

# Entertainment's biggest fan

An analysis of Netflix's brand in Germany established through social media marketing on Instagram

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**ABSTRACT:** Television has been ever-changing, from black and white to color, from standard to high-definition, and now TV can be watched wherever and whenever the users want. The emergence of SVOD services has revolutionized the media industry. Netflix is one of the most popular and well-known companies on a global scale, with over 180 million subscribers in 190 countries worldwide and as a synonym for all SVOD services. The Netflix brand is very distinct in its content distribution, self-produced content, interface design, algorithmic recommendation system, binge-watching model, and social media presence. The company operates on various social media platforms with several country-specific pages. Social media marketing allows a two-way communication, which strengthens the consumer-brand relationship and can increase the brand's trust, credibility, and recognition. Instagram is one of the most popular social media platforms amongst users and marketers. This research analyzes the Instagram account of Netflix Germany in answering the following research question: "How does Netflix's brand in Germany, as established through social media marketing, differ from the service's global brand?". A qualitative content analysis of 180 posts was conducted to analyze the social media marketing strategy of Netflix Germany on Instagram. The results show that Netflix Germany follows the consistent global Netflix Identity, which is focused on promoting the self-produced content. However, the company knows about the individual cultural differences of its global clientele and adapts to it in terms of humor and culture-specific content. The overall brand voice is humorous, positive, and self-ironic, which makes the brand approachable and authentic. The content is tailored to the user's interests and humor, as the main strength of Netflix's content marketing strategy is the guiding principle: Know your audience.

**KEYWORDS:** Netflix, subscription video-on-demand (SVOD), Instagram, social media marketing, Germany

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# 1 Introduction

*At different times video has been different things for different people, and its history is more than just a progression of material formats: cameras, transmitters and receivers, tapes and discs, decks that record and play them, digital files, apps and interfaces. It is also a history of ideas about technology and culture, and relations and distinctions among various types of media and the and the social needs giving rise to their uses (Newman, 2014).*

Netflix is available in over 190 countries worldwide, with more than 180 million subscribers (Watson, 2019). What began in 1997 as a DVD-rental business, is now one of the most popular brands, as well as the largest subscription video- on-demand service (SVOD) on a global scale (Lobato, 2019). As Netflix is a globally successful business, it is no longer just the name of a brand. Instead, it is an umbrella-term for SVOD services, entangled with the term of “binge-watching” (Jenner, 2018, p. 109). It is referred to by people as an activity “let’s Netflix and chill” (Lobato, 2019, p. 13). Some even used it as a definition of a new era, “the age of Netflix” (Barker & Wiatrowski, 2017, p. 26). These examples help to explain why Netflix gets much attention in the field of research, but also the mainstream media.

The global media landscape offers a wide range of many different SVOD services which supply a popular and successful alternative to linear television. These alternatives create new opportunities and possibilities for audiences. The consumers are no longer relying on specific schedules in terms of viewing. However, they can watch the content whenever, wherever, and on whatever device they prefer. This user-driven entertainment has forever changed global media landscapes. With this new autonomy, users can re-watch content or engage in binge-watching (Jenner, 2016). Generally speaking, watching over a few episodes of a series at once is the definition of binge-watching. According to research, there was a drop in the viewing time of traditional TV in the United States, which links to the popularity of SVOD (Spangler, 2016).

Netflix has managed to form a distinct brand identity that sets it apart from competitors, such as HBO, Amazon Prime, or Hulu. Netflix’s brand identity is distinct in its recommendation system, the self- produced content, its emphasis on binge-watching, as

well as its distinct social media marketing strategy. Netflix state, as a several times nominee and the winner of 'The Best in Social Media' by 'The Shorty Awards', to be "Entertainment's biggest fan" (Letki, n.d.).

Many brands switch from more traditional advertising to social media advertising. Social media defines as "a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technical foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content" (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). Some scholars even predict that social media marketing will overcome traditional television advertising (Wayne, 2018). Despite the vast amount of research on Netflix, the history of Netflix, the original content created by Netflix, or the global expansion, little research focuses on the social media marketing strategies of Netflix.

Social media plays a crucial role in Netflix marketing strategy as they use it to connect with their users. Previous research focuses on traditional television and their use of social media marketing, such as Wang (2016) and Clark & Ferguson (2017). However, there is not much research on SVOD and social media marketing. Martín-Gómez and Fernández-Quevedo's (2018) research centers around the Twitter strategies of Netflix Spain. The research by Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, and Segado-Boj's (2019) compares the Instagram accounts of the Netflix and the HBO Instagram accounts of Spain and the US to find cultural differences in their strategies. The researchers state that Netflix is successful in investigating a new method for the usage of social media to promote television content. Other findings show that Netflix uses its marketing to differentiate from competitors. Furthermore, social media marketing can help in facilitating fan engagement as well as introducing new content.

The previously mentioned research focuses mainly on the market in the US or Spain, whereas very little research specifies on Germany. Netflix expanded to the German market in late 2014 and is now successful with German Netflix Original productions, such as 'Dark' (2017-2020), 'How to sell drugs online (fast)' (2019 -), or 'Wir sind die Welle' (2019 -). At the end of 2019, they opened their first official office for Netflix Germany, in Berlin. Kelly Luegenbiehl, the vice president of Netflix EMEA, noted in an interview that they are working on more German content. The move to Germany helps them deepen their partnerships and find possible new business partners (Zarges, 2019). In 2019 Netflix Germany had around 7.25 million users (Moody, 2020). With around 83 million inhabitants in total, this shows that almost nine percent of the inhabitants use and value the brand.

## 1.1 Research Question

The research explores how Netflix Germany constructs its brand identity through the social media platform Instagram and how it differs from its global brand identity. Netflix's success in Germany shows in its social media platforms and their following there. Netflix Germany currently has 1.7 million followers on its Instagram account and over 800.000 followers on its Twitter account. According to research, WhatsApp is the most used platform with 79%, followed by YouTube, with 77%, Facebook with 64%, followed by Instagram with 43%. At the same time, Twitter had, in comparison, only 22% (Koptuyug, 2020). Instagram is a highly effective social media platform in Germany, which makes it interesting to investigate.

The research focuses on Netflix Germany's Instagram usage for social media marketing in exploring the strategy pursued. Furthermore, the study explores how the brand represents itself on social media platforms, and how this influences the social media marketing. The researcher aims to shed light on a not overly researched market, as there are some gaps in the literature. In doing so, the research supplies insight into the fields of SVOD, social media marketing, and how this can influence brand perception. In order to further previous research, the researcher sought to answer the following research question and sub-questions:

*RQ: How does Netflix's brand in Germany, as established through social media marketing, differ from the service's global brand?*

*SQ 1: What are the characteristics of the messages posted on Instagram by Netflix Germany?*

*SQ 2: How do the posts try to foster engagement?*

The chosen method for this study is qualitative content analysis. The researcher collected 180 Instagram posts by Netflix Germany between the 15th of February 2020 and the 29th of April 2020. The qualitative content analysis helps find recurring themes and patterns within their social media platform, which helps in concluding their marketing strategy. Previous research used qualitative content analysis in order to draw conclusions of Netflix social media marketing strategy, such as the one by Martín-Gómez and Fernández-Quevedo (2018) and Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019).

## **1.2 Scientific Relevance**

Netflix is one of the most successful and popular companies in the entertainment industry, making it crucial to research. This study contributes to earlier research about the impact of SVOD services on traditional television and the ways of consuming it. Furthermore, it offers insights into how distinct brand identity can make the brand stand out from competitors. Social media and Instagram, in particular, can help promote a brand and how this can affect how users interact with the brand. Therefore, this research contributes to the field of digital branding as well as marketing and how the implementation of social media marketing can influence the overall brand perception.

As aforementioned, there have been some studies on the connections between social media marketing and television. However, there are still gaps in terms of the connection between social media marketing and SVOD services. This study helps to gain more understanding of social media marketing and especially Instagram. It aims to fill the gap in research on the Netflix Germany brand, as only the Spanish and the US Netflix brand are researched on so far by Martín-Gómez and Fernández-Quevedo (2018) and Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019). Therefore, this study offers an insight into how Netflix cultivates its brand over national borders in terms of its social media marketing.

## **1.3 Social Relevance**

This research increases the overall understanding of SVOD services and their impact on traditional television as a global culture, thus supplying insight into new media on old media. The research adds more knowledge and understanding of the field of marketing and branding, especially in terms of transnationalism. Furthermore, it can also bring more understanding of how social and cultural elements might influence how the users perceive branding and marketing on social media. The added knowledge can help other brands and customers. Social media plays a significant role in people's everyday lives, as they create an online identity, with which they engage (Ding, Cheng, Duan & Jin, 2017). Thus, the research and the results provide a framework that helps other brands who are interested in incorporating Instagram into their social media strategy. Besides, it can help them to incorporate it at a larger scale.

Netflix Germany's Instagram account is a compelling case for research. Almost 13 million people use Instagram weekly in Germany, whereas Twitter falls with only 2.8 million



weekly users (Buggisch, n.d.). Furthermore, the magazine HORIZONT analyzes the most successful social media presence of major brands in Germany based on their engagement. So far, the car company Mercedes-Benz was on top. In March 2020, Netflix overtook the place of Mercedes-Benz, with over 3.450.000 interactions, which makes Netflix's social media presence highly successful in terms of engagement (Theobald, 2020). Hence, this study includes an analysis of the engagement that Netflix Germany creates through its Instagram account and determine whether this relates to the content the brand produces.

As Netflix is not offering any insight into their social media marketing strategy, this study contributes to a broader understanding of their overall marketing. Instagram can be used as a business tool and therefore helps in reconsidering the old way of marketing. The research offers a third-party objective point of view, which can be helpful for Netflix itself to get a different understanding of its branding practices. Furthermore, it can also be helpful for other companies who are interested in the way Netflix uses of humor on their social media platforms.

## **1.4 Thesis Outline**

The researcher structured the thesis according to the Methodological Guidelines Thesis Research (Janssen & Verboord, 2019-2020).

The first chapter of the thesis introduces Netflix as a brand and its social media marketing strategies, as well as briefly tell the connection between the two. Then the researcher discusses earlier research and the need for future research, which leads to the aim and the research question of the thesis. Furthermore, the chapter addresses the research method as well as state the scientific and societal relevance of the present study. Finally, a concise outline of the thesis structure provides further insights into this prevailing framework of research.

The second chapter provides the theoretical background of the study, which includes a review of relevant theories and a critical evaluation of earlier research conclusions. The theory includes separate sub-chapters, which then introduce aspects relevant to the research question. The first sub-chapter begins with the SVOD industry in general, and Netflix, in more detail, focused on the introduction of Netflix on the German market. Next, the second sub-chapter includes concepts of branding, such as brand identity, and then relate these concepts to the brand identity of Netflix. Following this, in the third sub-chapter, social media marketing strategies are explained, here focusing on

the branding practices of Netflix Germany. These sub-chapters provide a context for the study to be carried out.

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The fourth chapter presents the results of the data analysis. It interprets the results linked to the research question and the theoretical background. Therefore, it includes a detailed discussion of the core and sub-themes that emerged through the analysis.

Fifth and finally, the last chapter focuses on the conclusion, which contains the discussion of the results of the data analysis. Additionally, the researcher provides an answer to the research question. The next section places the findings within the context of the theoretical framework and previous research. In the end, the researcher discusses the implications of the study, possibilities, and recommendations for further research in the context of social media marketing and the SVOD industry.

## 2 Theoretical Framework

This study explores the social media marketing strategy used by Netflix Germany on Instagram. Therefore, this research builds on a theoretical framework, consisting of a literature review about SVOD services, branding strategies, and social media marketing. The first section discusses the evolution of and changes from traditional television to subscription-video-on-demand services. The second section includes an overview of the SVOD market and shows where Netflix places itself within its competitors. The third section is touching Netflix's global expansion, especially about the German market. In the fourth section, the focus is on the theory of brand identity. Following this, the theory applies to the Netflix brand. Finally, the last and fifth section discusses, social media, specifically Instagram, concerning social media marketing, television, SVOD, and the Instagram account of Netflix Germany.

### 2.1 Is TV really dead?

In the last decades, television underwent rapid changes. As SVOD services emerged, some scholars and media outlets predicted that linear TV would be dead soon. In contrast, others said it is rather a reshaping and a change in the cultural spheres of television. Television is ever-changing, from black and white to color, from digital to widescreen and high definition. Now television people enjoy television wherever and whenever they want (Wolk, 2015). SVOD services are platforms that offer the possibility of having access to an online library of series and movies which the users get in exchange for a monthly fee. Many of these platforms offer a large amount of different content, which satisfies different tastes. With the introduction of subscription video-on-demand services, new possibilities for television audiences form, which led to a rise in the scholarly attention given on the global television industry.

Some say that SVOD services revolutionized the history of TV. They give the audience more autonomy through time-specific viewing and the new independence on set schedules (Lobato, 2019). Lobato (2019) concludes that internet television is not a replacement, but rather “adds new complexity to the existing geography of distribution” (Lobato, 2019, p. 13). Lotz (2017) adds that this leads to new innovative ways of watching television. Others argue that SVOD services are an alternative to traditional television, which shows in the 3% drop in viewing time of traditional television in the United States

(Spangler, 2016). Many see in SVOD platforms like Netflix, a new form of user-driven entertainment (Malone, 2016). In an article about internet distributed television, Lotz, Lobato, and Thomas (2018) argue that services such as Netflix might not take traditional broadcasting, but rather exist alongside. Consequently, competition in the fields has forever changed. However, Netflix still finds itself in a discussion regarding where it is similar and where it differs from traditional television, as „in many ways television is being disrupted in a dramatic way and Netflix is a perfect example of that” (Auletta, 2014).

Like many other technologies, television holds a pattern of continuity of evolution and transition: After all, 'newness' can only originate from an assumed 'oldness'. Catherine Johnson (2012) examines the television industries in the United States and the United Kingdom regarding the evolution of television in the digital industry. She describes that through the emergence of SVOD platforms, television is no longer a push medium, meaning that viewers receive the content in a linear form on various channels. Instead, it is a pull medium where the viewers can decide on what content to watch from various platforms (Johnson, 2012). Therefore, the users can individually decide what to watch at what time, on which device, and where they want. Attributable to this, the role of the viewer changes, as the viewer is an active curator of the content and must browse and search for content independently (Robinson, 2017).

There is no longer the activity of just watching television, rather users must actively select the content they want to see. Jenner (2018) researches the role that Netflix plays in the changes in television and explains that Netflix has re-invented television by changing the practices of consuming it. Consequently, new delights come through the introduction of streaming, such as re-watching and re-visiting familiar content (Collins, 2013). With the internet continually taking more room in the daily lives, TV changes from a primary to a secondary medium (Mikos, 2016). Mikos' (2016) research focuses on the SVOD market in Germany. The author states that “technology has changed, and the cultural practices of consumption have become more diverse” (Mikos, 2016, p. 160). Jenner concludes that “Netflix may be best understood as a signifier for shifts within the media industry where the understanding of clearly differentiated media forms becomes obsolete” (2016, p. 269). SVOD services disrupt the traditional media landscapes, specifically the film and television audiences and their viewing preferences.

The users experience growing usefulness from using SVOD services (McKenzie, Crosby, Cox, Collins, 2019). These services allow the viewers to watch a substantial amount

of content from a library from different devices for a fixed monthly fee (Wolk, 2015). Wayne (2018) continues that “Netflix has aggressively positioned itself as a replacement for linear television and views traditional television networks as its primary competitors” (2018, p. 726). Gilbert's (2019) research focuses on television content stream on new media. The researcher finds that Netflix positions itself as a form of television, which focuses on the constantly changing, vast amount of content in the catalog.

