

Master Thesis

Co-viewing in a digitalized television landscape

A qualitative research exploring co-viewing behaviour among Dutch student households in a world shaped by digital TV

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Master Thesis
January 2021

ABSTRACT

The television industry is changing due to digitalization and technological developments. The primary means of home video entertainment has shifted from traditional linear television to nonlinear television. This is shaping the work of content producers, TV advertisers and traditional broadcast companies, but also the viewing behaviour of audiences. Television was long established as a social practice usually done in the presence of others, better known as co-viewing. However, more recently scholars observed that the social element of television viewing is slowly being replaced by a more individualistic approach. Therefore, this research focused on how co-viewing practices have been reshaped in a digitalized era. Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with the age group that responds the most actively to these technological changes in the television industry, students living in a student household. These interviews were analyzed using thematic content analysis after which ten themes emerged. These findings give a detailed picture of the experiences and perceptions of co-viewing practices in a student household.

To start with, the television screen plays a significant role in student households for both linear and nonlinear television viewing. The young people in this sample observe that linear television is mostly used for live content and is valued for its familiarity and trustworthiness. In terms of nonlinear television viewing, the participants highly appreciate the freedom that comes with it. This type of viewing is much more convenient in a student household. This freedom, the diverse content and absence of commercials is what draws them the most to nonlinear television. Furthermore, student households have on average access to at least two SVOD platforms or more. When it comes to content, short-term content (e.g. movies) is preferred during co-viewing whereas long-term content (e.g. series) is mostly avoided. In addition, students indicate that content which generates more sociability such as live content, reality TV and poor-quality content is the most popular in a co-viewing setting. Moreover, participants report that contrasting schedules lead to less co-viewing. Additionally, too much content as well as contrasting interests results in a longer selection process among the co-viewing groups. The respondents observe that their mobile phone is the most prominent distraction during co-viewing. Finally, co-viewing continues to be a practice in which the social aspect is key. No obstacle can outweigh the social benefits attained from co-viewing.

KEYWORDS: *Audience research, co-viewing, digital television, viewing behaviour, nonlinear television*

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1. Introduction

In the past two decades, the media landscape has been continuously evolving in response to digitalization and technological innovations. More specifically, digital technology, the internet and mobile media had a profound impact within the television landscape. This enabled new opportunities for the creation, distribution and consumption of television content (Tse, 2016). For a long time, linear television has been the most dominant way of watching television (Morley, 1986). This is defined as the traditional form of television in which the audience watches a scheduled TV program at the specific time it is offered, on the particular channel it is presented on (Han & Lee, 2014). This limits the control of the viewer by place, content and time (Cook, 2016). However, with the emergence of new online forms of television the linear television market is facing competition. The digitalization of television is shaping the work of content producers and TV advertisers including substantial transformations of traditional television broadcast companies and the viewing behaviour of audiences (Chaney, Gartrell, Hofman, Guiver, Koenigstein, Kohli & Paquet, 2014; Tse, 2016). These technological forces and the convergence of television with the online world has resulted in an increase in online television consumption (Nee & Barker, 2019). The primary means of home video entertainment has shifted from traditional linear television sets to nonlinear television forms. Nonlinear television can be understood as a way of viewing that enables place- and time shifting (e.g. Netflix, Ziggo Go). These online platforms, better known as video on demand (VOD) services consist of a continuously expanding collection of content. Today, these new online forms of television are still increasing in number and diversity (Chaney et al., 2014; Tse, 2016). In addition, along with the introduction of complementary technological devices such as smartphones and tablets the viewing experience of television audiences goes beyond the living room. With the use of these gadgets people are now able to watch television anywhere and at any time (Nee & Barker, 2019). Big players in the television industry are convinced of continuous change in the future. In October of 2019 the CEO of Netflix, Reed Hastings, believes that online streaming services will continue to grow and eventually replace linear television over the next ten years (Easton, 2019, October 17).

Digitalization and technological advancements effect the television environment on multiple aspects. One of these aspects is the viewing behaviour of audiences. Television viewing was long established as a social practice usually done in the presence of others (Lull, 1980, 1982; Morley, 1986). However, more recently scholars observed that the social

element of television viewing is slowly being replaced by a more individualistic approach (Gomillion, Gabriel, Kawakami & Young, 2017; Tse, 2016). One of the reasons that encourages a more individual viewing experience is the rise of new technologies. The television screen is no longer the only device to use for television viewing. With the emergence of online gadgets such as mobile phones, tablets and laptops people are now able to watch television on other devices as well. The use of these smaller screens to consume media is associated with a more solitary way of viewing (Nee & Barker, 2019; Rigby, Brumby, Gould & Cox, 2018). These same gadgets as well as the rise of social media also make it possible to watch television while being connected to the online world using a second screen, which is also known as multi-screening. This enables the possibility to watch television with others while not being physically together (Pires de Sá & Roig, 2016). Multi-screening still creates a sense of togetherness through socializing with online communities while watching TV by yourself (Tse, 2016). Moreover, a more individualistic viewing experience is also encouraged with the introduction of VOD services. The most prominent form of VOD services is subscription video on demand (SVOD). These online streaming platforms use a subscription business model in which the users need to pay a subscription fee to get unlimited access to their content. Due to a fast-growing collection of content provided by SVOD services television audiences have relatively to linear television a more diverse and wider array of content options to choose from. On top of that, with the use of algorithmic systems these platforms also offer personalized content which is filtered and suggested according to the subscriber's preferences (Tse, 2016). As a result, some people tend to be more likely to watch something of their own interest instead of coming together with others and spend time choosing something of similar interest (Rigby et al., 2018). Another consequence of the rise of VOD services is the possibility to watch TV series or movies uninterrupted for extended periods of time, also called "binge-watching" (Rubenking, Bracken, Sandoval & Rister, 2018). This new phenomenon is enabled by leaving out commercial breaks and the time period (e.g. week) of waiting between episodes, which usually was the case for linear television. Binge-watching also contributes to a more individualistic way of viewing. Research suggests that more than 80% of people tend to binge-watch alone instead of doing it with others (Sung, Kang & Lee, 2018).

1.1 Societal relevance

In its more traditional sense, television viewing was considered a social activity usually done in the company of others, also known as ‘co-viewing’. This refers to more than one person sitting in front of a TV set watching and discussing a program together (Tal-Or, 2016). Today, these co-viewing practices are reshaping in the current digitalized era. Television co-viewing practices still attracts the attention from TV broadcasters, advertisers and other companies related to the media industry. This is due to the fact that a physically shared television viewing experience brings both economic and social benefits. In terms of the social benefits, co-viewing enables relationship fostering. Throughout the process of co-viewing, audiences share their personal opinion as well as discuss topics related to the content on television. At the same time, group viewing also promotes situated learning and critical thinking through shared meaning-making by using media together (Pires de Sá & Roig, 2016). Therefore, watching television in a joint setting can enhance the viewing experience of the co-viewing group members. Besides co-viewing being a ticket to talk, it also serves other social needs such as demonstrating one’s competence as well as creating intimacy and relationship connections (Tal-Or, 2019). As for romantic partners, co-viewing can function as a way to strengthen and maintain social relationships (Gomillion et al., 2017). Furthermore, in a family group setting co-viewing can result in better family solidarity. It is however possible that co-viewing and its social aspects work differently in different household compositions. Group viewing can lead to more individual viewing whenever the group structures change. For instance, the presence of parents during co-viewing in a family setting can lead to more individual TV consumption among children (Mora, Ho and Krider, 2011). The sociability between the co-viewing members does not only depend on the group composition. Research shows that the social interaction in a co-viewing group is also strongly associated with the structure of the content on television (Ducheneaut, 2008). In terms of the economic benefits, group viewing leads to an improvement in viewer engagement and time watching content. Due to the social element of joint viewing, co-viewing groups turnout to have higher levels of viewer attention and engagement than individual television viewers (Mora et al., 2011). The sociability during television viewing is therefore also closely related to the work of media businesses (e.g. TV advertisers). This is due to the involved shared meaning-making and emergence of discussions related to brands and commercials during co-viewing (Mora et al., 2011; Pires de Sá & Roig, 2016; Tse, 2016). On top of that, co-viewing group members also watch on average around 10% longer and 3% more channels than people watching television by themselves (Mora et al., 2011).

1.2 Scientific relevance

Co-viewing gained early on attention once traditional linear television was established as the most primary medium (Lull, 1982; Morley, 1986). However, recent studies focusing particularly on television consumption with respect to co-viewing remain quite limited. A lot of theories on media effects mainly focus on the individual and do not aim attention at group processes. In addition, until recently, co-viewing research has focused almost exclusively on group compositions such as traditional family households, romantic partners or children and their behavior related to cable television (Ducheneaut, 2008; Tal-Or, 2019). To the best of my knowledge, none of the existing research specifically intended to explore co-viewing among young adults in the new digital environment. Although, they are the generation that responds the most actively to the technological changes and disruptive innovations in the television industry (Nee & Barker, 2019). In the Netherlands nonlinear television viewing has grown significantly over the past few years, especially among the younger audience (Commissariaat voor de Media, 2019, p. 29). Therefore, the aim of this current study is to expand an existing body of literature by doing research in a different context compared to previous research. The main goal of this research is to find out in what way digital television has influenced co-viewing practices in the Netherlands. More specifically, this research will be looking at student households and the way their co-viewing processes look like in this digital age. This study will seek to find the answer to the following research question: ‘How have co-viewing practices been reshaped by digital television?’. To answer this research question this study will conduct interviews with university students in the Netherlands who live in a household with roommates. In this way, insights will be gained about their experiences regarding co-viewing with roommates.

The remainder of this thesis is organized into five more chapters. Chapter two elaborates on previous literature relevant to the topic. Furthermore, the chapter will critically examine previous research theories in relation to audience behaviour to create a suitable framework that will assist in answering the research question of this study. Chapter three covers information about the methods used to gather and analyze the data. More specifically, chapter three will discuss why certain research approaches are chosen and how they are carried out. Chapter four will provide the most important results of the interviews. These results are categorically presented in the main themes that emerged from the data analysis. In addition, these findings are discussed by connecting it to the existing research and theories addressed in chapter two. Finally, chapter five provides a conclusion of the research and an

answer to the research question. It will also present the limitations of the research and potential recommendations for future research.

