Netflix relationship marketing on Twitter.

Creating brand community through online communication

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ABSTRACT

Netflix is one of the most popular subscription video on-demand platforms (SVOD) worldwide, operating in 190 counties and with active social media presence. Brand's communication on social media has been praised by marketing publications and branded as 'successful' in engaging followers, attributing it to the use of relationship marketing to engage online brand community existing on Twitter. However, limited scientific research has been conducted to create comprehensive understanding of Netflix's social media strategy, especially on Twitter. Consequently, this research aims to reduce the existing knowledge gap, and determine the characteristics of messages comprising relationship marketing strategy of Netflix on Twitter, ultimately seeking to answer 'How does Netflix use Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community?'. Research on online brand communities in different cultural settings remains limited, and therefore the study included the cross-cultural comparison between communication of Netflix US and Netflix India, to explore whether Netflix adapts its relationship marketing strategy to different cultural contexts. To answer the study's research question and sub-research question, qualitative content analysis of a total of 1,145 tweets posted by Netflix and by its online brand community was conducted, analyzing both textual and visual data in the messages. Through directed content analysis, combining the deductive and inductive category creation, three themes were distinguished. It was observed that Netflix focused on three thematic areas in its Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community: 'All about Netflix', 'Community relations', and 'The world around us'. Therefore, the research concluded that the relationship marketing of Netflix on Twitter exhibits a unified approach across different accounts, which can be represented as a three-level model with three focus areas. These are: internal level focused on promoting the brand and its content, middle level focused on social interactions with the brand community, and external level focused on discussing topics prominent in society. Research also detected that Netflix employs localization strategy in referencing topics relevant for specific cultural contexts of the US and India in promoting the content and initiating conversations. Overall, this research contributes to expanding the knowledge on Twitter strategy of a prominent SVOD platform in cross-cultural context and details its elements, and offers an insight into the 'success' strategy that can serve as a useful audience engagement model for other media organizations.

KEYWORDS: *relationship marketing, Netflix, online brand community, customer engagement, Twitter*

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1. Introduction

In the past years, the popularity of 'subscription video on-demand' services (SVODs) has been steadily increasing worldwide (Lotz, 2017; Sweney, 2018, July 18). Through their international scope and accessibility, streaming platforms have contributed to intermarket exchange of audiovisual content, therefore furthering media globalization (Jenner, 2018). Netflix, particularly, is one of the most dominant SVOD industry players worldwide, established in 190 countries and with 139 million subscribers (Netflix Media Center, 2019). Although being an American company, Netflix aims to appeal to global scope audiences (Jenner, 2018). To develop its global appeal, Netflix not only offers programming catalog shared across regions, but also uses 'regionalization' by creating "non-English language in-house productions" (Jenner, 2018, p.25). Therefore, to meet the tastes of a culturally diverse audience, Netflix employs a strategy of 'conglomerated niche', pursuing mass customization in the form of developing different content for distinct regional customer segments (Lotz, 2017). Another sign of Netflix representing media globalization is its active licensing of content for international distribution and consequently spreading content to audiences worldwide (Jenner, 2018). Nevertheless, some research refers to Netflix as a 'transnational' rather than a 'global' SVOD platform, as despite brand's wide reach the access to it is limited to population that has "high-speed broadband, a computer, and electricity", and can afford regular subscription payments (Jenner, 2018, p.190).

1.1 Societal relevance

The growth and popularity of Netflix has been aided by brand's diversified marketing strategy, which includes various elements. Namely, Netflix sends push notifications to subscribers in the form of mobile messages and emails, promoting the upcoming and newly-added content, and offering viewing suggestions (Netflix Media Center, 2019). Moreover, Netflix uses outdoor advertising on billboards in public locations, for example on Sunset Boulevard in Los Angeles, advertising the content it offers (Beer, 2019, February 28). Netflix also employs partnerships with mobile operators and internet service providers, such as Vodafone and Orange in Spain, which promote Netflix by including it in a special television and data package (Thomson, 2019, March 7). Another essential element in Netflix's marketing approach is the use of social media.

Similarly to other world's leading SVODs, such as Amazon and Hulu, Netflix has a wide presence on major social media platforms, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Netflix actively uses social media in its marketing strategy and has successfully used these platforms to maximize audiences by promoting its serialized fiction in the US (DeCarvalho & Cox, 2016; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b; Netflix Media

Center, 2019). This success has been attributed to Netflix using relationship marketing principles in its social media communication strategy, and praised by non-scientific business and marketing publications such as *Forbes* and *Marketing Land*. Twitter, specifically, has become the 'go-to' platform for SVODs to engage audiences, and for forming online brand communities, surpassing other social networking sites (Wilson, 2016). Therefore, the chosen research topic possessed societal relevance as Netflix has become a contemporary media phenomenon with worldwide presence and with a praised social media relationship marketing approach (Cunningham & Craig, 2016). Besides the importance that this study's results present for Netflix, by offering external perspective on the real-life manifestation of the company's social media management processes, understanding Netflix's marketing strategy on Twitter can provide other media organizations with useful models to improve their audience engagement (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a).

1.2 Scientific relevance

Recently, in addition to appraisal of general public, Netflix's social media marketing communications strategy has evoked scientific interest as it differs from that of traditional television in its focus on continuous content promotion tying to the "binge-watching model" rather than on encouraging live viewing (Beer, 2019, February 28). Nevertheless, knowledge on specific social media strategies that media organizations use to maintain the "on-going community-brand relationship" and specifically on communication strategies of SVODs remains limited (Guo, 2014; Wirtz, den Ambtman, Bloemer, Horváth, Ramaseshan, van de Klundert, … & Kandampully, 2013). A literature review on the topic indicated that there is a lack of academic research focused on analyzing Netflix's tactics on social media, especially on Twitter. One of the few comprehensive studies on Netflix, carried out in Spain, emphasized the variety of elements that Netflix Spain combined in the posts published on Twitter – namely text, hashtags, images, and emoticons – and the promotional nature of Netflix's tweets that focused on stimulating consumption of brand's content (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a). From a more general angle, Wayne (2018) and Tryon (2015) stated that Netflix focuses on presenting itself as a more engaging, quality form of television with improved viewing experience, and on discussing binge-watching.

However, studies focused on communication strategies of Netflix with attention to Twitter remain few, and further research is needed in several areas. Firstly, to identify the characteristics of those messages that prompt Twitter users to react to Netflix tweets and to engage with the brand. Secondly, to assess whether or not Netflix has developed a coordinated communication strategy across Twitter in different cultural contexts (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a). The scientific relevance of this project lies,

thus, in its contribution to an underexplored research topic, including the lack of studies on "online brand communities in a cross-cultural context" (Madupu & Cooley, 2010, p.364).

1.3 Research question

Based on the rationale outlined above, the following research question and sub-research question were posed to guide the study:

Research Question: How does Netflix use Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community?

Sub-Research Question: How does (if so) Netflix adapt its relationship marketing communication strategy to different cultural contexts? For this question, comparison between tweets from Netflix US and Netflix India Twitter accounts was carried out.

The central research question of this study focused on two concepts: relationship marketing and online brand community. Effective relationship marketing is considered a pivotal component in contemporary brand social media strategies. Defined as establishing and maintaining relationships with company's customers, the concept has been frequently applied to offline marketing and recently to social media context (Steinhoff, Arli, Weaven, & Kozlenkova, 2018; Vivek & Morgan, 2012). The second concept included in the research question – online brand community – encompasses a social entity which "reflects the […] ways in which brands connect the consumer to the brand, and consumer to consumer" (Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 418). The proliferation of social media has allowed for creation of online brand communities on social media platforms, including Twitter (Hajli, Shanmugam, Papagiannidis, Zahay, & Richard, 2017). The two concepts present in the research question are connected through another concept, namely customer engagement. The term "engagement" has become central to discussing brand communities as it encompasses interactions and interactive experiences of participants (Brodie, Ilic, Juric, & Hollebeek, 2013). Within relationship marketing paradigm, consumer engagement is positioned as an essential tool for "building and enhancing" brand-customer relationships (Brodie et al., 2013, p.105). Nevertheless, engaging brand audiences through Twitter has been under-researched compared to Facebook and Instagram contexts (Ibrahim, Wang, & Bourne, 2017).

To answer the research question and the sub-research question, qualitative approach was taken as a suitable method to explore socially constructed meanings within Twitter communication of Netflix, and to analyze multimedia comments created by social audiences (Brennen, 2013; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a). Specifically, this project performed a qualitative content analysis of tweets created by Netflix and its brand community, as it is essential to understand customer responses "to a brand's communication efforts", and compared the relationship marketing communication of Netflix

US and Netflix India Twitter accounts (Watkins & Lewis, 2013, p.41). Both textual and non-textual messages (visuals) were analyzed to account for diversity of elements included by Netflix in its relationship marketing strategy through Twitter communication.

The two mentioned Netflix accounts were chosen for several reasons. Firstly, Netflix US is the company's most prominent Twitter account in terms of follower number, specifically 6.22 million followers as per 26-June-2019 (Twitter, 2019b). It is also Netflix's earliest established Twitter account, which sets it as a benchmark (Twitter, 2019b). Netflix India account has 243,041 followers as per 26-June-2019 (Twitter, 2019a). Secondly, of all five Netflix's English-language Twitter accounts – UK and Ireland, US, Canada, India, Australia and New Zealand – US and India appeared as the most opposing countries on the Hofstede's cultural dimensions model (Hofstede Insights, 2018; LeFebre, 2011). This model encompasses six dimensions of national cultures that distinguish countries from one another: power distance index; individualism versus collectivism; masculinity versus femininity; uncertainty avoidance index; long-term orientation versus short-term orientation; and indulgence versus restraint. Hall's (1976) classification of high- and low-context cultures was also considered. However, despite Hofstede's model remaining a dominant cultural paradigm, it has been extensively criticized as promoting reductionism of diverse, heterogeneous groups, and its validity doubted (Schumann, 2009). Therefore, Hofstede's and Hall's culture classifications were critically questioned when applied to messages of Netflix.

1.4 Thesis outline

To organize this research in a systematic manner, it was divided into chapters. The remaining thesis part is structured in the following way. The second chapter introduces and synthesizes the existing knowledge on various aspects of relationship marketing, including relationship marketing communication approaches through Twitter, on online brand communities, and on the known strategies in SVODs' relationship marketing communication. The third chapter outlines the research design of this study, providing rationale for choosing qualitative content analysis as a research method, and explaining the sampling approach. This chapter also presents operationalization of the researched concepts and details the steps taken during data collection and during building of the coding frame, trial coding, and main coding stages. The fourth chapter offers the detailed overview of the results obtained through the analysis, by discussing the general descriptive findings on the textual and visual data, the three distinguished themes, and comparing differences in findings for Netflix US and Netflix India messages. The fourth chapter also discusses these results in relation to theory and knowledge outlined in chapter two. The final, fifth chapter answers the research question and the sub-research question by looking

at the research results. It includes the general relationship marketing strategy of Netflix through Twitter communication, together with the proposed conceptual three-level model, the elements of the localization approach in the contexts of Netflix US and Netflix India, and the responses of Netflix's online brand community. The final chapter also outlines research implications, limitations, and suggests avenues for future studies.

2. Theoretical Framework

This chapter discusses concepts pertaining to the relationship marketing and to community building on social media via the means of relationship marketing communication. Firstly, there is an overview of the relationship marketing through its main concepts, principles and developments, and the outline of the commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. Secondly, the section focuses on online relationship marketing communication through Twitter. Thirdly, online brand communities are discussed, with their essential characteristics and dimensions. Other parts of the chapter talk about the customer engagement, cultural differences in the contexts of Western and Eastern relationship marketing communication, and the specific tactics in SVODs' relationship marketing communication.

2.1 Relationship marketing

The contemporary international business environment is characterized by a continuously growing competition and increasing globalization, with businesses consequently deepening their focus on enhancing relationships with consumers (Daukseviciute & Simkin, 2016; Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015). The nature of company-customer relationships has also become increasingly interactive and experiential (Dessart, Veloutsou, & Morgan-Thomas, 2015). This is largely because social media have allowed consumers to seek and exchange information about the brands, and to share brand-related experiences on a global scale through simple and inexpensive actions (Araujo & Neijens 2012; Baruah, 2012; Chu & Sung, 2015). Brands hold symbolic, socially constructed meanings, and consumers enhance their concepts of self through "associating with brands in a form of a relationship" (Chu & Sung, 2015, p.257). Addressing such underlying implicit goal, relationship marketing has become a way for brands to acknowledge customers' individuality, make them feel cared for, and to provide them with personal attention (Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015). Given its strong orientation towards the pivotal resource of every company, which are customers, relationship marketing has been acknowledged as an essential element for achieving success in the contemporary business environment (Beck, Chapman, & Palmantier, 2015). The core of the relationship marketing paradigm posits that to sustain long-term profitability it is important for businesses to make the most out of current customers, by understanding their goals and desires in relation to a brand, and by nurturing the ongoing brand-customer relationship (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005; Guo, 2014; Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015).

The term 'relationship marketing' was first formulated in 1983 by Leonard Berry, and the scientific interest in this concept re-emerged in mid-1990s (Hunt, Arnett, &

Madhavaram, 2006; Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015). Defined as establishing, "enhancing, developing, and maintaining" relationships with company's customers, the concept has been frequently applied to offline marketing (Vivek & Morgan, 2012, p.127). For example, customer word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is a notable outcome of relationship marketing (Lo & Campos, 2018). Other relationship marketing cornerstones that are critical in the company-customer relationships are trust, commitment, and communication (Palmer, Lindgreen, & Vanhamme, 2005). Already in 1994, Morgan and Hunt proposed the Commitment-Trust theory of relationship marketing, establishing trust and commitment as two fundamental factors in business relationship building and maintenance. In this context, commitment is a "desire to maintain a valued relationship" (Boateng & Narteh, 2016, p.130). Specifically, affective commitment is implied, embodying the emotional connection – feelings of identification, affiliation, and loyalty that consumers have towards the brand (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; Hsiao, Shen, & Chao, 2015). The trust element of the aforementioned theory refers to a consumer's belief in a company being reliable, honest, and only engaging in those activities that benefit the consumer (Boateng & Narteh, 2016).

Since the inception of the relationship marketing concept, its central theme has been communication with customers, and customer-brand dialogue is seen as advantageous for establishing and maintaining strong marketing relationships between the two (Guo, 2014; Szmigin, Canning, & Reppel, 2005). Therefore, communication plays an essential role in the relationship marketing, leading to the creation of commitment, loyalty, satisfaction and trust in the customer-brand relationships (Graca & Barry, 2017; Lo & Campos, 2018). Quality of information is imperative, and should be reflected through messages containing timely, accurate and complete information that is meaningful for customers, as they expect quick and informative communication from brands (Graca & Barry, 2017). Maintaining and strengthening a relationship with customers also depends on expressions of recognition, empathy, friendship, understanding, and an effort to listen by the brands in their relationship marketing communication (Ward & Dagger, 2007).

In the past decades when online interactions have become a prominent communication mode for businesses and individuals, relationship marketing has also been applied to online relationship building (Steinhoff et al., 2018). Online relationship marketing reflects the use of various Internet-enabled features and tools for building and maintaining long-term brand-customer relationships in an online environment (Boateng, 2019; Boateng & Narteh, 2016). Although being relative newcomers to the relationship marketing domain, social media platforms are particularly regarded as useful tools for it (Guo, 2014). This is because social media allow reaching vast numbers of consumers as well as gathering insights about their behavior and preferences, therefore offering more targeted communication through messages relevant for consumers (Guo, 2014; Lo & Campos,

2018). These features of social media make them useful for "long-term engagement and relationship building" with customers through exchange of ideas and experiences (Drury, 2008; Guo, 2014, p.5). According to Guo (2014), relationship marketing through social media has several functions, namely information provision, personalization of communication, and development of community. In this context, personalization refers to consumers perceiving the brand's communication as tailor-made to suite their communication preferences (Boateng & Narteh, 2016).

Nonetheless, despite evident advantages the proliferation of social media also provides challenges for traditional relationship marketing approaches (Baird & Parasnis, 2011; Watkins & Lewis, 2013). Particularly, social media have enabled new ways of consumer socialization by facilitating boundless peer-to-peer communication (Chu & Sung, 2015; Wang, Yu, & Wei, 2012). For example, the customer WOM communication, long acknowledged as an important information source influencing consumer decision-making, becomes electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which spreads further and more rapidly than offline WOM and reaches audiences globally (Chu & Sung, 2015). In relation to brands, eWOM is any positive or negative brand-related content that consumers create and distribute through the Internet, with complaints and compliments being some of the most frequent eWOM types (Chu & Sung, 2015; Ma, Sun, & Kekre, 2015). When the experiences shared about the brand are positive, such as compliments, the eWOM is considered a customer advocacy (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; Sashi, 2012). If the distributed messages are negative, such as complaints, eWOM can disadvantage a brand by threatening its image (Lo & Campos, 2018). For example, since the launch of Netflix in India, many local subscribers have complained about "the issue of catalog discrepancies", pointing out that some content offered by the brand in other regions was unavailable in India (Lobato, 2019, p.124).

Nowadays, to achieve effective relationship marketing through social media, the communicated messages need to align with the users' needs, especially the "emotional needs of belonging and acceptance" (Watkins & Lewis, 2013, p.27; Zhu & Chen, 2015). Satisfying these needs aids in the formation of trust in online marketing relationships (Boateng, 2019). Furthermore, communication with the audiences needs to be conducted in a meaningful, personal manner, which is pivotal due to ever-increasing global brand competition (Steinhoff et al., 2018; Zhu & Chen, 2015). In the case of SVODs, the wide range of platforms available at a similar price emphasizes the importance of not only differentiating the brand from competitors via original content, but also of ways SVODs communicate with their current and future subscribers.

2.2 Online relationship marketing through Twitter communication

In the past years, tweets and their content have firmly established themselves as essential parts of many brands' marketing strategies (Okazaki, Díaz-Martín, Rozano, & Menéndez-Benito, 2015). For example, in 2017, 67.2% of the US companies with more than 100 employees used Twitter for marketing purposes (eMarketer, 2017). Content of tweets and the approach taken in engaging audience on Twitter can influence the perception of a brand, and the decision-making process of existing and prospective customers (Ibrahim at al., 2017; Stieglitz & Dang-Xuan, 2013). Furthermore, due to its potential for real-time communications, Twitter has become an increasingly essential socializing agent that facilitates brand-focused eWOM, which can reach large number of consumers and influence their attitudes towards brands (Chang, Hsieh, & Tseng, 2013; Chu & Sung, 2015; Lee & Youn, 2009). In this way, brands' Twitter profiles serve as eWOM vehicles for providing brand information, answering brand-related questions, generating interest and awareness about the brand, and establishing brand image. Brand communication on Twitter can also help combatting negative eWOM about the brand, as Twitter enables brands to reach out directly to those customers who share negative brand-related information (Chu & Sung, 2015). Moreover, including such elements as information useful for the users and humor into brand communication on Twitter brings the potential to produce virality and to engage followers (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

As an information channel, Twitter has ideal capabilities to provide "an interactive one-to-many" communication (Burton & Soboleva, 2011, p.497). The interactive features of Twitter, such as replying and retweeting, allow brands to engage in a continuous dialogue and direct conversations with consumers (Kwon & Sung, 2011; Watkins & Lewis, 2013). For example, some global brands such as Domino's employ the Twitter communication strategy of frequent (86% of all tweets) replies to followers, therefore using Twitter as a response mechanism (Burton & Soboleva, 2011). Others, for example Microsoft US, "promote positive messages" about the company through combinations of "retweets, hyperlinks, and hashtags", and use messages of independent influential individuals (Burton & Soboleva, 2011, p.497). Alternatively, a brand's communication strategy of Twitter can be reactive, using the platform as a channel for service recovery by responding to customer complaints (Burton & Soboleva, 2011).