Due to these changes, the diversity of consuming television around the world grows. SVOD services moved further in the center of attention by news reports, research, and the global media field. Taking these studies and articles into consideration, this leads to the conclusion that TV is not really dead and that “new media forms do not replace old ones” (Wayne, 2018, p. 737), but rather are competitors of traditional television. Jenner (2016) states, SVOD services are successors of linear television. Similar Burroughs says that “it is all television, but Netflix wants to be your television” (2019, p. 3). However, Netflix is not the only SVOD service on the media market, but there are many more. Therefore, the next section presents how Netflix is differentiating from competitors.

## **2.2 Challenges in an increasingly competitive (media) market**

Netflix stands as a synonym for all SVOD services (Gilbert, 2019), as company is one of the major players and forerunner in the industry. Other key players in non-linear distribution are Amazon Prime, Hulu, and HBO, just to name a few. Additionally, some network providers make efforts to offer a viewing experience that needs no fixed schedule, such called “catch-up services” (Gilbert, 2019, p. 690). Still, these cable-provider-video-on-demand services are not very popular. Many viewers reject these efforts and perceive them as inconsistent (Lotz, 2017).

Netflix focuses on selling monthly subscriptions to the content library, which varies from country to country and can be streamed and accessed through multiple devices. The goal is to add new subscribers while also keeping old members. SVOD companies market their content interactively to generate more viewer attraction and participation. Netflix and other SVOD services “build a brand on the combination of their original content, convenience and reliability of the streaming service itself” (Gilbert, 2019, p. 687). Even though Netflix has various forms of licensed content, its original content helps to capture new and existing members. Cox (2018) states that “Netflix's original programming is often

more than an exclusive commodity; it is an exclusive gateway to a cultural experience” (2018, p. 445).

Netflix differentiates itself from competitors by being one of the first to start producing original content. The company started to license old television series and film, which offered an excellent opportunity for production companies and networks. In contrast, with traditional television, these often relied exclusively on advertising (Gilbert, 2019). Consequently, Netflix started building its content library with original and international productions. Many SVOD platforms move towards television content from earlier years, such as old cult television series and shows (Robinson, 2017). However, other services, such as Hulu or HBO, produce original content as well. Netflix's business model constitutes of creating, making, and distributing its original content, which makes the company stand out and consequently differentiates it from competitors.

Furthermore, Netflix differs from its competitors in being very active and successful on social media. The company uses country-specific platforms for their social media marketing, which give the brand an advantage towards other brands. Finally, another factor that makes the brand stand out is the “overtly global reach as the forces that help encourage cross-cultural understanding” (Elkins, 2019, p. 386).

### **2.3 Making Netflix (global)**

Netflix is influential and well known not only for its extensive library of content. The company obtains cable and broadcast television programs and licensed feature films and offers original produced television and film content. The next section provides an overview of Netflix's history of origin, original productions, and of their global expansion, especially regarding the German market and in terms of transnationalism as well as localization strategies.

Netflix was founded in California in the United States in 1997 by Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph. It started as a DVD sales and rental business and launched a monthly rental model in 2000 (Keating, 2000). In 2007, they added an instant viewing service to their assortment. As online streaming services got increasingly popular Netflix expanded in that direction as well (Cook, 2014). At first, Netflix streaming content had a limit of only 1000 features. In 2010 Netflix decided to offer a streaming subscription for unlimited viewing and expanded to Canada (Cook, 2014). One year later, the company launched in Latin America. In 2012 Netflix expanded to North European countries, such as Sweden or

Norway. In the same year, Netflix premiered all eight episodes of its first-ever exclusive content, 'Lilyhammer' (2012-2014), co-produced with the Norwegian public television. Consequently, the series marked the start of their standard release strategy (Cook, 2014).

Netflix uses localization strategies and partnerships with locals to expand in the European market (Bengesser, 2019). Even though pay-tv still holds the most significant subscription business in the EU, SVOD services are rapidly growing. Netflix holds almost 50% of the SVOD market in the EU in 2017 (Grece & Fontaine, 2017). The European market differs from others: In the EU, 30 percent of the content of the Netflix catalog in Europe needs to be produced in Europe itself (Jenner, 2018).

In late 2014 along with other European countries, Netflix launched on the German market, where most people received the announcement well. Stiegler (2016) writes about the expansion to Germany and gives a brief overview of the German media landscape. He states that the German market is one of the biggest European media markets. In Germany, there is a public broadcasting system by the ARD and ZDF. These channels are noncommercial, but inhabitants must pay 18€ per month per household, whether they have a TV or not. There are two main private broadcasting groups in Germany. Firstly, the ProSiebenSat1 Media AG, which has 22 percent of the overall market in 2014 (Stiegler, 2016). Secondly, the RTL group, which has channels in many European countries, with 24 percent of the German market. ARD and ZDF each have 13 percent of the German market. Stiegler (2016) notes that the German market differs from other markets.

The German viewers expect their content to be dubbed in their native language, as this is a long-held tradition. However, this connects to more expenses for Netflix. Since 2019, Netflix has an office in Berlin to focus more on German Netflix original productions and to expand the German service. In comparing the content catalogs of Netflix Germany and Netflix US, it becomes clear that the German catalog is a lot smaller. While the catalog of Netflix US has 1157 TV shows in 2016, Germany has only 328 and whereas in the US, there are 4593 movies in total, Germany only has 1440 (Kidman, 2016).

Netflix generates revenue from a monthly subscription fee. In contrast, other platforms in the SVOD market generate revenue from advertisements or a combination of both. In Germany, users can choose between three different subscription plans. The basic plan offers subscribers the possibility to stream the content on one device in standard quality for 7.99€ per month. The standard plan allows the users to watch the content on two devices at the same time in high definition quality for 11,99€ per month. With the

premium plan for 15,99€ per month, consumers can watch ultra-high-definition quality on four devices simultaneously (Netflix, n.d.).

Netflix is a transnational brand, as it uses a multi-cultural approach in branding and its brand identity (Havens, 2018). The platform is successful in many different countries. Havens (2018) researches upon Netflix's branding strategy. He calls the multi-cultural approach the "transnational level" (2018, p. 5) of the international brand. Similarly, Jenner (2018) expresses that the success of Netflix is related to transnationalism. Netflix works quasi-global as a media service negotiating with different countries and however, the brand is rather national in its business model (Lobato, 2019).

The most crucial aspect of Netflix's transnationalism is the worldwide publication of content on the same day instead of geo-blocking the content. With this global release strategy, users in Berlin and New York can watch the new season of a series on the same day. This strategy follows the concept of simultaneous distribution and works without any advertisement as a disruption (Pilipets, 2019). The strategy helps in minimizing the potential that users could release spoilers in other countries through social media, as well as additionally starting a conversation on social media.

Netflix is a global brand, but it uses localization strategies to adapt to different national markets and cultures. Netflix is an American company, but it is also "a global actor that operates under different conditions and with different content in each national context it enters" (Jenner, 2018, p. 187). The content libraries vary in the several countries where the brand interacts, as "every country has its own story when it comes to local content" (Lobato, 2019, p. 157). As stated previously, different media regulation laws apply in different countries and Netflix has to adapt to these. Therefore, the distinctions between national markets impact Netflix's prospects within these markets.

The brand learned to understand and adapt to the different values, viewing habits and cultures, not only in content but with the marketing as well: "The challenge of global media is to adapt to these diverse conditions. Success is not just about pushing out great content to the world but also about understanding and negotiating cultural differences" (Lobato, 2019, p. 114). Localization comes with many challenges for the brand, as it inherits many factors, such as the previously mentioned local laws, translation and dubbing of the content, designing the interface, changing payment systems and changing the screenplay posters (Lobato, 2019).



The subscribers receive national content, but many are interested in the international and original series such as 'Orange is the new black' (2013-2019), which they could not watch before. Lobato (2019) states that "Netflix subscribers mostly want international content as opposed to local content" (2019, p. 160). The brand manages to combine local and global content through its selection of content in the library, and therefore achieves to combine it within one platform. Lobato (2019) says that Netflix cannot live up to the demand for local-language news, comedy, or sports. Therefore, these local genres will continue to be satisfied by local television. Consequently, "Netflix cannot – by definition – be the future of television in all countries" (Lobato, p. 183) - it is rather a coexistence between the local and the global. Nevertheless, the users know they do not have to choose only local or only global content, but they slightly move between it. In using a combination of local and global content, "Netflix may well be the most multilingual television service that has ever existed" (Lobato, 2019, p. 120). The library grows more over time and reflects geographic diversity as well as availability (Lobato, 2019), as a shared taste in content can bring consumers across diverse cultures and countries closer together.

The brand cannot just translate the content, but has to adapt to the markets, the culture, and the audience. Netflix has country-specific social media accounts, which are not just a translation of the global brand but set up to satisfy the tastes and needs of the national users. The transnationalism is an integral part of the Netflix brand identity. A separate section, after some general literature and research regarding brand identity, discusses Netflix brand identity in greater detail.

## **2.4 Defining a brand (identity)**

The standard definition for a brand is a good or service (Ghodeswar, 2008). It builds the basis on which consumers can identify and bond with a distinguishable name or logo, which makes it identifiable for the consumer (Weilbacher, 1995; Ghodeswar, 2008). Ghodeswar (2008) identifies essential elements that help build a brand. The authors states that the brand needs to adapt to the environment and thrive even with a competition (Ghodeswar, 2008). He adds that a successful brand needs to position itself, requires a clear brand message, and deliver a brand performance. A brand identity originates from the company itself. However, through advertising, the brand can communicate a specific brand image towards the consumers (Nandan, 2005). The brand identity makes the company original and distinguishable from competitors.

Brands help consumers to satisfy their needs, and consumers can form an emotional connection with the brand. De Chernatoy and McDonald (1998) state that in order for the brand to be successful it needs “to develop a high-quality relationship, in which customers feel a sense of commitment and belonging, even to the point almost of passion” (1998, p. 27). De Chernatoy, Cottam, and Segal-Horn (2006) explore how a brand can create value with consumers and the staff. A brand identity can continuously evolve as it is “a unique set of brand associations that the brand strategist aspires to create and maintain” (Aaker, 2012, p. 68). Essamri, McKechnie, and Winklhofer (2019) examine how corporate brand identity co-creation with online brand communities work. The researchers find that brand identity is dynamic and socially constructed within the company, the brand itself, and internal and external stakeholders. Consequently, “brand identity is critical for the long-term building, differentiation and management of the corporate brand” (Essamri et al., 2019, p. 367). The interconnection between the brand, the individual user, and the brand community co-create the brand identity.

A brand can be more effective in working together with stakeholders by considering them in making decisions and involving them in brand-related activities and organizations (Essamri et al., 2019). Consequently, it is of great importance that the brand identity centers around the understanding of the company's stakeholders. Having a strong understanding of the consumers' needs and expectations increases the overall success of the brand. The interconnection between the brand, the individual user, and the brand community co-create the brand identity. Black and Veloutsou (2017) researched the co-creation creation of brand identity. The researchers indicate that the brand identity is the heart character of the brand. They define it as a “set of unique brand associations that producers aspire to create or maintain and the symbols they use to identify the brand to people” (Black & Veloutsou, 2017).

The consumers play a crucial role in the growth of a brand and the internet offers countless opportunities for consumers to communicate with brands directly. As they contribute to the brand identity and decide individually which brand to support, the brand needs to be close to the personal identity of the consumers. The consumers can engage in high brand loyalty, which can lead to being more unfavorable towards other rivaling brands (Kuo & Hou, 2017). The critical factor of a brand is to be recognizable and to verify the brand image within the consumer, as “brand identity fuels recognition, amplifies differentiation, and makes big ideas and meaning accessible.” (Wheeler, 2013, p. 4) Netflix

manages to create a strong brand identity and the next section gives more insight in the factors that make it distinguishable from competitors.

## **2.5 The 'Netflix-brand'**

Netflix often associates itself with terms such as “quality” or “cult”, but only a few studies have examined the brand identity of the company in greater detail. Netflix is an entertainment-based platform, with the consumer relationship being in the center of the focus. As aforementioned, there are many similarities within SVOD services and traditional television. Therefore, just like there is television channel branding, which became pivotal in the 1980s to differentiate from competitors, there is SVOD branding (Lotz, 2014). Additionally, the brand is similar to broadcast channels, as both have the urge to entertain the viewers (Havens, 2018). Just as broadcast channels create diverse programming, Netflix relies on the programming to strengthen its brand identity. Consequently, it can help build an audience based not only on fans of the service but also on the self-produced content it offers. For channel branding, the typical strategy incorporates slogans, logos, graphics, and more to create a brand identity (Havens, 2018). Netflix has a distinct identity compared to other competitors, with the red 'N' additional to the sound, which plays before watching the content.

In the center of the Netflix-brand stands the disruption of traditional ways to watch television, as Havens (2018) found while examining the brand identity. The platform itself presents itself with the words “Revolutionary. Disruptive. Fearless” (Havens, 2018). The author states, the focus on tech brings up the image for the users of “being youthful, tech savvy, and modern” (Havens. 2018, p. 6). Therefore, the brand is disruptive, youthful, individualistic, and techy, able to satisfy immediate viewer desire. Besides that, terms such as “Netflix and chill” represent the brands interactivity, offer more attachment between the users to the brand. Netflix shifts from a distribution technology to a content creator of “quality” television (Burroughs, 2019). Therefore, the company's original content is part of the Netflix brand identity.

### **2.5.1 Original content creator**

The Netflix brand is distinctive in its high standard of produced SVOD content. Wayne (2018) analyzes branded television content in subscription video-on-demand portals. He notices that Netflix has formed the brand identity through the Netflix Originals

and how they present themselves as original content creators. In many cases, Netflix removes other networks logos from external productions, and rather promotes them as self-produced, such as programs such as 'Riverdale' (2017-) by CW, which Netflix marks as a 'Netflix original'. This strategy helps in positioning the brand “as the audience's primary point of identification” (Wayne, 2018, p. 727).

Netflix aspires to be the leading provider of content by delivering the content worldwide. Despite Netflix's immense production of original series to strengthen its brand, 80 percent of the streamed content is licensed and not original content (Spangler, 2018). There are about 15.000 titles across the different national libraries (Martín-Quevedo et al., 2018). As stated before, Netflix produced 'Lilyhammer' (2012-2014) in cooperation with the Norwegian public television. However, the first series-produced entirely by Netflix was 'House of Cards' (2013-2018) in 2013, which was very successful and well perceived by the viewers.

Until now, the company increased its content library to a substantial extent. In 2018, Netflix released 240 original produced shows and movies. In comparison, in 2019 the company added 371 new original series and movies to the content library, which is an increase of 54.6% (Bridge, 2019). The prediction for 2020 encompasses more than 400 shows and movies (Bridge, 2019). Some of the most popular original series ranked through their views are 'Stranger Things' (2016-), with 64 million views, 'The Umbrella Academy' (2019-), with 45 million views and 'Money Heist' (2017-), with around 44 million views (Koblin, 2019). The most famous original movies are 'Bird Box' (2018), with 80 million views, 'Murder Mystery' (2019), with 73 million views as well as 'Triple Frontier' (2019), with 52 million views (Koblin, 2019). To sum up, the original content makes the Netflix brand very distinct, and are in the center of the brand. The company improves the user experience continuously through the aforementioned original content, as well as the algorithmic recommendation system.

### **2.5.2 Big & personal: Netflix's recommendation system**

Another integral part of the Netflix brand is “the platforms' datafied, algorithmic nature” (Elkins, 2019, p. 386). Netflix officials often claim that the company does not have a brand. However, Ted Sarandos, Netflix's chief content officer, claims that the brand is rather personalization (Sepinwall, 2016). Consequently, the recommendation system is the heart of the company and an integral part of Netflix's success. Even though other SVOD

services, such as Amazon Prime, work with algorithms, it is not such an indispensable part of their brand identity. In 2006 Netflix held a one-million-dollar competition to bring the personalization strategy to the next level. The company released a dataset with over 100 million anonymous film ratings and asked for cooperation in finding a successful recommendation system (Bennet & Lanning, 2007).