2. Theory and previous research

This chapter consists of four different sections that each contribute to the theoretical foundation of this study. Relevant literature in terms of the changes in the television industry, the shift in television consumption and previous research on co-viewing practices will be thoroughly explored in the first three sections. In the fourth section, the theoretical framework will be discussed. This chapter intends to provide a theoretical basis for the research question ‘How have co-viewing practices been reshaped by digital television?’.

2.1 The changes in the television industry

This research focuses on Dutch university students and their co-viewing behaviour in relation to digital television. It is therefore essential to look at developments in the television landscape: the rise in technological innovations at the expense of linear television.

In recent years, the television industry has gone through a change in which traditional cable (linear) television is no longer the only source of home video entertainment. Linear television can be understood as the traditional form of television in which the audience watches a scheduled TV program at the specific time it is offered, on the particular channel it is presented on (Han & Lee, 2014). This limits the control of the viewer by place, content and time (Cook, 2016). Linear television is now competing with new online forms of television, also known as nonlinear television, that provides a wide array of content among other advantages.

Some scholars have argued that these new online forms of TV will completely replace linear television, while others remain confident that traditional television viewing will continue to be a fundamental part of society (Tse, 2016). Looking at the Netherlands, nonlinear television is becoming more popular and online television viewing is increasing every year with video on demand (VOD) being the most popular form of online viewing. In 2019 an average of 65,2% of the people in the Netherlands claims to watch VOD every once in a while, which is an increase compared to 49,1% in 2017. More interesting is the age-group between 20-34 years old in which 86,3% of the people watched VOD at least once in 2019. It is even argued that consumers will most likely pay for two or more VOD services in the future. In fact, 25% of all video on demand consumers in the Netherlands already have access to at least two VOD services (Brouwer, 2018). At the same time, 98,9% of the people in the Netherlands watched linear television at least once in 2019. This was a small decrease compared to 2017 in which 99,4% of the people watched linear television (Commissariaat

voor de Media, 2019). These percentages represent people in the Netherlands from at least 13 years old. Even though the changes in linear television viewing are minimal, the growth in online television viewing is relatively quite substantial. These new online forms of television have changed television viewing processes by giving the audience control over how, when, where and what they want to consume (Cook, 2016).

2.1.1 Subscription video on demand services

Non-linear television is defined as a way of viewing that enables place- and time shifting. The audience is able to select a program of their choice and watch it at their leisure. There are several forms of nonlinear television such as AVOD (Advertisement Video on Demand), SVOD (Subscription video on demand) and TVOD (Transactional based Video on Demand). The most prominent form of nonlinear television is subscription video on demand (SVOD). The number of available SVOD services in the Netherlands continue to grow. In 2019, Disney+ and Apple TV became the latest online platforms available to Dutch consumers. The amount of available SVOD services grew to a total of nine among which Netflix and Videoland are considered the most popular (Van Amstel, 2019). The remainder of this sub-section will provide some facts and figures regarding the several SVOD services in the Netherlands.

Netflix

The most popular SVOD service in the Netherlands and worldwide is Netflix. In 2007, Netflix – initially started as a DVD rental service – released the first video on demand service in the United States. The SVOD service subsequently became available in 2013 on the Dutch market and recently counted a total of 3.17 million paid subscribers. It can be considered as an ideal example of a technological disruption in the traditional television industry as the number of users continue to rise leading up to a total of 167 million paid subscribers worldwide in 2020 (Telecompaper, 2020). The market share of Netflix in the Netherlands has increased to a total of 43% in 2019. Unfortunately, Netflix provides very limited information regarding their consumer's consumption behavior. However, the SVOD service did indicate that subscribers worldwide watch 2 hours of Netflix a day on average (Algemeen Dagblad, 2019). The online platform offers a variety of both national and international TV series and films, but also invests largely in producing their own original

content. Netflix has multiple subscriptions available to its users of which the cheapest one starts from €7.99 per month in the Netherlands.

Videoland

Over the last few years Dutch broadcasters and TV providers like RTL, SBS, NPO and Ziggo have entered the Dutch SVOD market by introducing their own online platforms like Videoland, RTL XL, NPO Start Plus and Ziggo Go. Videoland in particular has a quite similar story to that of Netflix. What once started as a DVD rental store in 1984 has now turned into the second most popular SVOD service in the Netherlands. Initially, the retail chain went bankrupt in 2010, but the concept and franchise chain were kept intact. Eventually, the Dutch broadcasting company RTL took the initiative in 2013 to take over the company and launched the SVOD platform Videoland in 2014. According to research by Telecompaper, Videoland has an estimated total of 760.000 paid subscribers in 2019. It aims most attention towards providing local content, but also offers quality international entertainment as well as their own original produced content (Briel, 2019, October 17). The Dutch streaming service offers a subscription of €8,99 per month.

Other national initiatives

Besides Videoland there are more Dutch SVOD services available. For example, the Dutch public broadcaster NPO introduced their SVOD – NPO Plus – in 2018 and counted a total of 250.000 subscribers in 2019. They already offered a free AVOD service, called NPO Start where the audience was able to re-watch the programs from all three NPO channels with advertisement. However, their service allows people to re-watch and watch forward programs and movies without any advertisements for a monthly price of €2,95. The NPO is also part of NLZiet, which is another Dutch SVOD service. NLZiet is a collaboration between three Dutch broadcasters – NPO, RTL and SBS – that was released in 2014 and was estimated to have around 150.000 subscribers in 2019 (Telecompaper, 2020). People can subscribe to NLZiet for €7,95 per month, which grants them unlimited access to all programs of the three broadcasters. Lastly, the Dutch TV provider Ziggo has entered the Dutch SVOD market with its on-demand streaming service Ziggo Movies & Series XL. This streaming service is only available to already existing customers of Ziggo, which can be added to your TV & Internet bundle for €11,95 per month. The SVOD service offers both international and national movies and TV series including the HBO catalogue.

Disney+ and Apple TV+

The most recent international additions to the Dutch SVOD market are Disney+ and Apple TV+. The Walt Disney Company, one of the largest media companies worldwide has launched its subscription streaming service Disney+ in the Netherlands in November of 2019. Since then, the position of Disney+ in the Dutch SVOD market has increased to a 7% market share with an estimated 570.000 subscribers (Telecompaper, 2020). Disney+ mainly aims to provide family-oriented entertainment. From original films, series to animated shorts and documentary-series. Disney+ is available to Dutch consumers for a monthly subscription of €6,99. The SVOD service Apple TV+ became accessible to the Dutch audience in November 2019 as well. Even though there is not a lot of information available on the progress of this streaming service, Telecompaper (2020) did indicate that Apple TV+ is most likely experiencing a slow progress due to its limited content. They mainly focus on original series and documentaries, but also offer a variety of international content. The SVOD service does come at a competitive price of €4,99 per month.

Amazon Prime Video

The American multinational technology company Amazon launched its SVOD service Amazon Prime Video in 2016 in the Netherlands. Amazon Prime Video is part of Amazon Prime, which is a paid subscription program from Amazon that gives users access to additional services otherwise unavailable or available at a premium to regular Amazon customers (Amazon.com, 2020) In 2019 the streaming service was estimated to have around 80.000 Dutch subscribers (Telecompaper, 2020). The SVOD service provides international content to its subscribers as well as their original programming. Compared to other SVOD services in the Dutch Market, Amazon Prime Video belongs to the relatively smaller players. However, the streaming service shows it is growing slowly recently. This might also be a result of their monthly subscription price of €2,99, which currently makes it the cheapest international SVOD service in the Netherlands. A brief overview of the Dutch SVOD market can be found below in table 1.

Table 1. Overview of the SVOD services in the Netherlands

<u>National</u>			
			
Videoland	NPO Plus	NLZiet	Ziggo Movies & Series XL
<u>International</u>			
			
Netflix	Disney+	Amazon Prime Video	Apple TV+

2.2 Television consumption behaviour

The convergence of television and the internet together with the rise of SVODs has led to a shift in consumer's viewing behaviour. One of the changes that is recently seen more often is the shift towards nonlinear television for young adults (Commissariaat voor de Media, 2019, p. 29). Five years ago, young adults in the Netherlands between 20 and 34 years old watched 170 minutes of linear television daily on average, while today this number has decreased to around 80 minutes per day. (Duin, 2020). Research suggests that the generation that responds the most actively to these new forms of TV watching are young adults (Nee & Barker, 2019). This is consistent with the numbers published in an annual research on Dutch viewing behaviour. This report shows that the majority of people using SVOD services and other types of online viewing are young adults between the age 20 and 34 years (Commissariaat voor de Media, 2019, p. 29). Another study carried out by Bergsma in 2019, which investigated the viewing behaviour and selection process of people in relation to SVOD services in the Netherlands also confirms that the younger generation adopts nonlinear television more than linear television. In fact, the only group to which this applies is the age group between 18 and 30 years who spend on average 117 minutes on nonlinear television and 99 minutes on linear television per day. However, linear television is still the most popular used medium among audiences younger than 18 and above 30 with an average of 134 minutes per day as opposed to 104 minutes for nonlinear television. It is interesting to find out why these young adults show to prefer nonlinear television.

Another shift in consumption behaviour is found in the social role of television. Earlier studies on television consumption behaviour by Lull (1990) and Rubin (1981) found that social interaction was a gratification that people look for when watching television. This so called ‘uses and gratifications theory’ claims that people use media to gratify specific wants and needs (Griffin, 2012). More precisely, these studies indicated that people mainly watch television because it brings people together, whether it is their friends coming over to watch a movie or to watch a serie with their family household. Therefore, these studies continuously emphasize on the role of television being a medium that contributes to a sociable setting (Cha, 2016).

However, some researchers found that digitalization in the television industry contributes to reconceptualizing viewing behaviour and the social role linked to watching television. For instance, scholars have expressed their concerns about digitalization being a cause in television viewing becoming more individualized rather than a social activity (Gomillion et al., 2017). This is most likely the result of the audience having more control of how and when to watch something using SVOD services. Another possible explanation could be due to the fact that digitalization makes it possible to watch television on more mediums. Private mediums such as a tablet, laptop or smartphone make it relatively easy to watch content alone. Many scholars suggest that the increase in individual viewing is the result of several factors (Hayes, 2019; Tse, 2016; Vanattenhoven & Geerts, 2017). In the next three sub-sections this thesis will elaborate on three important factors that have contributed to a more individualized television viewing experience.