There are several levels of brand relationship marketing communication through Twitter. Watkins and Lewis (2013) distinguished five levels: basic, reactive, accountable, proactive, and partnership. Each level represents an increase in communication activity from both the brand and its followers (Watkins & Lewis, 2013). The essence of each aforementioned level is outlined in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Relationship marketing communication levels on Twitter (adapted from Watkins & Lewis, 2013)

Level	Characteristics
1. Basic	Brand carries one-way communication with followers, broadcasts original messages
	Brand does not reply to followers' messages
	No additional accompanying information in the brand's tweets, such as links or hashtags
2. Reactive	Brand carries one-way communication with followers, does not reply to their messages
	Brand includes additional information into tweets: hashtag(s), link(s) to external sources such as websites, and/or "'@' mention" (Watkins & Lewis, 2013, p.29).
3. Accountable	Brand broadcasts a message, and also follows users back
	Brand's responsiveness is indicated by the number of users the brand follows
4. Proactive	Periodic contact between the brand and its followers
	Brand retweets followers' messages
5. Partnership	Continual contact between the brand and its followers
	Two-way, dialogical conversation: brand responds directly to followers' tweets

There are several specificities concerning these levels. On the second, reactive level, including a hashtag in a tweet increases brand's interaction with followers, as the hashtag enlarges the scope and scale of information transfer and allows the brand to provide followers with a mechanism to follow and respond to a particular topic (Lin & Pena, 2011). By recognizing brand-specific hashtags, consumers can interact with the brand and each other, which opens the possibility for the online brand community development on Twitter (Watkins, & Lewis, 2013). Both external and internal hyperlinks used in tweets can also provide access to relevant content unlimited by the character restriction of tweets and therefore increase followers' engagement (Burton & Soboleva, 2011). This way, the reactive level bears the capacity to become the catalyst for higher interaction levels (Watkins & Lewis, 2013). However, external links may potentially lead to information that "negates or compromises" the brand's intended message, while internal links that refer to brand's organizational sources continue its communication with followers (Burton & Soboleva, 2011, p.493).

On the fourth, proactive level, retweeting users' tweets of referring to them also has the dual potential advantage. Firstly, it allows the brand to communicate a supposedly independent endorsement of itself (Burton & Soboleva, 2011). Secondly, it helps to create credibility, by retweeting the messages of influential Twitter users, such as celebrities and users with verified accounts (Burton & Soboleva, 2011). Nevertheless, there are certain limitations to the aforementioned classification of relationship marketing levels. Particularly, Watkins and Lewis (2013) did not include clear communication aspect into the third, accountable level, therefore making this level's strategy questionable for building brand-customer relationships. This is because the act of a brand following users back is a one-time action that does not guarantee any future brand-customer interaction and consequently does not imply a brand-customer relationship development.

Furthermore, tweets within relationship marketing communication can have two different message orientations. Firstly, instrumental or task orientation, which encompasses inquiries about "task at hand", provides information and coordinates actions (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18). Secondly, socioemotional orientation, which refers to expressions of emotions and social information such as agreement or disagreement, and has a function of positive or negative reinforcement – guiding the message receivers towards or away from certain behaviors (Lin & Pena, 2011). In the Twitter communication of brands, Lin and Pena (2011) and Watkins and Lewis (2013) identified the following categories within message orientations, based on Interaction Process Analysis (IPA) framework: giving opinion, giving suggestion, giving information, asking for opinion, asking for suggestion, asking for information. The IPA framework categorizes interpersonal communication messages according to their goal, and has been applied in the categorization of relationship marketing communication messages online (Lin & Pena, 2011).

With regards to the relationship marketing communication of audiovisual media companies on Twitter, the number of existing studies has been limited, although Twitter remains "the most popular social media platform for television marketing strategies" (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019, p.1). In one of the prominent existent studies, Lin and Pena (2011) assessed the communication of major American television companies on Twitter. The authors established that the eight researched television networks employed more task-oriented messages, such as "Watch this episode", than socioemotional communication messages, such as "Hey, good to know you enjoyed the show" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.19). This appeared in line with the television brands' goal of promoting the programming they offer and of transmitting programming-related information through social media platforms to maintain audience's interest (Lin & Pena, 2011).

Lin and Pena (2011) also observed that in their Twitter communication television networks focused on a positive socioemotional communication such as salutations and

jokes, as establishing the "sense of pleasantness" cultivates positive consumer attitudes towards brands' relationship marketing communication on Twitter (Eckler & Bolls, 2011). As a result, positive socioemotional tweets create favorable attitudes among followers towards brands, by presenting television brands and their programming in a positive light, and contribute to developing lasting consumer-brand relationships (Lin & Pena, 2011). Using humor and suspense in the brand communication on Twitter, and the emotional appeal by, for example, relating with the characters, also contributes to increasing the user engagement (Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019). Furthermore, tweets that contain images engage followers more than text-only tweets, as visual content is the first thing that users fixate on (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

2.3 Online brand communities

While the focus of relationship marketing has traditionally been on an individual consumer, relationships can also exist with "groups of like-minded people" that create communities (Szmigin et al., 2005, p.480). As one of the contemporary developments affecting relationship marketing, the proliferation of social media has allowed for the creation of online brand communities on social media. Social media platforms enable consumer socialization in online communities where individuals share information about brands and their products, therefore leveraging interactivity possibilities of social media (Chu & Sung, 2015; Wang et al., 2012). Such brand communities are an important element for companies' relationship marketing. Firstly, brands can enhance their relationship with consumers by including them into a conversation. Secondly, online brand communities can act as resources for brands to gather ideas for improving products and services (Fournier & Lee, 2009; Szmigin et al., 2005; Wirtz et al., 2013, p.238).

The scientific interest in online brand communities has been increasing in the past two decades. It has been detected that consumers purposely "join groups of like-minded individuals who interact around a focal object" of a brand (Dessart et al., 2015, p.30). Therefore, brand community is a social entity which comprises of individuals with a shared interest in a particular brand, and represents "the ways in which brands connect the consumer to the brand", and consumers to each other (Dessart et al., 2015, p.32; Muñiz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 418). Online brand community is non-geographically bound and consists of brand's admirers who use electronic means of communication to "overcome real-life space and time limitations" (Dessart et al., 2015, p.32). However, an individual does not need to be a 'fan' – a devoted enthusiast that has strong emotional engagement with and vast knowledge about a brand, with regular brand consumption and active co-creation – to participate in an online brand community communication (Kozinets, de Valck, Wojnicki, & Wilner, 2010; Szmigin et al., 2005).

Traditionally, brand communities strongly focused on a brand itself (Wirtz et al., 2013). With the proliferation of the Internet and social media, engagement in an online brand community aims at both the brand and other community members, and consists of five sub-processes: sharing, learning, socializing, advocating, and co-developing (Dessart et al., 2015). Online brand community members can also engage in evangelizing, which encompasses sharing the brand-related 'good news' and inspiring others to use the brand, but may also involve negatively comparing the brand with its competitors (Schau, Muñiz & Arnould, 2009). For example, pricing of Netflix India subscription is criticized by users for being expensive compared with those of other streaming services available in India, such as Hotstar (Lobato, 2019).

Furthermore, engagement of online brand community relies on "exchange of experiences, content, and information" (Dessart et al., 2015, p.36). When online brand community members are highly engaged, they display shared traditions and rituals that evolve around the "shared brand consumption experiences" and exhibit a shared consciousness (Dessart et al., 2015; Wirtz et al., 2013, p.225). The shared consciousness is an intrinsic connection between the brand community members that manifests through a sense of 'we-ness' – a "collective sense of difference" from non-members (Wirtz et al., 2013, p.224). Expressions of nostalgia about a content are also characteristic to online brand communities, making them "spaces for remembrance" and discussions on content long after its initial release or ending (Williams, 2015, p.43).

Social media has also influenced the consumption of television content by bringing the proliferation of social audiences, which encompass "the online participatory culture" on social media revolving around content (Lacalle & Castro, 2018, p.2). Extending this idea to SVODs, Netflix content motivates the brand community to disclose their emotions and experiences on Twitter, and such sharing of personal information can potentially "bring users closer" (Lacalle & Castro, 2018, p.12). Therefore, consumption of Netflix content encourages communication among audiences, and their comments create sense of community "strengthened by common causes" (Lacalle & Castro, 2018, p.9). However, according to Wirtz et al. (2013), a true relationship between the brand and its community cannot exist without the "element of co-ownership of the brand" (p.237). For this purpose, brands should make online brand community privy to information about internal organizational affairs, and invite users to submit feedback and suggestions (Wirtz et al., 2013). For example, Lego actively employs co-ownership strategy, which implies allowing consumers collectively to influence the development of brand's product, by encouraging co-creation – consumers sharing their ideas about the brand and its product(s).

Ang (2011) identified four dimensions of brand community relationship management: connectivity, conversations, content creation, and collaboration. Nowadays, collaborating

with customers takes the form of exchanging ideas and has been empirically proven to be a vital source for new knowledge discovery for brands (Boateng & Narteh, 2016). For content creation, one of its main manifestations is the derivative art produced by brand community. Such art presents a stronger engagement with the audiovisual brand and its content, and shows cultural adaptation of brand's product (Jenner, 2018). Furthermore, social media allow the convenience of involvement in an online brand community without spatial barriers or joining costs, and with easy exit barriers (Wirtz et al., 2013). The latter can simultaneously disadvantage the company as customers can leave the brand community at any time unobstructed. There are several other challenges that the inception of online brand communities on social media presents for brands. For example, online brand communities allow individuals to reveal very limited information on their identity, and to engage in intra-community relationships passively or not at all (Wirtz et al., 2013). Moreover, there is a threat of online brand community members being able to switch to an alternative community with just several clicks (Wirtz et al., 2013). The online brand community can also become a place for anti-brand discussions and comments, for example about the negative influence that the brand has on social issues such as discrimination of minorities (Wirtz et al., 2013). However, Szmigin et al. (2005) argued that even a negative dialogue about a brand is a valuable information source for the company, as it can bring fresh perspectives.

2.4 Customer engagement

An essential element comprising relationship marketing is customer engagement (Vivek & Morgan, 2012). Engagement emerges from experiences, and an engaged consumer is occupied with the consumption object such as a brand (Boateng & Narteh, 2016). Therefore, companies' customer engagement strategies become extensions of building relationships with both existing and potential customers (Vivek & Morgan, 2012). One stream of scientific research emphasizes customer engagement as being a psychological process (for example, see Brodie et al., 2011), while another sees it as a behavioral process (for example, see Bowden, 2009). For this research, customer engagement is viewed as a "behavioral manifestation beyond purchase" that customer displays towards the brand (van Doorn et al., 2010, p.253). Specifically, customer engagement is the customer-brand relationship that centers on interactive experiences of customers in a co-creative environment (van Doorn et al., 2010; Vargo, 2009). Engaging customers on social media does not only sustain the loyalty of satisfied customers, but also allows preventing unsatisfied customers from abandoning the brand consumption (Dessart et al., 2015). For Netflix specifically, the brand aims to "create brand loyalty" among its brand community by acknowledging and addressing its members "as individuals and not as mass audience" through recommendations and friendly, familiar tone of voice (Jenner,

2018, p.128).

Customer engagement within relationship marketing comprises of several elements, including behavioral dimension, which captures the participation of individuals with the brand (Vivek & Morgan, 2012). The behavioral dimension consists of three sub-dimensions: sharing, endorsing, and learning (Dessart et al., 2015). The sharing aspect encompasses the acts of "providing content, information, experience, and/or ideas" about the focus of engagement, which is the brand (Dessart et al., 2015, p.35). The endorsing element manifests through expressing devotion to and support for the brand, and referring others to it (Dessart et al., 2015; Wirtz et al., 2013). The learning aspect consists of seeking assistance in the form of information, content, ideas, and experiences regarding the brand (Dessart et al., 2015; Wirtz et al., 2013). This can be done either by leveraging the online community "as a source for the latest news and trends" regarding the brand, or by searching for "help for a specific consumption-related issue" (Dessart et al., 2015, p.36).

Another important aspect of customer engagement is co-creation, which is customer behavior that customizes the brand experience (van Doorn et al., 2010). Through this, customers become advocates for the brand's products and services, and provide feedback on company's performance (Boateng, 2019). For example, by offering suggestions for improving consumption experience or developing new products (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; van Doorn et al., 2010). Another essential customer engagement component is 'voice' – customers expressing their brand experience (van Doorn et al., 2010). Participation in brand communities, particularly, is one of the strongest 'voice' manifestations, and has been expanded by the emergence of social media (van Doorn et al., 2010).

2.5 Cultural differences in relationship marketing communication

Traditionally, theoretical foundations of relationship marketing have been drawn upon Western theories, particularly in the context of the US and Western Europe (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005; Schumann, 2009). However, relationship marketing is not a universal paradigm with a "uniform global application", as cultural factors influence its development (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005, p.61). Offering services on an international scale in different cultures can be challenging, since customers' expectations of brands and their products might vary due to different cultural norms and values (Schumann et al., 2010). For SVODs, the challenge is to adapt to diverse conditions in international markets, as success in SVOD internationalization is not just delivering content to "global audiences with distinctive preferences and expectations", but also "understanding and negotiating cultural differences" with foreign audiences (Lobato, 2019, p.114).

Therefore, in an international context, relationship marketing often brings challenges (Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015). Particularly, when Western relationship marketing

strategies are directly transplanted into emerging non-Western economies, the used relationship marketing approach may not function due to a cultural distance created by differing cultural, social, economic conditions (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005; Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015). Therefore, it is imperative to consider that "communication is rooted in culture", and that relationship marketing in different cultural contexts requires adapting the communication style (Hofstede, 2001; Nes, Solberg, & Silkoset, 2007). To successfully implement the relationship marketing activities in diverse cultural settings, companies should ensure that such activities and communication echo the target population's values and meet its needs (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005; Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015). This can be done through embracing acculturation and local appropriation (Flambard-Ruaud, 2005; Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015). For example, in India the issue of censorship is delicate, with regular censoring of explicit sex and violence (Lobato, 2019). However, when Netflix launched in India in 2016, the brand executive stated that Netflix content would not be censored, simultaneously signaling orientation towards "cosmopolitan Indian subscribers" who value uncensored content, and the disregard for a prominent local rule (Lobato, 2019, p.123).

The adaptation of organizational communication is also applicable to the two cultural contexts this research focuses on – the US and India. India belongs to a high-context communication culture, meaning that emphasis within the relationship marketing communication messages is on context – customer experience and relationship with the brand (Graca & Barry, 2017). In high-context culture, communication messages are implicit and ambiguous, and literal and lengthy messages are undesired (Graca & Barry, 2017; Hall, 1976). Relationship marketing communication strategies are different in the US, which is a low-context communication culture where messages are direct and explicit, and emphasize content, such as facts, numbers, and statistics (Graca & Barry, 2017; Hall, 1976). Samsung, for example, has implemented a successful cross-cultural adaptation of its communication strategy by appealing to different cultural values on its social media depending on the audience country (Tsai & Men, 2012). For example, in China Samsung emphasizes product's intangible aspects and an emotional connection with it, while in the US focus in brand's communication is on practical and functional product features (Tsai & Men, 2012).

Considering cultural differences and specificities when engaging customers in online brand communities is also important. According to Madupu and Cooley (2010), online brand communities on social media are extensions of traditional geographically-bound communities, and therefore reflect the offline cultures and languages of participating members. For example, there are more than 20 official languages in India – such as Hindi, Marathi, and Tamil among others – without one language universally shared by all citizens

(Lobato, 2019). There are also several differences in the online brand communities in relation to the US and India that can be linked to Hofstede's cultural dimensions (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). For example, the individualistic culture that is viewed by some as predominating in the US may explain why members of online brand communities have more need for receiving information than giving it as concern for the group wellbeing is lower (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). Therefore, when managing such online brand community more information should be provided than received from it, so that community's information needs are completely anticipated and fulfilled. Conversely, India is seen by some as a collectivistic culture where online brand community members seek social integration – experiencing shared meanings and activities (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). Consequently, for such online brand community, "opportunities for social integration" should be provided with mentioning shared traditions and rituals (Madupu & Cooley, 2010, p.372).

Nevertheless, despite its continuing popularity, Hofstede's classification carries inherent limitations that make its application to cultural contexts questionable. Firstly, applying a dimension label to a country disregards the fact that within each country there exists a variety of sociodemographic and ethnic subcultures with "own distinctive" characteristics (Douglas & Craig, 2009, p.131). Therefore, Hofstede's cultural dimensions cannot "be projected onto individuals" or "any collective grouping of humans" – such as a brand community – as such application creates oversimplification and stereotypical characterization (Venaik & Brewer, 2013, p.469). Secondly, Hofstede's dimensions portray cultures as occurring in a vacuum (Douglas & Craig, 2009). However, every national culture coexists with and is affected by various "macro- or micro-level contextual factors", for example religion, level of education, societal affluence, and degree of urbanization, among others (Douglas & Craig, 2009, p.132). When making cross-cultural comparisons, context becomes especially important as not only cultures differ, but also their surrounding contexts (Douglas & Craig, 2009). Therefore, when the "contextual factors" are disregarded, the inferences made about cultures can be erroneous and invalid (Douglas & Craig, 2009, p.132).

Thirdly, Taras, Steel and Kirkman (2012) questioned the validity of Hofstede's cultural dimensions as Hofstede's classification is rooted in a belief of cultures being largely unchangeable. However, changes in cultures might be actually happening faster than in Hofstede's view. For example, Taras et al. (2012) identified a change towards increasing individualism worldwide in the past 35 years, particularly in countries which experienced vast political and economic transformations, such as India. Therefore, classifying cultures by Hofstede's dimensions ignores the cultural convergence phenomenon, which brings "convergence of cultural differences" between nations and weakens Hofstede's argument (Venaik & Brewer, 2008, p.278). Moreover, Hofstede's classification carries cultural

determinism, stemming from the aforementioned paradigm of 'cultural stability', and blindly attributes differences in individuals' values and behaviors to inherent differences of cultures (Taras & Steel, 2009). However, many values are "culture-free" and defined by individual experiences, personality, and even momentary emotions (Taras & Steel, 2009, p.43). Regarding specific aforementioned dimensions, individualism-collectivism dimension is seen as imprecise as it consists of numerous sub-dimensions, which can change "depending on situational conditions" (Nakata, 2009, p.10). Furthermore, Hall's high-low context classification of cultures has been criticized as it remains unclear whether there is an undoubtable causality between "aggregate country categorization" and individuals' communication patterns (Adair, Buchan, & Chen, 2009, p.163).

2.6 SVOD relationship marketing communication

The audiovisual industry, including SVODs, increasingly uses social media platforms for promoting own programming and engaging audiences (Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019). Specifically, serialized fiction (series) have become the main products of SVODs, and communicating about series has been shown to produce high engagement among users (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Although knowledge on the online communication strategies of SVODs is limited, existing literature has shed some light on it. According to Wayne (2018), the branding strategies of SVODs often focus on platforms' "distance from and superiority to" traditional television (p.730). This is done by placing emphasis on being a "more engaging form of television", contributing to the culture similarly to cinema and literature, and representing an improvement of the consumers' viewing experience (Tryon, 2015, p.106; Wayne, 2018). References to binge-watching are also recurrent, to describe a common SVODs' audience behavior (Wayne, 2018).