Netflix defines itself in its convenience. For regulators the brand defines as a tech firm, and for consumers, they are rather a media firm. Consequently, some assume that Netflix is shifting from a distribution technology brand towards a content creator of 'quality' television Burroughs (2019) Nevertheless, complete personalization is an integral part of the Netflix brand, as the user experience is in the center of the focus of Netflix's brand.

The platform collects data every second, from the second the user logs into its account. This method helps to tailor the content for each user individually. The personalization seems to work well as 80% of the streamed content comes from the recommendation system (Plummer, 2017). The goal is to adapt the interface and content to individual preferences, which results in no profile being the same. Lotz (2017) adds to this that the “worst outcome is having the wrong person see the new content and thus produce negative word of mouth” (2017, p. 27). Through the variance of genres in content many users find a specific value in the service and the widths of content help in satisfying a broad and diverse audience. Categories form through the algorithm, such as ‘Popular on Netflix’ or ‘New Releases’, as well as other categories related to genres.

The recommendation system bases on three pillars: Firstly, the way how members engage with the content, secondly, the employees who tag the content into categories and thirdly machine learning (Plummer, 2017). Furthermore, through distinct viewing decisions, the user “generates digital trails that can be monitored and manipulated by the platform” (Gilbert, 2019, p. 695). “Big data” analytics can help to examine substantial amounts of data to discover concealed meanings (Russom, 2011), such as the consumers viewing habits. Netflix generates a massive amount of data however, there is not sufficient access to the data, which makes it difficult to research (Kelly, 2017). The customer-centric model and the usage of customer data increased the company’s success and are part of the overall brand identity. Another vital part of the Netflix brand identity is the so-called 'binge-watching', often practiced by the audience.

### 2.5.3 To binge or not to binge

Netflix's brand identity builds around disturbance, such as scheduled viewing, which allows people to watch what, where and when they want (Havens, 2018). Through this new form of consuming content, another vital part of the Netflix brand identity emerges: The practice of 'binge watching'. The term was first introduced in the late 1990s and relates to the repeated consumption of content (Pilipets, 2019; Jenner, 2018). Researchers define binge-watching or 'marathon watching' (Jenner, 2016) as "an intensive form of viewing a television series" (Mikos, 2016, p. 157). Pilipets (2016) finds that there are three critical features of Netflix streaming, which play into the practice: "recommendation, attention and attachment" (Pilipets, 2019, p. 1). Netflix releases episodes from various series no longer weekly. Instead, the platform releases them all at once, which then challenges previous television viewing habits from linear to non-linear. The concept and the possibility of watching the content at anytime, anywhere allows viewers to stop or start whenever it fits best into their lives.

The experience of watching is made as effortless and seamless as possible for the user. Features like the the auto-play, which starts a new episode after a few seconds, the "skip intro" button, which makes it even easier and faster to get straight into a new episode of a series, as well as the recommendation system, which provides the user with personalized fitting content, play into the binge-watching. Furthermore, the release of all episodes of a series at once is a marketing and promotion technique that helps to advertise the service, as well as to create a hype surrounding the content even before the release date (Mikos, 2016). Some researchers see this new way of content consumption critically, as for example Sim (2016) notes that "binge-watching is etymologically associated with indulgence, compulsion, and loss of self-control—behaviors conceptually antithetical to autonomy" (2016, p. 190). However, the practice of binge-watching submerges within Netflix advertising stand-on personalization and worth.

To summarize, the Netflix brand differentiates from competitors in the overall interface design and the distinct red logo. Furthermore, the platform's success shows through its distinct brand identity, which builds around the original content, the recommendation system, and the overall contribution to the culture of binge-watching. Another significant part of the Netflix brand is the social media marketing strategy, which the researcher addresses in the following sections.

## **2.6 Netflix's social media marketing success**

Netflix's social media presence is highly successful on various platforms and often praised by many. The following sections first give an overview of the literature concerning social media marketing and second provide more insight on how some traditional television channels make use of this marketing practice, as well as how Netflix uses social media for its benefit. Even though researchers state that Netflix managed to build its marketing strategy as a cultural phenomenon, part of the mainstream, and “quality TV” (Jenner, 2018), little research actually focuses on the specific strategy applied.

### **2.6.1 Social Media Marketing**

Through the rise of the internet, smartphones, and social media, novel possibilities for brands arise, which can help the brand to grow and maintain consumer relationships. Digital marketing is a sub-branch of conventional marketing and considered as a new channel to place products or brands. Dahiya and Gayatri's (2018) research on digital marketing communication strategies. The researchers find that it helps in starting a two-way communication between the brand and the consumer and in measuring the generated interactivity and engagement. Communicating with the users helps to understand them better and increases overall engagement (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Therefore, digital marketing provides two-way communication between the brand and the consumer (Dahiya & Gaytari, 2018).

Social media enables not only more interaction between consumers but also between consumers and brands. The platforms can help brands create a long-lasting connection with their customers, enabling businesses to build a particular brand image (Bacik, Fedorko, Nastisin, Gavurova, 2018). Consumer relationships increase overall brand awareness, consumer locality, and engagement (Bacik et al., 2018). To be successful, a brand must satisfy the consumer's needs to consume, create, connect, and control. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) state that social media marketing can be less pricy and more effective than conventional marketing.

Communicating and interacting with the customers are not the only benefits for businesses of social media marketing. Laroche, Habibi, Richard, and Sankaranarayanan (2013) argue that social media affects overall brand loyalty. The researchers emphasize the importance of having a positive conversation about the brand. In another research about the effects of social media on brand communities, researchers Laroche, Habibi, and Richard

(2012) find that brand communities can influence brand loyalty and brand trust. A study focused on perceived brand identity finds that building a brand is a lengthy process and that social media can positively influence the process if brands have a regular and stable presence (Bacik et al., 2018). Similar, Ashley & Tuten (2015) state that frequent updates are essential. Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) explore branding strategies in social media marketing and find that many companies use social media for interaction, promotion, and informing. Furthermore, Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) state that social media marketing can be less pricy and more effective than conventional marketing. The various platforms offer numerous possibilities for businesses. Many marketers use Instagram as it is a profound way to promote their brand and interact and engage with consumers.

### **2.6.2 Social Media Marketing on Instagram**

Every social media platform has distinctive characteristics that can reach different people, satisfy unique needs, and stimulate different engagement. Consequently, these platforms differ in how users operate them and how brands use them for marketing purposes. As this research examines the social media marketing strategy of Netflix Germany on Instagram, this section offers more insights on the possibilities for marketers on the platform.

Instagram launched in 2010 and is one of the most popular and successful social media networks, not only for users but for brands as well. In 2012, Facebook bought Instagram, and the social media platform has over one billion monthly active users. The platform offers the possibility to share their lives through pictures and videos with friends and other people. Instagram focuses primarily on visual content and has a high user engagement rate, which makes it a valuable social media marketing tool. Consequently, many brands include Instagram in their marketing strategy, as it is beneficial them to connect and communicate with consumers. Furthermore, companies can present a well-curated picture of the brand.

Instagram is the second most used social media platform among marketers, right behind Facebook (Guttman, 2019). There are around 500 million daily active story users (Guttman, 2019), which allows an environment for brands to promote their products and services and form a connection with customers. Over 200 million users visit a minimum of one business profile a day (Instagram Business, n.d.). Additionally, businesses create one-third of all stories posted Instagram stories (Guttman, 2019). Brands can build meaningful



connections with customers, as the engagement is remarkably high on social media platforms such as Instagram (Bacik et al., 2018). Ginsberg (2015) analyzes the Instagram accounts of leading food brands and finds that brands can use Instagram to communicate their brand with creativity towards the audiences. The author suggests that brands should use this cost-effective marketing tool to share diverse and relevant pictures to keep the consumers connected, engaged and entertained (Ginsberg, 2015).

The platform becomes increasingly relevant to reach new niches. Younger audiences prefer Instagram over Facebook, as the visual content reflects rather a specific brand image than an ad (Ferguson, 2016). Research concentrated on the usage of Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat and Instagram, finds that with Instagram, users have the highest scores in showing affection and sociability, as well as the highest scores in commitment, which makes the platforms important for brand loyalty and community engagement (Phua, Jin & Kim, 2017). Additionally, Instagram users feel connection and delight in following specific brands on social media (Phua et al., 2017).

As aforementioned, Instagram can be a helpful tool for marketers as it fosters engagement and interactions. Likes and comments can easily measure these, as the number of likes, comments, or even shares can help to determine whether a post is popular or not (Muñoz & Towner, 2017). Lee, Hosanagar, and Nair (2014) study the effects of social media marketing on consumer engagement on Facebook. The researchers discover that messages with informative content can reduce the overall engagement, while emotional content can increase it. Burke, Joyce, Kim, Anand, and Kraut (2007) observe that shorter messages can have an impact the number of responses in their study. Similar, the study by Arguello, Butler, Joyce, Kraut, Ling, Rosé, and Wang (2006), reports that a short and simple text might increase the overall answers.

The visual content can influence the engagement as well. Bahski, Shamma, and Gilbert (2014) examine that images with faces receive more overall engagement in terms of likes and comments, than pictures without faces. Similar Jaakonmäki, Müller, and Vom Brocke (2017) investigate the effects which can have a possible impact on social media marketing campaigns. They observe that pictures, which include people, can increase engagement. The researchers (2017) additionally found that the time of posting can influence the engagement and that the usage of positive emoticons can increase engagement. The results of these studies lead to conclude, that the selection of visual and textual content influences the overall engagement and interaction of the followers. Due to

the success of social media marketing, it is not surprising, that television channels and SVOD services increasingly include it in their marketing strategy.

### **2.6.3 Social media marketing and traditional television**

Television always had a social dimension to it, as people watch it together or communicate about the program. The social dimension moves to a digital space through smartphones and social media (Guo, 2018). New possibilities arise, as the users can ask questions, share their impressions, and interact with each other.

Television stations increasingly use social media platforms to further engage with the audience. Earlier research focuses on social media and marketing practices within traditional television networks, such as the research by Wang (2016). The researcher finds that TV networks use social media platforms to reach a higher engagement with their audiences. There is a link between an active Twitter presence and high television ratings. Similarly, Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo (2018) discover that Twitter is one of the most used social media platforms for television promotion marketing strategies. The study by Clark & Ferguson (2017) examines the usage of social media platforms by TV stations. The researchers conclude that there could still be an improvement if they would use it more for information and direct communication as well as tailor the content to the target audience. The findings indicate that television stations use social media platforms mainly to report news and promotional purposes. However, it is essential to note that other researchers note that television is not far in connecting with consumers through social media (Martín-Quevedo & Fernández-Gómez, 2018).

Innovative social media marketing strategies can also influence the box success of movies. Nanda, Pattnaik, and Lu (2018) examine the possible impact on movie success in India. They find that “companies must let go of their designated roles of producers and work collaboratively with the consumer in the social media to sustain their brand conversation” (2018, p. 235). The researchers state that social media platforms support building a connection with the audience through content promotion, which helps the audience identify better with the movie characters. They emphasize that it is vital to adapt the strategy to different social media platforms, specifically to be successful. Some researchers observe these efforts made by television networks more critically, such as Martín-Quevedo and Fernández-Gómez (2018). They note that television is not far in connecting with consumers through social media.

#### **2.6.4 Social media marketing and Netflix**

Social media marketing offers the opportunity to reach big and niche audience audiences. It is possible to share content that corresponds to the audience's needs. Netflix engages in traditional and outside advertisements; such as billboard campaigns or e-mail announcements. The company spent 1.1 billion dollars on advertising in 2017, which is a notable increase from the 842 million dollars spent on advertising in 2016 (Weprin, 2018). In comparison, in the first half of 2017, Hulu spent around 65 million dollars. Netflix uses its marketing strategy to differentiate from competitors (Martín-Quevedo & Fernández-Gómez, 2018).

Netflix maintains a presence on many different social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. Furthermore, Netflix has country-specific accounts, rather than just translating the main Netflix account "Netflix US." As mentioned previously, this helps in adapting to different markets, cultures, and audiences. DeCarvalho and Fox (2016) examine the marketing strategies by Netflix for the promotion of the second season of the Netflix original production, 'Orange is the new black' (2013-2019). The marketing strategy relies on native advertisement, which the authors define as "advertising that subtly blends into its delivery medium" (DeCarvalho & Fox, 2016, p. 505). Netflix made a name in the advertisement industry with live events that work with storytelling (DeCarvalho & Fox, 2016). Furthermore, the company produced some viral social media campaigns, which led to an overall high audience engagement (Martín-Quevedo & Fernández-Gómez, 2018). Netflix creates and shares content on their social media, which includes images and short videos.

Netflix builds a likable brand identity through social media, by using humor and through knowing its audience and what they want. In examining the case of Netflix Spain, the researchers Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo (2018) find that the brand uses a generally positive tone and humor. The researchers add that Netflix uses a distinct voice on social networks, as they know their users and their humor. The use of the first person as their tone of voice, in the written text, makes the post appear more personal to the users (Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019). Furthermore, the messages on the various social media platforms include hashtags, memes, or emoticons (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018). With the use of memes, gifs, and videos, Netflix targets digital communities and takes part in online culture (Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019). Memes can work as an asset for brands, as the audience knows and acknowledges them (Murray, Manari & Manari, 2014).

Similar, the head of content, editorial, and publishing from Netflix DACH, Andreas Laux states in the podcast “Monsters of content marketing” that the team is surprised by the goodwill of the fans on social media. He continues that the success bases on having a good feeling for what the fans want in listening to what they have to say. He continues that, the focus is on figuring out what is moving for the community right now, how they talk to each other, how they make their memes, and to be humble with the community (Benninghoff, 2020).

Netflix is a transnational brand, as it uses a multi-cultural approach in its branding strategy. Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019) compare the social media marketing strategies of HBO in the US and Netflix in Spain on Instagram. The researchers discover that Netflix focuses mainly on promoting their service or content and enforces the consumers' participation and entertainment. Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019) find that the strategies differentiate in different countries and markets. The general approach on Instagram can be described as more global, even though it is adapted slightly to the various countries. Jenner (2018) points out that there is a link between the content promotion and social media as they have a global release strategy. Similarly, Berthon, Pitt, and Plangger (2012) discuss the need for companies to adapt their social media marketing strategies to different national markets. The study by Gao, Tate, Zhang, Chen, and Liang (2018) comes to similar conclusions, as the researchers state that the overall strategy needs to fit various consumer behaviors, which can vary in different cultures and countries.

The Instagram page Netflix Germany offers a compelling case to research. The page currently has over 1.7 million followers, and the most successful social media presence in Germany based on engagement (Theobald, 2020). The researchers Martín-Quevedo and Fernández-Gómez (2018) discuss the need for future research to analyze other social media platforms than Twitter to see if their strategies are similar or different. Furthermore, Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019), note that future research could discover more about other cultural settings.

## **2.7 Summary**

Netflix managed to become the most popular SVOD service in the world and reshaped the culture of linear television. Despite plenty of competition, the company became the global forerunner and a synonym for other SVOD services and binge-watching. Since the global expansion in 2014, the brand has over 180 million subscribers in more than

190 countries worldwide. Netflix is highly successful in Germany and a competitor to traditional television. The success is linked to the brand identity of Netflix, as it manages to stand out from competitions. As Netflix continually grows, the brand identity changes as well. However, three factors make the brand identity very distinct apart from the logo and overall interface: Firstly, the Netflix original productions, secondly the recommendation system and thirdly the culture of binge-watching. Previous research examined the overall benefits of implementing social media marketing (Ginsberg, 2015; Ferguson, 2016; Phua et al., 2017; Bacik et al., 2018), the connections between traditional television and social media marketing (Wang, 2016; Clark & Ferguson, 2017; Nanda et al., 2018) and Netflix's social media marketing strategies on Twitter and Instagram in Spain and the US (DeCarvalho & Fox, 2016; Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018; Martín-Quevedo et al., 2019). However, there are some gaps in the research and literature on Netflix's social media marketing practices, such as further exploring diverse cultural settings. It has been six years since Netflix entered the German market. However, very little research examined the case of Germany, apart from Stiegler (2016), who writes about Netflix's expansion to the European market and the example of Germany. The research fills the gap in Netflix's social media marketing strategy to draw conclusions about Netflix's local and global approach, which builds the brand's transnational characteristics. This research explores Netflix Germany's social media marketing strategies applied on Instagram and how this helps to construct its country-specific brand identity.