2.2.1 Personalized and abundant content

Today it is relatively easy for television audiences to watch television anywhere and anytime they want. Due to personalized content and the use of algorithmic systems it is also convenient for consumers to watch content that match their personal interests (Tse, 2016). Netflix itself explains that ‘personalization is one of the pillars of Netflix because it allows each member to have a different view of our content that adapts to their interests and can help expand their interests over time.’ (Netflix, 2020). In this way, Netflix creates a so called ‘member profile’ for each of their consumer.

Furthermore, the numerous SVOD platforms available to customers in the Netherlands with each their own array of content results in an abundance of content to choose from. Netflix alone already offers a collection of content that consists of 3991 movies and

series in the Netherlands. According to Hayes (2019) an overload of choices offered by the current SVOD platforms can help create a so-called ‘audience paralysis’. This means that the decision-making process of individuals can take an extended amount of time – 9.4 minutes among young adults – after which some even decide not to watch at all anymore. In addition, this selection process can be more of a burden when watching in a joint setting in which people have to take into account potential contrasting interests of others.

In a study by Webster and Wakshlag in 1982 that investigates the impact of group viewing on TV program choice, they show that group viewing compromises individual preferences and therefore decreases a person’s individual loyalty towards a certain program type or genre. However, today there is an abundance of content available which makes it easier to watch something of your own interest instead of joining a group viewing. This is confirmed by Bergsma in 2019, who claims that people tend to rather watch something of their own interest than spending time to select something to watch with others. Therefore, it can be assumed that nowadays social experiences are discouraged by having personalized and an abundance of content available to people.

2.2.2 Binge watching

Some SVOD platforms like Netflix also eliminated commercial breaks and therefore enable users to watch entire seasons of series, or films non-stop. This makes it accessible for audiences to watch their favorite TV series or movies uninterrupted for extended periods of time. This phenomenon is also known as “binge watching” (Rigby et al., 2018; Rubenking et al., 2018). Trouleau, Ashkan, Ding and Eriksson (2016) indicate in their study that at least 60% of Netflix users have binge-watched one or more times. Another study in 2017 shows that around 80% of college students participate in binge-watching (Riddle, Peebles, Davis, Xu and Schroeder, 2017). Binge-watching is generally an activity done alone. In fact, in a research by Sung et al. (2018) exploring the motivations for binge-watching the majority of respondents (83%) prefer to binge alone rather than with others (17%). Prior to SVOD platforms this so called “binge watching” was obviously also possible by continuously watching DVD’s or videotapes on your VCR. However, SVOD services make it a lot easier by taking away the hassle of inserting a new DVD whenever you have finished another season of your series. Despite increasing numbers of academic publications on the topic, the concept of binge-watching lacks a standardized definition. However, it is generally defined as

the self-determined consumption of multiple episodes of a serialized show consecutively (Castro, Rigby, Cabral & Nisi, 2019).

The rising popularity of binge-watching also effects traditional business models in the television industry. Steiner and Xu (2018) argue that binge-watching has disrupted these models in the television industry such as television advertising, content production and distribution. For example, some SVOD services do not include traditional advertising and storylines are not constrained anymore to the structure of realizing one episode per week because they can release entire seasons in one go. This accessibility encourages viewers to participate in binge-watching more easily and alters their attitude towards traditional linear television. In fact, a study by Tse (2016) investigates people's sense of togetherness while watching TV in a digital age and found that the audience describes commercials and the week of waiting between episodes as 'unwanted interruptions' (p. 1552).

However, studies more critical of binge-watching have suggested that a longer time span of watching television leads to more inattentive viewing. Even though binge-watching is considered to be a favorable viewing method among college students, it appears to have a negative influence on perceived enjoyment, comprehension and memory of the series (Horvath, Horton, Lodge & Hattie, 2017; Steiner & Xu, 2018). It is not that the attention span of young individuals is shorter, but they do get disrupted more easily, especially by their mobile phones (Mark, 2017). Mobile phone use during television viewing is very common today. In fact, in an online survey 74% of smartphone owners have indicated that they use their smartphone while watching television (Shokrpour & Darnell, 2017). In addition, Holz, Bentley, Church and Patel (2015) argue in their study that their respondent's mobile device use during television viewing was unrelated to the running television show. When watching television for an extended period of time distractions like a mobile phone are likely to happen more often, which leads to less comprehension and memory of the series and thus results in less inattentive viewing. It is therefore safe to conclude that binge-watching has its pros and cons for the consumer and the television industry.

2.2.3 Multi screening

Another factor that is stimulating the audience into more individualized television watching is multi screening. This is defined as making use of second screens such as smartphones, laptops or tablets while watching television. This way of television viewing is becoming more and more common today according to Vanattenhoven and Geerts (2017).

This also corresponds with the research by Tse (2016) in which the results illustrate that audiences do not have to be physically together anymore to watch television because with the use of gadgets such as mobile phones and social networking sites audiences are connected through online communities and are able to watch TV ‘‘alone together’’ (p. 1550). Due to multi screening it is possible to communicate with someone through your ‘‘second screen’’. Thus, you can still watch a show with your friend without being physically together. This so called ‘multiplatform era’ does not require people to physically gather together in order to be social with one another, which was very common to do when linear television was the only medium and when social networking sites did not exist yet. However, that does not mean that multi screening eliminates social interaction entirely, since you can communicate through mediums like WhatsApp while watching a movie. Online television viewing still strongly contributes to sociability and fostering relationships among its viewers. But the way in which this is achieved is simply by doing it virtually (Tse, 2016). Furthermore, the average household size in the Netherlands has consistently been decreasing (Kamer, 2020). In particular, Kamer (2020) expects that the percentage of single households compared to multi-person households will continue to grow. This shift in the living environment might also contribute to less physical co-viewing and more individual or ‘virtual’ co-viewing (Tse, 2016).

While the rise of online platforms and technological devices influence the social practices of television viewing, it is wrong to assume that the media industry and the audience entirely switch from linear television (mass audiences) to nonlinear television (individualized). This makes television co-viewing in the digital age a complex issue. Because this research mainly focuses on joint television consumption behaviour of university students, it will be beneficial to be conscious of and informed about the previously discussed practices and complications related to nonlinear viewing.

2.3 Previous research on co-viewing practices

Television consumption is traditionally considered a social activity that is done in the company of others, also known as ‘co-viewing’ (Tal-Or, 2016). More specifically, Pires de Sá and Roig (2016) define co-viewing as ‘people sitting in front of a TV set watching and discussing a program together’ (p. 394).

2.3.1 Early research

Co-viewing has attracted the attention of both scholars and the media industry since the 1970s, once television was well-established in society and considered the most dominant medium. These early studies examining audience behaviour in relation to co-viewing generally address family households (Leichter, Ahmed, Barrios, Bryce, Larsen & Laura, 1985; Lull, 1980, 1982; Webster & Wakshlag, 1982). Some of these studies address that television created an antisocial experience and killed the 'art of conversation'. In contrast, other research debunks this and argues television to be a contributor to the 'art of conversation' in which it provides a shared experience that increases the amount of conversation both domestically and outside the home (Morley, 1986). In fact, the value associated with a specific television program is usually determined by the amount of social interaction it generates (White, 1986). More specifically, Lull (1980) suggests that early ethnographic research shows that "TV and other mass media, rarely mentioned as vital forces in the construction or maintenance of interpersonal relations, can now be seen to play a central role in the methods which families and other social units employ to interact normatively" (p. 198). A study by Morrison and Krugman in 2001, which examines the social role of media technologies in the home confirms the previous claims and indicates that television consumption is largely considered to be a social activity, usually carried out in groups.

These social functions of television viewing can be distinguished in two ways: internal (direct) and external (indirect) functions. An example of the former is family members watching television together whereas the latter can be understood as television programs being the topic of conversation somewhere outside the home (Ducheneaut, Moore, Oehlberg, Thornton & Nickell, 2008; Morrison & Krugman, 2001). Therefore, it was assumed in the past that television encourages social interaction between television viewers.

2.3.2 Social and economic implications

In quite recent studies academics argue that the technological advancements in the television industry lead to a more individualistic television experience. The reasons why scholars and the media industry continue to be concerned with an increase in individual television consumption is related to the social and economic implications of joint television viewing.

A socially relevant implication is presented by Gomillion et al. (2017). Their research studies the effects of sharing media with a romantic partner when there is an absence of a shared social network. The study shows that consuming media together with a romantic partner could strengthen the relationship quality not only because it allows them to spend more time with each other but also because it enables them to build a shared social identity, which generates a sense of well-being and connectedness. When looking at existing literature covering group viewing in the family context a study by Mora et al. (2011) suggests that this group composition functions as a ‘means to social ends’, such as the emergence of conversations and topics to talk about (p. 449). The study, which explored elements that can either stimulate or deter co-viewing and effects thereof, also argues that family TV consumption can result in bolstering family solidarity while at the same time increase individual television consumption when parents are present. Other factors that would drive co-viewers apart is the growth in single-person households in society but also the complications of the group selection process in which an agreement on the choice of television program is less likely to be attained due to the differences in preferences. Moreover, the results presented not only socially meaningful conclusions but also economically relevant implications such as improving total consumption of television content and viewer engagement (Mora et al., 2011). Other literature that has expanded on the exploration of economic implications of co-viewing provided similar results, describing that co-viewing in general shows to be having higher and more lengthy levels of viewer attention and engagement than individual viewers because of shared meaning-making as well as evoking discussions in relation to brands and advertisements (Pires de Sá & Roig, 2016; Tse, 2016).

2.3.3 Co-viewing among young adults

Academics have explored co-viewing practices in various contexts but still mainly focus on group compositions like families or romantic relationships. This is perhaps due to the majority of traditional household structures and obsolete conditions of the television industry. Therefore, studies on co-viewing including young adults remain limited. The available studies on co-viewing among young adults and their findings will be discussed accordingly.

