

Netflix and Chill: An Analysis of Turkish Generation Z Viewers on the New Hedonistic Product

Netflix and Chill: Yeni Hedonistik Ürün'ü kullanan Türk Z kuşağı izleyicilerinin bir Analizi

Xheni Simaku, Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, Haliç Üniversitesi, E-Posta: xhenisimaku@halic.edu.tr

<https://doi.org/10.47998/ikad.1004162>

Keywords:

Netflix,
Consumerism,
Hedonism,
Binge-Watching,
Generation Z.

Abstract

Lifestyle technologies frequently increase and adjust the intensity of involvement within the context of the digital attention economy. As a result of digitalization, Netflix is a pioneer in the streaming culture of recommendations, instant delivery, and custom-made production. To express this, McDonald and Smith-Rowey (2016) coined the phrase “the Netflix effect.” The algorithms used by Netflix’s mechanisms are intended to capitalize on viewer activity and increase time spent on the platform. With this platform, a new well-known brand was born, as well as a new generation of hedonistic consumers. The catchphrase “Netflix and Chill” legitimizes and highlights the brand’s relevance by appealing to a new cultural taste in a world where the emotional aspect of consumption is becoming increasingly evident. This paper aims to evaluate the hedonistic behavior of Netflix binge-watching by Turkish students and, more specifically, the fundamental points by examining the following: Netflix culture and how Netflix is watched, the choice of such a platform, the algorithms of this platform, the production and thus consumption of content, hedonism, and lastly, binge watching. A reception study was undertaken, with for groups, each of them composed by five Netflix subscribers from generation Z participating in focus groups. A focus group and discourse analysis are used to explore indicators of hedonism, binge-watching, and consumerism in the show and how people react to it. The study determines the extent of viewers’ hedonism and their self-perception of it.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Netflix,
Tüketicilik,
Hedonizm,
Aşırı İzleme,
Z Kuşağı.

Öz

‘Dijital Dikkat Ekonomisi’ bağlamında ‘Yaşam Tarzı Teknolojileri’ izleyici katılımını düzenlerken, katılımın yoğunluğunu da arttırmaktadır. İzleyicisine ‘anında teslimat’, ‘özel yapım üretim’leri ile benzer platformlar arasında öne çıkan, dijital teknoloji ve medya hizmetleri sağlayıcısı yapım şirketi Netflix’in bu bağlamda önemini McDonald ve Smith-Rowey (2016) “Netflix etkisi” ifadesiyle vurgulamaktadır. Bu video akış platformunun kullandığı algoritmaların amacı, izleyicilerinin etkinliğinden yararlanarak platformda harcanan zamanı arttırmaktır. Netflix yeni nesil hancı tüketiciler oluştururken, “Netflix and Chill” sloganı ile tüketimin duygusal boyutunun giderek daha önemli hâle geldiği bir dünyada, yeni bir kültürel zevk oluşturarak varlık nedenini meşrulaştırırken, markasının güncelliğini korumaktadır. Bu makale, Türkiye’de yaşayan Netflix izleyicisi gençlerin seçme ve izleme davranışını araştırmaktadır. Netflix aboneli olan Z kuşağından 20 üniversite öğrencisi ile beşer kişilik dört odak grup olmak üzere alımlama çalışması yapılmıştır. Odak grup çalışmasının verileriyle, ‘hedonizm’, ‘tüketicilik’, ‘aşırı izleme’ kavramları üzerinden söylem analizi yapılmıştır. Analiz sonucunda yer yer etkin çoğu kez edilgen olan seçme ve izleme davranışının, uzun süreli ve aralıksız, art arda tüketme şeklinde gerçek yaşamın sorunlarından uzaklaşmak zihni boşaltmak ve sadece mutlu olmak, zevk almak üzerine kurulu olduğu saptanmıştır.

Introduction

The last few decades have witnessed rapid cultural change globally, and as Bauman (2001) has identified it is characterized by being, fluid, fleeting, a phenomenon that cannot be fully understood because it is in constantly evolving. This change is due to a variety of factors; technological development being among the most significant. The speed and prolificacy of technological development can be linked to and identified as driving the so-called neoliberal policy that in recent decades has increasingly sought to interconnect international markets. Neoliberal policies began to emerge in the early 1980s and were reinforced by important political figures such as Thatcher and Reagan who started the de-regularization of markets (Harvey, 2002), creating a free international market, which then developed over time to the much-discussed phenomenon of globalization which has to some extent become rooted in all areas of the society including the economic, social, political, and technological.