Regarding Netflix specifically, its branding practice encompasses blurring the distinction between Netflix original content and that of other media companies (Wayne, 2018). Moreover, Wayne (2018) argued that Netflix often positions itself as a 'quality TV', while Jenner (2018) stated that Netflix emphasizes that it offers viewers more viewing choice and more control over it than other SVODs. Additionally, Heredia Ruiz (2017) pointed out that Netflix highlights the exclusivity of its programming. In Spain, Netflix has also used the approach of publicly displaying a user's tweet criticizing Netflix's programming catalog and responding by pledging commitment to improving its content offering, in the form of billboards (Gonzalez, 2019, February 25). Furthermore, since 2015 Netflix has increasingly been focusing on promoting diversity – racial and linguistic – as well as supporting female emancipation and "questioning heteronormativity" (Jenner, 2018, p.266). Although this can be associated with Netflix's "broader translational outlook" of catering to diverse audiences, brand's diversity concept "remains tied to its American definition" –

linked with US-specific historic, economic, and cultural conditions, for example, lower socio-economic status of some African-American community members (Jenner, 2018, p.266). Another American-centered element of Netflix's communication concerns brand's emphasis on the US national holidays and events. The worldwide release of new seasons of Netflix content is on Fridays, which often coincides with the beginning of the US national holidays. These are not common holidays shared across different nations, such as Christmas, but "secular national holidays and events specific to the history" of the US, for example Memorial Day (Jenner, 2018, p.222). This points out the dominant perspective that the US market takes in considerations of Netflix, despite the brand presenting itself as transnational, cross-border broadcaster (Jenner, 2018).

Furthermore, a recent investigation centered on Twitter highlighted the promotional nature of Netflix's tweets, which focused on stimulating the consumption of Netflix content (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). In their study of the Twitter communication strategy used by Netflix Spain, Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018b) distinguished that the main emphasis of Netflix's tweets was on promoting the audiovisual content this SVOD offered, and less on promoting Netflix as a SVOD platform. Netflix Spain also actively used hashtags in its tweets as classification labels when promoting the offered content, for example #StrangerThings, which refers to popular Netflix original series. Moreover, tweets of Netflix Spain often included videos and images, as well as memes and emoticons (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Among followers of Netflix Spain, these elements generated the most engagement, respectively. Furthermore, Netflix Spain used retweets of external accounts, such as of writer Stephen King.

Another element of Netflix Spain strategy that was observed as generating follower engagement was Netflix sharing a question about a certain topic, inviting followers to participate, which linked to a straightforward, direct communication style of low-context cultures (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). The communication strategy of Netflix Spain on Twitter also included the use of humor and storytelling, for example a video which referred to a social situation evolving around consumption of audiovisual content, and could be seen as expression of collectivism attributed to Spain by Hofstede (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). The storytelling element, carrying 'between-the-lines' meanings and discussing customer relationship with Netflix, represented a more high-context cultural expression. Such presence of both high- and low-context culture elements aligned with common classification of Spain as positioned in the middle of high-low continuum (Kim, Pan, & Park, 1998). Moreover, Twitter communication strategy of Netflix Spain exhibited localization, through referencing elements of local Spanish culture like dialogues of comedians from *Martes y 13* in the content promotion (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Netflix Spain also actively capitalized on prominent social topics

and events, and popular communication formats such as memes in promoting own content, which showcased the brand's effort to establish a common ground with its audience and with the audience's possible interests, and to create a community (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). This presentation effort also showed Netflix appearing 'passionate' about popular culture and using references to its prominent elements as a "unifying factor" and "vital commonality" between Netflix audiences that otherwise might not share other similarities (Jenner, 2018, p.256).

Regarding the reactions of Netflix Spain followers, the most conversation in terms of comments was generated by tweets which discussed series, possibly because as opposed to movies, which are a unitary story, series have multiple deliveries of the story via several episodes. In fact, communication about series boosts the engagement among television brand followers as it creates the desire to talk about the series in between the episodes and seasons (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Although Netflix does not publicly disclose the viewership data per content type, the brand has recently revealed the top-10 most watched (within a week) content on its UK & Ireland platform, with 8 out of 10 titles being Netflix original programming, and six out of 10 being serialized fiction (Meek, 2019, May 9). This corresponds with Netflix's reporting to its global shareholders on brand's "series offering" currently overtaking its "original movie offering" in popularity among subscribers (Netflix, 2019).

When looking at Netflix Spain followers, their communication with Netflix revolved less around tweets that offered information or promoted Netflix as a platform, which indicated that consumers of SVODs are more interested in the content these platforms offer than the platforms themselves (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). The conversation in the form of followers' comments, likes and retweets revolved most actively around tweets promoting Netflix content and especially Netflix original production – such as series *Orange Is The New Black* – indicated the success of Netflix's production policy (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Specifically, this policy involves actively producing original, in-house content, and acquiring exclusive international licensing rights to the content of other media organizations and branding it as 'Netflix original' (Jenner, 2018). For some series, Netflix Spain tweets promoting 'originals' appeared to belong to wider campaigns on broader social causes, such as promotion of *Orange Is The New Black* tied to Netflix supportting the LGBT Pride (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). For other series, such as *Lost*, Netflix Spain used a cryptic message of only numbers in the tweets, which corresponded with the series' mystery-oriented plot. In general, the various elements used by Netflix Spain showed the diversification and versatility of approaches Netflix took in its communication with followers, and strong privileging of own original content and its promotion.

Overall, relationship marketing has become an essential element of business communication, regarded as an effective way to build and maintain brand-customer relationships. Trust, commitment and communication are the main cornerstones of the relationship marketing, manifested in the Commitment-Trust theory. Quality of information and expressions of positive intent are among some of the other essential relationship marketing elements, contributing to increased customer engagement. However, relationship marketing communication needs to be adapted to specific cultural settings, such as low-context communication culture in the US and high-context culture in India. More recently relationship marketing principles have been applied to the brands' communication on social media platforms, including Twitter, which present both advantages and disadvantages for relationship building. Formation of online brand communities on social media has been another contemporary development affecting relationship marketing. There are five relationship marketing communication levels distinguished in media organizations' messages on Twitter, each representing an increase in brand-follower communication activity. Relationship marketing communication messages on Twitter can also be divided into instrumental/task orientation and socioemotional orientation. Regarding Netflix, the few existing studies have established that in general its relationship marketing communication Netflix positions itself as superior to traditional television and references binge-watching and diversity. In the context of Spain, it has been observed that Netflix focuses on promoting own original programming, uses humor and storytelling, and references locally relevant topics, therefore exhibiting localization approach.

3. Method

This chapter outlines the research design of the study, through explanation of the qualitative content analysis as a method chosen to answer the research question and the sub-research question. The chapter presents the justification for the selected research method, details the steps taken during data collection and data analysis process, and discusses the rationale for the research decisions made, specifically the sampling procedure and the research units, the researched timeframe, and the analytical categories through the operationalization section.

3.1 Research design

The method chosen to answer the research question: How does Netflix use Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community? and the sub-question was qualitative content analysis of secondary data. The qualitative approach was selected as the research question is concerned with exploring the nature of organizational communication and the meaningful relations of concepts within its language, and not with the quantification of numerical data. The qualitative approach also allowed assessing and understanding the variety of "usages and meanings of words, concepts and ideas" within the constructionist perspective of a socially created reality of Twitter communication, and developing "the sense of the larger realm" of brand-customer relationships through viewing "communication as a social and cultural practice" (Brennen, 2013, p.14). Furthermore, qualitative content analysis, which is "a method for describing the meaning of qualitative material" in a systematic manner, has been extensively applied to the study of organizational communication materials (Julien, 2012; Schreier, 2013, p.1). It is also a popular method for analyzing the social audiences that emerge around TV programs and the multimedia comments that include text, images, gifs and video (see Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a). Drawing on previous experiences, qualitative content analysis was a suitable method to examine tweets published by Netflix.

Firstly, qualitative content analysis is applicable for analyzing qualitative data and such secondary sources as texts, focusing on "characteristics of language" with attention to texts' meaning in context (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1278; Krippendorf, 2004). Secondly, it is suited to analyzing both textual data in tweets, and media such as images and video (Julien, 2012; Schreier, 2013). Netflix US and Netflix India accounts frequently use the combination of these elements (Twitter, 2019a, 2019b). Therefore, qualitative content analysis allowed analyzing both written and non-written data and therefore gaining fuller understanding of Netflix's relationship marketing approach through Twitter communication, without excluding any of the tweet elements. Thirdly, qualitative content analysis afforded

theoretical flexibility, meaning that it can be used within diverse theoretical perspectives and therefore, could be applied to the selected theoretical framework of relationship marketing (Julien, 2012).

The particular approach to qualitative content analysis taken in this research was the directed content analysis, with combined deductive and inductive category application (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005; Mayring, 2000). This qualitative content analysis type was selected as it allows supplementing an "existing theory of prior research" on a certain phenomenon when it is incomplete or can use further description, such as in case of this research when the existing relationship marketing paradigm lacks insights into relationship marketing practices of SVODs on Twitter, particularly of Netflix (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281). Therefore, the directed content analysis fitted the research goal of conceptually extending the selected theoretical framework.

3.2 Sampling
3.2.1 Sampling strategy

Since the qualitative research method was employed, nonprobability sampling approach was taken (Babbie, 2011). The sampling strategy for identifying the elements eligible for analysis was a "more formalized sampling" strategy (Flick, 2011, p. 26). This is because the created research design was more 'tight' than 'loose' due to clearly defined concepts, questions, and theoretical framework guiding the research (Flick, 2011). Therefore, this study's research design made it possible to distinguish data relevant for research prior to data collection (Flick, 2011). More formalized sampling strategy was also taken as the research sub-question implied comparison between two groups – Netflix US and Netflix India tweets – and the selected sampling approach allowed to create datasets which could be systematically examined for differences between them (Flick, 2011). Specifically, the research sample was created via stratified purposeful sampling, by "building subgroups" of original tweets/retweets and of comments for comparison (Flick, 2011, p.29). The selected sampling strategy also included defining the number of cases in advance, and considering their "distribution over certain features" – tweet/retweet and comment (Flick, 2011, p.26). Specifically, it was defined how many original tweets/retweets and comments would be gathered, to reflect diverse communication components forming the relationship between Netflix and its customers (Flick, 2011). Later in research, to present the findings, sampling within materials was applied to the collected data, by selecting the most illustrative examples (Flick, 2011). When applicable, these illustrative quotes were corrected for spelling issues for clarity, for example from 'Unbrella Academy' to 'Umbrella Academy'.

3.2.2 Sampling units

Tweets produced by two Netflix accounts were collected, forming two datasets. Specifically, the research data was gathered from the Twitter accounts of Netflix US and Netflix India. The data item for sampling was one tweet, including all written and non-written text (visuals) within it. Tweets were selected for the data corpus based on criterion of the most recent timeframe, as the research interest was in Netflix's most contemporary use of Twitter communication as a relationship marketing tool. Therefore, one of the borders of the period under investigation was marked by the earliest possible data collection date, 8-March-2019 as the Thesis Proposal approval date. Furthermore, Netflix US Twitter account was established 11 years ago, while Netflix India account almost 4 years ago, and both exceed seven thousand tweets (Twitter, 2019a, 2019b). This created the technical limitation of accessing the oldest tweets, as Twitter does not allow unregistered users to access the earliest account activity (Twitter, 2019a, 2019b). Retweets appearing in the accounts' feeds (see Figure 3.1) were also included into analysis alongside the original Netflix tweets (see Figure 3.2). Netflix US and Netflix India accounts actively retweet other users' content, which appears as essential element of Netflix Twitter communication and of building links with users (Twitter, 2019a, 2019b).

Figure 3.1: Example of a retweet message with a comment in Netflix India Twitter feed

Furthermore, as relationship marketing involves communication of customers towards the brand, the comments of Netflix Twitter followers were also sampled. The combination of the three elements – original tweets, retweets, and comments – appear consistently throughout both aforementioned Netflix Twitter accounts. Therefore, excluding the retweets and comments from the analysis would have disregarded the vast portion of current relationship marketing communication of Netflix and therefore limited the insight into the brand's relationship marketing strategy, as the relationship is formed through two-side, brand-community communication on Twitter. Additionally, per each tweet, first five comments were established to be gathered. The amount of five comments was selected because in Netflix US and Netflix India Twitter accounts the number of comments per tweet varies, and can be anywhere between one comment to several hundred comments. In the preliminary data screening, five comments per tweet appeared to be the most frequent minimal number of comments existing for each tweet and therefore could be counted on to appear on most tweets in the Netflix US and Netflix India feeds. Additionally, per each collected post the number of user retweets and likes was recorded.

Figure 3.2: Example of an original Netflix US tweet with a comment

3.3 Data collection

Tweets were collected retrospectively, starting with the newest tweets available on the designated data collection starting day, 8-March. Tweets from all days of the week were collected as Netflix's and users' posting activity may change per day (Twitter, 2019a, 2019b). The data was collected through copying and pasting the written textual data into the Excel sheet, and saving non-written data (visuals) in a designated Windows folder. Particularly, gifs were captured through screenshots as most last only a few seconds and a screenshot sufficiently conveys the gif's meaning. The Twitter API tweet retrieval software was not used due to its technical limitations, as the publicly available software version does not allow retrieving more than 150 tweets per account and the non-written texts (visuals), and cannot distinguish between the original tweets and retweets.

For each aforementioned Netflix account, 100 consecutive tweets appearing in the main feed were planned to be gathered. The beginning of data collection was 8-March-2019 and the end was 17-March-2019, marked by recording the furthest tweet from the

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Netflix accounts' past activity which satisfied the indicated tweet amount criteria. Initially, for each of the datasets – Netflix US and Netflix India – total of 480 data items per dataset were planned to be gathered, amounting in 960 items in data corpus ($n = 960$):

Table 3.1: Initially planned size of datasets

Initial size Netflix US dataset	Initial size Netflix India dataset
80 original tweets & retweets	80 original tweets & retweets
400 comments on Netflix US tweets (80*5)	400 comments on Netflix India tweets (80*5)
Total dataset: 480 items	Total dataset: 480 items
Grand total: 960 items	

However, during data collection it became apparent that some tweets appearing in the main feeds of the two researched Netflix accounts contained less than five comments. Therefore, to satisfy the amount of comments for analysis, the number of collected tweets from the main feeds was increased from 80 to 100. This increase amounted to overall data corpus of 1,145 data items ($n = 1145$):

Table 3.2: Definitive size of datasets

Definitive size Netflix US dataset	Definitive size Netflix India dataset
100 original tweets & retweets	100 original tweets & retweets
474 comments (469 textual + 5 emoticon-only)	471 comments (461 textual + 10 emoticon-only)
Total dataset: 574 items	Total dataset: 571 items
Grand total: 1145 items	

Within these tweets, 358 non-written texts (images, videos, gifs) were collected:

Table 3.3: Number of collected non-textual data (visuals)

Non-written texts Netflix US dataset	Non-written texts Netflix India dataset
202 images/gifs	108 images/gifs

39 videos	9 videos
Total dataset: 241 items	Total dataset: 117 items
Grand total: 358 items	

During the data collection process, it became apparent that the posting frequency and number of posts per day differed between Netflix US and Netflix India, which impacted the period of Twitter communication under investigation. Although for both accounts the data collection commenced on 8-March-2019, for Netflix US the 100 collected tweets covered the timeframe of 19-February-2019 to 8-March-2019, while for Netflix India the 100 tweets covered the timeframe of 17-January-2019 to 8-March-2019. Therefore, the period under investigation of Netflix India communication was slightly wider than that of Netflix US by approximately one month.

3.4 Operationalization

As directed content analysis was the selected research method, existing research on the relationship marketing provided guidance on the concepts of interest, informing the initial coding scheme and relationships between some codes (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). The body of literature on relationship marketing regards this concept as comprising of various aspects. Nevertheless, the three specific elements consistently emerge throughout literature as essential cornerstones of relationship marketing: trust, commitment, and communication (for example, see Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015, and Palmer et al., 2005). These three elements were taken as manifestations of the relationship marketing in messages gathered from Netflix US and Netflix India Twitter feeds.

Firstly, the trust element reflects consumers' belief that the brand possesses certain positive qualities, and manifests in consumer messages praising the brand and referring to it as, for example, honest in its dealing with consumers and reliable in its promises and offerings (Boateng & Narteh, 2016). Secondly, the commitment element reflects the consumer's emotional connection with the brand, and manifests in consumer messages expressing identification and affiliation with the brand and the brand community, by, for example, proclaiming loyalty towards them (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; Hsiao et al., 2015). Thirdly, the communication element reflects the conversation effort of a brand towards its consumers, and vice versa. It manifests in the consumers' and brand's messages which show empathy, understanding, and express recognition to each other, such as gratitude, as well as mentions of friendship and of brand's effort to listen to consumers (Ward & Dagger, 2007).

For the communication aspect specifically, the operationalization by Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018a) focused on Netflix communication through Twitter was adapted to this study. The Twitter messages of Netflix US and Netflix India were therefore classified based on the three tweet categories, eight tweet objectives, and eight add-on elements. This operationalization of brand's and its followers' messages was supplemented with additional elements from the operationalization by Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019), specifically additional position in the 'objective of a tweet', and the new aspects of 'personalization' and 'virality'. Other elements of this operationalization were used for assessing the non-written texts such as images, videos, and gifs. Additionally, 'message orientation' was included, based on the Bales's IPA framework adapted by Lin and Pena (2011) for assessment of television networks' communication on Twitter. The detailed coding scheme is available in the Appendix A.

3.5 Data analysis

The chosen approach of directed content analysis required a more structured analysis process than other types of qualitative content analysis (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005). Therefore, the description and interpretation were done systematically through step-by-step coding, by "assigning successive parts of the material" to categories of the coding frame, aiming for the combination of concept-driven and the data-driven categories (Schreier, 2013, p.171). It was specifically ensured that part of the categories was data-driven – created inductively – so that the coding frame matched the material by providing a valid description of it (Schreier, 2013). Following the rules of directed content analysis, the analysis began with "deductive category application" – identifying the initial coding categories using the existing theory and prior research, which were then supplemented with the emerging data-driven categories (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281; Mayring, 2000).

3.5.1 Building of the coding frame

The process started with determining key concepts as initial coding categories, followed by creating "operational definitions for each category" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281). The coding strategy followed the goal of the research question to identify and categorize different manifestations of relationship marketing. Therefore, textual messages were first coded using the predetermined codes from the coding scheme, and "any text that could not be" classified based on this scheme was assigned a new code (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1281). During the analysis process, the whole data was looked into for codes, which were labelled, then formed into clusters and "translated into themes" (Julien, 2012, p.122). The analysis followed steps outlined by Schreier (2013): creating the coding frame and category definitions, segmenting the textual material into coding units, conducting the

pilot phase and then the main analysis phase. For non-written texts, objects evident in the images, videos, or gifs were identified, and the symbolic communication and meaning behind the objects (Julien, 2012).

The qualitative analysis software Atlas.ti was used to organize the analysis process, as it assisted in efficiently handling the research data amount in the limited research timeframe, and was freely accessible without a financial investment. The software allowed organizing and compiling the categories, and assisted in comparing and contrasting them (Julien, 2012). Furthermore, memos were written with the help of Atlas.ti to keep track of the research progress. In the first analysis step of data preparation, the textual data which was collected into Excel sheets was transformed into the Word document format, as Atlas.ti does not allow importing files in any Excel formats. Furthermore, several tweets and comments gathered from the two Netflix accounts were non-English. For Netflix India dataset, 42 messages were written in Hindi and one in Marathi, and for Netflix US, 10 messages were in Spanish, one in French, and one in Portuguese. For the purpose of analysis, these messages were translated to English through Google Translate and then double-checked with native language speakers to ensure the correctness of translation. Consequently, non-English messages were analyzed in their translated versions, which produced a limitation of meaning potentially lost in translation.