The research by Ducheneaut et al. (2008) is one of the studies that explores co-viewing among young adults. Their research focuses on groups of friends and the sociability

between them while watching television together. The majority of the participants indicated that the social aspect of co-viewing is what attracts them the most to do it. This confirms earlier studies on the social aspect of joint television viewing (e.g. Lull, 1990; Rubin, 1981). According to Ducheneaut et al. (2008), this social aspect is also associated with the content genre. The authors suggest that particular genres encourage sociability even more. Some popular genres in a co-viewing setting include sports events, documentaries and reality television but also poor-quality movies are considered as a good way to foster social interaction. The dynamic sphere of a show or ability to make fun of people or poor qualities in a program are some of the motives for choosing these specific genres. This is also in line with White (1986), who argues that programs are chosen based on the amount of social interaction it generates.

Other studies on co-viewing practices among groups consisting of young adults seem to contain contradicting information. On one hand, Chaney et al. (2014) examine co-viewing habits and viewer engagement among a substantial amount of 50,000 groups in all different sizes and structures. They argue that younger people participate more often in group viewing than older people. In addition, they also claim that people in their 20s and 30s practically view the same amounts of time in both groups and individually. The information provided by Chaney et al. (2014) is confirmed by the research findings of Rubenking et al. (2018). They explore co-viewing in relation to binge-watching and address that co-viewing is prominent among their sample, which were college students. However, it was also quite common that their participants watched individually and enjoyed discussing binge-worthy content with their peers afterwards. On the other hand, Rigby et al. (2018) investigate people's viewing behaviour with respect to SVOD services with the use of interviews as well as their personal kept diaries. In their research they explain that 75.8% of the analyzed viewing sessions in their study were performed alone whereas 24.2% was watched by more than one person. They signify that the youngest household observed (two young professionals) is the group that participates the least in co-viewing. Even though the information provided by Rigby et al. (2018) is based on just one group consisting of two young professionals, it still contrasts the findings from the other previously mentioned studies.

To better understand co-viewing among young adults it is as much as important to be aware of the reasons and motives that prevents them from watching in a joint setting. One of these reasons is that people prefer to watch something of their own preference rather than spending time choosing to watch something of mutual interest (Rigby et al., 2018). In addition, Ducheneaut et al. (2008) explain that going back and forth to a friend's house or

other public space to watch something together can be considered inconvenient and a reason to prefer individual viewing. Another reason that prevents people from these social gatherings could be due to contrasting schedules. Ducheneaut et al. (2008) also mention that participants rarely used the ability to pause or stop a program, which is the result of group viewing establishing a certain pressure to avoid such actions (Ducheneaut et al., 2008). This could also potentially be a reason for people to watch something individually in order to stay away from these pressures that occur in a joint setting.

Based on recent studies on television consumption which explored co-viewing practices in various contexts, most scholars solely focus on the examination of family households or romantic partners. Even though the younger audience seems to be the most responsive towards these technological advancements. In addition, the limited research on co-viewing that does include younger audiences appear to be contradictory. Moreover, student households and their co-viewing behaviour in the digital age remain unstudied. To fill this gap in the literature, this current study will focus on television co-viewing practices in the context of student households.

2.4 Theoretical framework

Over the years, scholars have developed several different theories and perspectives to explain audience behaviour. In order to understand audience behaviour today it is essential to be informed about the different approaches to analyze why and how people consume media the way they do, especially in times of unlimited choices and ways to do so. In this part, previous theories in relation to audience behaviour will be critically assessed to create a suitable framework which will assist in answering the research question of this study.

2.4.1 Active audience perspective

In early audience studies academics generally explain audiences from the perspective of their assumed passivity. This was due to their beliefs that audiences were nothing more than just mindless receivers of information and observers of visuals provided to them by the mass media (Elliot, 1972). However, because of the continuous developments in the media industry due to digitalization new perspectives have emerged as to how audience behaviour can be interpreted. More specifically, the audience in its traditional context is experiencing a profound shift. Instead of defining audiences as homogenous and easily manipulated both old and new research have argued for the opposite, which is the active audience perspective

(Livingstone, 2000). For example, Siapera examines the relation between television and the emergence of Web 2.0 while looking at audience attitudes. The researcher argues that the audience are not only consumers of media products but also take part in communicative, cultural and social processes (Siapera, 2004). Additionally, digitalization allowed the audience to build online communities separately from broadcasters where they can freely express their opinions on public platforms. Because of this, research has shown that the audience holds a degree of power over the television programs they watch (Baym, 1998).

However, despite the shift from historical passive audience perceptions to theorists advocating for an active audience there are still scholars critical of this active behaviour. Seaman (1992) questions the active audience theory by highlighting that even though people are free to choose to watch what they want and take pleasure from it, that does not mean they can be considered active. More specifically, he argues that ‘‘unless they [the audience] are genuinely aware of the highly constrained character and content of that programming, unless they are genuinely aware of the sorts of information, perspectives, analyses, beliefs and images that are systematically filtered out of the mainstream media, it is simply wrong to suggest that such viewers are truly free in their decisions to act’’ (p. 307).

It is also wrong to assume that digitalization is a main driver of audience’s active behaviours. For instance, a research carried out by Roscoe (1999) implies that even though technologies contribute to enhanced ways to interact with media content, audiences are mainly considered as receivers. They look for premeditated content ready to absorb. However, in a more recent study supporting the active audience perspective, Astigarraga Agirre, Pavon Arrizabalaga and Zuberogoitia Espilla (2016) indicate that traditional and contemporary forms of media complement each other because ‘‘the audience will use both and select one or the other according to the functionality of each medium and the needs they may have at a given point in time’’ (p.142). For the purpose of this study, an active audience perspective will be taken into account and can be defined as viewers actively involved in their pursuit of pleasure from watching television shows and making their own choices (Ang, 1996).

2.4.2 Uses and gratifications theory

The uses and gratifications (U&G) theory claims that people use media to gratify specific wants and needs (Katz, Blumler and Gurevitch, 1973). This theory is rooted in the perspective of audiences as active users. It is considered an essential and widely used theory

when it comes to studying television viewing behaviour. In fact, Potter (2012) showed that the U&G theory ranks fourth place in the most salient approach currently in use within the field of communication. The theory aims to understand audience behaviour and media influences with a focus on the viewer's motives for consumption to satisfy their human needs. In other words, it is a research tradition that "does not ask what the media do to people, but what people do with the media" (Lull, 1980, p.198). The idea is that the audience is motivated and selective in making their own decisions about what to view and what to think about what they see (Katz et al., 1973). Media technologies continuously develop and serve us new ways of consumption. Therefore, the U&G theory will persist in helping academics to comprehend why people consume media the way they do and what effects that might have. The U&G theory by Katz et al. (1973) is based on three premises: it considers audiences not to be passive but actively pursuing media to satisfy their needs, it believes that the audience is conscious enough of their own motives to report them and these self-reports are considered reliable and lastly, it assumes that the media is in competition with each other for sources of need gratification.

U&G theory is applicable within the current research as it has historically been adopted in studies exploring the effects of new media in people's lives (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015). This present study has co-viewing at its core, which can take place using both linear and nonlinear television. For that reason, relevant U&G studies and methods in the context of television and the internet will be analyzed to understand this phenomenon optimally.

U&G of television

Early research on television viewing practices using the U&G theory shows multiple updates. For instance, McQuail, Blumler and Brown (1972) established five motivations for television viewing: media-person interactions, diversion, personal relationships, personal identity and surveillance. This typology was extended by Greenberg in 1974 by finding seven motives: relaxation, habit, passing time, companionship, learning, arousal and escape. Moreover, Rubin (1981) found similar gratifications but revealed additional ones: desire to watch specific program content and social interaction. Other uses and gratifications emerged when the U&G theory was used to examine television viewing in different contexts. For instance, various studies focus on the U&G of specific genres of television programming to understand why individuals choose that particular genre. For example, gratifications for public TV consisted of education, relaxation, forgetting, passing time, companionship, communications utility and entertainment (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015). Whereas the

gratifications found for the reality TV genre included additional gratifications such as TV personalities and schadenfreude (pleasure from someone else's misfortune) (Barton, 2013).

A lot of already existing uses and gratifications are appropriate to consider in this current research such as companionship, social interaction, relaxation and arousal because they look relevant in relation to co-viewing practices. However, taking into account the uses and gratifications related to television is not sufficient enough as this study focuses on co-viewing practices in times of digital television. Therefore, it is necessary to look at more contemporary studies in which the U&G theory is used in the context of nonlinear television.

U&G of the internet

Many scholars argue that nonlinear television demands an active audience due to the fact that viewers have to be selective of and decide on the time, platform and content. In other words, deliberate choices have to be made to consume specific content. Whereas linear television consumption can sometimes be unintended (Katz et al., 1973). Because the television industry is transforming, so are the viewing practices, motives and gratifications of the audience. More precisely, Ruggiero (2000) presents three aspects of the internet that distinguishes itself from traditional media: interactivity, de-massification, and asynchronicity. In other words, more control, more choice and more authority over time to consume. These three attributes can extend the number of potential gratifications the audience may look for through internet usage (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015). In fact, a study by Steiner and Xu in 2018, which explored how binge-watching and technologies have changed the ways viewers interact with television confirms the previous claim. Their study illustrates that binge-watching expands the variety of reasons than those claimed by the U&G theory, including catching up, relaxing, gaining a sense of completion, experiencing cultural inclusion and improving viewing experience. Because of the interactive role of the internet the U&G theory is constantly reformulated. An earlier study by Hoffman and Novak in 1996 introduces the concept of interactivity on the idea of "flow". This stands for the audience starting to take pleasure from the process of browsing the internet while looking for content. Another example is the study of LaRose, Mastro and Eastin (2001) in which they talk about gratifications sought (GS) and obtained (GO) to emphasize the interactivity of the internet. A person can go online to seek one gratification but ends up with another. These studies added new gratifications such as content, process and social interactivity to the U&G theory of the internet. Because technological developments in the television industry result in new online

behaviour it is necessary to consider these gratifications associated with the internet that potentially could apply to co-viewing of nonlinear television.

