn 99 was recommended. It is necessary to point out that all of the recommended content was in the personal list of the profile.

On April the 28th, the third profile was signed in to watch one movie. Even though the profile was sell-set for the people who strictly prefer action movies and series, Netflix’s newest Turkish original series Fatma was suggested on the banner trailer, even though its genre is a psychological drama. It was the day that movie was released, too (April 28th). Then, the closest content to be an action movie which is the Gemini Man, was watched. When the movie ended, Fatma was suggested again. It seems like Netflix promotes its own content more than estimated.

The aim of watching content on the third profile is to see if Netflix sends an email regarding that profile. Since it is a known factor that Netflix wants its users to engage with the content as much as they can, it sends an e-mail that includes content that the user can possibly like. It is always sent to the first profiles, but the other ones must be checked, too. For observing this phenomenon, a few episodes of a TV series will be watched and left half-watched. Then, an e-mail may or may not be received.

The next day, the only first profile was engaged. The recommended content was Fatma again. It was ignored this time, but the successive interest of the profile will be that due to the leading role. The profile continued to watch Girlboss to control if the warning screen will appear when the content was watched full screen. It apparently appears after watching three episodes on full screen. The three episodes do not have to be watched entirely. The last five minutes of the first episode can be watched, and after two whole episodes without any movement on the keyboard or touchpad will result in asking questions to the user.

The warning screen' continue and play it over buttons did the same thing. When clicked, they just continued the show. However, this will be rechecked on the different profiles.

On the following day, the first and second profile watched Fatma from the banner. The reason for the first one is that it had a female lead, and the story was revolving around her. However, Netflix seems to understand the taste of the “person” behind the profile, since the category “US drama series with strong heroines” occupies the second line right after Continue Watching line. Later down, there situates a “Best Pick” line consists of thumbnails that include women on the focal point except for one. Then, TV Dramas with Strong Heroines, and finally, TV Shows with Strong Female Figures. After watching Fatma, the show Sexify was suggested on the banner. The second profile was asked if they liked Leyla ile Mecnun.

On the third profile, Fatma was suggested, too. However, there was no new content suggested. It was instead the previously recommended one, La Casa De Papel. Then, there is the “TV Shows” section as the following recommendation. Fatma is the only one under the continue watching headline since it is the only TV series watched.

Again, the recommended content is TV series. The recommended contents' thumbnails mostly consist of actors, apart from Fatma. Moreover, they are usually full of guns. Although the most prominent contents are series, the profile will continue watching action movies.

The third profile watched Old guard, and after it ends, TV Show Shadow and Bone was suggested on the main screen, without pressing any other buttons. Since it is not a movie and the profile does not prefer series, it was decided that it will not be watched. After watching the recommended content, the browse screen does not have a banner anymore. They only offer recommendations as headlines with thumbnails below, and they start with a personal list that was conducted while creating the profile. It is followed by the "Dive into the Adventure" section, which starts with a Netflix Original content and is full of action series. Then, period films that are completely unrelated as a genre but include one content with aggressive implications appear. In addition, one of the best picks for the profile has a weapon on the thumbnail.

The next day, the strong women category was higher than the previous day, and the content watched was chosen from that category. The show Gilmore Girls was chosen and watched on a mobile device. It kept playing the first episode. Even after turning back to browse and opening the show, the episode starts from the beginning. The "next episode" button near "watch credits" one did not even appear. It was only then that the next episode played when the next episode button under the timeline was clicked. After the third episode, Netflix worked like usual. It is thought that the problem was due to a glitch of the site, rather than a unique feature for the show, especially the fact that this happened before the research and it coincided with another user's experience was considered.

On the same day, the sitcom “Community” was suggested on the banner for the second profile, and just like the profile characteristics, it was watched. The purpose was to check the warning screen. After three episodes, the screen is darkened, and three options are offered: continue, play it over and turn back to browse. It was told above that both continue and play it over options function remarkably similar that it looks the same. However, the time that the chapter was played was different. When the “continue” button was clicked, the episode starts where it left, and it may be beginning, too. For this case, it was 02.19, started from that time, and appeared different. The play it over button, on the other hand, starts the episode from the beginning.

For now, thumbnails did not change for different profiles; they rather changed together. For instance, Brooklyn 99 had Andre Braugher for May the 4th, and for the 5th, it was Andy Samberg for the first and the second profile.

For the second profile, the show Sherlock was recommended on the banner the following day. Even though it includes comedy components, the show is mainly mystery drama. Thus, it was not chosen, but How I Met Your Mother under the comedy headline was watched. Since the profile did not search anything yet, it seems like the main focus of Netflix may be on the searching section. It had Sherlock for a while on the banner, too.