It is at the peak of this phenomenon that generation Z was born. Also known as the generation of the internet, it is commonly understood that they have no problem adapting to technological needs (Ünür & Turan, 2021). This generation is the prime customer of Netflix, a company that founded in 1997 by Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph that was initially born with the idea of selling and renting DVDs ordered via the Internet, a company which cares greatly about its relationship with customers, the intimate, personalized quality of which has given it the type of market that has led it to grow from a small-medium company to an international giant. Netflix is an American platform that allows you to watch movies and TV series in streaming on-demand and that has millions of subscribers all over the world. The most obvious novelty lies not in the programs but in the methods of dissemination of the same; because they get paid they have to deal with an expectation of quality.

The phenomena considered in this study are the aforementioned generation Z and its relationship with Netflix, focusing on the hedonistic dimension that this new platform presents to its viewers, or rather more precisely, consumers. It is a product which has seen a considerable increase in traction thanks to sophisticated algorithms that Netflix has created since the beginning and which optimize a relationship of fidelity with the customer, based on customer care, and with it, it has assured that the proliferation of the users has been a fundamental point of growth. Over time, the increasingly sophisticated algorithm by selecting content and products tailored to the viewer's interests and taste have created devoted customers.

The period in which this research was conducted has been extremely delicate and uncertain. The world has found itself having to face a global pandemic that has like all almost all the world, affected Turkey, which has often adopted lockdown policies causing people to have had to adapt to a new normal, in which Netflix, according to what the young people in this research study say, has played an important role, above all in distracting them and in killing time.

In short, this article concerns Generation Z, the Netflix platform, and how the contents of the latter have become a hedonistic consumer product among the young Turkish students interviewed in this research. It can be concluded that the circumstances of the period in which we find ourselves has further strengthened the influence of online platforms at the expense of the self-esteem and social behavior of the subjects studied.

Netflix and Generation Z.

With digitalization, globalization, and cultural convergence we are witnessing a change in the media system and its relationship with the public. For years, the television habits of viewers were regulated by the schedule, which assigned precise time slots, and if a program was missed it was difficult to retrieve. In the ever-evolving field of pay-TV, on-demand TV, and streaming, what matters is the time and dynamics of usage, and the variability of content for consumers with very dissimilar characteristics. With new technologies much television is available to view in streaming mode, allowing everyone the freedom to compile their preferred schedule resulting in a personalization of viewing habits. The synchronized schedule of generalist TV has a unified impact on the public and is aimed at satisfying mass consumption, unlike thematic TV which focuses more on individual needs.

To date, the Internet has had an increasingly important role in the television landscape. The television industry seems to be among the readiest to utilize the web in order to design an engrossing experience for the customer and at the same time encourage interaction with viewers through the use of different social networks such as Facebook and Twitter.

The most obvious novelty of Netflix lies not in the program but in the methods of their disseminations, since they get paid, they have to deal with an expectation of quality. In particular, this mode of use permits the user to take advantage of a large amount of content and to regain control of their time by being able to choose where, when and on which screen to view their favorite movies or TV series. One of the important steps that Netflix took was the launch of House of Cards, its first original production, which had the effect of discouraging competition, and in 2016 Netflix finds itself having global coverage creating the famous relationship of Fidelity with the customer. Within two decades, the company that began with video rental became one of the most widely-used streaming / online platforms in the world. Customers who subscribe do so not only to it just to watch audiovisual content; but to have a series of experiences, ranging from setting their own profile and personalized icon, to familiarizing themselves with the user interface, from scrolling the catalog, to evaluating the content they have just watched, and finally, having the opportunity to participate in discussions on social networks, additionally appealing in that it is on a global scale.

This set of interconnected experiences means that Netflix is perceived less as a business focused on generating profit and more as an entirely customer-oriented service, which cares about them, maintains a personalized relationship with them, and which is potentially capable of providing exactly who they are They aim to construct a trust relationship and familiarity with the user that is stronger than any other commercial

strategy for customer loyalty and which, in turn, generates stronger network effects than any marketing campaign: the value of the service perceived by the client is proportional to the number of other users using that same service. In other words, having many subscribed users attracts new customers.

Furthermore, the popularity of Netflix lies not only in the tailor-made factor, where customers are presented with television series or films presented based on their tastes, with scheduling it made to measure, but also having in its a very competitive cost including the fact that there is the possibility of sharing one account with up to 5 people.