## **3 Methodology**

This chapter holds a definition and explanation of the chosen research method to answer the research and the sub-questions. The study focuses on Netflix Germany's social media marketing strategy on Instagram, which reflects the overall brand identity. The first section gives more insight as to why a qualitative approach and, more specifically, a qualitative content analysis, was chosen and what supported this justification. Following this, the next section goes into greater detail of explaining the method of the sampling of the data, as well as describing the units of analysis and operationalization. Finally, the researcher discusses the credibility, reflexivity, validity, and credibility as well as ethical factors.

### **3.1 Research design**

The purpose of this section is to explain the research design in more detail. This study aims to answer the following research question 'How does Netflix's brand in Germany, as established through social media marketing, differ from the service's global brand?'. Furthermore, the researcher answers the following two sub-questions 1) 'What are the characteristics of the messages posted on Instagram by Netflix Germany?' and 2) 'How do the posts try to foster engagement?'. The goal is to make meaningful interpretations about the social media strategy of Netflix Germany in interpreting the data collected on their Instagram page by using qualitative research. The content analysis is a suitable method, as the research identifies and explores how Netflix builds its brand identity on Instagram, through their published content.

#### **3.1.1 Qualitative Research Method**

This study helps discover more about the social media marketing strategy applied by Netflix Germany on Instagram. The researcher chose a qualitative approach, as social scientists use this method to analyze different themes in media. Babbie (2017) defines qualitative research as the "examination and interpretation of observations, to discover underlying meanings and patterns" (Babbie, 2017, p. 391). The researcher chose the method as it is a discrete and nonreactive approach, which makes in-depth interpretation possible. Qualitative research helped to understand and investigate the social phenomenon, to reduce and make meaning out of the data.

Qualitative research consists of collecting, analyzing, and sampling the data, and managing, interpreting, and exploring it to find themes and patterns within it (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Morrison, Haley, Sheehan, and Taylor (2011) explain that qualitative research refers to different aspects such as general definitions, ideas, or explanations. With qualitative research, language can help to understand and interpret certain phenomena (Brennen, 2017). Therefore, the researcher could go further from the visible social media messages to the hidden core of the messages (Schreier, 2013). The researcher coded the data into smaller fragments, which reduced substantial amounts of data (Neuman, 2011). With the method, an underlying strategy of social media marketing applied to Instagram could be identified, as the published content was analyzed, and interpreted. The researcher chose a qualitative content analysis, as it helped to reduce and categorize data, as well as to find underlying relationships (Julien, 2012) and meanings (Morrison et al., 2011).

### **3.1.2 Qualitative content analysis**

Qualitative content analysis is a descriptive, non-reactive method that makes an in-depth interpretation of social phenomena possible (Neumann, 2011). With content analysis, the researcher can not only analyze the data qualitatively but also quantify the data (Gbrich, 2007). Numbers are often associated with quantitative methods, but they can help find frequencies and patterns of codes. These findings then help to verify the conclusions (Kawulich, 2004). The qualitative content analysis helps find categories for the data, which then helps discover reoccurring patterns to make sense of the gathered data (Julien, 2012). In the next step, the vast amounts of data are reduced into smaller pieces (Neumann, 2011). The method is appropriate as it allows the interpretation of the data, form codes, transform them into overarching categories, and find relationships between the different categories (Julien, 2012). Another benefit of qualitative content analysis is that the researcher can work alone and does not need others' involvement.

The researcher did the coding manually. Therefore, the researcher defined the main research question and collected the data. In the next step, a coding frame was built, which Schreier (2013) identifies as the core of the method. The main categories for the coding frame form through the combination of a deductive and an inductive approach. Deductive means that the categorization was based on previous research and literature on SVOD services branding social media marketing, Instagram, and Netflix. For the inductive approach, the researcher got familiar with the sample, then coded the data and then

formed and defined different variables and categories, which helped to describe the data (Elo & Kynäs, 2008). In grouping various categories, overlapping categories were removed. Inductive refers to the fact that previous work is restricted, and there are still gaps. Therefore, the researcher came up with categorizations (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The deductive approach built the base of the categories, and earlier research added more understanding (Elo & Kyngäs, 2008). The inductive approach helped to increase the understanding of previous research and added new observations. In the next step, a preliminary analysis of 20 posts was conducted. Through this trial phase, the main categories and sub-categories of the coding frame were tested. Afterward, the frame could not be changed anymore. The next step was segmentation (Schreier, 2013), where the collected materials were divided into meaningful segments, and then the coding frame could be evaluated and modified. This modification was based on consistency, exhaustiveness, unidimensional, and validity (Schreier, 2013).

The categories and the theoretical framework then helped to find an answer to the research and sub-questions. The researcher could make conclusions about the social media marketing strategy from Netflix Germany, and the brand identity displayed on their Instagram page. Additionally, the results were qualified to find reoccurring patterns and to create an overview.

## **3.2 Sampling**

This part of the methodology describes of the units of analysis for this research. Then it is described how and when the data was collected and finally, how the data was analyzed.

### **3.2.1 Units of Analysis**

The posts published by Netflix Germany on its Instagram page “netflixde” were the units of analysis for this research. The analyzed data included the visual of the post. This data included covered images, such as memes, scene screenshots, photoshoots, and more, and videos, such as trailers or teasers. Moreover, the description underneath the post was included, with elements, such as emoticons, hashtags, or tags. The researcher translated the German caption into English. As the researcher was native in German and fluent in English, it helped to understand the underlying concepts of language and culture in the samples. Besides, the researcher noted the date and day of the week posted, which helped



in identifying whether Netflix Germany had a strategy as to which weekdays they post more or less and to analyze the overall frequency of the posts. The researcher noted the number of likes and comments to measure the content and which content fosters most engagement. Finally, the researcher noted down which shows and movies are promoted to make sense of promotional strategies.



Visual: Photograph or Video

Textual: Message of the post, as well as the date posted and the amount of likes and comments

### 3.2.2 Sampling

The sample size included 180 Instagram posts published between the 15th of February 2020 and the 30th of April 2020. As recommended by the Methodological Guidelines Thesis Research (Janssen & Verboord, 2019-2020), the researcher included 180 Instagram posts for the qualitative content analysis of social media data. The Instagram account of Netflix Germany has over 2000 posts on Instagram. Consequently, there was enough data to analyze through this method. The data was selected in a way that Flick

(2007) calls purposive sampling, meaning that the chosen posts are the most recent ones published at the time the study was conducted. Therefore, the researcher collected the data in chronological order. Through this collection method, subjectivity and bias were prevented, as the data was not collected randomly. Additionally, this helps to analyze at what times during the week the posts were published. The posts are collected manually, on the 5th of May 2020. The visuals were saved in a .doc file, along with the description of the post and the numbers of likes. Moreover, comments and the date of posting were written down. The researcher did a preliminary analysis of 20 posts to build the base for the categories' specifications. In the next step the data was imported to Excel. Using Excel helped in quantifying the posts. As aforementioned, this helped to gather more understanding of the frequencies and correlations of the codes.

### **3.3 Operationalization**

To find an answer to the main research question as well as the sub-questions, the researcher operationalized different concepts, which helped to prove relevance. Furthermore, the operationalization helped with analyzing and interpreting the data. The researcher focused on several aspects of the Instagram page of Netflix Germany: Firstly, the visual, such as images or video posted, and secondly, the messages communicated through the descriptions of the post. Therefore, it included the messages and overall tone of voice, and how is this promoted the brand of Netflix Germany itself. Some variables were adapted from other researchers on branding, marketing, or social media and other research on Netflix. The research by Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019) on the difference between Netflix Spain's promotion on Instagram and HBO's promotion on Instagram or Martín-Quevedo and Fernández-Gómez (2018) research on Netflix Twitter strategy in Spain helped the process of operationalization. Other studies revealed that the number of likes is essential for measuring engagement, such as the study by Ding et al. (2017). Including engagement helped the understanding of Netflix's communication of its brand identity through its social media. The concepts operationalized were the producer of the promoted content, and the type of content promoted. Furthermore, the most advertised content, the post's objective, the type of post, the characteristics of the written text, engagement, and other elements, such as the day and the date posted, were included. The table below shows the coding frame:

**Table 1.** Coding frame.

Category	Sub-Category	Sub-Sub-Category
<b>1. Producer of promoted content</b>	1.1 Original 1.2 Purchased 1.3 Both 1.4 Other	
<b>2. Type of content promoted</b>	2.1 Movie 2.2 Series 2.3 Both 2.4 Other	Most advertised content
<b>3. Objective of the post</b>	3.1 Promoting specific content 3.2 Promoting specific actor(s) 3.3 Promoting the platform 3.4 Informing 3.5 Show solidarity 3.6 Encouraging Participation	
<b>4. Type of post</b>	3.1 Image 3.2 Video 3.3 Number of visual elements in the post 3.4 Other elements in the visual	Image 3.1.1 Scene Screenshot 3.1.2 Meme 3.1.3 Graphic 3.1.4 Movie/Series Poster 3.1.5 Reposted Content 3.1.6 Photoshoot 3.1.7 Behind the scenes 3.1.8 List 3.1.9 Other  Video 3.2.1 Teaser 3.2.2 Compilation 3.2.3 Meme 3.2.4 Trailer 3.2.5 What is ... watching 3.2.6 Other  Other elements in the visual 3.4.1 Tag 3.4.2 Logo 3.4.3 Written Text 3.4.4 Actor(s) in character 3.4.5 Actor(s) not in character Other Video Movie Poster Scene Screenshot Photoshoot Reposted Content
<b>5. Characteristics of the written text</b>	4.1 Emoticons 4.2 Tag 4.3 Hashtag 4.4 Point of view: 1 <sup>st</sup> person, 2 <sup>nd</sup> person, 3 <sup>rd</sup> person 4.5 written by the intern 4.6 use of the word “intern” 4.7 exclamation mark 4.8 question mark 4.9 word in bold letters	Point of view 4.4.1 1 <sup>st</sup> person 4.4.2 2 <sup>nd</sup> person 4.4.3 3 <sup>rd</sup> person  Emotional elements in the text 4.10.1 humor 4.10.2 exciting 4.10.3 positive 4.10.4 engaging

	4.10 emotional elements in the text 4.11 Word count per post	4.10.5 neutral 4.10.6 provoking 4.10.7 sad
<b>6. Engagement</b>	6.1 Average Comments: Number of comments created by users. 6.2 Average Likes: Number of times liked by users. 6.3 Average Comments of top 5 posts 6.4 Average Likes of top 5 posts	
<b>7. Other</b>	7.1 Day and date of the post	

### 3.4 Validity, Reliability & Reflexivity

Qualitative content analysis is an interpretative method, therefore, in some cases, implications can arise regarding the credibility, and it is crucial to make the process as clear as possible. According to Silverman (2011), validity refers to the “truthfulness of findings,” while reliability focuses on the “stability of findings” (Silverman, 2011, p.360). The researcher increased the reliability of this research by making the data gathering and analysis transparent. Moreover, subjectivity, which is given through the exhaustive theoretical framework, was avoided. Reflexivity is known as self-critique (Brennen, 2017). Consequently, the researcher had to think critically about the role in the entire process. Finally, regarding ethics, the content posted on the Instagram account of Netflix Germany could be considered as not personal, because the brand posts have a promotional purpose. Therefore, no issues with the privacy of individual users arose.

### 3.5 Summary

This chapter explained the chosen research methods and techniques for this qualitative study. Firstly, the use of quantitative analysis was justified, as well as the use of content analysis. Secondly, the researcher described the sampling and units of analysis in more detail. Furthermore, the operationalizations were presented, including the visuals, type of promoted content, the objective of the post, written text, and engagement. Finally, the concepts of validity, reliability, reflexivity, and ethical considerations were touched on.

## 4 Results

This chapter presents the results of the content analysis and connects these results to the previously addressed theory. One hundred eighty posts by the Netflix Germany Instagram account were collected on the 5th of May 2020. These posts were published between the 15th of February 2020 and the 29th of April 2020.

The coding frame contains the following categories:

1. The producer of promoted content
2. The type of content promoted and the most advertised content
3. The objective of the post
4. The type of post
5. Emotional elements in the written text
6. Additional elements

The researcher coded the data in excel. The usage of excel helped with calculating the amount of total appearance of each code, as well as finding correlations between the different codes. Table 2 below gives an overview of the most significant findings. Each section discusses these findings in further greater detail throughout the chapter.

Additionally, the sections include further elements of the visuals and the written text and the engagement and activities per weekday.

**Table 2.** Summary of the results.

<b>1. The producer of promoted content</b>	<b>2. The type of content promoted</b>
Original 77,78% (n=140)	Series 60,56% (n = 109)
Both 9,44% (n = 17)	Movies 24,44% (n = 44)
Purchased 8,33% (n = 15)	Both 10,00% (n = 18)
Other 4,44% (n = 8)	Other 5,00% (n = 9)
<i>Total 100% (n = 180)</i>	<i>Total 100% (n = 180)</i>
<b>3. The most advertised content</b>	
1. Élite 10,71% (n = 21)	6. Isi & Ossi 5,61% (n = 11)
2. I am not okay with this 9,18% (n = 18)	7. Betonrausch 5,10% (n = 10)
3. Money Heist 8,67% (n = 17)	8. Love is blind 4,59% (n = 9)

4. Unorthodox 6,63% (n = 13)	9. To all the boys 4,59% (n = 9)
5. Freud 5,61% (n = 11)	10. Extraction 3,06% (n = 6)
	<i>Total 100% (n = 180)</i>
<b>4. Objective of the post</b>	
Promoting specific content 42,81% (n = 140)	
Informing 18,04% (n = 59)	
Promoting specific actor(s) 15,29% (n = 50)	
Show solidarity 12,84% (n = 42)	
Encouraging participation 7,65% (n = 25)	
Promoting the platform 3,36% (n = 11)	
<i>Total 100% (n = 327)</i>	
<b>5. The type of post</b>	
<b>Image total 65,56% (n = 118)</b>	<b>Video total 34,44% (n=62)</b>
Scene Screenshot 26,27% (n = 31)	Teaser 20,97% (n = 13)
Meme 18,64% (n = 22)	Compilation 16,13% (n = 10)
Graphic 12,71% (n = 15)	Meme 16,13% (n = 10)
Movie/Series Poster 10,71% (n = 12)	Other 16,13% (n = 10)
Reposted content 8,47% (n = 10)	Trailer 14,52% (n = 9)
Other 7,62% (n = 9)	Behind the scenes 9,68% (n = 6)
Photoshoot 5,93% (n = 7)	What is ... watching 6,45% (n = 4)
Behind the scenes 5,08% (n = 6)	
List 5,08% (n = 6)	
<i>Total 100% (118)</i>	<i>Total 100% (62)</i>
<b>3 Emotional elements in written text</b>	<b>7. Additional elements</b>
Humor 38,72% (n = 103)	Tag (visual & text) 29,56% (n = 53)
Exciting 15,41% (n = 41)	Emoticon 17,78% (n = 32)
Positive 15,04% (n = 40)	Hashtag 0,56% (n = 1)
Engaging 12,03% (n = 32)	
Neutral 10,15% (n = 27)	
Provoking 6,77% (n = 18)	
Sad 1,88% (n = 5)	
<i>Total 100% (n = 266)</i>	

## 4.1 Netflix social media marketing strategy

The following section provides an overview of the results and interprets how Netflix Germany uses a distinctive social media marketing strategy applied on Instagram. Netflix Germany has in total 1.7 million followers on Instagram. On the day of the data gathering, there were 89 IGTV-videos and eleven saved stories, which the users can re-watch. The researcher analyzed the posts in terms of the content promoted, the producer of the content, the main objectives of the posts, and the specific type of posts. Additionally, the researcher evaluated the frequency of the posts and daily online activity.