The second analysis step was building of the coding frame. Within this process, firstly, parts of the overall gathered material were selected to avoid the cognitive overload (Schreier, 2013). Specifically, material was selected from each of the different written data types to reflect the diversity of the collected data: tweets and retweets of Netflix US; tweets and retweets of Netflix India; comments on Netflix US tweets/retweets; comments on Netflix India tweets/retweets. For each of these data segments, 10 items (tweet, retweet, comment) were used respectively, in the chronological order in which they appeared in the data collection file. Therefore, 40 data items were used to build the initial coding frame.

Next, to begin building the coding frame, structuring and generating were done. Structuring encompassed creating main categories, and the generating element manifested in creation of subcategories (Schreier, 2013). This was carried via the combination of concept-driven and data-driven way, consistent with the essence of directed content analysis, as generating all categories in concept-driven way could leave part of the data unaccounted for (Schreier, 2013). The concept-driven categories were derived from the operationalization of relationship marketing outlined in Appendix A. The data-driven categories were created through subsumption, as corresponding with the directed qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2013). This meant that each textual message was examined through reading until the relevant concept was encountered, and then checking whether a relevant subcategory was already created. If it was, the message was

'subsumed' under such sub-category, and if it was absent, a new sub-category covering the concept was created. The subsumption was repeated until the saturation point was reached – no additional new concepts were found and no new sub-categories were created. During subsumption, each data item was read and assigned a 'code' in Atlas.ti if it contained a separate concept, which represented a sub-category. When all codes were developed, they were grouped in Atlas.ti into 'code groups', representing main categories. This process resulted in creating an initial coding frame with 14 main categories and 36 sub-categories.

When the structure of the coding frame was developed, categories were defined, ensuring that each main category and sub-category were given a concise name (Schreier, 2013). For each main category, a brief description for the category scope was created. Furthermore, sub-categories were illustrated with a positive example. As stated by Schreier (2013), one or two examples per each sub-category are sufficient as higher number of illustrative quotes make the coding frame too large and difficult to use. This recommendation was followed to create a manageable coding frame.

In the next step, the structure of the developed initial coding frame was assessed, revised and adjusted to satisfy the criterion of unidimensionality for the main categories, and criterion of mutual exclusiveness for the sub-categories. For example, the sub-dimension 'Promoting specific content' was collapsed as it embodied the same meaning as the main category 'Promoting Netflix content'. Furthermore, the sub-category 'Deflating Netflix brand message' was eliminated as upon inspection its illustrative quote did not actually exhibit a negative, deflating meaning. Sub-category 'Brand's interests' was similarly dismissed as the illustrative coding unit did not actually refer to Netflix expressing its interests. Furthermore, it was noticed that the sub-category 'Rhetorical question' was linked to several coding units which were in fact not rhetorical, but more concrete questions. To accommodate such coding units, a new sub-category 'Seeking factual information & clarification' was created. Additionally, the residual category titled 'Other' was introduced to satisfy the requirement of exhaustiveness and to equally account for the parts of the material which did not fit into any main category of sub-category, but nevertheless constituted the data, such as cryptic messages. Overall, after the expansion and revision stage of building the initial coding frame, the frame resulted in 10 main categories, 25 sub-categories, and 18 sub-sub categories.

After the initial coding frame was created and revised, segmentation was done which consisted of dividing the textual material into coding units. Segmentation was done in such way that "each unit fitted into exactly one sub-category of the coding frame", and therefore aided in ensuring the mutual exclusiveness of sub-categories (Schreier, 2013, p.182). The segmentation step was also taken to ensure the essential quality criterion in the qualitative content analysis – the coding consistency (Schreier, 2013). Segmentation into

coding units was done based on the thematic criterion. Thematic criterion was selected due to its better applicability in qualitative research as it allowed looking at the topic change within material, without being limited by the formal units such as words or sentences. This flexibility provided a better fit with the coding frame, as not all collected tweets carried only one meaning.

3.5.2 Trial coding

Afterwards, the pilot phase of the qualitative content analysis was undertaken. Specifically, the trial coding was conducted to apply the categories and sub-categories distinguished during the coding frame building to the wider part of data. In the first step of the pilot phase, the material was selected to cover all types of the collected textual data, similarly to the material selection in the coding frame development. The amount of data for the trial coding was expanded from 10 items per message type in the coding frame development, to 50 tweets/retweets and 200 comments for each Netflix account respectively, to roughly represent half of all textual data. The trial coding step was conducted to recognize and modify the possible shortcomings in the coding frame before the main analysis part, and included two rounds of coding, by coding and recoding the material within 10 days to ensure unidimensionality and mutual exclusiveness (Schreier, 2013).

During the trial coding, several changes to the coding frame were made. For example, sub-subcategory 'Announcing content premiere' was renamed 'Announcing content release', and placed under sub-category 'Promoting Netflix services'. Moreover, sub-category 'Referring to content title' was re-made by being split into three new sub-categories: 'Netflix original', 'Non-originals available on Netflix', and 'Content unavailable on Netflix'. For these, the production source of content referenced in tweets was checked via a search engine. Additionally, 'Urging brand's action' was transformed from the main category to a sub-category, as it violated the unidimensionality criterion against the main category 'Pushing engagement' due to being one of its elements. Furthermore, during the trial coding it was assessed whether the codes assigned to coding units actually conveyed their meaning, and subsequently some data fragments were re-assigned to different sub- and sub-subcategories. For example, "I hope it is available on Netflix now?" was re-coded from 'Asking to introduce content' to 'Seeking factual information & clarification', and "Who would've known @NetflixIndia would be a supporter of my love life" was recoded from a discarded sub-category 'Brand acting as human' to 'Praising the brand'. Overall, during the trial coding, the coding frame was revised and re-assessed, and after the pilot phase of the analysis the coding frame resulted in 6 main categories, 37 sub-categories, and 44 sub-sub categories.

This coding frame was then applied in the main analysis phase to the rest of the textual material. The remaining un-coded material was divided into thematic coding units, which were then assigned to the categories of the coding frame (Schreier, 2013). Please see the findings of the data analysis in the Results section, and the final coding frame in Appendix B.

3.6 Consistency and validity

For the employed research method of qualitative content analysis, two criteria were considered for assessing the research quality. Firstly, the consistency criterion, which is an equivalent of a reliability criterion adapted to qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012). As this research was conducted by an individual researcher, consistency was "assessed by comparing coding over time", looking at stability of coding decisions for the coding frame (Schreier, 2012, p.175). Specifically, research consistency was ensured by creating distinct, mutually exclusive main category definitions which allowed distinguishing categories from one another and "to recognize instances of the category in the data" (Julien, 2012; Schreier, 2012, p.168). Coding consistency was also aimed for, in the form of consistently "applying categories to the entire material," and was ensured by two coding rounds and the iterative coding process (Schreier, 2013, p.182). This way, quality of category definitions was tested to make them unambiguous and clear, so that the second coding round yielded similar results as the first coding, therefore strengthening systematicity of the method (Schreier, 2013). Moreover, research transparency was ensured by systematically following all qualitative content analysis steps and providing detailed description of decisions made during data collection and analysis process (Tuval-Mashiach, 2016).

Regarding validity, in qualitative content analysis it concerns "the extent to which the categories" of the coding frame sufficiently describe the research material and the concepts of chosen theoretical framework (Schreier, 2013, p.183). To ensure this, the study followed the requirements of unidimensionality and mutual exclusiveness for coding frame elements. Furthermore, the specific types of validity – face validity and content validity – are essential for the quality of qualitative content analysis (Schreier, 2012). In this research, face validity was ensured during the creation of data-driven categories of the coding frame, by providing the exact description of the research material. The face validity was assessed from the trial coding results by looking at the number of residual categories and the amount of coding units assigned to them (Schreier, 2012). In this study, only several segments of the textual material were assigned to the residual category 'Other', therefore ensuring high face validity. Furthermore, the coding frequencies for any sub-category as compared to others were not especially high, which further strengthened face validity and differentiation within sub-categories. The second relevant validity type, the content validity, deals with concept-

driven categories of the coding frame and whether they cover all elements of the researched concept. Content validity was evident trough validating several relationship marketing operationalization concepts as present in the data, by identifying them during two coding rounds (Schreier, 2012).

Nonetheless, there was also a threat to the research validity. Particularly, the directed content analysis offered an inherent limitation of approaching the research data "with an informed, but nevertheless existent bias", caused by the very nature of the directed content analysis, namely overemphasis on theory (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p.1283). This presented the validity threat of the researcher finding the supportive rather than non-supportive evidence of the relationship marketing theory, and of diminishing the neutrality of the research. Nevertheless, this threat was counteracted by exercising reflexivity as described in the next section.

3.7 Reflexivity and ethics

To ensure the research quality, reflexivity was an essential part of the research process (Berger, 2015). Firstly, as data was examined through the lens of commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing and analysis began with the deductive approach, reflexivity was exercised continuously to resist the bias of distinguishing only positive examples in data that would fit the theory. For this purpose, researcher looked for results contradicting the existing knowledge and theory on relationship marketing communication of SVODs. Secondly, researcher is an avid Netflix user herself, and therefore was cautious to avoid bringing personal bias of preferences and experiences with Netflix and its content into the research (Berger, 2015). Specifically, reflexivity was practiced through self-evaluation via critical self-questioning, memo writing, and acknowledging research limitations through all steps of data collection, data analysis, and reporting on results (Dowling, 2006). Reflexivity was also imperative in examining and questioning researcher's personal pre-judgements and prejudices about the researched cultural contexts of India and the US, as well as internal (personal beliefs about Netflix) and external factors (news and reporting about Netflix in media) that could influence the interpretation of Netflix's relationship marketing communication (Dowling, 2006). Moreover, reflexivity was vital in staying critical on the Hofstede's classification of cultures and in maintaining open-mindedness on unexpected findings.

Another aspect that was imperative in this research was ethics. There remains a debate whether messages published on Twitter are entirely public (Ahmed, Bath, & Demartini, 2017). For instance, some researchers (for example see Townsend & Wallace, 2016) state that tweets containing hashtags are inherently intended to be "visible to a broader audience" and therefore unquestionably public (Ahmed et al., 2017, p.82). From

this perspective, Netflix's messages on Twitter can be considered subject to public availability as a corporate, purposively public communication. Furthermore, the terms and service agreement of Twitter, signed by all existing Twitter users, explicitly states users' consent for third parties collecting and using user data (Ahmed et al., 2017). Nevertheless, critical reflection "on the possible implications" of using others' tweets is important towards individual persons who created or were mentioned in Twitter messages (Ahmed et al., 2017, p.81). This is because not all of the non-corporate, non-celebrity Twitter users might know that their tweets are publicly viewable and "available for analysis and scrutiny" (Ahmed et al., 2017, p.81). However, the data corpus of this research included more than 1,000 items, which presented the labor- and time-consuming feasibility issue of reaching numerous users, some of which "may even no longer be maintaining their account", for informed consent (Ahmed et al., 2017, p.85). Therefore, recommendation by Ahmed et al. (2017) of limiting the collection of nonessential personal data of users was followed, and of protecting non-corporate, non-celebrity Twitter users' identity by "using a quote, but no username", as in this research some of the collected comments included mentions of usernames (p.89). Therefore, privacy and confidentiality of affected Twitter users was protected by collecting only texts of the tweets, and anonymizing the in-text usernames of regular users when reporting research results (Brennen, 2013).

4. Results and Discussion

This chapter discusses the results distinguished through via qualitative content analysis process. Firstly, the general descriptive results are given, together with findings on non-written texts such as images, videos, gifs, and emoticons. Secondly, each of the three detected overarching themes is outlined in detail, namely 'All about Netflix', 'Community relations', and 'The world around us'. For each theme, the definition and explanation of its essence are provided, alongside illustrative quotes. Thirdly, the comparison of findings on relationship marketing communication of Netflix US and Netflix India is made in the context of culture. The research results are linked to and discussed in relation to the literature consulted in the Theoretical Framework chapter.

4.1 General descriptive findings

4.1.1 Written texts

The Twitter messages collected from the main feeds of Netflix US and Netflix India accounts were classified according to the three categories of basic tweet characteristic: original, retweet, and reply. For Netflix US tweets (non-comments), there were 18 original tweets and 82 retweets, with one 'reply' tweet. For Netflix India tweets (non-comments), there were 94 original tweets and 6 retweets, with one 'reply' tweet. Therefore, in the researched timeframe of 19-February-2019 to 8-March-2019 for Netflix US, and of 17-January-2019 to 8-March-2019 for Netflix India, these Netflix accounts employed opposing strategies in terms of the type of posted tweets. Netflix US relied heavily on retweeting content originally created by other verified and non-verified users[1], while Netflix India produced mostly original tweets. Furthermore, Netflix US posted tweets more frequently than Netflix India, with 100 original tweets/retweets of Netflix US posted within 17 days, while Netflix India posted the same tweet amount within 50 days.

For the retweets used by Netflix US, the accounts that the brand retweeted represented diverse thematic orientations. However, all of the 'retweet' messages referenced the content either already offered by Netflix US, or to be introduced shortly. Specifically, the Twitter accounts whose messages were retweeted by Netflix US included verified accounts, some of which focused on news about and promotions of audiovisual content – such as 'Netflix Film' and 'See What's Next' – and some were specifically

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[1] Verified user refers to an account of public interest, held by the public figure, global brand, or a celebrity, whose authenticity has been checked and confirmed by Twitter, and is marked by a blue badge next to the username. Non-verified user represents an account whose authenticity has not been confirmed by Twitter, and without a blue badge next to the username (Twitter, 2019c).

dedicated to content available on Netflix, for example to Netflix original series *On My Block* and *One Day At A Time*. Moreover, Netflix US retweeted the messages posted by other regional, English-language accounts of Netflix, particularly Netflix Canada, Netflix UK & Ireland, and Netflix Australia & New Zealand. This showed Netflix establishing connectivity across its various branches, and enforcing the aim of positioning itself as transnationally connected, cross-border broadcaster (Jenner, 2018). Retweets used by Netflix US also included messages of verified celebrity Twitter users, for example, movie director James Cameron, actor Amy Schumer, and media outlets such as *Entertainment Tonight*, with only a limited amount of tweets by non-celebrity users with non-verified accounts. Therefore, in its retweet approach Netflix US primarily focused on two components: affiliated accounts promoting Netflix content, and the individual and organizational celebrity users. For Netflix India, the few 'retweet' messages that were used originated from accounts of Indian celebrities such as actor Priyanka Chopra, sportsman Sachin Tendulkar, and one message of Netflix US. Therefore, in its limited retweet approach Netflix India focused on accounts of individual Indian celebrities, and the 'central' English-language Netflix account. This demonstrated cultural adaptation of Netflix's communication messages and elements of localization strategy in context of India, through references to locally relevant figures (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

Based on the classification of the relationship marketing communication levels of Watkins and Lewis (2013), the approach taken by Netflix US on Twitter showcased the proactive level. Netflix US communication prominently involved the use of retweets, which represent the periodic brand-follower contact via one-way communication. Although compared to lower relationship marketing communication levels such approach carried the potential for increased interaction between the brand and its community on Twitter, the actual message in the tweet remained "a one-way, one-time broadcast" communication (Burton & Soboleva, 2011; Watkins & Lewis, 2013, p.30). Nevertheless, through the proactive relationship marketing communication approach Netflix US communicated a supposedly independent endorsement of itself and strengthened own credibility by retweeting the messages of influential Twitter users, such as celebrities (Burton & Soboleva, 2011).

Comparatively, the communication approach of Netflix India exhibited the lower, reactive level of relationship marketing communication, as it actively broadcasted original messages, but did not focus on responding to follower's messages and on retweeting them frequently, therefore employing the one-way broadcasting of communication messages (Watkins & Lewis, 2013). Nevertheless, Netflix India invited brand community to initiate conversation by actively providing additional information in the tweets through hashtags, links to internal sources such as Netflix India YouTube page and to external third-party

websites (Watkins & Lewis, 2013). Such additional information also included '@' mentions, for example of @MumbaiPolice and Indian music band @7_bantaiz. Overall, it was observed that Netflix US leveraged the interactive features of Twitter – such as retweeting – more than Netflix India, however, neither account actively utilized the replying feature, therefore limiting possibilities for a continuous dialogue and direct conversations with consumers (Kwon & Sung, 2011; Watkins & Lewis, 2013).

Moreover, 52.4% of Netflix US brand and brand community tweets (n = 301) and 41.7% of Netflix India brand and brand community tweets (n = 238) included various add-on elements, with Netflix US using slightly higher add-on amount. Firstly, links to another Netflix media site, specifically to videos – trailers and excerpts of Netflix content – on respective YouTube accounts of Netflix US and Netflix India. Secondly, the third party links to non-Netflix websites, for example to websites campaigning against animal testing and containing podcasts on Netflix shows. For Netflix India particularly, some messages included links to the official Netflix website, and the third party links to Hindi-language news outlets that present local news on Indian politics and business, such as ZeeNews. The use of internal links presented the continuation of communication with followers, while the external link possessed a threat of negating Netflix's image as it lead to an article criticizing Netflix's self-censorship in India (Burton & Soboleva, 2011).

Moreover, hashtag and emoticon add-ons were included in both Netflix US (n = 198) and Netflix India (n = 172) brand and brand community's tweets. Hashtags were used to reference the title of content both available and unavailable on Netflix – for example "#AfterLife" – or the contents' availability ("#ComingThisMarch", "#NowStreaming"), actors appearing in content ("#NaomiWatts", "#UshaJadhav"), events such as #Oscars and #InternationalWomensDay, and encouragements for certain actions such as #RenewODAAT and #ShedTheStigma. Netflix India also used hashtags to initiate conversations with the brand community, for example #MythOrNot? Regarding emoticons, Netflix and its brand community used this add-on element to emphasize the emotion contained in the message, such as thumbs up emoticon for expressions of agreement or a laughing face emoticon for humorous expressions, and to reference the plot (see Figure 4.1) or characters of Netflix content. For example, messages referring to Netflix original series *After Life*, which featured a dog as one of the characters, included dog emoticons. Therefore, in its relationship marketing communication Netflix used emoticons to complement the topic and reinforce emotions expressed in the tweet (Lacalle & Castro, 2018).

Figure 4.1: Synopsis of a Netflix series The Order expressed in emoticons in Netflix US tweet

In terms of the tweets' message orientation, Netflix used both task/instrumental and socioemotional messages. However, use of task/instrumental messages ($n_{quotations}$ = 334) prevailed over socioemotional messages ($n_{quotations}$ = 102), which aligned with findings of Lin and Pena (2011) on the Twitter communication of major American television networks. This highlights that Netflix as a SVOD platform pursues similar goals to traditional television companies when it comes to (a) promoting the programming it offers and (b) transmitting programming-related information through Twitter to maintain audience's interest (Lin & Pena, 2011).

Furthermore, the message type that produced the most engagement for Netflix US and Netflix India in terms of likes and retweets were the 'retweet' messages, and in terms of comments the 'original' tweets. The most liked, retweeted, and commented-on messages of Netflix US revolved around promotions of Netflix original programming, specifically series, which aligned with the findings of Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018b) about the highest user engagement produced in the context of Netflix Spain. However, for Netflix India the most commented on messages revolved around Netflix initiating conversation with the brand community by asking followers for a certain input, such as "Give us a song lyric and we'll tell you what to watch this week". This showed that user engagement on Twitter was not triggered by the same elements and varied across online brand community of Netflix.