The founding of Netflix, the year 1997 also coincides with the first year those of the so-called Generation Z were born. The Pew Research Center (PEW) determines that Generation Z were born from 1997 onward, choosing this date for the reason that it marked the beginning of what could be discerned as “different formative experiences”, one of the most important factors of which are the widespread internet access, the development of technological services, and prominent world events such as the attacks of the twin towers in New York on September 11th 2001. At that time Generation Z were just 4 years old, which is why they just have little or no memory at all of the event. Pew has indicated that they would use 1997–2012 for future publications but would remain open to date recalibration. In accordance with the definition given by PEW, in 2021, members of Generation Z would have ranged from 24 years to 9 years old.

One of the significant aims of this study is to highlight that Netflix is the same age as generation Z, which will therefore make it easier to understand parallels between Netflix in adapting to the market demand, and how it has developed. For this reason, it is crucial to understand how this generation and Netflix have evolved together over time.

Tailor-made Production and Algorithms

Algorithms are new cultural intermediaries (Bourdieu, 1984) that shape contemporary cultural experiences and identities (Elmacioğlu, 2021), but their obscurity and complexity, however, hinder an understanding of their logic and processes as tastemakers.

In 2007, the Netflix project went online and began its venture in the world of streaming on-demand, which it is now clear has allowed it to become the most successful streamed entertainment service, but this does not mean that the distribution of content in digital format is problem-free at the infrastructure level.

Netflix’s catalogue is governed by the geo-blocking mechanism: each country has its specific catalog including some original Netflix products. In addition to creating original content, the worldwide success of the platform is certainly due to the time-shifted viewing mode: the user can enjoy watching material whenever they want and wherever they are, just as with any downloaded and opened applications on smart devices. This modality, Marrazzo (2016) underlines, guides the phenomenon of the place shifted which implies that the contents are not viewed in full at the same time and place, but in different moments, situations and through different devices.

Netflix has managed to distinguish itself from other OTTs above all thanks to the customization of its offering and the interaction with its user: the interface communicates thanks to a system of algorithms called the recommendation system or suggestion system. CEO Reed Hastings has suggested that the ultimate goal would be to become so good at suggesting material someday that the service is going to be able to recommend exactly the right movie or show based on customers' moods when they connect to Netflix. Netflix users scroll through the catalog from 40 to 50 titles on their home screen before choosing a title. The choice is influenced by details such as the preview image of the title, which the algorithm decides based on the aspects of the film or show that may interest the viewer.

As has been clear from the beginning the service aims for viewer entertainment and enjoyment. Netflix has transformed into an OTT (Over-The-Top) platform which via the internet offers paid services to its users, and Svod (Subscription video on demand): namely: a service for the limited use of audiovisual works on request which provides for a fixed periodic fee to access the contents of a catalogue. Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Now Tv, and Infinity are other platforms that are part of both the OTT and Svod circuit.

Netflix has a catalog or an audiovisual offer system for its subscribers. Before 2011, it only contained non-original films, i.e. from producers other than Netflix. After a crisis, experienced in July 2011, due to the increase in subscription costs for streaming and the demand for new content, CEO Hastings decided to focus on the creation of original product (television series and films) the first of which were *Orange Is The New Black* and *House of Cards* posted online in 2013. To grow, Netflix can count on the incredible power that the algorithm and an accurate data-mining operation can provide. All the contents in the catalog are automatically sorted into one or more of what the executives call "verticals": surprisingly specific sub-genres in which all films and television series are indexed. This categorization is crossed by that of data from users who, in turn, are divided into over two thousand taste clusters, a system comparable to that of collecting demographic ratings, but much more advanced and precise.

This system aims to help the user make viewing choices, but CEO Reed Hasting's ultimate goal is to one day become so good at suggesting that he will be capable to propose you exactly the right movie or the right show based on to your state of mind when you connect to Netflix. (Hasting & Meyer, 2020)

Consumerism, Hedonism and Binge Watching

The notion of hedonism has very deep roots connected to the ancient Greeks. Etymologically, the word hedonism has the following meaning: "Hedonism, in ethics, is a general term for all theories of conduct in which the criterion is the pleasure of one kind or another. This word came from the Greek *hedone* ("pleasure"), from *hedys* ("sweet" or "pleasant")". (britannica.com, 2021) But with the modern age and with modernism, the meaning of hedonism has taken a new turn; it is connected to the experience of consumption. While the concept of consumer experience is rather complex to define, at least two components that distinguished it can be identified. The first component is

represented by the intercommunication between the individual and the supply system (Addis, 2007). Therefore, the relevant aspect of the consumer experience is also the ability to generate continuous interaction (physical, cognitive, or emotional) between the consumer and the supply system which is the product, the brand, and the surrounding environment. This interaction is due to three factors:

- the technological component as it requires the individual to interact more, allowing an increase in the sense of self-esteem and the hedonistic content of the experience,
- the equity component, that is the degree of activity or passivity of the consumer,
- the sensory component.