2.4.3 Non-media centric approach

This paper looks at audience behaviour in terms of co-viewing practices. Therefore, by just paying attention to the audience motives related to their media choices will not provide a sufficient enough answer to the research question of this study. In order to answer the research question adequately the media should not be the only focus. This is confirmed by Morley (1986) as he argues that “the media are an integral part of the way the everyday is conducted and media decisions are constantly crossed through and influenced by nonmedia conditions and decisions” (p. 9). In other words, a person’s co-viewing experience goes beyond their motivations to watch certain content. In fact, co-viewing practices are so ingrained in household routines, which is why it is valuable to incorporate the non-media centric approach to understand how Dutch university students take part in and interpret co-viewing practices within their home environment.

The non-media centric approach helps to make sense of co-viewing practices by treating it as a routinely practice and focusing on how the media is also interwoven in materialities, socialities and daily habits while considering media content as subordinate (Deuze, 2012; Pink & Leder Mackley, 2013). Moores (2012) claims that media uses cannot be understood as an isolated activity anymore and that the non-media centric approach fits well with examining the daily consumption of media alongside other (social) practices. Therefore, the non-media centric approach suits well with the concept of co-viewing practices. It enables the researcher to make meaning out of the routines and choices of the audience that go beyond their media uses while participating in co-viewing.

Pink and Leder Mackley (2013) incorporate this approach in an ethnographic study of media beyond media content by looking at the role of media in routines of everyday life within the home environment. The non-media centric approach in their research consists of a framework with three elements associated with the home environment: environment/place, movement/practice and perception/sensory embodied experience. The first element can be defined as “the coming together of the multiple processes and movements of things that converge in ways that are constantly shifting and changing, to constitute home” (Pink & Leder Mackley, 2013, p. 683). This current study will apply the first element by considering the household situation: household composition, arrangement of shared spaces, available

media devices. The next element points out the movement of people in the home environment. This is specified as how people move within the home and become intertwined as they face other persons. Therefore, the current research will pay attention to how co-viewing takes place when living together with people that have different lifestyles. Lastly, the element of perception and sensory embodied experience concentrates on how a person perceives the aspects of the home and how movements in the home environment are experienced. This will be incorporated into the current study by analyzing the attitudes and feelings of people towards co-viewing practices within their household. Overall, the elements developed by Pink and Leder Mackley (2013) will provide guidance in moving away from media-centrism and focus on the role of media in everyday life in ways that go beyond the content. This will eventually contribute to a more profound explanation of co-viewing practices in student households.

Summary

In this chapter, previous research regarding (non)linear television (consumption) was analyzed as well as television co-viewing practices. To understand co-viewing practices among student households in times of digital television several theories are relevant to shed a light on the behaviour and motives in both a media and nonmedia context, including the active audience perspective, U&G theory and non-media centric approach. In the remainder of this study the methodological choices will be explained to carry out this research. This is followed by the results of the analysis and the discussion thereof after which a conclusion is formulated.

3. Methodology

The goal of this research is to examine how co-viewing practices have been reshaped by digital television. To do so, this study investigates university-age students in the Netherlands. This chapter discusses the methodological choices made to carry out this research. Since the purpose of this study is to gain detailed insights into people's experiences with respect to a certain phenomenon a qualitative rather than a quantitative approach is used. More specifically, qualitative interviews are used in order to answer the research question. Using this method allowed the researcher to shed a light on both the traditional and digital television consumption behaviour, motives and patterns of university students living with roommates in relation to co-viewing.

3.1 In-depth interviews

Qualitative analysis in the form of qualitative interviews functioned as the methodological foundation of this research. The intention of qualitative interviews is to gather comprehensive information about participant's experiences by asking open questions that deal with their opinions, motivations and understandings of a certain phenomenon (Flick, 2018). Therefore, from all the qualitative methods available, conducting interviews was the most appropriate option for this study because it will generate a profound understanding of the potential participants' social life related to a particular practice (Hermanowicz, 2002). These objectives are consistent with the posed research question, which implies the need to elicit detailed and personal information from university students about their experiences with co-viewing in a student household. By doing so, the researcher was able to make meaning out of these results using themes and words, which eventually led to a better understanding of the organization and processes of co-viewing among young viewers (Hermanowicz, 2002). In line with Kvale (2011), this research used semi-structured interviews to attain data. This is a common approach that is used to explore "the lived daily world from the subjects' own perspectives" (p. 11). Another reason to rely on semi-structured interviews is because they are neither completely open nor restricted questioning sessions and have the ability and flexibility to create a conversation-style interview between the interviewer and interviewee (Kvale, 2011). The semi-structured interviews are guided by an interview schedule, which included predetermined questions and themes that established the direction and laid out the areas of interest (Appendix A). However, the order in which these topics were addressed in the interview was dependent on the participants involved

(Flick, 2018). Open-ended questions were designed for each of these topics to gather more detailed information.

3.2 Sampling

The research question imposes several criteria that participants had to meet before they could be included in the sample. They were included in the sample based on their nationality (language), education level, age and housing situation. Dutch nationality is required to avoid potential language barriers during the interviews, which has been addressed by multiple scholars as a fundamental challenge to overcome when carrying out interviews sufficiently (Flick, 2018; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009). For instance, it is crucial to diminish language barriers they can result in a loss of nuance, which can ultimately threaten the exhaustiveness of the collected data. Speaking the same language can also help with establishing commonalities between the interviewer and interviewees, which will eventually enhance rapport (Flick, 2018). Therefore, the interviews were held in Dutch.

The next criterium is that the participants had to be university students. This matters due to their specific housing conditions. This requirement is included because this study aims to explore co-viewing behaviour among roommates. Thus, students should be living in a shared household but not with their family or romantic partner. In the Netherlands, there are two types of higher education: research-oriented (WO) and profession-oriented (HBO) education. Research-oriented education is primarily offered by research universities and profession-oriented education by universities of applied sciences (Education in the Netherlands, n.d.). In an annual research report focusing on the Dutch student population and their housing circumstances in 2019, Hooft van Huijsduijnen, van Hulle, Marchal, van der Lelij and Zwanenveld mention that university students are the largest group (70%) to live away from home after which students going to a university of applied sciences follow with 41%. From the group of university students living away from home, a total amount of 123,400 students live in a house with shared facilities. Among the group of university of applied sciences students living away from home 80,300 students live in a house with shared facilities. To maximize the chances of finding enough participants, both university (WO) and university of applied sciences (HBO) students were included in this research. In the same research report by Hooft van Huijsduijnen et al. (2019), it is explained that the Netherlands counts a total of 695,000 university and university of applied sciences students and the majority of these students are between 18 and 25 years old. This leads directly to the

requirement age and for that reason this study paid attention to the largest and most representative group of Dutch university students between the age of 18 and 25 years old.

The fact that the participants involved in this research were university and university of applied sciences students between 18 and 25 years old also presented another opportunity to enhance rapport based on commonalities such as having the same age, education level and being in a similar life stage. Broom, Hand and Tovey (2009) argue that possible dissimilarities between the interviewer and interviewee can lead to the participant being less detailed in explaining their views, also called ‘interviewee reserve’. When preventing interviewee reserve by creating a shared language a larger amount of reciprocity will be achieved, which will eventually lead to more profound findings.

Qualitative in-depth interviews were conducted with a total of thirteen Dutch university students. A complete overview of the sample and additional information can be found in table 2. The thirteen participants were recruited via personal contacts, Instagram and Facebook. The initial plan to recruit participants face-to-face and conducting face-to-face interviews was not possible due to the outbreak of the corona virus and therefore quarantine rules and regulations had to be respected and followed to ensure everyone’s safety.

In terms of the sampling method, the snowball technique was used to find more suitable participants. This method assumes that enough interview participants will be recruited based on the referrals of other participants (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981). Even though the snowball sampling technique successfully resulted in enough respondents, it also led to narrow demographic differences in terms of gender because most women introduced their female friends. Therefore, the sample consists of 10 female and 3 male students of which all were in their last year of studying. All names mentioned in this research are pseudonymous to assure the participant’s anonymity. All participants were between the ages of twenty-three and twenty-five at the time of the interview. All respondents lived with at least one roommate.

Table 2. Sample overview

Name	Age	Gender	Education level	Residence	Number of Roommates
Xiomara	24	F	HBO	Diemen	2
James	25	M	WO	Rotterdam	2
Levy	24	M	WO	Rotterdam	5
Nikki	25	F	WO	Amsterdam	2
Tyler	24	M	WO	Rotterdam	1
Aaliyah	25	F	HBO	Amsterdam	2
Ciara	25	F	HBO	Rotterdam	3
Delilah	23	F	HBO	Delft	1
Kehlani	23	F	HBO	Diemen	2
Esra	25	F	HBO	Delft	1
Isabella	23	F	HBO	Schiedam	1
Jasmine	25	F	HBO	Tilburg	2
Chloe	23	F	WO	Leiden	2

3.3 Data collection

The research question seeks to understand how co-viewing practices have been reshaped by digital television. To properly answer this question an interview schedule was created that touched upon different topics related to consumption habits of the participants both individually and in a co-viewing setting. Topics included but were not limited to time spend watching television, access, content interests and viewing motivations and experiences. The overall goal was to find out which factors influence the way students watch television in a shared household. More specifically, this research looks at why and how people prefer to watch television together and alone. Asking about a person's individual viewing behaviour added in contrast, which will eventually help to make more sense of their co-viewing behaviour. For the purpose of this research, participants were free to talk about any kind of platform – linear or non-linear – which led to more extensive outcomes.

The interviews began with a set of introduction questions, continued with questions regarding their individual viewing behaviour and then concluded with questions about their living situation and co-viewing behaviour. Asking questions using terms that needed an explanation such as co-viewing was avoided to minimize the chances of a misunderstanding. Therefore, natural language was used to describe and simplify such terms.