The first section interprets the general social media marketing strategy on Instagram to answer the main research question 'How does Netflix's brand in Germany, as established through social media marketing, differ from the service's global brand?'. The results show that Netflix mostly promotes self-produced content and series, which reflect their brand identity of "quality" TV and the practice of binge-watching. Overall, Netflix posts more pictures than videos and seems to be committed to have an active and regular presence on Instagram. Furthermore, the company promotes not only content but also specific actors. They are often starring in more than one Netflix production. The overall tone of voice is positive, humorous, and written from the 1st person perspective.

### 4.1.1 Original content creator

Netflix Germany commits to the management of its content, as the results display that the brand promotes original produced content to a substantial extent. A total of 77.78% (n=140) of the posts hold the code "original". Hence the posts hold self-produced content. Furthermore, 9.44% (n=17) of the posts contain "both", meaning original and purchased content, for example, in video-compilations. In total, 8.33% (n=15) of the post in the data set are "purchased", right before the code "other", with 4.44% (n=8). Consequently, Netflix focuses on promoting its own, self-produced, original content. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, Netflix identifies its brand identity to a large extent through its original or so-called 'quality' content (Jenner, 2018) and its overall programming (Havens, 2018).

Netflix's marketing focuses mainly on program branding and the brand's social media platforms reinforce that image (Havens, 2018). The company uses a similar strategy to channel branding, as it incorporates logos to create a brand identity (Havens, 2018). 27.60% (n=53) of the posts include the platform's logo in form of the red "N" or written out

as “Netflix”. Jenner (2018) adds that Netflix previously mostly relied on programs such as ‘Orange is the new black’ (2013-2019) in their marketing strategy, even though other programs would have fit better in their overall schedule. Therefore, the author adds that nowadays, “Netflix continues to rely on broad thematic concepts to frame its output” (Jenner, 2018, p. 162).

Netflix Germany builds its overall brand identity on Instagram through its 'quality' content, which makes it is interesting to look at the most advertised screenplays. All the content from the top ten is self-produced. The most promoted series is ‘Élite’ (2018-) with 10.71% (n=21) of the overall data set, ‘I am not okay with this’ (2020-) follows with 9.18% (n =18), ‘Money Heist’ (2017-) with 8.67% (n =17), ‘Unorthodox’ (2020) with 6.63% (n=13) and ‘Freud’ (2020) with 5.61% (n =11). Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019) study the social media marketing strategy of Netflix Spain, and America in comparison to HBO's strategy. The researchers find that Netflix US and Netflix Spain focus on promoting self-produced content to a large extent. Similar Martín-Quevedo and Fernández-Gómez (2018), note in their research on Netflix Spain, that “findings indicate that Netflix's social media strategy focuses on what sets it apart from the competition: the content it provides and the options it offers for viewing it” (2018, p. 138). Consequently, Netflix's uses a global strategy in promoting original content, which is the heart of the brand and the overall brand identity.

The head of content, editorial, and publishing from Netflix DACH, Andreas Laux, states that the brand's success bases on having a good feeling for what the fans want. He adds that fandom is an integral part of Netflix (Benninghoff, 2020). Netflix offers national content, but many subscribers are interested in international content (Lobato, 2019). Consequently, the brand mainly promotes international series, which already have a so-called fandom, but also new national series, such as 'Unorthodox' (2020) and 'Freud' (2020). Netflix Germany also uses localization to adapt to the countries culture and values and satisfy the user's needs. Havens (2018) states that Netflix is a transnational brand, as it uses a multi-cultural approach in its branding strategy. As mentioned previously, Netflix has an official office in Berlin since 2019, to be closer to production partners and focus on producing more original German content. Furthermore, the European market differs from others, as one-third of the overall content from Netflix must be produced in Europe (Jenner, 2018). Consequently, Netflix needs to produce increasingly more content in Europe and, therefore, Germany, as well.



The next ten most promoted series are original productions as well, and only then some purchased content is promoted. It is not surprising that these screenplays are most mentioned; for example, 'Élite' (2018-) aired its third season on the 13th of May and 'I am not okay with this' (2020-) had its movie premiere on the 26th of February. 'All of the release dates fell into the period of data collection between the 15th of February and the 29th of April. Hence, Netflix Germany promotes mainly new releases, rather than old content. Six out of the ten screenplays are series, and only four promote movies. This observation could be evidencing another part of Netflix's brand identity – the binge-watching.

#### **4.1.2 Marketing the binge**

Binge-watching is strongly wired within the brand and often used as a synonym for Netflix. The analysis displays that 60.56% (n=109) of the type of content promoted are "series". In comparison, only 24.44% (n=44) are "movies". Jenner (2018) states that, as soon as Netflix started to promote its self-produced content, two features have been emphasized. Firstly, as aforementioned, 'quality' content and secondly the practice of binge-watching. Netflix supports the binge-watching model, through mostly releasing new screenplays on Fridays, which offers the users the possibility to watch the content over the weekend, without any disruption. The posting schedule gives more insight into the global release strategy in Germany, addressed in section 4.7.1. Jenner (2017) discusses that the global release strategy creates a fandom around screenplays, which then plays into the practice of binge-watching. Moreover, the global release strategy helps prevent people from spoiling the content for people who live in a different country. The users can discuss the content on social media on a transnational level, which enforces the fandom. An example is the series 'Money Heist' (2017-) which Netflix promotes continuously, and the strategy creates a hype or fandom.

Netflix's platform offers many series, which mirrors the social media marketing strategy. The binge-watching practice is embedded in the series, as it makes the consumer want to see more and more content. Even though Netflix did not invent the practice of binge-watching, many people still connect it with the platform or use it as a synonym. To summarize, Netflix Germany promotes more series than movies, as binge-watching is a central part of the marketing strategy and the overall global brand identity.

### 4.1.3 Objective of the post

Not every post seems like an actual content promotion, but many of the posts have an underlying advertisement. The most used code for the post's overall purpose was “promoting specific content” with 42.81% (n=140). Ferguson (2016) finds that many young people enjoy Instagram over Facebook, as the visual content does not seem like an ad but rather reflects a specific brand image. These findings correspond with the results of the analysis of the Instagram account of Netflix Germany, as many posts seem not like a typical advertisement, as the comparison of Figure 1 and 2 shows.

Figure 1. Netflix Germany Instagram post.



Figure 2. Netflix Germany Instagram post.



Figure 1 appears like a clear promotion of the series 'Money Heist' (2017-). It is a series poster showing the actors looking in the camera, stating the name of the series and the date when it will air. In comparison Figure 2, is a graphic, which shows the comparison of the three screenplays' Baby' (2018- ), 'To all the boys I've loved before' (2018; 2020), 'how to sell drugs online (fast)' (2019- ) and 'Isi & Ossi' (2020). The post seems purely informing at first, but the caption reads, “Thanks to my math teacher, I can tell you that the

<sup>1</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9o1KXQKHhY/>

<sup>2</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B8oXCyGK6Ds/>

intersection of this diagram clearly shows you should watch *Isi & Ossi*.” Therefore, the post is informing but also promotes the content and enforces the users to watch it.

Additional objectives of the posts were “informing”, with 18.04% (n=59), which mostly includes posts that announce the date of a premiere or give more insight into a screenplay, such as Figure 1. The code “promoting specific actor(s)” appeared in 15.29% (n=50). Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo (2018) find that Netflix US and Netflix Spain post pictures of actors, which can increase the engagement and interactivity of the users. Therefore section 4.1.6 goes into greater detail of Netflix’s actor promotion and how this is part of the social media marketing strategy.

A brand has to put in the effort for the consumer to strengthen the brand-consumer relationship and to strengthen the overall brand identity (Hoffman & Fodor, 2010). The code “show solidarity” occurs in 12.84% (n=42) of the posts. This occurrence matches the results by Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019). The researchers find that solidarity and empathy are efficient social media marketing tools, as they create a vast amount of engagement from the audience. Engagement and interaction are measured through comments and likes and will be analyzed in a later section. The code “encouraging participation” appeared in 7.65% (n=25) of the posts, and often includes the invitation to reply or tag other people in the comments.

Netflix Germany focuses on promoting its content instead of promoting specific platform features. Therefore, the code that occurred the least was “promoting the platform” with only 3.36% (n=11). Andreas Laux, the head of content DACH, states that the aim of the content is not to drive up the “watch numbers”, but rather to give the fans a platform to interact (Benninghoff, 2020). Furthermore, Netflix promotes its brand identity, not through its platform or service, but its ‘quality’ content. Similarly, Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019), state that “users value Pay On Demand platforms for their exclusive content more than other features such as the size of their available catalog” (2019, p. 82). To conclude, only a few posts focus on promoting the actual platform, which evidences that Netflix defines itself rather through its content than specific features of the platform.

#### **4.1.4 Interactivity & Engagement**

As just mentioned, the code “encouraging participation” appeared in many posts of the overall dataset. An example of this code shows Figure 3. In this specific post, the users get to engage with other users and share their thoughts on the, at that time, recently

released, fourth season of the series 'Money Heist' (2017- ). The picture has an orange background, and the faces of some actors of the series cut out. It also shows some emoticons between them, and the mouths of the actors hide under a black bar with question marks and exclamation marks. In the center of the picture is a red bar which reads in German and white lettering "Platz für spoiler", which translates to English as "Space for spoilers". Furthermore, the caption states "To all the master series marathons among you: below this picture is the official place where you can talk about Money Heist Part 4. Everything else is a spoiler-free zone. Have fun <3".

**Figure 3.** Netflix Germany Instagram post.



The post encourages interaction and participation. Interactivity is a significant element in brand communication. It can further the relationship between the consumers and the brand and motivate users to engage (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). The authors define interactivity as "the extent to which consumers can participate and engage" (Ashley & Tuten, 2015, p. 21) with the brand. Therefore, interactivity is a powerful element, if applied rightful in the social media marketing strategy. The interactivity can be measured by taking likes and comments into consideration. Essamri et al. (2019) note that a participatory

<sup>3</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-icsgXCbDH/>

leadership style can enable the brand to be more effective by involving the users in brand-related activities and organization. Andreas Laux states that communication and community building is the most crucial part of social media marketing (Benninghoff, 2020). He mentions the social media account of Netflix Germany offers the fans a platform for fandom. The post promotes binge-watching, as users who have seen the whole season, in the period of only one day since the release date, can engage in the comments, as they otherwise risk being exposed to spoilers.

Another factor that can have a positive impact on engagement is the tagging of other profiles (Martin-Quevedo et al., 2019). Concerning the use of tags, 66.04% (n=35) of the visual images or videos, and 33.96% (n=18) of the written text included tags. Therefore, in 29.45% (n=53) of the overall datasets, tags were included. The tags can either link to Instagram pages set up for specific shows, such as '@elitenetflix'<sup>4</sup>, or link to actors starring in the platform's series or movies. Furthermore, there are pages such as '@wearenetflix', which gives insights about working at Netflix. Nanda et al. (2018) state that companies have to let go of their traditional roles and rather work with the users on social media. Similarly, Andreas Laux notes that the communication between the brand and the consumer should not be top to bottom, but preferably on one level. The tagging of other profiles helps to reach niche audiences interested in specific shows, movies, or actors and help the users to identify with.

#### **4.1.5 Type of post**

The average number of visual elements per post is 2.77, with some posts only containing one visual element, while others contain the maximum amount of ten visuals. In comparing the Instagram accounts of Netflix Germany and Netflix US, the researcher noted that most of the posts by Netflix US included more visual elements, than Netflix Germany. One can only assume that the social media marketing teams adapted the amount of visual element to the culture specific preferences. However, future research could examine this matter in greater detail.

The category "type of posts" differentiates between the codes "images," with 65.56% (n=118) and "videos", with 34.44% (n=62). The images included posts that depicted codes such as "Scene Screenshots" with 26.27% (n =31) and "Memes" with 18.64% (n=22).

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<sup>4</sup> Link to the Instagram profile of the series *Élite* on Netflix: <https://www.instagram.com/elitenetflix/>

“Memes” take up a large part: Including images and videos, 32 posts of the overall dataset depict memes, which supports the use of “humor as a main source” (Martin-Quevedo et al., 2019, p. 83). Memes are a part of online and digital culture. The research by Murray et al. (2014) focuses on memes and advertising. Murray et al. (2014) define memes as “a cultural unit or expression that is passed on to another person or group” (2014, p.329). The research by Murray et al. (2014) focuses on memes and advertising. The authors found that the memes have to be simple, original, and fit within the brand. Furthermore, the authors state that “memes have become an asset for brands, because like celebrities, they have a built-in audience that recognizes and appreciates them” (Murray, Manari & Manari, 2014, p. 329). The users can identify with the memes and, therefore, the overall brand, which can strengthen the consumer-brand relationship.

The Netflix Germany brand adapts the humor to the German culture, in using a specific type of meme in the videos and the images. An example of a meme presents Figure 4, which says on the image “my last four brain cells” and shows four actors of the series ‘Too hot to handle’ (2020- ). The upper part of the picture is white, with black text. It gives the image a different meaning in putting it in a different context.

**Figure 4.** Netflix Germany Instagram post.



<sup>5</sup> Link to the Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/B\\_ekhiYHEXo/](https://www.instagram.com/p/B_ekhiYHEXo/)

In comparing the Netflix US and Netflix Germany Instagram accounts, it becomes visible that these specific memes appear only on the Netflix Germany account. This uniqueness is evidencing for the usage of a rather local approach. Martin-Quevedo et al. (2019), find that Netflix is often using memes and humor, which indicates that the platform uses memes as part of a more comprehensive global strategy, which differs on the humor in the various countries and cultures. Andreas Laux states that the DACH social media marketing team looks at what the target group wants and then tailor the work accordingly (Benninghoff, 2020). Therefore, they create memes, which the users understand, know, and acknowledge. Netflix Germany uses memes to support the humorous, jokingly tone that most posts use.

Furthermore, the code "Graphics" was used in 12.71% (n=15) of the posts. An example of a graphic shows Figure 2, which compares different movies and series with each other. It reveals where they are similar and that people who enjoy one of the other screenplays could also enjoy another one on the graphic. The code "List", such as a list that presents all the new releases in March, appears in 5.08% (n=6). In comparing Netflix Germany with the global brand Netflix US, it becomes evident that Netflix US does not use graphics and lists to the same extent. Nikitina, Don, and Loh (2014) examine the stereotypes held by Malaysian students in Germany. The researchers find that the students characterized Germans, amongst other things, as analytical thinkers, disciplined, and punctual. One could make the assumption that Netflix knows its culture and what the users want. Therefore, they include graphs as a form of analytical thinking and lists about what is new in each month so that the users can plan as to when to watch each screenplay.

Other codes were "Movie or Series posters" with 10.71% (n =12), which mostly state the date of specific releases. These posters can excite the users about new premieres and increase engagement in the comments and are part of the fandom. Furthermore, they are part of the global release strategy and the binge-watching model. Another code is "reposted content," with 8.47% (n=10). Posts with this category often show pictures of the cast of screenplays and link to other pages. This is part of a tagging practice, which helps to reach niche audiences and increase engagement. Moreover, the code "Other" appeared in 7.62% (n=9) of the posts. It included content such posts of premieres or posts which show actors as kids. In comparing Netflix Germany and Netflix US, the researcher noted that Netflix Germany mainly posted about premieres of German Netflix original productions.