4.1.2 Non-written texts (visuals)

Another add-on element that Netflix used in its relationship marketing communication on Twitter were non-written texts such as images, videos, and gifs. Netflix US used more than twice the number of visuals (n = 241) than Netflix India (n = 117). Therefore, Netflix US approach in actively using visual content carried more potential for engaging followers, as tweets containing images engage brand community more than text-only tweets (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). In terms of video add-ons, 37% of Netflix US brand's tweets (n = 37 tweets) contained videos which represented several

categories. Firstly, trailers of new content shortly to be introduced on Netflix, or of a new season of already available content, such as series, movies, and comedy specials. Promotions in the form of excerpts from content available on Netflix, and compilation of excerpts on a specific topic, such as LGBTQ, were also present. Secondly, there were teasers for upcoming Netflix original series, for example for *The Order*, and teasers announcing the making of a new content such as the adaptation of a book *The Hundred Years of Solitude.* Thirdly, there was diegetic content featuring actors, which included interviews with cast members of Netflix original content, for example Ricky Gervais. Other videos represented extended content – compilations of non-Netflix content of *Saturday Night Live* comedy sketches, promotional video about diversity and inclusion with diegetic narrators, and non-professional videos with non-diegetic participants.

For Netflix India brand's messages, 9% of tweets (*n* = 9 tweets) contained videos. They included teasers for upcoming Netflix original content, for example the series *Leila* and the movie *Triple Frontier*. Moreover, some videos represented extended content, specifically the 'specials' videos referencing plot and characters of Netflix content, such as a sketch about Indian family experiencing situations similar to those in *Umbrella* Academy (see Figure 4.2). This showed Netflix using cultural adaptation in promoting American content to Indian audiences by referencing social situations local subscribers might identify with (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

Figure 4.2: Frame from 'specials' video from Netflix India tweet

Furthermore, the extended content offered by Netflix India included a Valentine's Day special video about young couples brought together by watching Netflix content. These references to social situations that evolved around consumption of audiovisual content showed the evidence of Netflix India using storytelling, which was similarly observed by

Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018b) in the Twitter communication strategy of Netflix Spain. Furthermore, Netflix aligned the release of this extended content with the predictable public event of Valentine's Day, which showed Netflix aiming to boost customer engagement by using real-time marketing (Willemsen, Mazerant, Kamphuis, & van der Veen, 2018).

As for images and gifs, Netflix used several types. Firstly, diegetic content such as images and gifs representing frames from content available on Netflix, such as *Queer Eye*, and from content not offered by Netflix, such as *Titanic*. The latter points at Netflix positioning itself as connected to and celebrating popular culture, and using prominent popular culture elements as "unifying factor" and "vital commonality" for its diverse international audiences (Jenner, 2018, p.13). Secondly, derivative art based on the diegetic content, for example frames from content available on Netflix, such as movie *ROMA*, with the added captions, and a collage of scenes from series such as *Gypsy*. There was also a derivative art based on content not offered by Netflix such as from *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, which links to Netflix's aim of "broader audience appeal" and therefore bringing commonality and unifying communication to its US brand community through references to the US popular culture elements (Jenner, 2018, p.116).

Other types of derivative art included brand-created banners for upcoming Netflix content such as *The Umbrella Academy*, and user-created paintings and posters for non-existent Netflix series (see Figure 4.3).
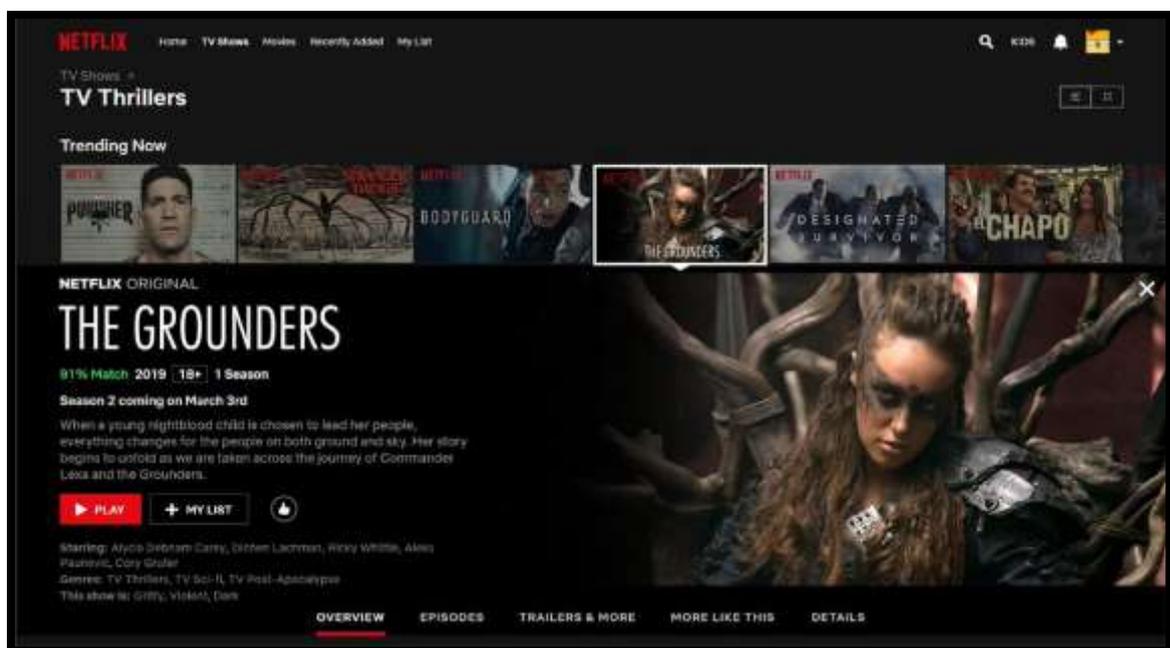

Figure 4.3: User-created poster for non-existent Netflix series 'The Grounders'

These creative expressions embodied the presence of the content creation dimension of brand community relationship management and a stronger engagement with

Netflix and its content through cultural adaptation of brand's product (Ang, 2011; Jenner, 2018). By displaying these to the wider brand community, Netflix presented itself as noticing and valuing the community's efforts, therefore acknowledging its members "as individuals and not as mass audience", and showed evidence for building customer loyalty on the commitment dimension of relationship marketing (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; Jenner, 2018, p.128). Furthermore, there was derivative art in the form of memes created by both Netflix and users, referencing prominent audiovisual content such as *Star Wars* and viral online images and videos. This mirrored the strategy of Netflix Spain in actively taking advantage of popular communication formats such as memes in promoting own content, and showcased Netflix's effort across various regional accounts to establish a common ground with its audience and audience's possible interests (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

Thirdly, Netflix used realistic images, which are understood as representing everyday actions, objects, and social situations in their unaltered occurance form. These included: screenshots, for example of users' Twitter and Instagram feeds; photos and videos of users' private lives, such as selfies, and photos of user's television set displaying Netflix content; photos of public spaces such as public transport; pictures and gifs of public events such as Apple product launch conference, or Spirit Awards ceremony. Moreover, extradiegetic images and gifs appeared, with actors in character, for example at the filming set of movie *The Irishman*, and outside of character – such as actor Yalitza Aparicio at Oscars – and behind-the-scenes images of filming locations and content scripts. Last but not least, face/forefront images of Netflix's board of directors were present in communication of Netflix US brand community, as illustration of the company's leadership lacking gender and racial diversity. The latter showed Netflix's brand community also being a space for negative eWOM alongside positive expressions (Lo & Campos, 2018).

Regarding differences in add-on visuals, for Netflix India, the diegetic content in the form of frames focused not only on American, but also on Indian audiovisual content offered by Netflix. Netflix India also used derivative art in the form of users' drawings and collages, and memes showing social situations with cultural elements specific to India, such as rickshaws. Overall, the use of visuals by Netflix US and Netflix India aligned with the findings of Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018b) on non-meme images and videos being used more than memes and emoticons. Moreover, the element of Netflix employing localization strategy was evident in Netflix India use of visual content by referring to elements of Indian culture, society, and everyday life.

4.2 Themes

Through several coding stages and the coding frame development, six main

categories were identified, with a number of related sub- and sub-subcategories (see Appendix B for complete coding frame). These main categories thematically clustered into three overarching themes, therefore distinguishing the three pivotal focus areas of Netflix relationship marketing communication on Twitter:

Table 4.1: The distinguished themes with related main categories

Theme	Main categories included
'All about Netflix'	'Brand consumption'
	'Promoting Netflix brand'
'Community relations'	'Pushing engagement'
	'Social interaction cues'
'The world around us'	'Viral topics'
	'Other'

4.2.1 Theme: 'All about Netflix'

The first theme encompasses discussions about Netflix as a brand and as a SVOD platform offering diverse audiovisual content and opening possibilities for different actions revolving around content consumption. The obtained results for Netflix US and Netflix India messages showed close similarity, with minor differences which will be discussed later in text. This theme unites the two main categories that focus on Netflix as a brand from two different angles. Firstly, the results of the analysis of messages produced mostly by Netflix brand community will be presented, through the main theme 'Brand consumption'. Secondly, the results of the analysis of tweets published both by Netflix and its brand community will be given, via the main theme "Promoting Netflix brand".

The first angle is expressed through the main theme 'Brand consumption' which deals with different aspects of using Netflix as a SVOD platform, such as various experiences, practices, and emotions, with 302 units of analysis belonging to this theme. Firstly, focus was on viewing behaviors that are tightly related to using SVODs. This was evident through mentions of binge-watching by both Netflix ("Beginning the month on a binge-worthy note") and its brand community ("Binged Sex Education, watched all the eight episodes in a row"), showcasing the evidence of this viewing behavior becoming a prominent phenomenon among audiences of SVODs, including Netflix (Wayne, 2018). Elements of subscription and ownership of a Netflix account were also present in

communication messages of Netflix's brand community. Particularly, such aspects as sharing one's Netflix account with others, which was mentioned both by Netflix and the users ("thought I could split the premium account with 4 people"), and brand community discussing terminating the subscription ("I have deactivated my account") or selling it to another potential subscriber ("Selling Netflix account @80Rs per month"). Therefore, in the researched timeframe communication of Netflix brand community on Twitter touched upon the core essence of Netflix as a SVOD with the integral elements of an account and a subscription, and brand's usage policy that allows sharing and terminating them at any time.

Moreover, Netflix India brand community discussed lacking affordability of subscription pricing ("Dear Netflix, with due respect, I request you to offer us an affordable monthly package if possible"). This displayed the co-creation element of customer engagement through suggestions on improving user's consumption experience through Netflix lowering the subscription price (Boateng, 2019; Boateng & Narteh, 2016). It also reflected the prominent complaint of Indian subscribers about Netflix monthly subscription being less affordable than that of other locally available streaming platforms such as Hotstar (India Today Tech, 2018, August 4; Lobato, 2019). While tweets of both Netflix US and Netflix India mentioned terminating the subscription, messages about selling and sharing a Netflix account were only present in tweets pertaining to Netflix India, one of the messages referencing high subscription pricing as a reason for account sharing. This emphasis on a collective experience of consuming Netflix as a brand, however, cannot be inferred to India being a more 'collectivistic' culture, as the country is comprised of numerous subcultures – such as ethnic and sociodemographic – carrying "own distinctive" characteristics, and therefore cannot be reduced to a homogenous entity (Douglas & Craig, 2009, p.131).

Further, in the 'Brand consumption' category, focus was on the various experiences of subscribers consuming content offered by Netflix. Sharing of these experiences can be seen as expressions of eWOM and an important information source for current and future Netflix subscribers with a potential to influence their consumption decision-making and to affect Netflix's image (Chu & Sung, 2015; Lo & Campos, 2018). The category included users' anticipation for watching the audiovisual content, expressed by the brand community through mentions of waiting for the content ("I can't wait to see it!"), curiosity ("I need to know what happens next!!"), and excitement about it ("Sooooo excited for this"). Users also discussed the different stages of watching the content: having watched content in the past ("Just finished with "The Umbrella Academy"), currently watching ("I'm watching this mom show on Netflix called Workin' Moms"), and planning to watch it in the future ("I'll be watching."). Communication about these common experiences and behaviors exhibited the formation of a 'shared consciousness' and an intrinsic connection between the Netflix brand community members, as "shared consumption experiences with the brand" could be seen

as becoming the shared rituals and traditions (Dessart et al., 2015; Wirtz et al., 2013, p.225). This also pointed at the existence of Netflix's 'social audience', as users sharing their consumption experiences on Twitter create "online participatory culture" which revolves around the SVOD's content (Lacalle & Castro, 2018, p.2).

Following this, the 'Brand consumption' category included users' opinions on the content available on Netflix, and on the brand itself. These expressions consisted of users praising the content offered by Netflix ("What an incredible show!"), but also of expressing the dislike for it ("It's boring didn't find it funny at all just depressing"). Therefore, Netflix brand community on Twitter also appeared as a place for anti-brand discussions and comments, representing the negative type of eWOM with a potentially harmful influence on brand's image (Wirtz et al., 2013). Moreover, users reported positive emotions that arose from watching the content, such as "I'm an emotional wreck (in a good way !)". These messages manifested the 'voice' element of customer engagement, with brand community expressing their brand experiences (van Doorn et al., 2010). Therefore, both types of eWOM were present in communication of Netflix's online brand community – complaints and compliments – with the latter being customer advocacy about Netflix (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; Sashi, 2012).

Despite some criticism, brand community praised Netflix for its positive qualities ("I know you have that X factor differentiating you from other digital streaming partners"), such as for providing subscribers with the content they like ("marvel TV shows and Anime are reason I'm using Netflix you are best"). In fact, 'Praising content available on Netflix' was the most used code ($n_{quotations}$ = 121) across the whole data corpus. Such praising of Netflix as a brand and of its content embodied the trust element of the relationship marketing, through consumers' belief in the 'goodness' of Netflix and in Netflix engaging in activities producing "the best possible outcomes" for consumers (Boateng & Narteh, 2016, p.132). This also displayed the co-creation aspect of customer engagement, through Netflix brand community offering feedback on company's performance and becoming advocates for its product (Boateng, 2019). This can also be seen as Netflix brand community having the "element of co-ownership of the brand" (Wirtz et al., 2013, p.237). Furthermore, the prominence of praising Netflix content and therefore expressing support for the brand showed the presence of 'evangelizing' and endorsing elements of customer engagement, therefore carrying the potential for users to refer others to Netflix and inspire them to use it (Dessart et al., 2015; Schau et al., 2009).

The second angle of the theme 'All about Netflix' was expressed through the main category 'Promoting Netflix brand', which encapsulated communication messages, mostly by Netflix and some by its brand community, focused on advancing the knowledge about Netflix's services and the content Netflix offers. This displayed the information provision

function of relationship marketing through social media (Guo, 2014). Regarding the services of Netflix as a SVOD platform, the brand communicated about them through two elements. Firstly, Netflix announced the content release, mentioning either the premiere date ("The Umbrella Academy premieres 15 February.") or a timeframe ("in theaters and on Netflix this fall."), or Netflix pinpointed that content was made available ("#Firebrand, now streaming."). Secondly, Netflix emphasized that it exclusively offered a certain content ("#Leila premieres June 14, only on Netflix."), which showed the brand positioning itself in a positive light against the competing SVODs such as Amazon or Hulu. Therefore, in its relationship marketing through Twitter communication Netflix employed the approach of differentiating itself in the eyes of current and future subscribers. However, there was no evidence of Netflix presenting itself as distant from and superior to traditional television, as contributing to the culture similarly to cinema and literature, or as using a 'quality TV' discourse, as stated by Tryon (2015) and Wayne (2018).

Furthermore, Netflix focused on promoting the content it offered to its subscribers. The biggest emphasis was on Netflix original programming, which was previously detected by Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018b) in relation to tweets of Netflix Spain. This emphasis was also illustrated by the category 'Netflix original' being the second most-distinguished across all data ($n_{quotations}$ = 118). However, Netflix did not explicitly mention the word 'original' in relation to content, which supported the finding of Wayne (2018) on Netflix blurring the distinction between its original content and content of other media companies available on Netflix. Within Netflix originals, the television series and movies were discussed by both Netflix ("Greenhouse Academy and The Umbrella Academy.") and the brand community ("#TheBoyWhoHarnessedTheWind"), and mentions of Netflix original series *Umbrella Academy* were the most frequent for both Netflix US and Netflix India. Both Netflix accounts occasionally promoted this series by referencing other Netflix original content, however, Netflix India exhibited localization by referencing a character from the brand's Indian original *Sacred Games*. Such active promotion of series rather than movies corresponded with series having become the main products of SVODs and consequently the main focus in SVOD communication (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Furthermore, the aforementioned series was made available for subscribers in India and the US within the examined timeframe. Therefore, this illustrated the effort of Netflix to focus its promotional efforts on its newest content by including the localization element, and to satisfy the need of its online brand community for quick and informative communication by offering timely and accurate information before and after releasing content (Graca & Barry, 2017). Additionally, Netflix's promotional messages included rhetorical questions revolving around the content plot ("Think your family drama is intense?") or characters ("What's in a name, anyway?"), supporting the findings of Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo

(2018b) on Netflix using rhetorical questions for content promotion.

Non-original programming available on Netflix was also promoted within the theme 'All about Netflix' by both Netflix ("10 Things I Hate About You") and the users ("#Danceacademy for me"), and the content irrespective of its production origin was referenced through a hashtag, for example "#AfterLife". Therefore, both Netflix US and Netflix India actively used hashtags in their tweets as classification labels when promoting content available on the platform, which corresponded with findings of Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018b) regarding Netflix Spain, and showcased the united approach across different regional Twitter accounts of Netflix. However, some of these classification label hashtags differed slightly in composition and spelling, for example '#UmbrellaAcademy' and '#ROMACuarón' for Netflix US, and 'TheUmbrellaAcademy' and '#ROMACuaron' for Netflix India respectively.

Furthermore, Netflix discussed content in terms of its plot ("In the near future, purity is law"), characters ("Leonard is the perfect gentleman, Gurki tells you why."), spoilers, and behind-the-scenes insights on the production ("He [Cuarón] didn't originally plan on shooting the film himself"), with users similarly discussing these aspects ("when *spoiler* she gives birth to a dead baby"). Netflix's focus on characters for promoting both original and non-original content showed the consideration about brand community engagement, as Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019) observed that relating with the characters contributed to increasing the user engagement. Furthermore, content cross-over ideas were suggested by Netflix ("Okay hear us out, a Sanju and Black Mirror crossover called SANJUnipero") and by the users, signaling the distinctive feature of SVODs occasionally creating content across several television series in their portfolio. This also exhibited the co-creation element of customer engagement, by users customizing their brand experience through offering suggestions for developing new products, and the customer advocacy as users promoted Netflix content alongside Netflix's own promotional messages (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; van Doorn et al., 2010).

4.2.2 Theme: 'Community relations'

The second theme 'Community relations' encompassed the non-promotional social interactions between Netflix and its brand community, therefore presenting the connectivity and conversation dimensions of brand community relationship management (Ang, 2011). The theme is comprised of two main categories. Firstly, it includes the main category 'Pushing engagement', which focuses on a more active facilitation of communication and actions between Netflix and its brand community. Secondly, it includes the main category 'Social interaction cues' which reflects more implicit written indictors that Netflix and its followers used to communicate acceptance or rejection in a conversation, expressing the

intent behind the message (Tanis & Postmes, 2003).