The second component is the attribution of the meaning of the individual to the interaction. That is, the individual must attribute a meaning to the interaction experienced. This process allows the transformation of the interaction experienced by the individual into reality, linked to the different mental states that manifest themselves in the consumer.

Ultimately, the more these two entities increase, the more the individual will be immersed in the experience. Connecting to Netflix, can be said by its nature to be a hedonistic product since, a film or series can be identified as a product that offers an emotional experience. During the viewing activity, the consumer hopes to be able to experience special feelings such as love, surprise, happiness, anger, sadness, deeply moved, scared (Fowdur, et al., 2009). In the consumption and evaluation phase of the object of the desire, the affective component is very important. Following the watching of a e film or television series, satisfaction will be obtained if the latter can offer a surprise effect, attract attention, and create strong emotions (Suwarto, 2012; Şakı Aydın,2019).

The advent of Netflix has led to the so-called binge-watching. This term is a sort of viewing marathon, indicated by the obsessive viewing of episodes in a single intensive session or the act of watching multiple episodes of the same TV show consecutively. In essence, it refers to the “bingeing” of TV series, comparable to what was called McDonaldization in the food industry, excess consumption of fast food, not being able to digest it, but wanting more and more of it, both because we like it, and because the cost is reasonable. (Ritzer, 2013). Eating one slice of a cake at a time may be wise, but does not having a whole cake in front of us, all to ourselves, invite us to devour it? This is the thinking behind the new shared fruition model, binge-watching not invented by Netflix, but certainly encouraged it.

Binge-watching has become a fairly recent phenomenon and the growing popularity of on-demand streaming services such as Netflix has made it easier to have uninterrupted access to full TV series. Being able to watch an entire season, either previously available or just released without interruption represents a destruction of the idea of seriality as it was conceived. Here, the consumption of the television products takes place based on the needs and choice of the user. In this way, there is a tendency towards the loss of some of the industrial characteristics which are typical of this kind of entertainment, including seriality. That is the presence of episodes which are intended to be broadcast at different times, and consequently, the possibility of metabolizing and digesting a TV series over

a long time and in such a way as to construct that emotional and lasting bond that has previously achieved. For the success of a TV series, it is necessary to create affection on the part of the viewer, and this empathy can only be created with a certain regularity and punctuality of the programme, which had been the strategy to create customer loyalty. The practice of binge-watching represents the negative side of Netflix. It is capable of isolating the viewer in front of their computer screen, damaging their social relationships, increasing the possibility of a worsening psychological conditions such as depression and also inducing other problems such as fatigue, obesity, and heart problems given the sedentary practice that ‘forces’ the binge-watcher to sit in an armchair, dazed in front of a screen.

Research Methodology

A significant and continuously increasing interest, during the last two decades, in data collection techniques that use group interaction as the main cognitive resource has been noticed (Colombo, 1997). These types have considered social actors as not simple sources of information, but protagonists in the research who are able to collectively elaborate the vision of the phenomenon being investigated (Acocella & Cataldi, 2020). Continuous comparison among the social actors makes it possible to clarify individual positions and contrast them to those of others, according to a sharing and comparing procedure (Morgan, 1998) which leads to the definition and explanation of subjective meanings. As a result, it is possible to collect many different meanings behind the same term or expression. Based on the aforementioned motive, the methodology used for this research is the focus group. A focus group is an informal debate between selected individuals about specific topics (Beck et al, 1986). Methods differ not in their mode of analyses, but mostly in their data-collection procedures, and in the nature of the data collected. Focus group have been used to evaluate marketing strategies a lot sooner than the late 1970s, but the techniques have changed over time. The interactive data between the participants and the moderator differentiates the focus group from the one-to-one interviews (Morgan, 1988).

Focus groups also give the possibility for researchers to see exactly how views are constructed, defended, and (sometimes) modified conversations with others, ex. to observe the process of collective sense-making in action, because in a focus group, people are faced with the necessity to give their individual thoughts, beliefs and experiences collectively (Morgan & Spanish, 1984). A focus group is a systematic coding via content analysis and strictly qualitative or ethnographic analysis.

The free flow of a focus group dialogue is an extraordinary tool to hear “the language and vernacular used by respondents” (Bers, 1987). This method provides the researchers, as in this case, with opportunities to listen to local voices, to learn the participants’ own ideas and language, and to develop new perspectives and create new connections a new connection with the members, instead of imposing those of the moderators on them (Freimuth & Greenberg, 1986), and to increase knowledge of participants’ conceptual worlds (Broom & Dozier, 1990).