Therefore, Netflix Germany appears to include national content, which the users can relate with. Future research could investigate if this is due to country-specific preferences.

The videos included posts with codes such as “Teasers”, “Compilations”, “Memés”, “Other”, “Trailer”, “Behind the scenes” and finally “What is ... watching”. Additionally, 12 posts in the form of videos and images include “behind the scenes” content. These posts allow the users to get more insight into productions. Therefore, this content is part of the brand-consumer relationship, can help the subscribers to get to know the actors better and thus identify with them. Similarly, Nanda et al. (2018) find that social media platforms help to build a connection with the audience through the content promotion and that this helps the audience to identify with the screenplay characters. The actors are another part of the overall brand identity.

#### 4.1.6 Actor promotion

As previously mentioned, the code “promoting specific actor(s)” appeared in 15.29% (n=50), however overall 77.22% (n=138) of the posts include actors. In 59.90% (n=115) of the posts, the actors appear in character, and 12.50% (n=24) the actors are not in character, as Table 3 presents. In many cases, the actors are not in character, for example, with “photoshoots”, which make out 5.93% of the posts. Netflix promotes its brand to an extent through its actors, especially of the original content. Many of these actors were unknown to the public eye before appearing in Netflix originals and now have a significant following on social media. Some appear in other Netflix productions, such as the German actress Lisa Vicari, who performs in ‘Dark’ (2017-2020) and ‘Isi & Ossi’ (2020). She currently over 436.000 followers on Instagram<sup>6</sup>. Using actors in more than one Netflix original production evidences that Netflix Germany uses the actors as part of the brand identity, as the users recognize them from previous productions.

**Table 3.** The promotion of specific actors.

Promotion of specific actors
Posts with actors 77,22% (n = 138)
Posts with actors in character 59,90% (n = 115)
Posts with actors not in character 12,50% (n = 24)

<sup>6</sup> Link to Lisa Vicari’s Instagram profile: <https://www.instagram.com/lisa.vicari/?hl=de>



The actors become the face of the brand, and therefore the overall brand identity. The brand identity helps consumers differentiate the brand from competitors, and thus the users know the actors from specific Netflix productions and connect them to the brand. As mentioned earlier, the code “What is ... watching” appeared in 4 out of the 180 posts. These posts are short videos, where German actors performing in Netflix originals, answer questions about the platform. The global brand Netflix US does not have these types of posts, whereas Netflix Germany creates these posts to offer the users another point to identify with. Since the beginning of producing its own original content, Netflix used its characters in their marketing and the promotion of binge-watching (Jenner, 2018). Jaakonmäki et al. (2017) find that social media marketing campaigns, which include people can increase the overall engagement. Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019) examine the cases of Netflix US and Spain. The researchers note that many images feature actors, which leads to conclude that the promotion of actors is part of the global marketing strategy. Netflix does not rely on previously well-known celebrities. The actors starring in the series and movies become recognized through Netflix’s promotion.

#### **4.1.7 Following a schedule**

The day and regularity of posting and can influence the overall engagement. Jaakonmäki et al. (2017) state that specific days or even hours can affect the audience's engagement. Martín-Quevedo & Fernández-Gómez (2018)’s study examines the specific times, Netflix Spain posted on its Twitter account. This examination helps to make interpretations about a specifically followed schedule. Table 4 provides more insight into the schedule Netflix Germany follows. The platform seems to follow a schedule regarding the spread of the postings per weekday of the week. Netflix Germany posts quite regularly and is very active on Instagram, with an average of 3,91 posts per day. Bacik et al. (2018) find that social media influences the overall process of brand building. Thus, brands can build meaningful connections with users through social media. The researchers stress that it is essential that the company has a stable and regular presence on social media to strengthen the overall perceived brand identity. The most active day in terms of posting is Tuesday, with 16.11% (n=29), followed by Saturday with 15.00% (n=27), then Monday and Wednesday with 14.44% (n=26), and then Thursday, Friday and Sunday with 13.33% (n=24) each. The most active weekday is Tuesday, which seems a little bit unexpected as Netflix generally follows the aforementioned global release strategy. Therefore, the brand

typically releases new publications on Fridays (Jenner, 2018), which gives the users time to binge-watch the content over the weekend.

**Table 4.** Daily frequency of posting.

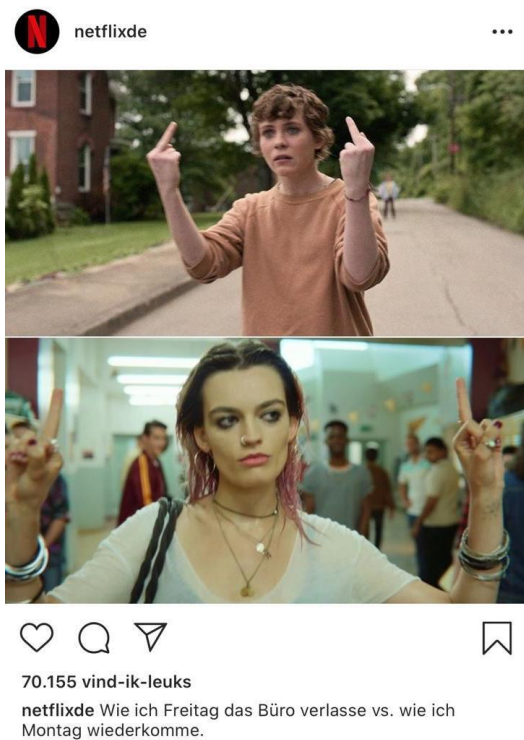
<b>Weekday</b>
Monday 14,44% (n = 26)
Tuesday 16,11% (n = 29)
Wednesday 14,44% (n = 26)
Thursday 13,33% (n = 24)
Friday 13,33% (n = 24)
Saturday 15,00% (n = 27)
Sunday 13,33% (n = 24)
<i>Total 100% (n = 180)</i>

The researcher observed which daily activities in terms of specific kinds of videos and images are uploaded. The activities appear to be quite similar, apart from one outlier. Friday has a high percentage for the code of “Teaser” 50.00% (n=4). This higher occurrence of the code “Teaser” differentiates from the other weekdays. The aforementioned worldwide release strategy can explain it, as Netflix mostly publishes new releases on Fridays. Furthermore, Netflix includes public holidays or other special days into their strategy. The brand makes posts specifically dedicated to them, such as International Women's Day.

In the next step, the researcher examined which days focus on which objectives of the posts. All the days primarily promote specific content, which was expected, as promoting specific content is the overall most used objective. However, on Sunday, the objective “show solidarity” is used to a greater extent. Figure 5 presents an example: The picture includes screenshots from the two characters of the series ‘I am not okay with this’ (2020-) and ‘Sex Education’ (2019-). Both characters hold up both of their middle fingers. The caption translates to English as “How I Leave the Office Friday vs. how I come back Monday.” Netflix Germany shows solidarity with the users, as most people enjoy the weekend and feel melancholic when it is over. In writing the caption, from the first-person point of view, the social media team show their solidarity and empathy for the users. As

previously mentioned, the head of content creation, Andreas Laux stresses that the team has to understand what the fans and what they care about (Benninghoff, 2020).

Figure 5. Netflix Germany Instagram post.



## 4.2 Message orientation

In order to answer the first sub-question, ‘What are the characteristics of the messages posted on Instagram by Netflix Germany?’, the researcher observed the written messages. Table 6 provides further insight into the overall elements used in the written messages. There were in total of 221 elements observed, as many posts included more than one element in the caption.

In terms of the tone of the messages in the written text, the researcher noted some interesting findings. The captions of the posts are, on average, 17.35 words long and, therefore, mostly quite short. This observation coincides with the results of previous studies, as Burke et al. (2007) found that messages with less text can have an impact on the number of likes. Similarly, Arguello et al. (2006) state that a clear, concise, and short text can increase the overall answers. As of June 2020, Netflix Germany holds the place of the most successful social media presence in Germany based on engagement. Users engage

<sup>7</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9ZsA19C0eF/>

with social media platforms, amongst other things, as a way of passing the time. As the users often just scroll through the platforms, shorter captions can be more appealing. The social media marketing team knows what the users want and adapt accordingly, in this case, with short captions.

**Table 6.** Overall elements in the written messages.

Elements of the written messages
1 <sup>st</sup> person 43,89% (n = 97)
2 <sup>nd</sup> person 11,31% (n = 25)
3 <sup>rd</sup> person 1,36% (n = 3)
Use of the word "intern" 2,71% (n = 6)
Emoticon 14,48% (n = 32)
Hashtag 0,45% (n = 1)
Exclamation mark 17,19% (n = 38)
Question mark 8,60% (n = 19)
Word in bold letters 7,24% (n = 16)
<i>Total 100% (n = 221)</i>

As mentioned earlier, the humor and the overall jokingly tone are essential in the global social media marketing strategy. Netflix has country-specific social media accounts adapted to the different countries, cultures, values, and needs of the users. In observing the posts, it became clear that Netflix Germany plays with the words and uses so-called "puns". Users can only understand and make sense of these puns if they have a good understanding of the German language. An example is the following caption: "Bei so viel Bromance geht mir das Herz auf. Frühlingsgefühle inklusive. 🌸"<sup>8</sup>, which translates to English as "With so much bromance, my heart is opening. Spring feelings included.". However, "Frühlingsgefühle", is not meant literally in this sense, but is instead a German word for being in love. Furthermore, many posts include typical German sayings, such as "Daumen hoch und niemals den Kopf verlieren."<sup>9</sup>. Translated to English, it means "Thumbs up and never lose your head." The choice of specific wording helps to build the brand

<sup>8</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9tmssEK-al/>

<sup>9</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B97Ed6diV2O/>

community, as only German native speakers can understand these puns. Consequently, Netflix uses a rather local approach in the wording of the text.

The researcher found more posts, which support the assumption of the local approach used by Netflix Germany. The post from the 20th of February 2020 depicts a list of movies “for the whole family.”<sup>10</sup> The caption translates to English as “One look at this list, and I already have the title song from 'Benjamin Blümchen' stuck to my head.” Benjamin Blümchen is a well-known German series cartoon character. Users can identify with the caption, as many know the song which plays at the beginning of an episode. Another post makes fun of the Austrian language, stating that it is “as cute as little puppies”<sup>11</sup>. Finally, Netflix Germany often includes English words in the captions. These so-called Anglicism’s are quite common in Germany. These examples show that the Netflix Germany brand uses the global approach of a humorous, jokingly tone and adapts it to the local market, in using German puns and cultural references.

#### **4.2.1 Anthropomorphism**

Netflix Germany seems to have a specific strategy to address the users. In 43.89% (n=97) of the messages, the 1st person was used, in 11.31% (n=25), the 2nd person, and in 1.36% (n=3) of the messages, the 3<sup>rd</sup> person. An example for the first person includes the following caption: “I love bringing good news from distant galaxies: Lost in Space will be back in 2021 for one last great adventure.”<sup>12</sup> Here, it is announced that Netflix releases another season of the series 'Lost in space' (2018-) in 2021. At first, it might seem a bit confusing that Netflix uses the first-person’s point of view on its social media platforms. It does not become entirely clear at first who the person writing the post is. Later, it becomes more apparent that the person writing the captions calls itself the “Netflix-Intern”. Netflix Germany has a small team working on social media content creation, rather than just one intern (Benninghoff, 2020). The head of content creation, Andreas Laux, stresses the importance of speaking the users' language. Therefore, the social media marketing team is quite young and diverse in terms of gender and emigrational background and comes from different parts all over Germany to reflect Germany's overall diversity.

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<sup>10</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B99tv46qpln/>

<sup>11</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-Rahj8ncGw/>

<sup>12</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9j4mKmC4UD/>

In 2.71% (n=6) of the messages, the term “intern” was used. An example of this is the following caption: “Dear diary, today is a good day. The I Am Not Okay with This Cast did a photoshoot. I've been swiping back and forth for half an hour. Bye, your Netflix intern”<sup>13</sup>. However, only users that follow the brand will understand this and therefore become part of the brand community. The interconnection between the brand, the individual user, and the brand community co-create the brand identity (Black & Veloutsou, 2017). The intern is used evidently to appear closer to the followers, especially as younger people enjoy Instagram and therefore, can identify with the intern (Ferguson, 2016).

The phenomenon of using the 1st person or writing as the “Netflix-Intern” can be described as Anthropomorphism, which is generally defined as giving non-human entities human traits or emotions (Epley, Waytz & Cacioppo, 2007). Brand anthropomorphism is “the extent to which a branded product is perceived as a human being” (Guido & Peluso, 2015). Previous research finds that Anthropomorphism can influence consumer's engagement and have a positive influence on the consumer-brand identification (Urška & Podnar, 2018). Therefore, it is not surprising that Netflix includes this approach in its overall social media strategy.

In comparing the Instagram accounts of Netflix Germany and Netflix US, it becomes obvious that Netflix US uses Anthropomorphism as well. However, it does not make use of the term “Netflix-Intern”. It is common for German companies to hire interns to manage social media platforms. One could assume that the users know the content is written and produced by an intern and therefore they are not as critical with the content posted or possible mistakes. Furthermore, in using interns, which are mostly young students, companies manage to be perceived as youthful. Similarly, Havens (2018) states that Netflix wants to be perceived as “being youthful, tech savvy, and modern” (Havens. 2018, p. 6). Therefore, this seems to be evidencing of the global brand identity. The interns are digital natives and often know more about online culture, as a third of online users worldwide are between 25 and 34 years old (Clement, 2020).

#### **4.2.2 Additional elements in the written text**

In the next step, the researcher examined other elements to answer the first sub-question regarding the characteristics of the written text. The code “Emoticons” appeared

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<sup>13</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9evEwkix3V/>

in 17.78% (n=32) of the posts. The most used emoticons included hearts for popular actors or cameras for photoshoots. Other frequently used emoticons are clapping hands and party hats, used for new season or movie releases. The brand uses emoticons to support the overall message and try to foster more engagement. The previously mentioned study by Jaakonmäki et al. (2017) found that the usage of positive emoticons can increase engagement. In comparing Netflix Germany and Netflix US, the results show that both Instagram accounts use emoticons to a similar extent, as Netflix US uses emoticons in 19% of the posts (Martin-Quevedo et al., 2019). Chen Yut Wei (2012) observes the usage of emoticons on Facebook. The researcher finds that the age and the location influence the usage and interpretation of emoticons. Netflix Germany includes them in its social media marketing strategy, as emoticons are part of digital culture, however the usage of emoticons seems to be part of the global brand identity.

Interestingly only one post, included a hashtag. In comparing this result with the study by Martin-Quevedo et al. (2019), the researchers found that 23% of the analyzed posts of Netflix US include hashtags. Here, one could only make the assumption that the usage of the hashtag is less popular in Germany compared to the US. Future research could investigate this matter. The description of the post with the hashtag reads “#WeWantShippudenToo (And will come. This time really. the 31st of March. Intern promise)”<sup>14</sup> The users ask the company to bring the series 'Naruto: Shippuden' (2007-2017) on the platform. Netflix pays attention to the demand and satisfies the users' needs. As mentioned previously, Andreas Laux, the head of Netflix DACH's social media marketing, stresses the importance, to stay humble and to admit mistakes. He criticizes that traditional companies often have issues to admit their own mistakes (Benninghoff, 2020). Netflix Germany notices the users' demands in implementing their feedback into their social media strategy and overall platform.