The 'Pushing engagement' category comprised of results from messages of both Netflix and its brand community. Netflix invited the brand community members to participate in a conversation, through asking to share a certain aspect of their private lives ("Tell us what you've written on the last page of your rough book") or to provide an answer to a question ("If the world really were to end in 8 days, what would you do?"). Invitation to vote was also present, via survey announcements by both Netflix ("Circle one: YES or NO") and by users ("https://twitter.com/Zeesamachar/status/1098503791903690752 … please vote"). Therefore, Netflix US and Netflix India used the strategy of generating follower engagement by sharing questions to invite followers to participate, as previously detected by Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo (2018b) for Netflix Spain, with Netflix India using this approach more actively. Furthermore, Netflix brand community fostered connectivity through messages which addressed specific Twitter users via mentioning their username, such as "@Username which one would you choose! :3"[2]. This appeared in communication of both Netflix India and Netflix US brand communities, signaling the commitment dimension of relationship marketing present across both researched Netflix accounts via users affiliating with each other, and therefore the similarity across Netflix brand community in creating connectivity. Nevertheless, addressing specific users via their usernames was slightly more prominent in communication of Netflix India and its brand community, which may point at a slightly higher group interdependency and collectivism. However, conclusive attribution of Hofstede's dimension cannot be made on this, as the evidence is very limited.

Similarly, the connection between Netflix and its brand community, and among the users, was leveraged by polling the community with specific goals. Firstly, by users seeking factual information and clarification on Netflix content, which was the third most frequently used code across all textual data ($n_{quotations}$ = 110). Particularly, users inquired about the content's release time ("Is it out anytime soon @NetflixIndia?"), such as the new season of a series ("When is trapped season 2 coming ?"). Therefore, the learning aspect of customer engagement was evident through leveraging brand community in seeking assistance in the form of information, ideas, and experiences regarding Netflix (Dessart et al., 2015; Schau et al., 2009; Wirtz et al., 2013). The distinct element was the Netflix India brand community asking about the reasons for the content's unavailability on Netflix India as compared to platform's other regions ("Other countries already has it in Netflix and not India why..??"). This mirrored the finding of Lobato (2019) on Netflix India subscribers voicing complaints and dissatisfaction on "catalog discrepancies", pointing out that Netflix India does not offer numerous content available for brand's subscribers in other territories (p.124). Furthermore,

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[2] Original username anonymized for privacy purposes

Netflix brand community sought suggestions for the content to watch ("Suggest me a show, something similar to @love maybe?"), and provided various recommendations, from viewing suggestions ("Try #Sense8") to everyday-life related advice ("Have curtains in the first floor apartment!!!"). This displayed the sharing and socializing elements of the behavioral dimension of engagement in an online brand community (Dessart et al., 2015; Schau et al., 2009). Netflix, for its part, encouraged users to engage in societally positive actions, such as "Let's make room for voices yet to be heard, for stories yet to be told".

Brand-follower conversation was also fostered by Netflix brand community members urging a certain action from Netflix regarding the content and services it offers. Regarding the content, users expressed wishes for Netflix to introduce specific actor(s) into content ("we want @YalitzaAparicio on another Netflix project") or to introduce content currently unavailable on the platform ("Y'all should put Ghost Adventures and the Titanic on Netflix"), and to remove a certain content ("Stop Trevor Noah show on Netflix"). Television series in particular were the focus, indicating the orientation of Netflix towards series rather than movies, with some users asking Netflix to renew the cancelled series ("also RENEW ONE DAY AT A TIME #RENEWODAAT") and others to extend the non-cancelled series by creating a new season, for example "Please @Netflix make season 2 & 3-9 of working moms". Therefore, co-creation element of customer engagement was evident through these suggestions for changing consumption experience and for offering different content (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; van Doorn et al., 2010). The appeals for extending or renewing the series also linked with the findings of Lacalle and Castro (2018) on Spanish television fiction fans questioning "reasons behind the ending" of content and subsequently petitioning the content provider for introducing a new season (p.8). Therefore, mobilization appeals in messages of Netflix US and Netflix India brand community pointed at the presence of emotional connection and loyalty of users towards Netflix content (Lacalle & Castro, 2018).

Additionally, Netflix brand community sought technical improvements ("Poco f1 now supports widevine L1 certification please certify the device so that we can stream in FHD") and creative collaboration with Netflix ("Hello sir I am a script writer and actor, I want to make a best show or movie with you"), with some users demanding direct communication from Netflix ("Please contact me"). This was present for both Netflix US and Netflix India brand communities, therefore not aligning with the limited view of Indian culture being high-context and carrying less straightforward communication style than the US low-context culture (Graca & Barry, 2017). Overall, the main category 'Pushing engagement' showed the presence of a collaboration dimension of a brand community relationship management, through the exchange of ideas (Ang, 2011; Boateng & Narteh, 2016).

Within the main category 'Social interaction cues', which formed the second angle of the theme 'Community relations', these cues included both the hostile messages with a

negative, dissenting orientation, and the goodwill messages with a more positive, affirmative orientation. The hostile messages by Netflix brand community expressed antagonism through deflating the other's message ("This pun is enough to unfollow this account"), through showing disagreement ("No,,,it isn't romantic") and tension by asking for help ("Send help"). The goodwill messages posted by both Netflix and its brand community also included several types. Firstly, Netflix complimented followers ("You're awesome") and congratulated others on their achievements ("congrats to @shondarhimes @EllenPompeo and everyone involved with reaching this awe-inspiring milestone!"), while users congratulated others on public holidays ("Happy #InternationalWomensDay"). Secondly, Netflix expressed love for the brand community ("We love you"), and users expressed love for Netflix content ("I absolutely love this show") and the brand itself ("love you Netflix"). These messages displayed the commitment dimension of relationship marketing through evidence of emotional connection between the brand community and Netflix, with users showing identification, affiliation, and loyalty to Netflix, and to each other (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; Hsiao et al., 2015).

Thirdly, goodwill messages included the brand community expressing gratitude to Netflix for the availability of content ("Thank you for putting @WorkinMoms on Netflix!!") and to each other for receiving advice ("Thanks for the recommendation!"). Moreover, apologizing messages by both Netflix and users were present, such as "We're sorry Sex Education got over so quickly" posted by Netflix India. Brand community also showed support ("Be brave, we believe in you") and agreement with Netflix's messages – for example, on diverse ways of being a strong female character ("You are absolutely right!!!") – and showed unity as a community ("#BetterTogether"). The goodwill messages were complimented by wisdom sayings posted by both Netflix and users, such as "Tomorrow will see tomorrow's tomorrow" by Netflix India. Therefore, Twitter communication of Netflix followed the paramount requirements of effective relationship marketing communication, as it was conducted in a personal manner, aligning with users' "emotional needs of belonging and acceptance" through such goodwill messages as expressions of unity, support, and love (Watkins & Lewis, 2013; Zhu & Chen, 2015, p.27).

4.2.3 Theme: 'The world around us'

The third theme 'The world around us' included the main categories 'Viral topics' and 'Other'. The latter category united textual elements which were not predominant and topically fell outside existing categories, however, required classification to account for all data. These were cryptic messages without distinguishable meaning created by Netflix brand community, for example "Mj 0%mj 0%c", and single-standing concepts mentioned by users without a specific context, such as "A parallelogram". The category 'Viral topics'

encompassed the general-interest topics, discussed by both Netflix and its brand community, with a certain degree of virality in societies within which Netflix as a brand and Twitter users as a brand community exist, and brought to public attention on Twitter through social transmissions of eWOM (Mills, 2012). Particularly, the distinguished topics connected with the themes expressed in the content available on Netflix. Topics such as animals and parenthood were mentioned by Netflix US ("It's the closest I get to spirituality, just watching a dog") and its brand community ("There is no other kind of relationship greater than parent-child"), relating to the themes in Netflix series *After Life* and *Workin Moms* respectively. The topic of education was also discussed by Netflix US ("Education is the key to a better future.") and its followers ("The power of education"), thematically linked to a movie *The Boy Who Harnessed The Wind*. Moreover, Netflix India brand community mentioned the topic of religion ("There are many such practices in every religion, which I believe is total rubbish").

Moreover, the topic of censorship was present in communication of brand communities of both Netflix US ("They banned Hasan Minhaj's Patriot Act in Saudi") and Netflix India ("Is there any sort of censorship applies on Netflix India"). In relation to Netflix India specifically, this linked to Netflix's recent announcement about imposing self-censorship on the content in offers in India, due to previous legal issues evoked by 'unfavorable' portrayal of a former Indian Prime Minister in the first Netflix India original *Sacred Games* (Clark, 2019, January 17). Moreover, humor via the means of jokes thematically linked to content offered by Netflix, was present in tweets of both Netflix ("Ted Bundy was jailbreaking through Windows at a time when firewalls didn't exist") and its brand community ("With great power comes great electricity bill"). At the same time, messages of Netflix US followers specifically referenced nostalgia ("Flashbacks to my nights watching Boston Public with my mom"). The presence of humor in communication of both Netflix US and Netflix India aligned with the findings of Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo (2018b) in Netflix Spain context. Therefore, across different regional Twitter accounts Netflix aimed at creating 'sense of pleasantness' through humor, consequently aiming to cultivate positive attitude among consumers towards its relationship marketing communication on Twitter, and to strengthen the user engagement (Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019). Expressions of nostalgia also pointed at Netflix US brand community on Twitter becoming a space "for remembrance", as users "continued to discuss" content long after its release and ending (Williams, 2015, p.43).

Furthermore, Netflix and its brand community focused on the everyday-life situations and experiences unrelated to Netflix content consumption, such as users discussing societal customs ("Indians put pyaaz in every curry") or personal facts about themselves ("I am living between Somalia and Kenya"). Furthermore, mentions of friendship by Netflix India ("For everyone tagging us as their best friend") and its brand community ("My best

friend is not on Twitter") displayed brand's effort to maintain and strengthen relationship with customers (Ward & Dagger, 2007). Another prominent topic was the audiovisual industry, discussed through several angles by both Netflix and its brand community. Firstly, through Netflix mentioning notable industry events such as Oscars ("Oscar predictions") and Spirit Awards ("#SpiritAwards"), with these mentions corresponding with the 'award season' in the US during the examined timeframe. Secondly, mentions of industry facts and figures by Netflix ("Now nominated for 10 Academy Awards including Best Picture and Best Director") and by users ("Keisha Castle-Hughes was nominated for Whale Rider in 2003"), and users discussing content not offered by Netflix ("Birds are chirping along with Bohemian Rhapsody").

Viral topics also included focus on minorities, such as messages championing feminism posted by Netflix ("there is no one way to be a strong female character") and by users, which pointed at Netflix appealing to liberal values that audiences worldwide might share (Jenner, 2018). Other messages by Netflix brand community supported racial and ethnic diversity ("Let's have some better writing and parts for Latinx."), pointed out racism of actor Trevor Noah who appears in Netflix content ("He has made racist remarks about India, its people and its language."), and referenced the LGTBQ community ("A LESBIAN"). However, mentions of LGBTQ, racism, and racial and ethnic diversity were only present in communication of Netflix US and its brand community. This connected with the increasing support of racial diversity and female empowerment, and "questioning of heteronormativity" by Netflix, which, however, remain linked with specific historic, economic, and cultural conditions of the US (Jenner, 2018, p.266).

In the context of Netflix US specifically, the brand community discussed immigration ("We are all for immigrants who follow the rules"), thematically linked to Netflix movie *ROMA*. This reflected the local development of immigration recently intensifying as a discussion topic in the US, and the evidence of Netflix audience using Netflix content as a tool for commentary on societal issues (Lacalle & Castro, 2018; Thompson, 2018, February 2). Therefore, it was observed that Netflix actively took advantage of prominent societal topics in promoting own content, showcasing brand's efforts to establish a common ground with the audience and to form a community, as previously detected in the communication of Netflix Spain (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Some tweets by Netflix promoting the content appeared to belong to campaigns associated with broader issues and social causes, such as promotion of movie *High Flying Bird* in the timeframe of Black History Month in the US (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Therefore, in its communication Netflix prioritized American-centered context by emphasizing secular national holidays and events specific to the US, and drew attention to their remembrance in Netflix US messages while not mentioning Indian national holidays or observances in Netflix

India communication. As highlighted by Jenner (2018), this suggests the dominant perspective that the US market takes in considerations of Netflix.

Moreover, other brands than Netflix were mentioned, such as Netflix referring to production companies ("@vsp_productions") and magazines ("for Flaunt Magazine"), and users mentioning the music streaming platform ("@spotifyindia"), the competitor of Netflix – Amazon ("#AmazonPrime good move"), and non-audiovisual brands such as sports teams ("because @mipaltan don't start their ipl before game 5"). Elite people such as actors starring in content offered by Netflix were mentioned by both Netflix ("a strong female lead played by the talented #UshaJadhav") and its brand community ("Snaps for @ReginaKing!"). The non-actor celebrities were also discussed, for example Netflix referring to movie directors ("directed by Martin Scorsese...") and sportsmen ("Virat Kohli wins everything again"), and users mentioning writers ("As William Shakespeare once said, hello"). Additionally, song lyrics appeared in the communication of Netflix's brand community, for example "When I'l be older, I will be stronger" from song Waivin' Flag by K'naan. Users might have referenced the song lyrics and the recognizable brands to bring a "unifying factor" and to establish common ground with fellow brand community members by using known popular culture references (Jenner, 2018, p.13). Overall, the third distinguished theme showed that the relationship marketing communication of Netflix on Twitter aimed to be current and timely through referencing topics currently prominent in the US and Indian societies and discussed by Netflix brand community. Consequently, it could be detected that Netflix used localization strategy towards the US and Indian brand communities, similarly to Netflix Spain context, through referencing elements of Indian and American popular cultures and prominent societal topics (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

4.3 Cultural comparison

Comparing the relationship marketing strategies of Netflix US and Netflix India on Twitter, several similarities and differences were detected. Firstly, regarding the use of language, communication of Netflix US brand community and of Netflix India and its community contained several non-English messages, despite both accounts having English as their primary language. Specifically, some tweets of Netflix US followers were in Spanish, which corresponded with Spanish being the second-most spoken language in the US, and that some Netflix content such as *One Day At A Time* and *ROMA* has Latinx, Spanish/Mexican-speaking actors which potentially attracted Spanish-speaking audience (United States Census Bureau, 2015). For Netflix India, while most brand and brand community tweets were in English, some users tweeted in Hindi and Marathi, and created derivative art using Tamil text, therefore offering a glimpse at the great language variety in

India (Gulf News India, 2018, July 1). This heterogeneity in the language use in the relationship marketing communication of Netflix illustrated the fact that Netflix brand community existing on Twitter might act as extensions of traditional geographically-bound communities in the sense of representing territories with variety of languages spoken (Madupu & Cooley, 2010).

Secondly, there was no evidence for members of Netflix India and Netflix US online brand communities having different needs due to their culture, therefore contradicting the statements of Madupu and Cooley (2010) and Hofstede (2001) regarding collectivistic and individualistic cultures. Specifically, it was not observed that members of Netflix US online brand community had more need for receiving information than giving it as concern for the group wellbeing in individualistic cultures is supposedly lower (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). On the contrary, messages aimed at receiving information by polling other users, and the goodwill messages of recommendations and advice, reflecting attention to others, were present in Twitter communication of both Netflix US and Netflix India brand communities. This might be because social media has enabled online brand communities to unite Netflix's admirers with shared interest in a brand who "overcome real-life space and time limitations", consequently creating boundless peer group of numerous sub-cultures (Chu & Sung, 2015; Dessart et al., 2015, p.32; Wang et al., 2012). Therefore, such globalization of communication allowed by social media could serve as a factor eradicating the questionable culture division of Hofstede, as pointed by similarities in Twitter communication of Netflix India and Netflix US (Douglas & Craig, 2009; Venaik & Brewer, 2013).

Nevertheless, mentions of friendship, religion, and of sharing a Netflix account – which can be viewed as communal practices – were only present in tweets of Netflix India. Within the limited view of India as representing a collectivistic culture, these could serve as signs of Indian online brand community members seeking social integration – experiencing shared meanings and activities (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). However, no meaningful conclusion could be made from this, as these were the only three categories that could be remotely linked to collectivism, and making inferences about 'Indian culture' based on such limited evidence would disregard the contextual factors "such as societal affluence, religion, or population density" in a diverse country (Douglas & Craig, 2009, p.132). Instead, the detected difference in mentioning certain topics pointed at the localization approach in Netflix's Twitter communication in the context of India, namely personalizing communication with followers and adapting the communication style by referencing societal values and customs such as socializing in groups (Burton & Soboleva, 2011; Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015; Nes et al., 2007).

Thirdly, regarding the traditional high- and low-context culture divide, there were no

findings showing the high-context culture characteristics in communication of Netflix India. Particularly, emphasis on context – customer experience and relationship with the brand – was present for communication of both Netflix US and Netflix India (Graca & Barry, 2017). Moreover, messages of Netflix India were literal, labeled by Hall (1976) as uncharacteristic to high-context cultures. For example, members of Netflix India online brand community on Twitter addressed Netflix in a direct manner, asking for new content and technical improvements, with some users straightforwardly demanding brand's reply. Therefore, messages of both Netflix India and Netflix US were similarly direct and explicit, showing no categorical high/low-content culture divide. Furthermore, communication of both Netflix US and Netflix India emphasized the 'content' aspect – facts, numbers, and statistics – traditionally regarded as prerogative of low-context cultures (Graca & Barry, 2017). For example, the category 'Industry-related facts & figures', offering facts and numbers, was present in tweets of both researched Netflix accounts. Therefore, communication of Netflix in different cultural contexts of India and the US did not exhibit the elements adhering to the traditional, limited classification of cultures, and instead displayed localization through communicating about the topics and customs prominent in each society.

5. Conclusion

This chapter looks back at the overall research process and synthesizes the obtained results into an answer to the research question and the sub-research question. Firstly, general relationship marketing strategy of Netflix on Twitter is outlined. Secondly, differences in relationship marketing communication of Netflix on Twitter in contexts of the US and India are presented. Thirdly, responses of online brand community of Netflix to brand's communication on Twitter are summarized. Furthermore, a three-level conceptual model for the relationship marketing strategy taken by Netflix through Twitter communication is proposed. Lastly, implications and limitations of this research are discussed, and suggestions for future research are given.

5.1 Research context

In the recent years, SVODs have risen in popularity worldwide, with Netflix becoming one of the most prominent SVOD platforms operating in 190 countries (Lotz, 2017; Netflix Media Center, 2019). Netflix has an established presence on major social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter and its social media strategy has been praised as 'successful' in engaging audiences by non-scientific business and marketing publications such as *Forbes*. This public praise prompted interest into academic understanding of reasons behind this 'success' (Cunningham & Craig, 2016).

Twitter was specifically selected as the focus area for this research as Twitter has become the 'go-to' platform for streaming companies to connect and engage audiences, and for forming online brand communities, surpassing other social networking sites (Wilson, 2016). Moreover, there remained a lack of research on characteristics of messages that prompt Twitter users to react to Netflix tweets and to engage with the brand, as well as no assessment had been made of whether or not Netflix developed a coordinated Twitter communication strategy in different cultural contexts (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018a). Consequently, this study aimed to contribute to filling the current gap in academic research exploring communication strategy of Netflix on Twitter.

To guide this research, relationship marketing served as a theoretical lens to examine the messages posted by Netflix, as relationship marketing is seen as pivotal element of contemporary social media strategies of brands (Abeza, O'Reilly, Finch, Seguin, & Nadeau, 2018; Hajli et al., 2017). In addition to Netflix's communication, the reactions of Netflix's customers, who form an online brand community on Twitter, were also examined due to being the quintessential half of brand-customer relationship built through communication, and therefore important to explore to gain fuller understanding of such relationship.