Focus group interconnections bring out not only common patterns of speeches, but also common experiences, and common way to make the experiences understandable. The researcher offers an insight into the commonly held assumptions, concepts, and meanings that constitute and inform participants' talk about their experiences. Researchers often work with respondents across differences of age, culture, ethnicity, gender, (dis)ability, and so on (Wilkinson & Kitzinger, 1996), and focus groups are particularly useful in enabling researchers to monitor people who can be particularly distant from themselves (Bers, 1987).

In addition to gathering data on the participant's feelings, thoughts, and opinions such as through both group and individual interviews, this study aims to gather deeper insights into the social reality of participants who share the same experience by providing an environment for interaction and discussion in which will yield which would be not expresses when the participant is interviewed alone. Such groups have been shown to allow participants to review their views and express themselves in a clearer and more understandable way. The role of the moderator in focus group studies is to encourage members of the focus group to take part actively to the debate and the ideas changing, to bring them to the attention of others by opposing their ideas, and to identify shared positions (Henn et al., 2006).

The analysis of the focus group study will be evaluated on two bases: the viewing activity of the series is based on cognitive and non-cognitive reactions. The cognitive reaction involves pursuing the act of tracing, being aware of the ideological text, and bringing that ideological doctrine into a certain position: supportive or opposing. Non-cognitive reactions, on the other hand, involve the denial of cognitive activity, in which emotions such as sadness, hatred, anger, excitement, enthusiasm, and joy are active, or where the act of looking is considered only as a means of the daily routine of breathing or entertainment. It corresponds to a form of reception in which it is absorbed. The denial of cognitive influence is the state of ideological doctrine in receiving in the way most appreciated by the dominant producers of meaning. Without realizing what the text exploits, the viewer is convinced of the dominant meaning in a form that is inhibited from reflection and questioning. (Reifova, 2015).

An important factor is the climate of the research. If the interaction between the participants takes place in a serene atmosphere and the discussion is conducted in a not too direct manner by the moderator, an effect of an amplification of the information can be achieved. The opinions that are collected will be of greater and significance and variety than that which would be obtained by interviewing people individually (Scardovelli, 1997). In fact, the comparisons made between opinions suggests the intersubjective construction of an argument, and even the contradictions within the group are considered as resources for the collective negotiation of the theme (Colombo, 1997).

In a focus group, the synergy of the group can favor the expression of a plurality of positions on, and definitions of, the same situation, activating memories of forgotten details and aspects not personally considered; these dynamics do not occur in an interview with two, where the interaction, although present, is undoubtedly between asymmetrical

actors. Moreover, in an interview, the interaction is only linear, while in the group it is reticular and therefore broadens the stimuli. These are the reasons why many authors argue that focus grouping is a particularly appropriate technique for obtaining new responses, unexpected opinions, and unexpected aspects, thus, stimulating the interpretative potentialities of researchers (Morgan, 1988).

The particular advantage of focus groups is the opportunity they offer researchers to observe how people engage in the process of collective sense-making: how views are constructed, expressed, defended, and modified within the context of discussion and debate with others. Above all, the use of focus groups should be considered in relation to the type of research question. Focus groups are a particularly good choice of method when the purpose of the research is to elicit people's understandings, opinions, and views, or to explore how these are advanced, elaborated, and negotiated in a social context. In particular, focus groups enable the researcher to gain a sense of the texture of talk: whether this talk is conceptualized as a 'window' to underlying beliefs and opinions (i.e. within an essentialist framework), or seen as a form of social action in its own right (i.e. within a social constructionist framework) (Lunt & Livingstone, 1996).

Gratification

The focus group discussed in this research is linked to generation Z and to Netflix viewers, so the gratification factor these subjects experience in viewing such content is of great importance.

Audience gratification as has been shown in many studies, can be determined from at least three different sources: media content, exposure to the media, and the social context that embodies the situation of exposure to different media. As one of the sources of gratification which has provided the basis for research in this field, media content has been given much importance. Less consideration has been given to the other sources. It has been clearly demonstrated in many studies that the need to relax or to kill time can be a source of satisfaction, especially if it is connected with watching television, while on the other hand the need spend time alone and spending time lonely can be associated with reading (Waples et al., 1940; Berelson, 1949). Also, the need to structure one's day to be satisfied by listening the radio. A similar case can be noticed in a wish to spend time with one's family or friends which can be realized by watching TV at home with the family or by going to the cinema with one's friends. Additionally, for some individuals the substitute companionship function may involve the use of the media to replace real social ties, while for others it may facilitate an adjustment of reality.