Another observed element was the punctuation, more specifically exclamation and question marks. The caption of 17.19% (n=38) of the dataset included exclamation marks. An example of the use of a question mark is the following caption: “I'm very okay that I Am Not Okay With This now available!”<sup>15</sup> The post shows a teaser of the series, and the caption announces that it is now accessible for the users to stream. The exclamation mark shows the excitement and works as a call of action to instantly watch it. On the other hand, 8.60%

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<sup>14</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B8vdPGhqWR/>

<sup>15</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9BeP0IKf0g/>

(n=19) of the captions include question marks. An example is: “If you celebrate Stanley as hard as I do, are you a Stan-Stan?”<sup>16</sup>. The caption goes along with a scene screenshot of the actor from 'I am not okay with this'. Asking the audience questions can promote engagement, as the users might reply in the comment section. Furthermore, in 7.24% (n = 16) of the messages, some words appeared in bold letters in the caption. An example is the following caption, which reads, “And now everyone: “**AWWW WERE THEY SWEET!**”<sup>17</sup>. The caption goes along with a post of actors and pictures of them as kids. The bold letters support the overall message of the post. Netflix uses these elements to speak the language of the users and knows what the users want. These additional elements in the written text are part of Netflix’s branding strategy and can increase the engagement and interaction of the users. Other elements, which can influence the user’s engagement are the emotional elements used in the written text.

#### 4.2.3 Emotional Elements in the written text

This section includes an analysis of the overall used emotional elements in the written messages. Netflix Germany uses a very humorous tone, as 38.72% (n=103) of the overall messages include the code “humor”. As stated previously, Netflix wants to be entertainment's biggest fan (Letki, n.d), and this reflects in the tone used in the posts' captions. The overall tone is humorous, light, jokingly, and positive, as shown in Table 7.

**Table 7.** Emotional elements in the written text.

<b>Emotional elements in written text</b>
Humor 38,72% (n = 103)
Exciting 15,41% (n = 41)
Positive 15,04% (n = 40)
Engaging 12,03% (n = 32)
Neutral 10,15% (n = 27)
Provoking 6,77% (n = 18)
Sad 1,88% (n = 5)
<i>Total 100% (n = 266)</i>

<sup>16</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B9cLCr-inuA/>

<sup>17</sup> Link to the Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/B\\_PR0cmiPMA/](https://www.instagram.com/p/B_PR0cmiPMA/)



Humor is part of the company's overall brand identity. The users identify with the brand through shared jokes and positivity. A German saying goes, “have a sense of humor” and people often use it in difficult life situations and to show that making jokes helps to overcome stressful situations. An example, is the aforementioned post from Figure 5, about having to go back to work on Mondays. Previous studies show that there are variances in humor styles of different countries (Chen & Martin, 2007; Kalliny et al., 2006), as humor preferences depend on the cultural background. Hoffmann, Schwarz, Dalicho, and Hutter (2014) analyze how advertising campaigns adapt the humor to the target market. The study compares Germany and Spain to find cross-cultural differences in the use of humor in marketing. The findings indicate that ads with sentimental humor are used more frequently in Germany than Spain. This type of humor includes sentimental and warm pictures and texts, which evoke empathy in the recipients. An example of sentimental humor is the post of actors as kids. In comparison to Netflix Germany, Netflix US appears to have no specific posts about actors as kids. Therefore, it is evidencing that Netflix Germany adapts to the country-specific humor preferences.

Leist and Müller (2013) compare different humor styles. They find that younger people in Germany often use self-defeating humor. Self-defeating humor “is used to enhance relationships with others at the expense and detriment of the self” (Leist & Müller, 2014, p. 552). An example of this kind of humor depicts the post from Figure 4. The post makes fun of one’s intelligence as it shows the “last four brain cells”. Leist and Müller (2014) conclude that, people in Germany have no issue with laughing about themselves. Similar, Martin-Quevedo et al. (2019), find that Netflix US and Netflix Spain use memes, which indicates that Netflix uses a more comprehensive global strategy, which adapts to the preferred type of humor in different countries and cultures.

Another example of humor includes the post of Figure 6, which is with a meme from the series ‘Love is Blind’ (2020- ). The picture is a screenshot of the series with one of the actors. The subtitles translate to English as “I shower sometimes”. The caption adds: “My new Tinder bio:”. This caption and the image show the brands jokingly tone. Moreover, the picture is part of the previously mentioned self-defeating humor, as the “Netflix-Intern” makes fun of its own hygiene.

Figure 6. Netflix Germany Instagram post.



The next most used elements are “Positive” with 15.04% (n=40), as well as “Engaging” 12.03% (n=32). An example of an engaging caption is the following: “Name me a film with more quotable moments than Girls Club. I’m waiting.”<sup>19</sup> This caption asks the followers to engage in the comments and state their opinions. Some messages are more objective with the code “Neutral” with 10.15% (n=27). An example are the captions that announce the date of a series or movie premiere, which provides some general information. Other messages are rather “Provoking” with 6.77% (n = 18). An example for a provoking caption accompanies a meme about the ‘Fast & the Furious’, which reads ““By the way: my ranking is the only correct ranking and yes, part 5 is the best!”. A small percentage of the posts has a sad emotional element in the written messages with the code “Sad” with 1.88% (n = 5). An example of a caption with a sad tone is the caption of Figure 8. It shows a character of ‘Money Heist’ that dies in the series. The caption reads: “Ágata” Nairobi “Jiménez, my heart is bleeding for you.”<sup>20</sup> Netflix Germany knows its users, their culture, humor, and what they want. The brand adapts its overall tone of voice accordingly, helping to interact and engage with the users.

<sup>18</sup> Link to the Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/B\\_ZX4XciRII/](https://www.instagram.com/p/B_ZX4XciRII/)

<sup>19</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B8otALoK57c/>

<sup>20</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-w99jzKk0h/>

### 4.3 Engaging an audience

Finally, in order to answer the second sub-question, 'How do the posts try to foster engagement?', the posts were observed in terms of likes and comments, as well as in correlation with other elements to find out which foster the most overall engagement. As mentioned previously, Netflix Germany currently holds the place of the most successful social media presence of major brands in Germany based on the measured engagement (Theobald, 2020). Netflix reinforces community building by creating posts that foster engagement and interaction with the users. Netflix Germany has over 1.7 million followers, and these followers create much engagement, as Table 8 presents.

**Table 8.** Likes and comments

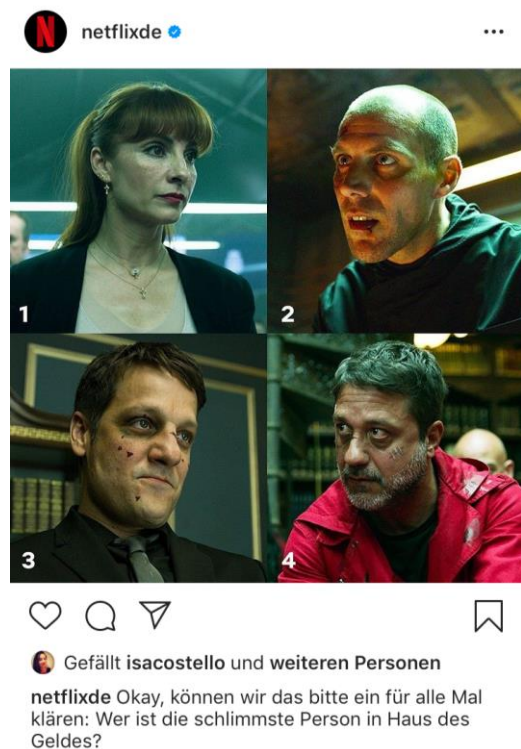
Engagement			
Average Likes	39859,72	Average Likes top 5	117.928
Average Comments	658,37	Average Comments top 5	7.931

On average, a post gets around 39.859 likes and 658 comments. However, there are a few posts that have created more engagement. The average of the top five posts regarding likes has a total of 117.928 likes and regarding comments 7.931. The post with the most comments had 14.961 comments at the time of the data gathering, and the post with the most likes 143.707 likes. Both posts are from the series 'Money Heist', which shows that the series has a huge fandom, as it sparks this much engagement. Figure 7 presents the post with the most comments. It depicts different scene screenshots and the four most disliked characters from the series. The caption translates to English as, „Okay, can we please clarify this once and for all: who is the worst person in Money Heist?“. The users seem to have a definite opinion on this matter and voice their opinion in the comments. The followers discuss with other users why which person is the worst character. Andreas Laux states that the aim of the social media team of Netflix DACH is to provide the fans with a platform for communication and discussion about series (Benninghoff, 2020). The interaction helps the brand's community building.

Figure 8 shows the post with the most likes. It is a drawing of one of the main characters of 'Money Heist' who dies in the series. In the drawing, the actress wears a red dress, which is similar to the color of the overalls the actors wear during their bank robbery. She is surrounded by flowers while holding one white flower in her hand. The

caption reads translated to English as “Ágata Nairobi Jiménez, my heart is bleeding for you.” The character appears to be well-liked by the audience, as everyone seems to be upset about her death in the series. The fandom surrounding Netflix's original series is an essential element of the platform (Benninghoff, 2020). Moreover, the post shows empathy towards the users.

**Figure 7.** Post with the most comments.



**Figure 8.** Post with the most Likes.



The researcher observed the correlation between the weekdays and average likes and comments, as presented in Table 9. Monday seems to be the most active day in terms of comments, as there are, on average, 1052 comments, whereas Thursday is the most active in likes with an average of 53656 likes. Overall, the users seem interactive and engaging in terms of comments and likes on most of the weekdays. Future research could investigate the correlation between weekdays and created engagement further. The overall high engagement by users seems to be evidencing that Netflix's social media marketing strategy is effective.

<sup>21</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-7YRtmCU0m/>

<sup>22</sup> Link to the Instagram post: <https://www.instagram.com/p/B-w99jzKk0h/>

**Table 9.** Average Likes and comments per day.

Day	Average Likes	Average Comments
Monday	41179,96	1052,31
Tuesday	35006,86	435,34
Wednesday	32540,04	770,35
Thursday	53656,71	941,08
Friday	40418,42	440,46
Saturday	40016,15	649,89
Sunday	37691,33	324,54

Table 10 presents the correlation between emotional elements, the average likes, and comments in order to understand which kinds of emotional elements in the written text promote the engagement with the users.

**Table 10.** Average Likes and comments for different emotional elements.

Emotion	Average Likes	Average Comments
Humor	42072,29	532,67
Exciting	39484,00	596,46
Positive	42892,25	624,40
Engaging	38789,28	1585,81
Neutral	28553,52	422,59
Provoking	37359,78	1338,28
Sad	66996,20	863,20

The emotion with the most average likes is “sad”. The emotion was used only for five posts overall, but one of the posts was Figure 8, which was the post with the most likes. The other two emotions with a large number of average likes are “humor”, with 42072 likes and “engaging”, with 38789 likes. These results confirm what Martin-Quevedo et al. (2019) find in their study concerning the Instagram account of Netflix Spain and Netflix US. The authors observe that “positive tone and humor generated significantly more engagement” (Martin-Quevedo et al., 2019, p.75). Consequently, Netflix uses a global approach to foster the user's engagement.

The measured engagement shows that Netflix Germany utilizes a language that is well-received by the audience. Consequently, it is not surprising that Netflix Germany has the most successful social media presence in Germany based on engagement. The users enjoy the content, which makes the brand's overall social media marketing strategy quite successful. It is adapted to the user's country, culture, values, and the users enjoy it. The brand knows what the users want, what they expect, and enforce this image through their social media presence. These results confirm what Martin-Quevedo et al. (2019) found in their study concerning the Instagram account of Netflix Spain. They found humor and an overall positive tone in most of the observed posts: "Positive tone and humor generated significantly more engagement" (Martin-Quevedo et al., 2019, p.75).

#### **4.4 Summary**

Netflix's social media marketing on Instagram has distinctive characteristics. The analysis shows that no posts are similar, as the brand commits to continually creating new content for the users. The platform focuses on the promotion of Netflix's original 'quality' content. The brand supports the binge-watching model, as most posts are about series. Netflix Germany encourages the users to interact and engage with the brand to further the brand-consumer relationship. In general, more images than videos were posted, with many of them being memes, as Netflix uses humor as their most valuable asset. Furthermore, the platform promotes the actors of self-produced content, as these are part of the marketing strategy and overall brand identity.

Tuesday seems to be the most active day; however, the brand has an overall regular and active presence, with an average of more than three posts per day. The results demonstrate that Netflix posts most trailers and teasers on Fridays. This posting schedule aligns with the global release strategy. The written messages are often written from the 1st person perspective, the "Netflix-Intern". Here, the company makes use of anthropomorphism, to increase the user's engagement and further strengthen the consumer-brand relationship. Netflix incorporates so-called "puns", which the users only understand if they have a solid understanding of the German language. Furthermore, the brand incorporates German culture-specific content. Overall, the used tone is very jokingly, positive, and excited, which aligns with the global brand identity. The humor preferences depend on the cultural background, and the brand seems to adapt the memes and captions accordingly.

All these elements seem to have a positive impact on engagement and interactivity. Netflix mostly generates a lot of comments and likes by the users. The social media marketing strategy of Netflix Germany seems to be effective, measured on the created engagement. Consequently, it is not surprising that Netflix holds the title of the most successful social media presence of major brands in Germany based on their engagement. The strategy seems to be overall quite similar in different countries, however, the content is slightly adapted to the country- and culture-specific preferences. Netflix is successful in its branding, as it knows the audience and their language and how to engage the users in speaking their language.

## 5 Conclusion

Linear television is still an essential part of everyday life. However, SVOD services changed the way traditional television is watched and received by the audience in the last decade and laid the foundations of a transformation in the global media field. In 2018, Netflix managed to get the most nominations (122) from the Emmys, displacing series giant HBO from the top after 17 years (Adalian, 2018). This is the definitive proof that classic networks are no longer superior to SVOD services. Netflix started as a small DVD rental business and is now one of the biggest entertainment companies worldwide. The name of Netflix becomes a synonym for binge-watching and SVOD services, which brings a generalizing, generic brand name effect. Netflix adheres to its corporate design across all media channels but matches the content specifically to the channels. This research investigated the social media marketing strategy of Netflix Germany in identifying their overall brand identity applied on Instagram. This study aimed to answer the main research question, “How does Netflix’s brand in Germany, as established through social media marketing, differ from the service’s global brand?”. Moreover, this study answered the two sub-questions “What are the characteristics of the messages posted on Instagram by Netflix Germany?” and “How do the posts try to foster engagement?”. The following subsection provides an answer to this research and sub-questions. In the next sub-sections, a discussion of some scientific, theoretical, and social implications and limitations and possibilities for future research follows.

### 5.1 Answers to the Research Questions

Netflix’s social media presence has been praised by many (Mann, 2016; Letki, n.d.) and seems to attract a significant following. The international Instagram channels only record numbers in the six-digit range. Netflix achieves this through a balancing act of promotion and entertainment, which they succeed like hardly any other company. However, such numbers cannot be achieved with “play it safe”. It takes courage to stand out and become a loved brand.

Netflix Germany currently has over 1.7 million followers on its official Instagram page. Additionally, it holds the place of the most successful social media presence in Germany. Previous studies examined how traditional television channels make use of social media in their marketing strategy (Clark & Ferguson, 2017; Wang, 2016) and studies by Martin-



Quevedo et al. (2019) and Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo (2018) researched on social media marketing strategies of Netflix Spain and the US. Nevertheless, there are still gaps in the understanding of social media marketing within other countries, such as Germany.

This research finds that Netflix Germany posts self-produced content to a large extent, with 77.78% of the content being original productions. These results are similar to previous studies (Martin-Quevedo et al., 2019; Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo, 2018). Consequently, Netflix's original content is in the center of the brand identity and sets it apart from the competition. Few of the posts are focused on promoting the brand itself, as the platform defines itself, preferably through the so-called 'quality' content. These observations show that the brand defines itself not through other aspects, such as pricing or usability.

A substantial part of the promoted films and series are Netflix originals, produced in Germany. This type of content is well-received by the audience. Netflix focuses on producing more original content in Germany, and Europe, as 30 percent of the catalog has to be produced in the EU (Grece, 2017). Furthermore, most of the posts promote series, which is part of promoting the binge-watching model. The model is strongly wired within the Netflix brand and part of its worldwide success (Jenner, 2018). The main objectives of the posts promote specific content and inform the users. Even though some content seems not directly promotional, the posts often hide an underlying promotion. This coincides with Ferguson's (2016) findings, which states that young people enjoy Instagram, as it reflects a brand image instead of solely an ad.