Because in person interviews were not possible due to the outbreak of the corona virus, another appropriate alternative was necessary to collect the data. One of these alternatives which is the most applicable for the purpose of this research without entirely losing the perks of in person interviews is online interviews via video communication platforms – also known as Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) technologies (e.g. Skype, Zoom or Facetime). Recent studies have shown that video communication technologies can be adopted successfully as a data collection tool to expand research interviewing strategies (Archibald, Ambagtsheer, Casey & Lawless, 2019; Gray, Wong-Wylie, Rempel & Cook, 2020). However, given the fact that it is different from face-to-face interviews it was essential to get familiar with these platforms as a research tool and be aware of its advantages and disadvantages to be able to obtain valid data and undermine as many obstacles as possible. According to both Archibald et al. (2019) and Gray et al. (2020), using VoIP technologies for qualitative interviews would not result in a loss of rapport and includes conveniences such as being able to be time and cost efficient, but also establishing a higher rate of comfortability on the participant side by allowing them to be in a space of their own choosing without interrupting too much of their usual planning. However, the main disadvantage of using VoIP technologies for qualitative interviews is technological difficulties, which can affect call quality (Archibald et al., 2019). To guarantee the quality of each online interview and diminish technological difficulties on both sides the interviewer provided the participant with technological information in advance. For instance, the interviewer recommended the participant to sit inside their home close to a strong Wi-Fi signal, make use of a fully charged device and if possible, to make use of a headset with a microphone to improve audio quality.

The thirteen interviews lasted between forty-five minutes to an hour. The interviews were conducted via three different VoIP platforms, Zoom, Skype and Facetime. Zoom and Skype offer a video recording tool and were therefore considered the most pleasant to use. However, all interviews were also additionally recorded with a separate hand recorder as a safety back-up. Notes were made by the researcher during the interviews to keep the interviews structured. All interviews were transcribed verbatim in the spoken language (Dutch). Halcomb & Davidson (2006) describe verbatim transcripts as the ‘reproduction of verbal data, where the written words are an exact replication of the audio recorded words’ (p. 38). For the analysis, only relevant pieces of the transcribed interviews were translated to English. Translating data to another language can bring complications as it relies on the language and interpretation expertise of the researcher. Not every word can be translated into English and some words carry different meanings, which makes translating transcribed data a

complex process (Temple & Young, 2004). Therefore, a potential linguistic loss might be inevitable. Participants verbally gave informed consent and indicated to stay anonymous, which is why all the participant names in this research are pseudonyms.

3.4 Data analysis

The transcripts are analyzed with qualitative content analysis. More specifically, thematic analysis is applied to examine the collected data. The goal of this research is to answer the research question ‘how have co-viewing practices been reshaped by digital television?’, which indicates the need to find motives and patterns in relation to the television consumption behaviour of Dutch students. Therefore, thematic analysis is the most appropriate data analysis method as it is a well-known strategy in qualitative studies to identify and analyze patterns in data (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Additionally, this way of analyzing fits this research the most as it also allows the researcher to interpret the data meaningfully by focusing primarily on the data and the previously discussed theoretical concepts (Riessman, 2008). According to Vaismoradi, Jones, Turunen and Snelgrove (2016), thematic analysis is characterized as a ‘systematic process of coding, examining of meaning and provision of a description of the social reality through the creation of theme’ (p. 100). This analysis is carried out according to the thematic analysis multistage process using open, axial and selective coding as the three coding stages, which helps to break down large amount of data (Boeije, 2010).

Before starting the coding process, Vaismoradi et al. (2016) recommend an initial phase to familiarize oneself with the data by reading the interview transcripts multiple times as well as taking reflective notes. By doing so, the researcher created an overall understanding of the data and the main concerns in the phenomenon under study (Vaismoradi et al., 2016). Aforementioned relevant theoretical concepts and expectations were also taken into account during the coding process and served as a guiding line throughout the analysis. All interviews were coded individually in the open coding phase, which led to a combined set of codes that have a returning pattern. This step particularly focused on the first data reduction and organization, in which initial codes are created and briefly described (Boeije, 2010). Initial codes can be understood as ‘a feature of the data that appears interesting to the analyst and refer to the most basic element of the raw data that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon’ (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 88). These initial codes were then organized into fewer, more meaningful groups during the axial coding phase.

Ultimately, the final themes started to develop in the selective coding phase. This last step included the refinement of the axial codes and reduce the list of findings by combining them into final groups that each form an overarching theme (Boeije, 2010). The ten final themes include co-viewing setting, linear television use, nonlinear television use, platform use, co-viewing content, organizing co-viewing, co-viewing selection process, distractions, obstacles to co-viewing and advantages of co-viewing. When these final themes were identified the researcher was able to formulate a new theoretical model, which will be discussed subsequently in this study to ultimately establish a conclusion.

4. Results

This chapter will introduce the most relevant themes that emerged from the data. Each theme will be presented and explained by using examples from the interviews. After finishing the coding process of the interviews, the ten final themes that occurred are (1) co-viewing setting, (2) linear television use, (3) nonlinear television use, (4) platform use, (5) co-viewing content, (6) organizing co-viewing, (7) co-viewing selection process, (8) distractions, (9) obstacles to co-viewing and (10) advantages of co-viewing. Each theme will be thoroughly explained in the following sections.

4.1 Co-viewing setting

The first theme is the setting in which the participants watch television together with their roommates. The co-viewing setting consists of three different aspects: when, where and what. The first aspect refers to which part of the day is spent on co-viewing with roommates, the second aspect determines where in the house co-viewing takes place and the last aspect presents what device is mostly used for co-viewing.

In terms of ‘when’, the majority of participants indicated that they mostly watch television together with their roommates in the late afternoon or evening. This is considered the most convenient part of the day to watch television together with roommates as it is usually a time when work and/or school is finished, and everybody is spending time at home. Some participants were very specific in terms of what parts of the day they do or do not watch television together. For instance, the 23-year-old student Kehlani notes that co-viewing with roommates never happens in the morning: ‘Usually end of the afternoon and evening, but never in the morning because that is when everybody is in a rush and is doing something for themselves’. Something similar is said by Xiomara, 24, when she was asked about which part of the day she spends on co-viewing with roommates: ‘In the afternoon, but mostly in the evening. We never really do that [co-viewing] in the morning actually’. Not only the mornings are considered inconvenient to spend on co-viewing, but also weekends appear to be difficult. Chloe, a 23-year-old student, answered the question quite extensively by saying the following: ‘Always in the evening on weekdays, never in the weekends really because then we usually do our own things. Most of the time we do it [co-viewing] in the evenings after dinner’. The weekends are usually spent individually as well as the morning and afternoon. The late afternoon and evening during weekdays are therefore the most convenient times to co-view because their individual schedules allow them to.

The second aspect of this theme is ‘where’. This paragraph presents in which part of the house co-viewing usually takes place among roommates. Twelve out of the thirteen respondents indicated that they have a common area in the house which functions as the living room. This is the part of the house where everyone usually comes together to co-view. However, Levy, 24, pointed out that the house where he lives does not have a common area, which means that co-viewing generally takes place in someone’s bedroom: ‘‘We don’t have a shared living room. However, all bedrooms are quite spacious so when we want to watch something together, we just go to someone’s bedroom’’. Whenever a shared space is not present the household will find another way to gather together and watch television. However, this does depend on household and room size as Levy indicates the importance of the private bedrooms being spacious enough. Having enough room for everyone to watch television together in a comfortable setting is considered valuable.

Lastly, the third aspect of the co-viewing setting describes what device is mostly used for co-viewing. The twelve participants saying they have a shared living room also noted the presence of a television screen in that part of the house, which is always used when they watch something together (linear and nonlinear). Therefore, the television screen is considered the most favored device to use for co-viewing among roommates. The majority of these twelve students indicated that their use of a television screen for co-viewing is due to the bigger screen size of the device in comparison to other alternatives (e.g. laptop or tablet) and the ease of use. Also Levy, who stated his household does not have a common area claimed that they only gather together in a bedroom where a television screen is present: ‘‘It is always in a bedroom that has a television screen, because the screen is much bigger’’. In addition, he noted that one of his roommates has a beamer (video projector), which is also something they make use of every now and then.

To conclude, all respondents show a preference for co-viewing in the late afternoon or evening with their roommates. These are usually the moments that the majority of the household is at home and available to co-view. Watching television together mostly happens in a common room such as a shared living room, which most often has a television screen present. Therefore, the presence of a television screen in those rooms as well as its screen size is why it is the most used device for co-viewing in a student household.

4.2 Linear television use

This section will discuss the use of linear television among the participants and their roommates. Despite the increasing popularity of nonlinear television, most of the participants still frequently use linear television. A few of the participants even indicated that they prefer linear television over nonlinear television when watching with their roommates. On the other hand, four respondents claim they never watch linear television at all.

One of the reasons why participants turn to linear television is because it does not involve a lot of effort to do so. For example, Chloe says: ‘‘We watch [linear] television out of comfort because it’s just so easy to do. You just turn it on, choose something easily and then don’t pay a lot of attention to it’’. Another respondent also notes the ease of use of linear television by comparing it to nonlinear television. Ciara, a 25-year-old living with three roommates, states that she finds the selection process of nonlinear television to be a burden, which is why she prefers linear television:

It’s just easier to turn it on and watch that [linear] instead of going to Netflix and really choose something you want to watch. Because if you want to use Netflix you have to spend time choosing something to watch and then you always have discussions. TV [linear] is just TV and it always offers programs that create a feeling of togetherness.

According to the previous statement by Ciara, linear television is perceived as a tool to enhance sociability between a co-viewing group. She says that the use of television in a group setting can create a feeling of togetherness. Therefore, television viewing with others can result in increasing social benefits. However, some participants identify linear television viewing more as a subsidiary activity instead of it having a primary role. According to Chloe, linear television creates atmosphere by using it more as background noise:

We watch more traditional [linear] tv than digital [nonlinear], because it’s just easier to watch traditional tv together. Usually when we sit downstairs in the living room, we just turn on the tv [linear] and never really watch with our full attention. We can do anything we want at the same time such as chatting. With a movie we pay full attention and we really have to plan to do something like that. With traditional tv it’s not like that, that’s just additional and not the focus point.

Another reason why the participants still watch linear television is due to the fact that some television programs broadcast live events. Before there were SVOD services people had to follow the broadcasting schedules of the television channels. You had to adjust your own agenda in order to watch your favorite program. Today with the presence of SVOD services you can easily miss three episodes and watch them back at a more convenient time.