For the first profile, downloaded chapters of The Bold Type were watched, and the next day it appeared on Continue Watching section. The Strong Women headline moved upper, too.

The only difference for the banners on May the 5th was Bir Başkadır. While the first one had a different banner, the second and the third had shared one. However, the first profile had a shared thumbnail on the mobile app. The other shared contents did not have any difference.

On the third profile, the banner suggested a film for the first time. Even though headlines recommended series, the banner's change is essential, especially when it is considered that the profile watched a few contents. It was even pointed out that the content is a film, not a TV series. Since it was recommended, 6 Underground was watched.

The first profile will continue watching the downloaded chapters on the mobile application, but this time, it will watch online, not from the downloaded section, to see if there will be a difference. Furthermore, there actually was a difference. Even though the downloaded content was watched from the main browse section on the app, and when the downloaded content was watched, the next episode was neither offered, not started. The "watch credits" and "next episode" buttons did not appear; Netflix rather closed the show and opened the browse screen.

The next day profiles one and two watched content. The first one continues watching The Bold Type. The show Girlboss is intentionally ignored to see if any e-mail regarding it will be received. However, it is not received, but two days later, on May the 8th, the closed account received one that reminds of a half-watched show.

May the 7th was interesting in regards to the first profile. Before that date, the web and mobile application recommendations were almost the same, apart from Bir Başkadır's thumbnail. On the web, Queen's Gambit covered the banner; thus, it was at first thought that it would be watched, especially since it meets the criteria. However, it changed on the application to Emily in Paris. Then, it did not change to a video, and interesting small classifications appeared. They were attention-grabbing at the front of the bright colours of the thumbnail. They included Friendship of Girls as features. When some of the features are clicked, they offer a list of the content that had the feature. However, it did not occur this time. It opened the information window right before the feature, and the window did not include the feature. To ensure that it did not happen by accident, it tested

on the same content several times. However, the function will be tested again on several occasions.

After that, content from the empowered women section was opened, and from all those, the one that showcases power was chosen to be watched. It displayed a woman sitting on her throne; the show was Queen South. The show was watched for three episodes and stopped playing.

The most interesting part of the second profile is that the user's list went lower than ever. It may be related to watching the content from the only banner, but there is no proof. However, the continue watching button is where it has always been; it did not change at all, which leads to the possibility of a default attribute.

Both of the profiles had Andre Braugher again for the Brooklyn 99, yet, mobile app's thumbnail had Andy Samberg for the profile I. Similarly, Suits had the same actor on its thumbnail on both web profiles but displayed an actress for the application. The list included Bir Başkadır, too. This time, its thumbnail was precisely the same. However, others had differences. The significant ones on the browse pages were that Modern Family's and Fatma's thumbnails. While the second profile had two actors for the Modern Family, the first one had the whole cast, a family. As for Fatma, the first one showed her with her child and another woman in two separate thumbnails -it was number one in the top 10 list for Turkey on that date, the second one displayed her alone and with a man. Family is highlighted for the first profile, and for the second, male participation was put forward. It seems like the stereotypic gender of the profile is deciphered by Netflix. Rather than showing interests according to the search bar results, it seems like Netflix used it as a base and offered what algorithms were taught to see "suitable".

On May the 9th, watching devices are swapped, and while the first profile watched The Crown on the web, the second one watched Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt on the

mobile app. The Crown was chosen because the profile's list was the last line on the page, and it was necessary to see what happens on the browse page after watching one of those contents. Because it was recommended on the banner, Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt was chosen for the second profile. Netflix did not recommend the same content on the banner so far; this seemed like the first. However, the content recommended was not the usual Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt; it was a film version of the show named Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt: Kimmy vs. The Reverend. That was also recommended on the mobile app, unlike the first profile. It had its quirky differences. The first interesting difference is that the film did not have a timeline on the bottom of the watching screen: there were only voice and subtitle language buttons. It was not seen after trying several times. This time it was not a glitch. It was later seen that the user could make choices for the show's plot, contributing to the adventure of Kimmy, the main heroine. The choices are open to change at any time, and those changes occupy the place of the timeline.

A couple of days after the movie ended, a notification is received informing that the show is entirely watched with another notification asking if it was appealing and if the user loved the content. It came with thumbs up and down emojis, asking the user to like or dislike the show.

On May the 10th, a power outage in the town that the researcher lives in after continuing the writing during the day; thus, only downloaded content Moxie was watched. On May 11th and the 12th, any content was not watched due to a trip was taken and health issues.