Many posts are memes that are part of online culture and seem to be well received by the audience. They show the like-mindedness of the users and the brand, making it easier for the audience to identify with the brand. The memes posted on the Netflix Germany account differ from the global brand. Thus, Netflix Germany creates the memes tailored for its audience. Therefore, the platform uses a more comprehensive global strategy based on humor in different countries and cultures. Another objective is the promotion of specific actors. Various actors appear in more than one Netflix production and are promoted on social media platforms, which makes them part of the Netflix brand identity and face of the brand.

Concerning the overall schedule of posting, there are some similarities to the previously explored Twitter strategy (Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo, 2018). The

company makes sure that it is posted regularly, with an average of more than three posts per day. This strategy coincides with Bacik et al. (2018) 's results, who found that a stable and regular social media presence is essential for the perceived brand identity. Additionally, the results show that releases are mostly published on Fridays, which is part of the worldwide release strategy (Jenner, 2018). It encourages binge-watching practices as well as the discussion of the new series on social media.

The first sub-question focuses on the overall messages communicated to the users: "What are the characteristics of the messages posted on Instagram by Netflix Germany?". The posted messages are mostly quite short, as previous studies found that shorter messages increase responses and overall engagement (Burke et al., 2007; Arguello et al., 2006). The posts are written from the "Netflix-Intern" and, therefore, mostly in the first person. This method is defined as anthropomorphism, meaning that human traits are given to non-human entities. It can influence the identification of consumers with the brand (Urška & Podnar, 2018). Furthermore, the brand makes use of additional elements, such as emoticons, punctuation, and writing in bold letters. These elements help to support the overall message, promote engagement, and make the messages more compelling.

Other elements are tags that link to other Netflix profiles or actors. The tags help to target niche audiences and form smaller communities under the global Netflix brand. The sub-pages range from Netflix Family to WeAreNetflix (employee representation) to Netflix Life. In addition to the topic-specific sub-pages, Netflix also operates separate pages for its productions. A definite target group is addressed: people who have seen the respective series. Besides, there are a few others that allow Netflix to reach a broad target group and serve their particular interests. Consequently, there are no barriers to content since it is a community that is on the same level of knowledge. If users voluntarily leave a like on the sub-series page, this is the most optimal and natural advertising environment, since they are interested in the promotion. The community is an integral and builds through user-generated content, communication in the comment columns, and content tailored to the users' interests and humor. Besides, Netflix attaches great importance to community management and is in constant communication with the customer through all channels.

The overall tone is very humorous, light, jokingly, and positive, as Netflix's goal is to be entertainment's biggest fan. Netflix often shows solidarity with the users and identifies with the users, in engaging and interacting with them, asking for their opinion. This strategy helps to strengthen the consumer-brand relationship (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Furthermore,

the DACH marketing team stresses the importance of communicating on one level with the consumers. Netflix differs from traditional companies as it stays humble and admits mistakes (Benninghoff, 2020), which shows that Netflix takes its customers seriously. Consequently, Netflix is courageous when it comes to self-irony. Reflected and riskier posts bring the community and the brand closer together because the level of identification is higher.

As aforementioned, the memes of the Instagram account are adapted to the user's preference. Netflix Germany makes use of so-called "puns", which only people with a proficient language level can understand. Consequently, the brand uses a somewhat local approach in the wording of the text. The social media marketing team creates culture-specific content. Netflix Germany uses the global approach of a humorous, jokingly tone and adapts it to the local market by using language-specific puns and cultural references. Netflix knows about the individual cultural differences of its global clientele

The second sub-question analyzes the likes and comments: "How do the posts try to foster engagement?". The overall level of interactivity is high between the company and the customers, as the 1.7 million followers create much engagement. A post gets an average of 39859 likes and 658 comments. The users seem to be most active on Mondays, and apart from one post with the emotion "sad", the most engagement is created with humor and positivity. These observations confirm that the overall used tone matches what the users want and expect from the brand. These results coincide with the findings of Martin-Quevedo et al. (2019). They discovered that humor and positivity generate increased engagement.

Netflix Germany uses Instagram and social media, to promote the brand identity and reflect its values, such as humor and entertainment. The findings of this study about the strategy of Netflix Germany on Instagram confirm the findings by other authors and add more understanding of the local approach of Netflix Germany. Consequently, it appears that the brand uses a global approach with a few localized elements, as it is slightly adapted to the different countries where Netflix operates. To sum up, Netflix shows a new and original way to use social media in its favor to promote and showcase the brand identity.

The main strength of Netflix's content marketing strategy is the guiding principle: Know your audience. In doing so, they prove that marketing of this kind is intended for large corporations with a high advertising budget and smaller companies or start-ups. Because: Even with few resources, brand promises, brand attributes, and brand stories can be created that appeal to the subscriber. The company is approachable, authentic, and as addicted to

series as its target group. Brand voice and timing are the keys to this successful social media communication. Depending on the target group, conformity can quickly get boring - and has little authenticity. Netflix shows that a tone of its own is essential in order to stand out from the competition. The streaming service uses colloquial language to hit the nerve of relatively young prospects. On social media, companies have the chance to show that they speak the same language as their target group. With an authentic, unique tone, brands create trust, credibility, and recognition. This sets them apart from the competition. Netflix knows how to stimulate the curiosity of its customers for upcoming film and series highlights and to fill the waiting time until the next season with exciting teasers of content. Besides, Netflix proves excellent timing in marketing on social channels. While Netflix has succeeded in maintaining its place thus far, its future depends on consumers' demand for media and entertainment.

## **5.2 Theoretical, scientific and social implications**

Instagram is a cost-efficient business tool that allows brands to form connections with the audience, promote a specific brand image towards the users, and engage with the users on a more personal level, making it possible to communicate directly. The platform continuously grows and allows brands to reach niche audiences. Netflix knows its audience and how to speak their language. In speaking with a humorous and positive tone, as well as in using Anthropomorphism and memes, the brand manages to entertain, engage, and interact with the audience. It seems that Netflix has competent employees in their social media marketing team, who manage to represent not only the Netflix global brand identity but also the German brand identity. As mentioned earlier, the team is set up quite young and diverse in terms of gender, emigrational background and comes from all over Germany to reflect Germany's overall diversity.

This study adds to previous research and literature by providing relevant new insights into the social media marketing strategy of Netflix Germany. It provides a framework for other brands who want to implement social media in their marketing strategy or want to improve their performance on platforms such as Instagram. The study offers insights into alternative forms of traditional advertising, which can guide brands on how to implement social media platforms into marketing. These new insights make the study relevant to other brands, as well as for Netflix, as it adds a subjective, third-party analysis. Furthermore, the detailed framework, as well as the conducted analysis and the comparison to previous

studies, offer new understanding and provide new knowledge of this not extensively studied part of Netflix and Netflix's brand identity.

### **5.3 Limitations and future research**

This research comes not without any limitations. As aforementioned, Netflix does not publish their data. Therefore, it was not possible to get access into inside information or private parts of the social media account, such as direct messages by the users towards the brand. This study used purposive sampling, which means that the posts were collected chronologically. Therefore, results only reflect a specific period and the researcher cannot report on possible changes or improvements of the social media account over a longitudinal period. As Netflix is continually growing, the brand identity is changing as well.

The conducted content analysis was done by one coder. Consequently, the content analysis relies on the ability of the researcher to code and interpret the results correctly, which makes the researcher's role influential in the whole process. The theoretical framework and overall transparency make this process as subjective as possible. However, with more coders, bias can be reduced, and subjectivity can be increased, as the overall coding frame and specific posts could be further compared.

The engagement was measured through the number of comments and likes. However, it could be interesting to include interviews and focus groups of the users for future research. The study could then examine how the users perceive the posted content, and how that represents the overall brand image of Netflix. Furthermore, the comments could not only be quantified but also analyzed in terms of the content. This could help to get a better understanding of Netflix's communication strategy, as the brand often replies to users.

Furthermore, it would be interesting to compare different social media platforms of Netflix Germany, such as Instagram and Twitter or Facebook. Including other platforms could help explore to what extent and how these differ. Another possibility for future research could be the comparison of social media platforms of Netflix Germany and a traditional German television Network, such as ARD or ProSieben.

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## Appendix



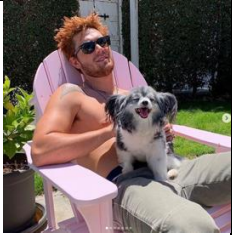
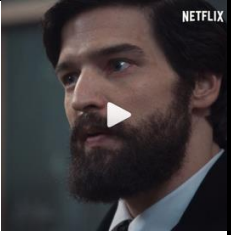
Extract from the results of the coding in excel sheets

Instagram Post	1	2	3	4
Date	15.02.20	15.02.20	15.02.20	16.02.20
Day	Saturday	Saturday	Saturday	Sunday
Type of content promoted	Movie	Movie	Other	Movie
Producer of promoted content	Original	Original	Both	Original
Name of advertised content	Isi & Ossi	Isi & Ossi	Money Heist; Elite; Nailed it! Spain; Vicky, Cristina Barcelona; Cable Girls	To all the boys
Objective of the post	Promoting specific content; Show solidarity	Promoting specific content; Promoting specific actor(s)	Promoting specific content; Promoting the platform; Informing	Promoting specific content
Type of visual	Video	Image	Video	Image
Image		Premiere		Scene Screenshot
Video	Meme		Other	
Number of visual elements in the post	1	1	5	1
Other elements in the visual	Tag; written text; Actor(s) in character	Logo; actor(s) not in character	written text; actor(s) in character	written text; actor(s) in character
Elements in the written text		Tag; word in bold letters; 1st person; 2nd person	1st person	1st person
Emotional elements in the written text	humor; provoking	humor	humor	humor
Word count	18	23	11	15
Likes	63.171	34.806	31.685	81.828
Comments	606	149	342	476
Link to the post	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8lW26cql">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8lW26cql</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8lxufZq6c">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8lxufZq6c</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8mJiZ_K">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8mJiZ_K</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8nvzUdq1">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8nvzUdq1</a>
Post	<p>Wenn du das Foto an die falsche Person geschickt hast.</p> 			 <p>Du fährst nicht gern bei Schnee, oder?</p>



Instagram Post	5	6	7	8
Date	16.02.20	16.02.20	16.02.20	17.02.20
Day	Sunday	Sunday	Sunday	Monday
Type of content promoted	Movie	Movie	Movie	Series
Producer of promoted content	Original	Original	Purchased	Original
Name of advertised content	To all the boys	To all the boys; Baby; How to sell drugs online fast; Isi & Ossi	Mean Girls	Freud
Objective of the post	Promoting specific content; Informing Show solidarity	Promoting specific content; Informing	Promoting specific content; Encouraging participation	Promoting specific content; Informing
Type of visual	Video	Image	Image	Image
Image		Graphic	Graphic	Poster
Video	Other			
Number of visual elements in the post	1	1	5	1
Other elements in the visual	written text	written text; actor(s) in character	written text	written text; Logo; actor(s) in character
Elements in the written text	2nd person; exclamation mark; question mark	1st person; 2nd person;	1st person	question mark; 2nd person
Emotional elements in the written text	provoking	humor	engaging	provoking
Word count	17	20	13	16
Likes	13.237	32.939	22.094	30.275
Comments	144	208	155	670
Link to the post	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8oCAAtYqI">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8oCAAtYqI</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8oXCYgK6">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8oXCYgK6</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8otALoK5">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8otALoK5</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8qf7SFqq">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8qf7SFqq</a>
Post				

Instagram Post	9	10	11	12
Date	17.02.20	17.02.20	18.02.20	18.02.20
Day	Monday	Monday	Tuesday	Tuesday
Type of content promoted	Series	Movie	Both	Series
Producer of promoted content	Original	Original	Original	Original
Name of advertised content	I am not okay with this	Isi & Ossi	Isi & Ossi; Dark	Elite
Objective of the post	Promoting specific content; Informing	Promoting specific content; Show solidarity	Promoting specific actor(s)	Promoting specific content; Informing
Type of visual	Video	Video	Image	Video
Image			Scene Screenshot	
Video	Trailer	Meme		Teaser
Number of visual elements in the post	1	1	1	1
Other elements in the visual	written text; Logo; actor(s) in character	written text; actor(s) in character	written text; actor(s) in character	Logo; actor(s) in character
Elements in the written text	1st person	2nd person; question mark	3rd person	word in bold letter
Emotional elements in the written text	humor	humor; provoking	humor	engaging
Word count	28	12	16	19
Likes	51.732	37.343	48.765	37.554
Comments	578	333	197	1.947
Link to the post	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8rESGICp">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8rESGICp</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8rPO5hiQ">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8rPO5hiQ</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8tLsySKqf">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8tLsySKqf</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8tszHWne">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8tszHWne</a>
Post				

Instagram Post	13	14	15	16
Date	19.02.20	19.02.20	19.02.20	20.02.20
Day	Wednesday	Wednesday	Wednesday	Thursday
Type of content promoted	Series	Movie	Series	Series
Producer of promoted content	Purchased	Original	Original	Original
Name of advertised content	Naruto Shippuden	Isi & Ossi	Riverdale	Freud
Objective of the post	Promoting specific content; Informing; Show solidarity	Promoting specific content; Show solidarity	Promoting specific actor(s)	Promoting specific content; Informing
Type of visual	Video	Video	Image	Video
Image			Reposted Content	
Video	Compilation	Meme		Trailer
Number of visual elements in the post	1	1	7	1
Other elements in the visual	Logo; written text	written text; actor(s) in character	actor(s) not in character	written text; Logo; actor(s) in character
Elements in the written text	Hashtag; use of the word intern; 1st person	exclamation mark	1st person	2nd person
Emotional elements in the written text	exciting	provoking	humor	neutral; provoking
Word count	11	7	17	93
Likes	25.411	54.679	46.609	12.376
Comments	2.749	478	85	142
Link to the post	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8vdPGhqL/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8vdPGhqL/</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8wl0yICG/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8wl0yICG/</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8wSIOGK/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8wSIOGK/</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8yQB02K/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8yQB02K/</a>
Post		<p>Wenn deine Mutter dein insta-Profil entdeckt.</p> 		

Instagram Post	17	18	19	20
Date	20.02.20	20.02.20	21.02.20	22.02.20
Day	Thursday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Type of content promoted	Both	Series	Movie	Series
Producer of promoted content	Both	Original	Original	Original
Name of advertised content	Spencer Confidential; Elite; Ozark	Locke & Key	To all the boys	Riverdale
Objective of the post	Promoting specific content; Promoting the platform; Informing	Show Solidarity; Informing	Promoting specific actor(s)	Promoting specific actor(s)
Type of visual	Image	Image	Image	Image
Image	List	Meme	Actors as Kids	Reposted Content
Video				
Number of visual elements in the post	1	1	9	1
Other elements in the visual	written text; Logo	written text; actor(s) in character	tag; written text; logo; actor(s) not in character	tag; actor(s) not in character
Elements in the written text	2nd person; 1st person; exclamation mark; word in bold letters	1st person; emoticon	exclamation mark	tag; exclamation mark; 1st person
Emotional elements in the written text	excited; engaging	humor	excited; engaging; po	humor; exciting
Word count	20	31	13	7
Likes	98.807	35.866	39.610	66.034
Comments	4.961	525	96	206
Link to the post	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8ypSIWCiep/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8ypSIWCiep/</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B8zEja_K9mz/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B8zEja_K9mz/</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B81ZO0BKNhD/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B81ZO0BKNhD/</a>	<a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/B83aq9anHQN/">https://www.instagram.com/p/B83aq9anHQN/</a>
Post	