A similar body of recently analyzed materials may be found in relation to television soap operas, with their purported capacity to "establish or reinforce value systems" (Katzman, 1972). One cluster of gratification that emerged from a study of a listener to a long-running daytime radio serial (The Dales), centered on the tendency of the program to uphold traditional family values (Blumler et al., 1970).

Focus groups centrally engages one or more group debates, in which participants together discuss about a chosen topic given by the researcher and introduced to them

(most commonly) by posing questions, although it is sometimes seen as a film, a vignette, a set of advertisements, cards to sort, or a game to play. The participants (usually 6-8, and rarely more than 12) may be pre-existing groups of people (e.g. family members, colleagues) which can be changed or put together depending on the necessity and the aim of the research, in which case it is usually recommended that groups are relatively homogeneous, particularly in relation to ‘prestige’ or ‘status’ factors such as occupation, social class, or age (Carey, 1994).

Crucially, focus groups create an environment of interaction between the participants of the group as well as between the group and the moderator; this kind of interactive data is one of the main characteristics that makes differ focus groups from one-to-one interviews (Morgan, 1988), as well as from methods that have various participants but do not permit interactive discussion (Stewart & Shamdasani, 1990). The hallmark of focus groups, then, is the clear practice people engaging in discussion and interaction which helps the researcher bring out data, new intuitions, and ideas, which would be very difficult to collect without this kind of research. group (Morgan, 1997). Focus group research conducted within an essentialist epistemological framework implies an assumption that individuals have their own personal ideas, opinions, and understandings, and that the duty of the researcher is to access or elicit these. Within this framework, the particular advantage of focus groups is the more comprehensive elicitation of the view of individuals. Focus group research conducted within a social constructionist epistemological framework does not utilize the notion of pre-existing ideas, opinions, and understandings located inside the heads of individuals, but rather presumes that sense-making can be achieved collectively by means social interaction between people. In focus groups, the participants speak mainly to each other rather than to the moderator, and they do it in a more ‘naturalistic’ or ‘ecologically valid’ way (Liebes 1984; Albrecht et al., 1993) than one-to-one interviews.

The key issue in the ethnographic analysis is how to select the material to present (whether this is framed as ‘themes,’ ‘discourses’ or simply as illustrative quotations), without violating the ‘spirit’ of the group, and without losing sight of the specific context within which the material was generated.

Results

For this reception study, the focus groups were composed of five viewers, Turkish students belonging to Z generation and each of whom watches Netflix regularly. Traces of hedonism, binge-watching, and consumerism are tracked in the content of the series with discourse analysis and in the reception of the series within a focus group. The four groups were completely different aside from the common denominator of all being Turkish students belonging to generation Z as their common denominator.

The first group is the group that knows each other and that tried to be the leading group in understanding the dynamics of the research. While, on the other hand, the second group, were totally heterogeneous and consisted of individuals who do not know each

other and turned out to be the most active group which had discussions that were more profound and lasting way for this research. The third group, even if knowing each other was the timidest one. It was perhaps the fourth group that would instead criticize the Netflix platform.

The fundamental points that this research examines are the culture of Netflix and the way Netflix is watched, the choice of such a platform; the algorithms of this platform; the production and therefore the consumption of content; hedonism and for last the binge watching.

For the first question we began to talk about the culture of Netflix, what is more or less true for all four focus groups is the fact that Netflix has a low cost, has a great deal of content and does not advertise. It gives one time for content once one stops watching it and opens it again. The thread of the series is not lost because the interface tells customers exactly where they were. They can choose the language and even the subtitles with which they watch it.

One of the most frequent responses that was increasingly seen among young people is the fact that Netflix has totally different content than Turkish TV series. They speak of series that no longer have a story of a poor girl and the rich boy who saves her story, a sort of rose-tinted fairy tale, but it is the serial genres that have made Netflix captivating to them instead. It seems that Netflix is able to give participants new points of view thanks to psychological series among others.

In contrast, others think that Netflix has a strictly functional appeal, which is to develop their English thanks to subtitles and breed languages that these series offer. Another very important factor is the genre that Netflix offers, according to all four focus groups, are the filters that this platform offers, more specifically the categories they can choose from.

On the other hand, almost all the individuals participating in the focus groups agree on the fact that they watch Netflix for a reason that are purely to do with socialization in that these young students pass on information and have something to discuss. Above all, this topic came up in a group which was the pilot group, therefore the most active group, the one in which all the individuals felt free to expose its ideas, the one in which the participants did not know each other well, and because of that didn't feel the pression of the prejudice. It turned out that often knowing the contents of this platform led to a form of socializing; therefore, they often found themselves having to see the series that their friends watched only to be able to integrate within the group.