On May the 13th, Profile III was examined. The movie "Triple Frontier" was suggested on the banner, and it was aligning with designated criteria for the profile, so it was watched. After watching, the trailer of another movie named "Outside the Wire" was played. After clicking the "More Info" button, it led to the film's pop-up with informing

about the film. After turning back to the browse, the banner suggested another content named “Shooter,” and it was watched. However, this time the recommended content was actually a TV series. This makes the researcher think that the users are tricked into watching series since Netflix operates according to its binge model to keep customers hooked.

The second stage of the research searched for the differences on the same profile logged in different devices resulting in having different IPs. When the number of the difference between watched content on different IPs is not huge, the difference on the browse pages seems insignificant and almost invisible unless it is searched for aimfully. For the first profile, when only one content, *Workin’ Moms*, binged, the banners and the Top 10 list was the same, and Continue Watching line remained. However, Critically Approved Content and agenda contents were different from each other, and the following line differed with one content, while the computer that watched *Workin’ Moms* recommended *Lucifer*, the other one did not. Then the difference could be seen other headlines. Even the contents of the order of the day changed, then the headlines.

However, the previous stage showed that when the different devices are chosen for the content under the name of the different altgenre, even under the same theme, the banner recommendation, too, changed. So, it is possible to say that the difference of the IPs relies on how well Netflix’s algorithm knows the user.

The second profile, however, changes this deduction. The banner is different from each other, even though the difference of the watched content is not drastic. Then, it is seen that the following headlines and what they recommend did not display any differences, the reason might be the complexity of the chosen theme for the profile one.

The home page of the third profile, behaved like the previous one. The banner changed but the rest remained the same. However, there was one interesting thing: the device that the content was not watched showcased the content that was already watched. The recommendation on the familiar device was again the serial content.

DISCUSSION

Overall, Netflix uses a tone that conveys the message that it is an entertainment service that takes its jobs very seriously. It presents itself as a company that thoroughly cares for its customers, even though it costs them. It is possible to decline commercial emails from Netflix.

From the very beginning of the Netflix usage process, Netflix constantly promotes itself. Starting from before creating an account, rather considering creating the account, it continues on every step of account creating, pulling the customers in Netflix by mentioning its benefits and using the expressions that are used in daily sincere talk with a respectful tone. It informs customers in a way that shows what they might want, but conventional television does not even offer.

Personalisation of the Netflix homepage is also an interesting point. The contents shown on the page have Netflix Originals, too. It is attention-worthy that the users are expected to be informed about original content. The settlement of contents on the first personalisation page is so mixed that it is impossible to like just a few and continue. As for content consumption, promotion continues. Netflix starts recommending its original and serial content from the very beginning. Even though they do not align with the chosen themes, they are scattered here and there on under every profile's almost every single headline. The same issue is applicable to Turkish contents. They are, especially at the beginning, highly recommended. Suggested banner contents were mostly original, too. Moreover, the type of content suggested is mostly series; films are rarely recommended,

even if it is the only type of content that is watched. As for downloading, if the user allows content to be downloaded, the mobile app downloads the content as it “decides”. These contents are primarily original and serial, too.

Downloading seems never to stop once it starts. Unless the feature is turned off intentionally, whenever the device is connected to the Wi-Fi, it starts to download content, especially serial ones. Even though a few episodes of a show are downloaded, Netflix only downloads a couple of its further episodes. It adds some episodes of another show, too.

Creating profiles includes choosing content that represents users’ own tastes. The more content is chosen, the sooner the customisation of the browse page is conducted. While for Netflix to figure out the first profile took almost whole research time, two weeks total, the third one did not even take a couple of days to “grasp”. Even though the opportunities that come with the search bar are used, it was hard for Netflix’s algorithm to detect what the user may want. This brings us to another point: it is not possible for the algorithm to find content for the users that know what they want unless the content is too blatant. For instance, while there are several contents for empowered women, and it was searched for a few times, the strong women line was on the bottom for the profile one.

As for the second one, it took a shorter time for the browse page to adjust to the taste of the profile. Those easy adjustments may be due to the simplicity or the abundance of other content on Netflix. Whatever the reason it, it is clear that it seems like Netflix trusts its users’ lead; however, the fact is that most probably either it made a good analysis of user behaviour, or the algorithms work well to recommend content.

Contents are classified into altgenres that are not traditional. Altgenres like feelgood content and girls’ friendship are indicated and are used commonly. It is also

necessary to point out that more complex content highlights these genres more. And some genres lead to other contents that have a similar feature.

Other non-traditional classifications also seem as headlines. According to previously watched content, they are recommended, and they all can be displayed throughout the browse page. Once the content is watched from lower lines, the headline moves to the upper part of the page.