However, James, 25-year-old student, explains that it is still important to watch certain events in real-time: “We always watch football live on television [linear] since it is not something you watch back because then you already know the scores and results”. With all the accessible sources of information through WhatsApp group chats, Instagram, Facebook or just the internet it is quite hard to avoid spoilers of certain sports events. Especially, when you follow the Instagram accounts of players of your favorite sports team. Besides watching live sports events, Isabella, 23, also notes other programs you need to watch live, such as the news or reality game shows such as the *Voice of Holland*: “We watched the press conferences together about the corona virus and sometimes we watch the Voice. We just want to stay up to date about the circumstances and what happens in the world”. Watching these programs live might also be due to the fact that people want to be part of the conversation in and outside the home. However, the COVID-19 pandemic is a different situation. Since it is a prominent and worldwide issue the desire to stay up to date regarding this topic might be higher than the usual desire to follow live news. In fact, the 25-year-old student Esra mentions that she and her roommate only watch linear television for the sole purpose to follow the COVID-19 press conferences: “We never watch linear tv together. Recently we did because of the corona situation so we watched the press conference about that, but other than that we never have linear tv on.” However, other than that it looks like the news, or linear television for that matter, is not watched at all in their household. Reality game shows like the *Voice of Holland*, *Expeditie Robinson* or *Wie is de Mol?* are also still popular to watch live among the participants. Nevertheless, they too have several sources of spoilers similar to live sports events.

There are four participants in particular who claim that they do not watch linear television at all. Some of them do not even have a subscription anymore or just pay for it because it is included in the rent. One of the reasons for this is that watching movies through linear television has a lot of commercials while most SVOD services do not (e.g. Netflix). Xiomara is one of the respondents who notes this reason: “Whenever you want to watch a movie together you don’t really go for normal [linear] television because it has a lot of

commercials’’. Some of the participants cannot even remember the last time they watched linear television.

In short, linear television is mainly used by the respondents because it feels effortless, it produces social benefits, and it broadcasts live programs. The main reasons to not use linear television is because of commercials and the lack of diverse and relatable content.

4.3 Nonlinear television use

The following sub-section will focus on the use of nonlinear television by the participants. Almost all of the participants mention ‘convenience’ as one of the most important advantages of nonlinear television. They value the freedom of deciding what, when and where you watch certain content. With SVOD services the participants can choose any content they and their roommates want to see.

The majority of the interviewees have also indicated that the offered content is an important motive to use nonlinear television. According to Isabella one of the advantages of nonlinear television is that the content is more diverse than on linear television: ‘‘The content is so diverse, you have way more choice. Too much choice that you just don’t know what to watch anymore. But that freedom in choice is something important to us. You choose what you want to watch’’. Note that Isabella also acknowledges that the abundance of content with SVOD services can result in decision stress. Chloe claimed something similar about the abundance of content on nonlinear television: ‘‘We always scroll through Netflix to see what’s popular. But it can take a very long time. It just takes a long time because there is so much to choose from. It never really goes smoothly’’. Again, the great amount of content results in decision stress. In Chloe’s case this results in a lengthy selection process when she is watching television with her roommates.

Another reason why the respondents turn to nonlinear television is because of the impracticality of planning. Living in a student household usually results in everyone having their own schedule. Thus, there are usually limited occasions when at least two people are home and have time to watch television together. This makes it very convenient to watch exactly what the co-viewing group wants to watch at that particular moment. According to Esra, a student household makes it hard to watch a certain program together at a fixed time: ‘‘With digital tv [nonlinear] you can decide together when you watch something. With traditional television [linear] you have to plan when everybody is home to watch a certain program at a fixed time on the television and that doesn’t work for us’’. The freedom that

nonlinear television provides in terms of watching anything at any time fits the most with a student household. The broadcasting schedule of linear television does not go well together with a household in which there are contrasting individual agendas.

Finally, nonlinear television is preferred over linear television because of the absence of commercials. The majority of channels on linear television contain commercials in between programs or movies. Many SVOD services such as Netflix or Videoland take this obstacle away by not showing commercials at all. Some participants see this as a big advantage of SVOD services and Isabella is even willing to pay to avoid these interruptions during movies: ‘‘Another big thing is those annoying commercials. It really irritates me. You don’t have that with paid on demand services because you obviously pay for it, but it’s so worth it’’. The absence of commercials is reason enough to turn to nonlinear television rather than linear television.

According to the respondents, the freedom to watch anything, anywhere and at any moment without any unwanted interruptions (commercials) draws them the most towards nonlinear television. Even though the abundance of content available on nonlinear television can result in extra decision stress and a lengthier selection process, the amount and diversity of that content is still highly appreciated.

4.4 Platform use

The participants revealed to have diverse attitudes and motives towards the use of different nonlinear platforms. Taking into account this information and understanding why student households use particular nonlinear platforms for co-viewing will eventually provide a more extensive answer to the research question of this study.

To begin with, Netflix is the most popular nonlinear platform among the thirteen participants. Twelve out of the thirteen students have pointed out their preference for Netflix among which three participants even said they use Netflix only. The two most common reasons for the favored use of Netflix are that it offers a large and diverse amount of content that speaks the most to the participants. Tyler, a 24-year-old student says:

Netflix is more diverse, there is something for everyone. There are things I like, things my roommate likes and things we both like. And my Netflix account is installed on the tv so it’s also more about convenience that we use it a lot.

Tyler also states the convenience of Netflix being installed on their television. According to Chloe, this takes away the extra effort to transfer content from another device to a television screen with for example a Chromecast or an HDMI cable: “We always watch movies together and Netflix is automatically installed on the tv screen and Videoland isn’t so it’s easier and quicker to turn Netflix on and choose something from there”. This is the second most recurring reason when the participants voiced their preference for Netflix. In most cases Netflix is automatically installed on the television.

The majority of the respondents indicated that they are subscribed to two or more SVOD services. In all of these cases the Dutch SVOD service Videoland was included. However, the use of Videoland is minimal compared to the use of Netflix and it generally depends on specific content Videoland offers. Participants frequently mention that they turn to Videoland only because of a particular movie or series they want to watch. Esra for example claims the following: “We actually wanted to watch something specifically on Videoland, which is why we used that platform”. Often these movies or series on Videoland were recommended to the participants by people around them, such as friends or family. Videoland is not really used for browsing and searching for potential new series or movies to watch because of the lack of (diverse) content. According to Ciara, the substantial amount of Dutch content on Videoland results in her leaning more towards Netflix: “Videoland has more Dutch movies and series and Netflix has a much wider collection, so we usually choose something from Netflix”. This is partly due to the fact that Videoland focuses mainly on the Dutch market. However, it seems like primarily offering Dutch content does not always play in their favor.

It also appears that not only SVOD services are used for co-viewing in a student household. YouTube, which is defined as an online video-sharing platform, was also mentioned in multiple interviews. Although most scholars do not perceive the platform as television, YouTube is one of the most popular websites with worldwide visitors watching around 6 billion hours of video every month (What is YouTube, n.d.). YouTube offers alternative content, which generally cannot be found on a platform such as Netflix. According to Tyler, music videos and podcasts are genres that seem to do well in a co-viewing setting: “We also watch a lot on YouTube together. Mostly music videos and then we talk about it or sometimes podcasts and then we listen and talk about it”. Additionally, recipe videos and vlogs are also some of the content genres mentioned by participants.

Most of the participants claim that they are subscribed to at least two SVOD services. Netflix belongs to the most used nonlinear platform. The popularity of Netflix is due to the

large and diverse amount of content as well as the convenience of it being automatically installed on the television screens of most participants. The second most used nonlinear platform is Videoland. This platform is mainly used among the respondents for specific content only. However, it seems like Videoland is not a platform used for browsing and discovering new content as it lacks diverse content.

4.5 Co-viewing content

In the past there was only a limited number of television channels to choose from if you wanted to watch television. Today there is an abundance of content available on all kinds of platforms. Since every individual has their own preferences it is relatively easy to choose your own desirable content. However, many other factors have to be taken into account if you want to watch content in a group setting. This can result in watching certain content in a group setting which you would not watch alone. This is agreed upon by Jasmine, a 25-year-old student: ‘I notice that I watch totally different things together than when I watch something alone’. Long-term content such as series that contain several seasons and episodes require a lot of planning. However, this is not required for short-term content like movies or documentaries. Sometimes short series are also convenient to watch together according to Ciara: ‘We can watch a short series together because it’s just 5 episodes instead of seasons. When it’s too long we don’t watch it together, that’s too big of a challenge’. This might be one of the reasons why the chosen content is dependent on whether people watch alone or in a group.

The respondents prefer to watch certain content live. Content such as sports events or live press conferences might interest more people in one household. One of the participants lives in a house with two other males who are sports fans just like himself. According to James football is the only thing they watch together on television: ‘Whenever there is football on television we usually watch together because we are all football fans’. Although it is content you can also easily watch alone, watching it together is more entertaining according to Tyler: ‘It’s [football] more exciting and fun to watch when you can share that with other people. It gives this feeling of social connection’. Therefore, particular content is preferred to watch in a group setting as it sustains and even boosts sociability during co-viewing.

This feeling of social connection does also occur when watching nonlinear content. Almost all of the participants watch nonlinear content together with their roommates every

now and then. Yet almost none of them watch series together. Xiomara is one of the participants that prefers to watch movies together: ‘‘With a movie you are done once the movie is finished. With a series you are really stuck to each other to do it again’’. Besides movies, reality television shows are also popular nonlinear co-viewing content among the participants:

It’s usually those kinds of programs [reality tv] or easy movies that allow you to chat while watching as well. When you’re watching with two people it’s easier to quietly pay attention to something, but when you’re with a group of three you notice that that becomes more difficult. (Nikki, 25)

According to the 25-year-old student Nikki reality television shows are more fun to watch when there are more people present. She also observes differences in sociability between co-viewing group sizes. It seems that the number of people in a co-viewing group is negatively correlated with concentration.

The chosen content for a co-viewing group is influenced by several factors. It is mainly caused by the differences in content duration. More specifically, in a co-viewing setting short-term content is preferred over long-term content. The participants also prefer to watch certain content with their roommates since it encourages sociability, such as live sports events and reality tv.

4.6 Organizing co-viewing

This sub-section will pay attention to the experiences that participants have with how co-viewing takes place in their household. Co-viewing is done in a group of two people or more. Therefore, an essential element for co-viewing to take place is having two or more people present at home. In a student household everyone lives according to their own planning and no one is usually obligated to be at home at a certain time. Nikki claims that this is a common issue in her household:

My lifestyle is also not really similar to that of my roommates. One works in the hospital, who works night and day shifts and the other one has a normal full-time job. Everyone has their own planning and therefore also their own fixed moments to relax.