Following the aforementioned rationale, this research examined the relationship marketing approach that Netflix took through communication towards its online brand community on Twitter, inquiring 'How does Netflix use Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community?'. Since Netflix operates in numerous countries worldwide and current research on Netflix communication through social media lacks cross-cultural comparison, the relationship marketing communication of Netflix was compared in two distinct cultural settings – the US and India, to contribute to reducing the gap in research on "online brand communities in a cross-cultural context" (Madupu & Cooley, 2010, p.364). For this purpose, the study posed a sub-research question: How does (if so) Netflix adapt its relationship marketing communication strategy to different cultural contexts? The selected countries both represented English-language Netflix accounts on Twitter, however, offered the ground for comparison as being most opposing on Hofstede's cultural dimensions among all English-language Netflix accounts on Twitter (Hofstede Insights, 2018; LeFebre, 2011). Nevertheless, application of Hofstede's dimensions was critically questioned due to the extensive critique of Hofstede's model.

5.2 General relationship marketing strategy of Netflix on Twitter

To answer the research question and the sub-research question of this study, qualitative content analysis was conducted on the 1,145 tweets and on accompanying 358 visuals posted by Netflix and by its online brand community in response to Netflix's communication on Twitter. Through the analysis process, the answer to the research question 'How does Netflix use Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community?' was obtained – it was observed that Netflix uses Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community by focusing on several areas. Firstly, Netflix focuses on promoting the existing and upcoming content it offers to subscribers. Predominantly, Netflix promotes its newest, original content, which supports the fact that series have become the main product of SVODs and the main focus in their communication (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Emphasis on promoting the soonest upcoming and most recently released content shows Netflix's aim to satisfy the need of its online brand community for quick and informative communication through offering timely and accurate information before and after releasing new content (Graca & Barry, 2017). Simultaneously, Netflix does not explicitly refer to its content as being 'original', which indicates that in its Twitter communication Netflix blurs the distinction between its original content and that of other media companies that it offers to subscribers (Wayne, 2018). Therefore, it can be concluded that Netflix strongly privileges own original content (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

Another type of brand's promotional messages focuses on Netflix as a SVOD platform, discussing various experiences, practices and emotions related to Netflix brand consumption. These messages indicate that Netflix uses storytelling in its relationship marketing strategy on Twitter, by referencing various social situations that evolve around consumption of audiovisual content (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Some messages are tightly related to the nature of SVODs, such as binge-watching and sharing a subscription among several users, while others highlight positive sides of Netflix as a SVOD platform by, for example, drawing attention to exclusivity of offered content (Heredia Ruiz, 2017). Consequently, it can be concluded that while information provision function of relationship marketing is evident in Netflix's Twitter communication, Netflix simultaneously aims at positioning itself in a positive light against the competing SVOD platforms by differentiating itself in the eyes of current and future subscribers via self-centered and slightly self-glorifying promotional messages (Guo, 2014).

Secondly, analysis revealed that Netflix also uses Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community by posting messages that are non-promotional social interactions with followers. Some messages point at Netflix using the strategy of actively pushing follower engagement by openly facilitating communication and initiating conversations with users, via hashtags and direct questions (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Other messages represent more implicit indicators that guide conversations, namely social interaction cues of rejection or acceptance which include both hostile, dissenting messages and goodwill, affirmative messages. For example, Netflix expresses love for its online brand community on Twitter, with followers expressing it back. Therefore, Netflix's Twitter communication exhibits presence of the commitment dimension of relationship marketing through evidence of emotional connection between the online brand community and Netflix, with users expressing identification, affiliation, gratitude and loyalty to Netflix, and to each other (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; Hsiao et al., 2015). Overall, goodwill messages show that the communication strategy of Netflix on Twitter follows the paramount requirements of effective relationship marketing communication as it is conducted in a personal manner, addressing followers' "emotional needs of belonging and acceptance" through expressions of unity, support, and love (Watkins & Lewis, 2013; Zhu & Chen, 2015, p.27). By aiming to satisfy these needs, Netflix showcases the effort to cultivate the trust dimension of the relationship marketing in its Twitter communication (Boateng, 2019).

Thirdly, research showed that Netflix implements relationship marketing towards its online brand community via Twitter communication by focusing on general-interest topics with a certain degree of virality in societies within which both Netflix and its followers exist, for example feminism. This points at Netflix using the strategy of appealing to "transnational

value systems" such as anti-sexist liberal values which "can resonate in different cultures" (Jenner, 2018, p.230). These viral topics also connect with the themes expressed in the content available on Netflix, as well as Netflix mentions everyday-life situations unrelated to audiovisual content consumption, and aspects of popular culture. Therefore, in its relationship marketing approach through Twitter communication Netflix uses the strategy of creating a wide audience appeal by using known cultural references and prominent societal topics, and of establishing a common ground via "unifying elements" its audiences might relate to (Jenner, 2018, p.13). Furthermore, humorous expressions are a common thread throughout Twitter communication of Netflix and its online brand community. Therefore, it can be concluded that in its relationship marketing on Twitter Netflix aims to create a 'sense of pleasantness' through humor and friendly conversational tone, consequently engaging in cultivating positive attitude among consumers towards its Twitter communication and in strengthening user engagement (Eckler & Bolls, 2011; Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b; Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019).

In addition to identifying the three described thematic areas, research also distinguished that Netflix implements its relationship marketing through Twitter communication by using original tweets and retweets, and does not post many direct replies to followers in its brand Twitter feed, therefore primarily relying on one-way broadcasting of messages. All the examined retweet messages used by Netflix connected with content available on the platform, which highlights the primarily promotional nature of Netflix's communication aimed at stimulating consumption of own content (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Netflix also retweets posts made by other regional, English-language accounts of the brand, such as Netflix Canada, and includes various add-on elements in its tweets, such as links to Netflix YouTube accounts and to the official Netflix website. This shows that Netflix takes the approach of establishing connectivity within own regional branches and aims to position itself as transnationally connected, cross-border broadcaster (Jenner, 2018). Other add-on elements used by both Netflix and its online brand community on Twitter are third-party links to websites on socially positive causes, emoticons to emphasize emotions in the message or to reference Netflix content, and hashtags to promote content offered by Netflix, to initiate a conversation and to promote a certain action.

Relationship marketing approach of Netflix also includes the active use of add-on videos, images, and gifs in its Twitter communication. Netflix uses videos that promote upcoming content or feature actors involved in it, while images, among other types, include frames from content both available and unavailable on Netflix. The latter frame type shows Netflix's strategy of using prominent popular culture elements as "unifying factor" and "vital commonality" for its diverse international audiences, and of positioning itself as connected

to and celebrating popular culture to appear relevant (Jenner, 2018, p.256). Moreover, in its tweets Netflix uses follower-created derivative art based on Netflix content, and memes. On the one hand, this points at Netflix presenting itself as acknowledging and valuing its online brand community's efforts (Jenner, 2018). On the other hand, this highlights that in its relationship marketing strategy through Twitter communication Netflix actively takes advantage of popular communication formats such as memes in promoting own content and trying to establish a common ground with its audience (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). Furthermore, Netflix uses more messages of task/instrumental orientation. This highlights that through Twitter communication this SVOD pursues goals similar to those of traditional television – promoting the programming it offers and transmitting programming-related information to maintain audience's interest (Lin & Pena, 2011). Such approach appears to be successful as Netflix's online brand community on Twitter engages the most around brand's messages which promote Netflix original programming, specifically series (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

5.3 Netflix's cultural adaptation of Twitter relationship marketing strategy

Despite numerous similarities in their relationship marketing approach through Twitter communication, for example in prioritized promotion of Netflix original content and in the message tone, the two researched Netflix Twitter accounts – Netflix US and Netflix India – exhibited certain differences. Therefore, the answer to sub-research question 'How does (if so) Netflix adapt its relationship marketing communication strategy to different cultural contexts?' is that Netflix varies its relationship marketing communication on Twitter in cultural contexts of the US and India, specifically by employing the localization strategy via several approaches. Firstly, considering the researched timeframe, Netflix US and Netflix India accounts have different strategies regarding the type of posted tweets. Netflix US focuses more on retweeting messages created by other users, while Netflix India predominantly focuses on posting own original tweets. Moreover, Netflix US posts messages – original tweets and retweets – in its Twitter feed more frequently than Netflix India, and uses more visuals than Netflix India. This indicates that Netflix US uses the relationship marketing approach on Twitter with a greater potential to engage followers, as users engage more with tweets containing images rather than text only (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b). However, Netflix India includes 'specials' videos as add-ons, which reference the plot and characters of existing Netflix content applied to context of India, and images and memes that show social situations containing cultural elements specific to India. Therefore, the relationship marketing strategy of Netflix India through Twitter communication exhibits localization strategy via cultural adaptation – promoting

American content to Indian audiences by referring to elements of Indian culture, society, and everyday life.

Research also indicated that the two examined Netflix accounts conduct their relationship marketing communication on different levels. Netflix US communication is on a proactive level, as it actively uses retweets therefore creating endorsement of itself and strengthening own credibility (Burton & Soboleva, 2011; Watkins & Lewis, 2013). Netflix India communication exhibits characteristics of lower, reactive level with one-way broadcasting of original messages with limited retweets (Watkins & Lewis, 2013). This allows concluding that although both Netflix accounts provide additional information in tweets in the form of hashtags and links, their communication does not reach the highest, partnership level of relationship marketing communication. Moreover, there are differences in the use of languages between the two researched Netflix accounts. Netflix US does not post tweets in other languages than English, while its online brand community on Twitter occasionally uses Spanish, French, and Portuguese words and sentences. Netflix India, however, posts several original messages either fully or partially in Hindi, therefore showing cultural adaptation and localization element, and brand's multilingualism strategy (Jenner, 2018).

Localization strategy is further evident in Netflix India tweets that discuss topics relevant to Indian online brand community, such as local celebrities, unavailability of certain content on Netflix India, high subscription pricing, and censorship, therefore mirroring current concerns of Indian subscribers (Lobato, 2019). Netflix India also uses cultural adaptation and personalization of communication with Indian followers by adapting its communication style to reference certain societal values and customs such as socializing in groups (Khojastehpour & Johns, 2015; Nes et al., 2007). Similarly, in communication of Netflix US and its online brand community on Twitter topics such as racial and ethnic diversity, immigration, racism, and LGBTQ are present, pointing at issues prominently discussed in the US. Therefore, it can be concluded that Netflix relationship marketing through Twitter communication exhibits the use of localization strategy by focusing on viral topics, locally relevant figures and typical situations that regional online brand communities might identify with and find appealing (Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo, 2018b).

5.4 Responses of Netflix's online brand community

The relationship marketing strategy of Netflix through Twitter communication prompted reactions from its online brand community, pointing at the presence of conversation dimensions of brand community relationship management (Ang, 2011). The online brand community reacts to Netflix's tweets by displaying co-creation element of customer engagement through suggestions on improving user's consumption experience

and offering suggestions for introducing new content on Netflix (Boateng, 2019; Boateng & Narteh, 2016). Netflix's followers also show emotional connection with Netflix content, by petitioning Netflix to extend or renew certain content, which shows the presence of the commitment dimension of relationship marketing (Boateng & Narteh, 2016; Lacalle & Castro, 2018). Moreover, Netflix's online brand community on Twitter engages in praising Netflix and its content, and consequently acts as brand advocates for Netflix by promoting the content, the platform, and the related consumption experiences. This makes evident the presence of the trust element of relationship marketing through consumers' belief in brand's positive qualities (Boateng & Narteh, 2016). Nevertheless, Netflix's online brand community also criticizes Netflix and its content, which displays variations in customer attitudes towards Netflix and shows the existence of negative responses to brand's relationship marketing approach.

Moreover, Netflix online brand community members engage in social interactions towards each other on Twitter, which shows the connectivity dimension of brand community relationship management (Ang, 2011). Users connect with others via mentions of usernames, and leverage the online brand community by polling it on various topics, including availability of Netflix content, which points at the presence of the learning aspect of engagement in online brand community (Dessart et al., 2015; Schau et al., 2009; Wirtz et al., 2013). Member of Netflix online brand community on Twitter also give recommendations and encourage others to engage in socially positive actions, therefore highlighting the sharing and socializing elements of customer engagement (Dessart et al., 2015; Schau et al., 2009). Therefore, it is evident that Netflix's relationship marketing strategy on Twitter produces customer engagement on various dimensions. Consequently, the relationship marketing strategy of Netflix through Twitter communication can be seen as 'successful' – as described by non-scientific publications – as Netflix's online brand community on Twitter displays commitment and trust towards Netflix, and various dimensions of engagement, such as co-creation and customer advocacy. Furthermore, Netflix's relationship marketing approach through Twitter communication shows evidence of creating an intrinsically connected online brand community which exhibits the signs of being a 'social audience' with participatory culture and having a 'shared consciousness' via mentions of shared rituals and experiences revolving around brand consumption of Netflix (Dessart et al., 2015; Lacalle & Castro, 2018; Wirtz et al., 2013).

Additionally, Netflix's relationship marketing approach on Twitter prompts usage of other languages than English among its online brand community. Despite English being the primary language of communication, Netflix's online brand community also tweet in other languages – Spanish for Netflix US, and Hindu, Marathi and Tamil for Netflix India. This reflects the linguistic diversity of Netflix's online brand communities as its members

originate from linguistically heterogeneous countries (Madupu & Cooley, 2010). There is also a difference in follower's reactions to the Twitter relationship marketing communication of the two Netflix accounts. Specifically, Netflix India brand community comments the most on Netflix messages that invite followers to participate in a conversation by asking for a certain input, while Netflix US followers engage the most with Netflix tweets promoting brand's original series. Therefore, research showed that the user engagement is not universally triggered by the same elements across the two examined Netflix Twitter accounts.

5.5 Proposed conceptual model of Netflix's relationship marketing strategy

Overall, through the qualitative content analysis process, three themes were distinguished, each representing a pivotal focus area within relationship marketing communication of Netflix on Twitter: 'All about Netflix', 'Community relations' and 'The world around us'. Based on these themes and the relationship between them, it can be concluded that in the examined timeframe the overall relationship marketing strategy of Netflix through Twitter communication represents a three-level structure which consists of three conceptual focus areas correlating with the three described themes (see Figure 5.1).
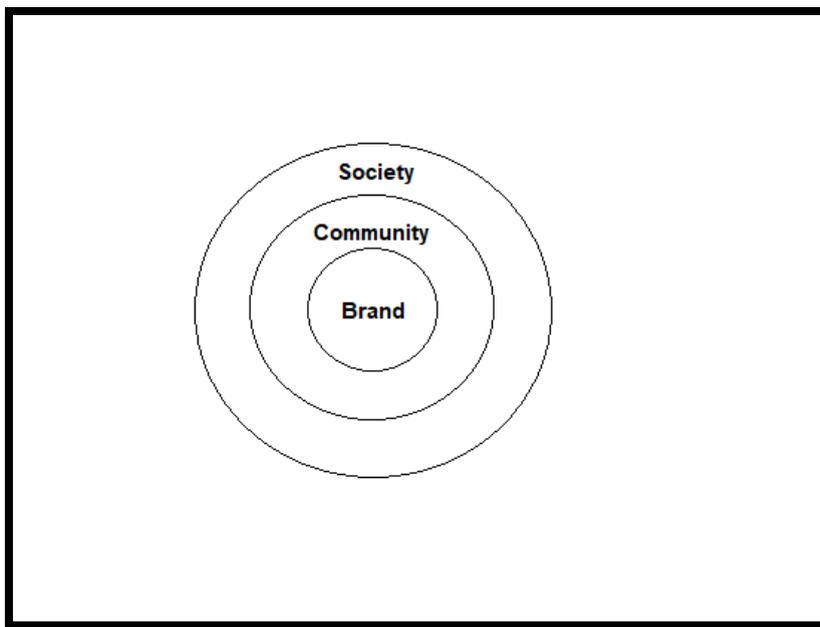
Figure 5.1: Three-level model of Netflix's relationship marketing approach through Twitter communication

On the first, more internally focused level, communication messages of Netflix and its online brand community on Twitter focus on the brand itself, promoting Netflix's services and content, therefore showing Netflix online brand community engaging in brand advocacy. On the second level, communication messages by Netflix and by its online brand

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community focus on the collective of individuals interested in Netflix, and explicitly and implicitly aim at engaging and mobilizing the brand community that exists on Twitter, as well as the vice versa effort of followers towards the brand. On the third, most externally oriented level, the communication messages of Netflix and its online brand community on Twitter revolve around general-interest topics prominent in societies in which Netflix as a company and its community as individuals exist.

Overall, Netflix uses Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community by focusing on three areas: itself as a brand, its followers, and the wider societal topics. The strategy taken by Netflix on Twitter shows the diversification and versatility of approaches, and adherence to the main guidelines of relationship marketing communication. Netflix's relationship marketing strategy through Twitter communication exhibits commitment and trust elements, humor and timely information useful for the followers, and focus on current topics and events relevant for local subscribers, all while promoting the content Netflix offers. Communication of Netflix and its online brand community on Twitter mirrors the discussions and events prominent in the offline environments at the time, showing that Netflix's communication aims to be up-to-date with real-life offline developments. The relationship marketing strategy of Netflix through Twitter communication also shows localization approach and cultural adaptation to the contexts of the US and India. The 'success' of the brand's overall strategy in terms of eliciting followers' reactions and building online brand community can be detected via Netflix online brand community actively engaging with Netflix through textual messages and visuals, expressing their opinions about Netflix and its offered content, and carrying out customer advocacy for Netflix.

5.6 Theoretical implications

This research produced findings with potential implications on the considered theoretical perspectives. Firstly, research results showed the presence of essential relationship marketing principles in Netflix's communication on Twitter. This substantiated the premise of relationship marketing as a part of contemporary social media strategies of brands, used for engaging online brand communities. Secondly, this research proposed a conceptual model to represent the multiple-level relationship marketing approach taken by Netflix through Twitter communication. This model offers a cohesive view of the diverse topics appearing in the relationship marketing communication of Netflix and its online brand community on Twitter, and summarizes the main topical focus areas. Therefore, the proposed conceptual model expands the current understanding of relationship marketing strategy that Netflix takes towards its online brand community through Twitter communication, and contributes to reducing the knowledge gap on social media

communication strategies of SVODs.

Thirdly, research findings raised questions about Hofstede's and Hall's culture classification models. The research findings did not reveal any substantial evidence for the communication of Netflix or of its online brand community in different cultural contexts to have clear differences linked to Hofstede's dimensions. Specifically, it was not detected that online brand communities of Netflix India and Netflix US had different communication needs due to their culture, therefore contradicting the statements of Madupu and Cooley (2010) and Hofstede (2001) regarding collectivistic and individualistic cultures. This questions the practicality of Hofstede's model when applying it to brand communities on social media. For example, no messages that mentioned explicitly 'collectivistic' or 'individualistic' behaviors – according to Hofstede's perspective – were present in Netflix's Twitter communication in either of the researched cultural contexts. This points not only at the questionable validity of Hofstede's classification of cultures, but also at social media enabling online brand communities to become boundless peer groups of numerous sub-cultures of users primarily united by shared interest in a brand and not offline behaviors or customs (Chu & Sung, 2015; Dessart et al., 2015; Wang et al., 2012). Therefore, examination of Netflix's communication, and the detected similarities in messages of Netflix US and Netflix India and their online brand communities, pointed at the globalization of communication within social media, which serves as a factor criticizing Hofstede's culture division (Douglas & Craig, 2009; Venaik & Brewer, 2013).