In all four groups, the fact that viewers watch Netflix or started watching Netflix purely to pass the time stands out because especially during the pandemic they had a lot of time available. Almost all participants therefore found viewing Netflix as an activity where the sense of time becomes very liable, since the students felt that once they started watching a series they had to continue until the end of the season. This sort of fulfillment was seen as a type of task for them; therefore, being able to see something to the end led them to feel gratified. Through these sorts of marathons, we arrive at the issue of the so-

called binge watching. Only one person among all these students reported that instead calculated the time it takes to be able to finish the series and realizing that the time spent on Netflix was excessive, she decided to stop watching Netflix.

A very relevant factor for the growth of online platforms was also the global pandemic, because during this global pandemic, where people were forced to stay at home, they found Netflix, a platform of entertainment. Netflix became a trend, so we had more free time available than before. Meanwhile, there was also a rise in the use of social networks, where the motto 'Netflix and Chill' was often sponsored. Getting online has meant that Netflix became a kind of brand and created a kind of interaction among people.

Also, thanks to the branding that made Netflix become popular among these young people, a new culture that has helped facilitate socializing online. It has become a brand that young people could not do without and has made them feel at ease both with regard to a new way of interacting and in finishing a series, both of which led to a sense of fulfillment, but also to an uncontrolled hedonism.

Probably the most stimulating part of this research is what comes out particularly in the dynamic of a group; despite not knowing one another they see themselves reflected in the other members, especially in the feeling of 'emptiness' that these students have, a sense of emptiness, of not belonging or not being enough that this generation feels and which is somehow filled with foreign series that can make them dream, and in other ways too, allows them to escape from what is the Turkish reality in which they feel trapped. To them, we understand, Netflix is an escape valve, but also a way out on something other, a new hope.

Conclusion

In this paper, through an analysis of the discussions of four focus groups analysis and taking the importance that the pandemic has had in the last two years into consideration, we have attempted to understand the attitudes that Turkish students belonging to generation Z have regarding Netflix and their behavior in relation to using it. It has provided an insight into how much the consumerist factor that now dominates all of humanity has also entered the sector of streaming platforms by encouraging people to give themselves up from a form of content addiction by using algorithms which tailor content to individual viewers.

The platform tries in some way democratic since the viewer can choose the contents to see us and when it reveals itself on the other side. This is also a platform that tries to sell its contents in a way that is comparable to that which has already pursued in the past, that of McDonaldization, in that as this research demonstrates, like as McDonald's tries to encourage customers to eat as much of their food as possible, in this case, Netflix encourages binge-watching of TV series by making them addictive to their viewers.

On the other hand, even if Netflix is an international giant, in this research it turns out that one of the reasons why Netflix has become so important in Turkey is that the

Turkish reality in the field of television and in that of online platforms is not sufficiently up to date, and for this reason, the students of the focus groups do not see themselves reflected in the series offered by the Turkish media, finding instead in Netflix loopholes in the infinite variety of its contents, especially with regard to genres. According to these students, the genres most seen in the Turkish media are the romantic ones where the usual dynamic of a couple always appears: a poor woman who finds salvation in the rich man, a cliché that no longer satisfies the spectators, given that according to them, by not projecting what is Turkish reality or realities, there is a lack of truthfulness in the available contents and consequently a lack of trust in Turkish media has arisen among these students.

On Netflix, on the other hand, they see content that is more on a par with their expectations, and they argue that it is a kind of reality in which they would like to live.

The significance of this research is the finding that Netflix content is not only avidly consumed by these students, but that it has begun to create a different culture, changing their point of view, not always for the better, and even often resetting what was a critical part of them. However, because they believe Netflix is a democratic platform, they do not realize the effect that algorithms have on their minds and in manipulating their ways of thinking.

Bibliography

Acocella, I., & Cataldi, S. (1997). *Using focus groups: theory, methodology, practice*. Sage.

Addis, M. (2007). *Ad uso e consumo. Il marketing esperienziale per il manager*. Pearson.

Albrecht, T. L., Johnson, G. M., & Walther, J. B. (1993). *Understanding communication processes in focus groups*. In D. L. Morgan, *Successful focus groups: advancing the state of the Art*. SAGE.

Bauman, Z. (2001). *Dentro la globalizzazione. Le conseguenze sulle persone*. La Terza.

Beck, L., Trombetta, W., & Share, S. (1986). Using focus group sessions before decisions are made. *North Carolina Medical Journal*, 73-74.