The frequency of suggested series indicates that broadcasting series is more important than single movies for Netflix. It makes sense, especially the binge method of it considered. As mentioned in the Literature Review, bingeing is an actual Netflix model, and it makes people wait for the new season at least for a year. Thus, it guarantees an audience of fans at least for a year.

What seemed interesting at first that makes sense now is that one strategy of Netflix is that making it visible to cancel the subscription, which will be mentioned later. Even while creating an account, the payment screen with the credit card information promises a no-nonsense cancellation which is a massive plus for Netflix because even cancelling a telephone line is quite burdensome in Turkey.

If a mistake occurs and credit card declines, Netflix allows users to watch content for a week, even though it reminds them about the payment problems. While logging off, Netflix informs the user that it is not always necessary. As for cancelling membership, it is definitely a smooth process. The user is not asked to keep the membership. However, it is asked for the user to open the account again nicely, and the user is informed that the options of the user will be kept for ten months. This might not seem enough for Netflix to send e-mails regarding re-starting Netflix six times in a three-week period of time. It starts by reminds users about the show that was binge, apparently liked, and goes on with the

the payment. It shows that Netflix is a consistent platform and actually extended, rather than being a closed system.

CONCLUSION

Netflix uses its own original content and serial TV shows for keeping customers in its system. The shows that are not available anywhere but at Netflix are continuously showcased to the users regardless of the day, places on the page, or the taste of the user. Netflix ceaselessly produces original content on several countries which helps the matter. while the contents are offered, the users are also almost forced to watch original serial content with sneaky full-page recommendations while the user watches whatever they can. Serial content almost guarantees a year of waiting for the next season, or more years for several cases.

Depending on the device, that is, IP, the accuracy of Netflix does not change as long as simple and traditional genres are chosen. The offered contents change, but their genre remains the same, in the frame of the chosen theme. However, when it comes to the more complex themes, profile three in this case, the contents mainly remain the same, once the theme is “grasped”.

Netflix is a platform that offers entertainment in exchange for a fee and user data for tracking of the taste. It uses the opportunities that comes with its extended nature. Its expected environment is actually everywhere possible with the downloading through the application. Its vision, operating model and governance revolves around keeping the customers in and connected to the system to gain financial benefit. It demonstrates a quite successful view. Since the main purpose is financial, it is not expected for Netflix to mark a new epoch unless it meets the expectations of its users. Since the users are worldwide, the contents have the potential to be both inclusive and exceed national limits. Still, localisation is expected due to its adopted niche marketing strategies.

Extra Notes

During the writing period, there were ups and downs with the pandemic, which will definitely have its effects on OTT business. In the last half of April, 2021, vaccines spread amongst the first world countries, which are the most significant market for Netflix when their target audience is considered. This year, Netflix could not reach its projected number of new users of 6 million and just gained 3.98 million new users in 2021, which is only 60% of the aimed new customers (“Netflix shares plunge”, 2021). It is widely thought that the reason behind the fall is that the user surge due to the pandemic was over, and the reason behind it is considered the vaccinations (“Aşı geldi”, 2021; “Aşı yaramadı”, 2021). However, Netflix relates this fall to pandemic conditions hindering original content production (Vega, 2021). The existence of the pandemic should not be considered the only component of the current situation. There are other facts about Netflix’s rivals. Especially in the USA, it seems like rival SVODs rose by touting Netflix’s customers (Lee, 2021); the situation is even named “streaming wars” by some (Watson, 2021). Even though Netflix is the most extensive SVOD service, it is thought that Netflix does not have a guarantee for its position on top of the SVOD services anymore (Pallotta, 2021), and the previous assumptions or expectations of Hollywood about Netflix being a content producing monopoly may not become real.

Some businesspeople suggest that Netflix could use adverts for more benefit (Pallotta, 2021), but it does not align with Netflix. It would opt for raising fees -which was already done in Turkey (“Netflix üyelik ücretlerine”, 2021)- or even not allowing for several profile building -which seems that it was being considered, but when circumstances is considered, it does not seem quite likely, especially when the market does not consist of only legal video streaming services. When people have the opportunity

to watch free content by only watching a few commercials, it is logical to expect them to pay for watching commercials.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation aims to explore the ways Netflix communicates with its users via its interfaces to keep them using the system. For this, walkthrough method was chosen, and merged with content analysis. To examine that, three different profiles with different themes for each and the differences and similarities of the changes of the interface is explored. After the results are found, communication establishing process and ways of user attraction is interpreted, according to content analysis methods.

Key words: Netflix, Communication, Interface, Video on Demand services, Audience