This research also did not produce any conclusive evidence for Netflix's communication in contexts of the US and India as following the high-/low-culture divide of Hall (1976). Both Netflix US and Netflix India, and their brand community members communicated in literal and often lengthy messages, which contradicts the proposed view of such messages being 'undesired' in high-context cultures, to which India is classified by Hall (1976). Online brand community of Netflix India addressed Netflix in a direct manner, asking for new content, technical improvements, or even straightforwardly demanding the brand's reply. Additionally, messages of both researched Netflix Twitter accounts emphasized 'content' – facts, numbers, and statistics – traditionally regarded as prerogative of low-context cultures (Graca & Barry, 2017). Overall, the examined communication of Netflix in different cultural contexts did not adhere to the traditional classification of cultures, consequently raising the question whether Hofstede's and Hall's dimensions remain relevant and applicable to exploring brand communities on social media. Potentially, these dimensions, for example individualism/collectivism, can be revised to reflect the boundless structure of online brand communities and explore the distinction (if any) of loosely-knit or tightly-know social frameworks within them.

5.7 Practical managerial implications

The results obtained from analyzing the relationship marketing strategy of Netflix towards its online brand community through Twitter communication carry certain implications that can be useful for management of Netflix. Firstly, in the examined timeframe both researched Netflix Twitter accounts displayed only one 'reply' tweet to their online brand community in their main feeds. Consequently, Twitter communication of Netflix did not reach the highest partnership level of relationship marketing communication (Watkins & Lewis, 2013). Furthermore, since some online brand community members voice negative opinions about Netflix and the content it offers, replying to them might help managing the potentially image-harming eWOM. This produces an opportunity for Netflix to enhance its current relationship marketing strategy on Twitter by implementing more replies to followers and displaying them in its Twitter feed. Such approach could allow Netflix to cultivate positive brand image by acknowledging follower messages as an important information source and showing interest in continuous dialogue and direct conversations with consumers (Kwon & Sung, 2011).

Secondly, Netflix did not fully utilize the commitment dimension of relationship marketing by offering the "element of co-ownership of the brand" to its online brand community on Twitter, as it did not make followers privy to information about internal organizational affairs (Wirtz et al., 2013, p.237). This could be rectified by, for example, Netflix releasing more information about the decision-making process behind creation of content, and by publicizing viewing and usage statistics. This would allow creating an image of openness and positively influence decision-making of current and future Netflix subscribers on brand consumption (Chu & Sung, 2015). Thirdly, in its Twitter communication Netflix prioritized American-centered context by emphasizing secular national holidays and events specific to the US, while not mentioning Indian national holidays in Netflix India communication. Therefore, Netflix can boost its localization strategy by including references to festivities that are typical to the geographic locations addressed by regional Twitter accounts, to introduce more common ground with the audiences (Jenner, 2018).

5.8 Limitations and future research

There were several limitations that potentially influenced the research quality. Firstly, although most analyzed messages were in English, some were written in other languages – Spanish, French, Portuguese, Hindi, Marathi, and Tamil. These messages were translated via Google Translate and the obtained translation was checked with native speakers, which still carried the possibility of certain meaning lost in translation. Secondly, cultural comparison between Netflix US and Netflix India Twitter communication was positioned in

Hofstede's classification of cultures. However, its validity and applicability is increasingly questioned in academic research. Only one dimension of the model was looked at – individualism/collectivism, supplemented by Hall's (1976) high-/low-context culture classification. Ultimately, these dimensions were not detected in the analyzed data, pointing that this study could have considered grounding its cultural comparison in a different cultural model more relevant for exploring online communication.

Moreover, considerable number of findings in this research connected with observations made by Fernández-Gómez & Martín-Quevedo (2018b) about Twitter communication of Netflix Spain, therefore pointing at a potential existence of a unified, coordinated approach taken by Netflix in its communication across various regional Twitter accounts. Consequently, the future research can seek to establish whether similarities found in communication of Netflix US, Netflix India, and Netflix Spain exist in messages of other regional Twitter accounts of Netflix. Furthermore, the proposed conceptual model of three-level relationship marketing strategy of Netflix's Twitter communication can be applied to messages of other regional Twitter accounts of Netflix to examine its wider applicability. Additionally, further studies can compare the Twitter relationship marketing strategy of Netflix with those of other international and local SVODs, and explore other elements beyond Twitter that comprise the marketing strategy of Netflix.

Moreover, research findings indicated that despite similarities there were certain differences in communication of Netflix depending on the cultural context of the Twitter account. Therefore, evidence of a localization approach taken by Netflix in its relationship marketing communication on Twitter towards online brand communities in the US, India, and Spain opens the possibility to examine whether Netflix takes such approach in other cultural settings. Netflix operates in many countries worldwide, and future research can explore the possible localization elements in brand's Twitter communication in other regions, for example Middle East or Latin America, and possible variations in the context of regions with multiple Netflix Twitter accounts, such as Southeast Asia.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Coding scheme

Table A1: Operationalization elements for written texts

Element	Type	Sub-type	Description/Specifics
1. Basic characteristic of Twitter message	Category of a tweet	Original	"Tweet posted by Netflix, also the one that quotes another tweet but does not constitute retweet" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
		Retweet	"Tweet posted by another user, but shared by Netflix" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
		Reply	"Tweet posted by Netflix as a response to a tweet by a follower" or by non-follower Twitter user (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
2. Tweet objective		Greeting (followers)	"Informal goodwill message" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
		Polling	Asking for input from the brand community regarding specific topic/issue

	Announcing a survey/game/contest	"Invitation to participate in a Twitter survey/game/quiz/contest" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Promoting the Netflix brand	"General promo message about the content-on-demand services the platform offers, such as news or an explanation about Netflix services. E.g.: dates of upcoming premieres or announcements of new shows" (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Promoting specific content	"Promoting a specific series, film or documentary. Message may include rhetorical questions" (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Pushing engagement	"Inviting followers to participate in a discussion or to answer a question" (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018a, p.135), and users urging the brand to engage with a message
	Expressing identification	References to usernames

	and affiliation	of others within tweet
	Proclaiming loyalty	E.g.: Expressing allegiance with the brand or fellow users
	Showing empathy	E.g.: Solidarity with other's feelings
	Showing understanding	Expressions of sympathetic awareness, tolerance
	Showing recognition	Acknowledging others
	Showcasing friendship	Mentions of words such as 'friend(s)', 'friendship'
	Showcasing effort to listen	Expressions that one is paying attention to other's message
	Praising positive qualities of a brand	E.g.: honesty, reliability, caring for consumer wellbeing
3. Add-on elements	Link to another Netflix social media site	E.g.: Netflix YouTube page
	Link to the official Netflix website	https://www.netflix.com
	Third party link	Link leading to non-Netflix online resource
	Gif	Animated image
	Image	
	Video	
	Hashtag	E.g.: #ContentTitle

		Emoticon	E.g.: ❤️
4. Message orientation	Instrumental/task	Asking for opinion	"Evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Asking for suggestion	"Direction, possible ways of action" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Asking for information	"Information, repetition, confirmation, clarification" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Giving opinion	"Evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling, wish" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Giving suggestion	"Direction, implying autonomy for other" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Giving information	"Information, repetition, clarification, confirmation" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
	Positive socioemotional	Showing solidarity	"Raising other's status, giving help, reward" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Showing tension release	"Joking, laughing, showinh satisfaction" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Showing agreement	"Showing passive acceptance, understanding, concurring, complying" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)

	Negative socioemotional	Showing disagreement	"Showing passive rejection, formality, withholds help" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Showing antagonism	"Deflating other's status, defending or asserting self" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Showing tension	"Asking for help, withdrawing out of field" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
5. Virality		Social significance	Current political and societal events
		Unexpected/odd	E.g.: Surprise, irregularity
		Elite people	Celebrities
		Humor	Joke, word pun
		Sexuality	Mentions of words such as 'sex', 'erotic', etc.
		Animals	Mentions of animal species. E.g.: Dog(s)
		Children	Mentions of words such as 'kid(s)', 'child', 'childhood', etc.
		Entertainment	E.g.: Awards show
		Conflict/violence	E.g.: Attack, accident
6. Engagement		Number of likes	"Number of times a tweet was liked by users" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a,

			p.135)
	Number of comments		"Number of user replies posted to a tweet" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Number of retweets		"Number of times tweet was retweeted by users" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)

Table A2: Operationalization elements for non-written texts (visuals such as images, videos, gifs)

Type of a visual	Category	Sub-category (if applicable)	Description/Specifics
Images & gifs	Diegetic		Frames from the content
	Realistic		Simulate reality
	Derivative art		Expressive creation that is based on elements of previously created, original work belonging to another individual
	Extradiegetic	The actor outside of character	Actor or actors offset
		The actor in character	Actor or actors portraying a character

	Meme		Humorous depiction of a particular phenomenon or theme that is meaningful within a culture
	Face/forefront		A headshot portraying a person
Videos	Teasers		Brief introductory promotion of a content
	Trailers		Full-length promotion of a content
	Extended content		a) Loosely alluding to plot or characters of Netflix content b) Referencing other societal themes
	Making-of		Creation process of a certain content
	Diegetic narrator		Actor(s)
	Non-diegetic narrator		Non-actor(s)

Appendix B

Final coding frame

Table B1: Coding frame created through qualitative content analysis

Main category	Sub-category	Sub-sub category (if applicable)	Illustrative quote	Main category scope
Brand consumption	SVOD-specific behaviors	Selling Netflix account	Selling Netflix account @80Rs per month	Different aspects of using Netflix as a SVOD platform: various subscribers' experiences, practices, and emotions
		Sharing Netflix account	thought I could split the premium account with 4 people	
		Stopping Netflix subscription	I have deactivated my account so now I will not make money from my account	
		Binge-watching	Binged Sex Education, watched all the eight episodes in a row	
	Subscription pricing		Dear Netflix, With due respect, I request you to offer us a affordable monthly package if possible	
	Stages of content		Just finished with "The Umbrella Academy."	

			watching	
			Anticipation for Netflix content			I can't wait to see it!	
		Giving opinion	Praising content available on Netflix	What an incredible show!	
			Disliking content available on Netflix	It's boring didn't find it funny at all just depressing	
			Praising the brand	I know you have that X factor differentiating you from other digital streaming partner	
		Reporting positive emotions induced by content		I'm an emotional wreck (in a good way !)	
Promoting Netflix brand	Promoting Netflix services	Announcing content release	The Umbrella Academy premieres 15 February.	Communication messages focused on advancing the knowledge about Netflix's services and the content that brand offers
		Emphasizing content's exclusive availability	#Leila premieres June 14, only on Netflix.	

	Promoting Netflix content	Behind-the-scenes insights	He didn't originally plan on shooting the film himself, but when his long-time DP Emmanuel Lubezki (Gravity, Children of Men) was unavailable, Cuarón stepped up	
		Netflix original	#AfterLife	
		Non-original available on Netflix	#Danceacademy for me	
		Referring to content plot	Who fed Rebel Wilson's dog while she was in the hospital?	
		Referring to content character(s)	It was Donny ..	
		Spoiler(s)	I'm not saying this is an Umbrella Academy spoiler, but I'm not not saying this is an @UmbrellaAcad spoiler...	
		Content cross-over	Okay hear us out, a Sanju and Black Mirror crossover called SANJUnipero	
		Rhetorical question	What's in a name, anyway?	
Pushing engagement	Inviting followers into		Tell us what you've written on the last page of your rough book and	Active facilitation of communication

	conversation		we'll tell you what to watch.	and actions between the brand and its community
	Addressing specific fellow user(s)		@Username[3] which one would you choose! :3	
	Announcing a survey		https://twitter.com/Zees amachar/status/109850 3791903690752 … … please vote	
	Urging brand's action	Directly asking for brand's reply	Hello sir i am a script writer and actor, I want to make a best show or movie with you	
		Seeking collaboration with Netflix	Please contact me.	
		Asking for technical improvements	Poco f1 now supports widevine L1 certification please certify the device so that we can stream in FHD	
		Asking to introduce actor(s) into content	we want @YalitzaAparicio on another Netflix project	
		Asking to introduce currently unavailable	Y'all should put Ghost Adventures and the Titanic on Netflix	

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[3] Original username anonymized for privacy purposes

			content	
		Asking to remove content	Stop trevornoah show on netflix	
		Asking to renew cancelled content	also RENEW ONE DAY AT A TIME #RENEWODAAT	
		Asking to extend running content	Please @Netflix make season 2 & 3-9 of working moms	
	Polling brand community	Seeking factual information & clarification	Is there any sort of censorship applies on Netflix India or they can potray anything in their tv series? Why anti Hindu content is not being censored?	
		Seeking viewing suggestion	Suggest me a show, something similar to @love maybe?").	
	Giving suggestion/rec ommendation		Try #Sense8	
	Encouraging socially positive action		Let's make room for voices yet to be heard, for stories yet to be told	
Social interaction cues	Hostile message	Showing antagonism	If this is showing forcefully implementation of Hinduism @NetflixIndia be ready to face the	Implicit written indictors used to guide Twitter interactions and to communicate acceptance or

			boycott	rejection in a certain conversation, expressing the intent and feelings behind the message
		Showing disagreement	No,,,it isn't romantic	
		Showing tension	Send help.	
	Goodwill message	Apologizing	We're sorry Sex Education got over so quickly.	
		Complimenting	You're brilliant	
		Congratulating	congrats to @shondarhimes @EllenPompeo and everyone involved with reaching this awe-inspiring milestone!	
		Expressing love	I absolutely love this show	
		Expressing gratitude	I will never stop thanking you	
		Showing support	Be brave, we believe in you	
		Showing unity	#BetterTogether	
		Showing agreement	I agree with you!	
		Wisdom	Tomorrow will see	

			saying	tomorrow's tomorrow	
Viral topics	Censorship			Is there any sort of censorship applies on Netflix India or they can potray anything in their tv series? Why anti Hindu content is not being censored?	General-interest topics that have a certain degree of virality in societies within which both Netflix as a brand and Twitter users as a brand community exist
	Parenthood			When a child is screaming in public it's important to remember that their mom is TRYING HER BEST RIGHT NOW.	
	Nostalgia			I'm really glad I was in my teens and 20's during this era of SNL.	
	Religion			There are many such practices in every religion, which i believe is total rubbish, like honour killing in Islam (i saw in Vice or Vox) and many more in Islam	
	Humor			Netflix. U just made my banana stand	
	Other brands (non-Netflix)			#AmazonPrime good move	
	Animals			Doggo would dry your	

			tears	
	Education		Education is the key to a better future. With books, teachers and hard work, anyone, from anywhere, can change the world.	
	Everyday-life situations & experiences		In Europe (ok at least Slovak and Czech republic) you NEVER walk in your house with the same shoes as out.	
	Feminism		there is no one way to be a strong female character	
	LGBTQ		A LESBIAN	
	Racial & ethnic diversity		I love having African stories told in a positive light that showcase our strength.	
	Racism		He has made racist remarks about India, its people and its language	
	Elite people	Actor(s)	Snaps for @ReginaKing!	
		Non-actor celebrities	Virat Kohli wins everything again	
	Audiovisual industry	Industry event(s)	Oscar predictions	
		Industry-related facts &	"Grey's Anatomy" will become the longest-	

			figures	running primetime medical drama in American television history tonight	
			Content unavailable on Netflix	Birds are chirping along with bohemian rhapsody	
		Friendship		Friends can nullify all the middle fingers. Friends are life	
		Immigration		We are all for immigrants who follow the rules.	
		Song lyrics		When I'l be older, I will be stronger	
Other		Cryptic message		Mj 0%mj 0%c	Textual elements which are not predominant and topically fall outside other existing categories, however, require classification to account for all data
		Single-standing concept(s)		A parallelogram	

Appendix C

Revised coding scheme

Table C1: Operationalization elements of the initial coding scheme definitively distinguished for written texts

Element	Type	Sub-type	Description/Specifics
1. Basic characteristic of Twitter message	Category of a tweet	Original	"Tweet posted by Netflix, also the one that quotes another tweet but does not constitute retweet" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
		Retweet	"Tweet posted by another user, but shared by Netflix" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
		Reply	"Tweet posted by Netflix as a response to a tweet by a follower" or by non-follower Twitter user (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
2. Tweet objective		Greeting (followers)	"Informal goodwill message" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
		Polling	Asking for input from the brand community regarding specific topic/issue
		Announcing a survey/game/contest	"Invitation to participate in a Twitter

		survey/game/quiz/contest" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Promoting the Netflix brand	"General promo message about the content-on-demand services the platform offers, such as news or an explanation about Netflix services. E.g.: dates of upcoming premieres or announcements of new shows" (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Promoting specific content	"Promoting a specific series, film or documentary. Message may include rhetorical questions" (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Pushing engagement	"Inviting followers to participate in a discussion or to answer a question" (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018a, p.135), and user's urging the brand to engage with a message
	Expressing identification and affiliation	References to usernames of others within tweet

		Proclaiming loyalty	E.g.: Expressing allegiance with the brand or fellow users
		Showcasing friendship	Mentions of words such as 'friend(s)', 'friendship'
		Praising positive qualities of a brand	E.g.: honesty, reliability, caring for consumer wellbeing
3. Add-on elements		Link to another Netflix social media site	E.g.: Netflix YouTube page
		Link to the official Netflix website	https://www.netflix.com
		Third party link	Link leading to non-Netflix online resource
		Gif	Animated image
		Image	
		Video	
		Hashtag	E.g.: #ContentTitle
		Emoticon	E.g.: ❤️
4. Message orientation	Instrumental/task	Asking for opinion	"Evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Asking for suggestion	"Direction, possible ways of action" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Asking for information	"Information, repetition, confirmation, clarification" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)

		Giving opinion	"Evaluation, analysis, expression of feeling, wish" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Giving suggestion	"Direction, implying autonomy for other" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Giving information	"Information, repetition, clarification, confirmation" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
	Positive socioemotional	Showing solidarity	"Raising other's status, giving help, reward" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Showing agreement	"Showing passive acceptance, understanding, concurring, complying" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
	Negative socioemotional	Showing disagreement	"Showing passive rejection, formality, withholding help" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Showing antagonism	"Deflating other's status, defending or asserting self" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
		Showing tension	"Asking for help, withdrawing out of field" (Lin & Pena, 2011, p.18)
5. Virality		Social significance	Current political and societal events
		Elite people	Celebrities
		Humor	Joke, word pun
		Animals	Mentions of animal

			species. E.g.: Dog(s)
6.Engagement	Number of likes		"Number of times a tweet was liked by users" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Number of comments		"Number of user replies posted to a tweet" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)
	Number of retweets		"Number of times tweet was retweeted by users" (Fernández-Gómez and Martín-Quevedo, 2018a, p.135)

Table C2: Operationalization elements definitively distinguished for non-written texts (visuals such as images, videos, gifs)

Type of a visual	**Category**	**Sub-category** (if applicable)	**Description/Specifics**
Images & gifs	Diegetic		Frames from the content
	Realistic		Simulate reality
	Derivative art		Expressive creation that is based on elements of previously created, original work belonging to another individual
	Extradiegetic	The actor outside	Actor or actors offset

		of character	
		The actor in character	Actor or actors portraying a character
	Meme		Humorous depiction of a particular phenomenon or theme that is meaningful within a culture
	Face/forefront		A headshot portraying a person
Videos	Teasers		Brief introductory promotion of a content
	Trailers		Full-length promotion of a content
	Extended content		a) Loosely alluding to plot or characters of Netflix content b) Referencing other societal themes
	Diegetic narrator		Actor(s)
	Non-diegetic narrator		Non-actor(s)