Berelson, B. (1949). Events as an influence upon public opinion. *Journalism Quarterly*, 26(2), 145-148. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/107769904902600202>

Bers, T. H. (1987). Exploring institutional images through focus group interviews. *New Directions for Institutional Research*, 14(2), 19-29.

Blumler, J. G., Brown, J. R., & McQuail, D. (1970). *The social origins of the gratifications associated within television viewing*. The University of Leeds, duplicated paper.

Bourdieu, P. (1984). *Distinction: A social critique of the judgement of taste*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Britannica.(2021,May13). Britannica: <https://www.britannica.com/topic/hedonism>

Broom, G. M., & Dozier, D. M. (1990). *Using research in public relations: applications to program management*. Prentice-Hall

Carey, A. (1994). *The group effect in focus groups: Planning, implementing and interpreting focus group research*. In J. M. Morse, *Critical Issues in Qualitative Research Methods* (p. 225-241). Sage.

Colombo, M. (1997). Il gruppo come strumento di ricerca sociale:dalla comunità al focus group. *Studi di Sociologia*, 35(2), 205-218.

Elmacioğlu, G. (2021). Kültürün ve iletişimin metinselliği üzerine bir deneme. *Uluslararası Toplum ve Kültür Çalışmaları Dergisi*, (7), 26-39.

Fowder, L., Kadiyali, V., & Narayan, V. (2009). The impact of emotional product attributes on consumer demand: An Application to the U.S. motion picture industry. *Johnson School Research Paper Series*.

Freimuth, V. G. (1986). Pretesting television advertisements for family planning products in developing countries: a case study. *Health Education Research*, 1(1), 37-45. <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/1.1.37>

Harvey, D. (2007). *Breve storia del neoliberalismo*. Milano: Il Saggiatore.

Hasting, R., & Meyer, E. (2020). *L'unica regola è che non ci sono regole. Netflix e la cultura della reinvenzione*. Garzanti.

Henn, M., Weinstein, M., & Foard, N. (2006). *A Short introduction to social research*. SAGE.

Katzman, A. (1972). The threat of exclusion. *Sage Journals*, 219-223. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/105345127200800208>

Lunt, P., & Livingstone, S. (1996). Rethinking the focus group in media and communications research. *Journal of Communication*, 46, 79-98. <https://doi.org/http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.1996.tb01475.x>

Marrazzo, F. (2016). *Effetto Netflix: Il nuovo paradigma televisivo*. EGEA spa.

McDonald, K., & Smith-Rowsey, D. (2016). *The Netflix effect: Technology and entertainment in the 21st century*. Bloomsbury.

Morgan, D. L. (1984). Focus Groups: A New Tool for Qualitative Research. *Qualitative Sociology*, 7(3),253-270. <https://doi.org/10.1007/BF00987314>

Morgan, D. L. (1997). *Focus groups as qualitative research*. SAGE.

Morgan, D. L. (1998). Practical Strategies for Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Methods: Applications to Health Research. *Qualitative Health Research*, 8(3), 362-76. <https://doi.org/10.1177/104973239800800307>

Reifová, I. (2015). A study in the history of meaning-making: Watching socialist television serials in the former Czechoslovakia. *European Journal of Communication*, 79-94. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1177/0267323114565744>

Ritzer, G. (2013). *The McDonaldization of society*. Sage.

Scardovelli, M. (1997). Dalla mente individuale alla mente di gruppo: riflessioni sulla funzione del facilitatore in un'ottica di pnl. *Rivista del dipartimento di scienze dei processi conoscitivi*, 97-120.

Stewart, D. W., & Shamdasani, P. M. (1990). *Focus group: theory and practice*. SAGE.

Şakı Aydın, O., (2019). Yeni izleme biçimleri ve Netflix içerikleri: Ritzerin Mcdonaldlaşma tezi ekseninde bir değerlendirme. *Journal of International Social Research* 12 (63), 1167-1172.

Ünür, E. & Tunar, A. (2021). Kuşakların karakteristik özellikleri ile müzik tercihleri arasındaki ilişki: bebek patlaması ve Z kuşakları üzerinde python analizi. *Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi* (6), 1473-1499.

Waples, D., Berelson, D., & Bradshaw, F. R. (1940). *What reading does to people: A summary of evidence on the social effects of reading and a statement of problems for research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wikilson, S., & Kitzinger, C. (1996). *Representing the other: A feminism & psychology reader*. SAGE.

Destekleyen Kurum/Kuruluşlar: Herhangi bir kurum/kuruluştan destek alınmamıştır.

Çıkar Çatışması: Herhangi bir çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.