Thus, it can be a challenge to watch something in a joint setting when everyone has contrasting schedules. All respondents have indicated that they do not have a pre-established moment during the week in which they plan to watch television together at home. Therefore, co-viewing generally happens very randomly and is usually in the moment (e.g. when everyone is in the same room doing nothing). Levy claims that even when there are enough roommates at home to co-view with, they might not be up for it: “We don’t really have a fixed night. It’s more like someone else suggests watching something together and then some people want to join, and others rather want to spend time alone”. So, co-viewing is not only dependent on people’s lifestyles, but also on whether they are in the mood to spend time together.

Watching linear television together shows to be more of a casual event that happens randomly. Most of the time participants have stated that linear television is already turned on by one of their roommates and that the rest of the household just joins in. Xiomara explains that watching linear television together with her roommates is never planned: “We never plan to watch tv [linear] together. It’s more like we’re both in the living room and that someone says, ‘shall I turn on the tv?’ or asks, ‘do you feel like watching tv?’”. However, in some cases co-viewing of linear television is planned. Tyler revealed that watching live programs (e.g. football or reality game shows) with roommates is usually arranged beforehand: “Sometimes we really plan it and invite friends over to watch football and then it’s really an event with 4 or 5 people, really a happening”. Due to the fact that it is live television and becomes more of a social event with multiple viewers it means that it cannot really happen randomly and needs to be organized for it to take place.

Planning to watch nonlinear television together with roommates is more common. Even though randomly watching nonlinear television together still happens occasionally, it is apparently more favored to plan this ahead. In most cases, the participants associated planned co-viewing of nonlinear television with watching a movie. This turns into a movie night, which is initially considered more as an actual happening and an intentional activity to be social according to Kehlani: “When we want to watch something on Netflix [nonlinear], we usually plan something ahead so that we can have a cozy movie night together”. Watching nonlinear television together also takes place in other organized ways when it is not necessarily perceived as a planned moment. For instance, Levy explains that he has a weekly habit with one of his five roommates in which they cook and eat together. This mostly includes watching television together:

We don't really have a fixed night. I usually do it [watching linear tv] with the roommate that has a room next to mine. We eat together weekly and then we just sit in one of our rooms and watch back a program like First Dates or something. Then we eat and chat about the weird program in a relaxed vibe. (Levy, 24)

Even though they do this on random days during the week and therefore do not have a fixed day planned for this, it does in fact involve some sort of planning. On the other hand, Nikki notes that watching nonlinear television together with roommates also happens completely unplanned and randomly just like linear television: 'We always just go with the flow. Sometimes it's somebody else who is watching, and the others just join in. For example, last time the others were watching Temptation Island together and then I just join in'. In this case of unplanned co-viewing of nonlinear television Nikki is describing a reality show. This probably allows other members of the household to join in randomly because of the lighter content. However, it is less likely to randomly join in when a movie is already halfway. Therefore, organizing co-viewing in a student household is also dependent on the type of content.

A student household is a more complex setting for co-viewing to take place as it usually includes household members with each their own individual planning and lifestyle. According to the respondents co-viewing generally takes place in the moment and completely randomly, but it can also be a planned moment. The opportunity to co-view can be hindered due to contrasting schedules and also depends on the mood and willingness of each household member to spend time together. A planned co-viewing moment is usually perceived as an intentional activity to be social together. Planning to co-view generally depends on the type of content being watched (e.g. movie or live television).

4.7 Co-viewing selection process

Choosing something to watch by yourself can be considered less of a struggle because you do not have to take into account the opinions and preferences of others (Bergsma, 2019). However, the selection process can be more complicated and time consuming in a joint setting. This theme explains the selection process in student households.

Since linear television is also often used for the sole purpose of having background noise selecting content to watch might not always be too much of an issue. Chloe states that

the selection process with her roommates can be rather effortless, but also mentions that the attention levels are quite low when they watch linear television:

For traditional television [linear] we just zap until we find something that we like. It's pretty easy because we don't pay a lot of attention to it when it's on. We usually know what we like and then it's just fine.

In Chloe's case it shows that the lack of interest can result in a lack of attention to what is playing on television, which makes the selection process easier. She also says that her and her roommates are on the same page in terms of what they like to watch on television, which is an ideal situation for a co-viewing group. However, this is not always the case. Contrasting interests in content within a co-viewing group is rather common. Levy says the following when his roommates chose to watch something that was not of his interest: "I've never seen *Boer zoekt Vrouw* [Dutch dating show] and it is not necessarily my first choice. But the rest wanted to watch that because they liked it, so I just joined them". This can make co-viewing and more specifically the selection process a more complicated and lengthy process. Nevertheless, sometimes people also just want to participate in co-viewing because of social purposes and therefore do not really care about what is on television, which is an example of Levy's case.

In terms of the selection process regarding nonlinear television, there is a clear distinction between either a quick or lengthy selection process. When looking at what the respondents say about the lengthy selection processes, the two most common struggles that extend the process are too much choice and too many contrasting interests. According to Jasmine, this can even result in not watching at all anymore: "It can take a very long time before we choose something. Because we all like different things. Sometimes it takes so long that we just decide to not watch at all anymore". Participants mention different kinds of solutions to minimize the selection process. For example, they make sure to know what to watch beforehand, they make a top three of options and together make the final decision or it takes one decisive person in the group to make the final decision. Most of the respondents that have indicated they experienced shorter selection processes when co-viewing already had specific ideas about what to watch beforehand. According to Nikki, this minimizes the time spend on choosing something to watch in the moment: "Usually someone already has a very concrete idea about what to watch, so most of the time someone suggests something to watch and then we choose to do that". Furthermore, Tyler notes that having similar interests among

the co-viewing group members contributes to shorten the selection process: “The choice to watch something is always pretty quickly made. We are both on the same line when it comes to content we like. We have the same taste so therefore the choice is pretty easily made”. Some respondents also indicate that Netflix has helped them to speed up the selection process by looking at the categories ‘weekly popular choices’ or ‘newly added items’, which are provided by the SVOD service.

The co-viewing selection process can be either a complicated or an easy process, which depends on several factors. A complicated and more lengthy selection process among the participants usually occurs due to too much choice in content and too many contrasting interests within the co-viewing group. On the other hand, an easier and shorter selection process is attained when the co-viewing group members share similar interests. In addition, lack of interest leads to lack of attention among co-viewing members. However, it seems that the respondents still participate in co-viewing for social purposes.

4.8 Distractions

This next theme describes the experiences of the participants with distractions during co-viewing. All of the participants mention various kinds of distractions that take place during co-viewing. To better understand these different types of distractions, they are categorized as internal and external distractions. Internal distractions can be understood as distractions within the co-viewing group that are caused by the co-viewing group members (e.g. chatting together). External distractions are caused by things other than the co-viewing group (e.g. mobile phone).

As for internal distractions, some participants mention the social benefits of watching television in a joint setting such as chatting with other members of the co-viewing group. These conversations are either about the content they are watching or about topics completely separate from the content on television. When conversations are about the television content, like Jasmine claims, it might result in enhancing the attention levels towards television viewing: ‘I’m talking a lot with roommates when watching together. Usually, we share our opinions about people in the program when they are annoying or something’. However, it might also lead to diminishing attention levels when the conversation topics have nothing to do with the television content:

When we turn the tv on it's usually a background thing. So, we watch it half and we just talk with each other, but not particularly about the program on tv. We are sometimes on our phones, or one is watching and the other isn't. We're not really focused on the tv program. It's usually just turned on, a bit spontaneous, just for fun, but not with full focus. (Chloe, 23)

Note how Chloe describes television viewing with a group as something that does not require their full attention. The television program is something on the background and not turned on with the intention to watch it. The co-viewing group is actually doing other things at the same time and the television sound is enough.

Secondly, external distractions are also present. These distractions can be understood as ways to distract oneself by doing things that are separated from the co-viewing group (Shokrpour & Darnell, 2017). Looking at the findings, all of the participants indicate that they deal with these kinds of distractions when they watch television with a group. Things such as doing homework, applying for jobs, grabbing a snack in the kitchen can all happen at the same time when co-viewing takes place. Interestingly, the smartphone is an external distraction that was mostly forgotten or not even perceived as a distraction. Even though mobile phone use during co-viewing is a distraction that was (eventually) mentioned in all interviews. Scrolling through social media apps and chatting via WhatsApp are the most common things to do during co-viewing among the participants. Ciara explains that using WhatsApp does not even feel like a distraction anymore because it has become such a big part of her life: "WhatsApp always continues, but that's part of your social life. You're so used to it. You don't even notice that you are doing other things at the same time". Because conversations on WhatsApp or other actions taken on a smartphone (or other devices) can also be about the content on television, it might also function as a way to enhance attention levels towards television viewing. However, most of the time the participants reveal that their smartphone use was not connected with the content on television.

The respondents have experienced both internal and external distractions in a co-viewing setting. Talking to each other is the most common internal distraction. The interview results show that the participants experience internal distractions that both enhance or diminish attention levels towards television viewing. The most dominant external distraction among the respondents is the smartphone. This distraction usually leads to diminishing attention levels towards the television.

4.9 Obstacles to co-viewing

Watching television in a joint setting has both obstacles and advantages. In this theme the obstacles will be addressed after which the advantages will be presented in the next and final theme.

Mainly three aspects were considered annoying by the participants. To begin with, the most prominent of these three aspects is too much talking by other members of the co-viewing group. Some participants note that when someone else talks a lot during television viewing it stands in their way of paying attention to the television program. Levy claims for instance that when a less serious program is on too much talking is not that big of a deal than when there is more serious content being watched:

Sometimes you want to pay attention to something you're watching but then other people are talking the whole time. It is not that big of a problem when we watch funny or light programs. However, whenever we watch a movie together, I find it more disturbing, but then you also notice that everyone tends to be a little bit quieter.

Therefore, it seems like the level of annoyance towards talkative co-viewing group members depends on the genre.

Another aspect that is considered an obstacle of co-viewing is that you may end up watching something that does not interest you. According to Jasmine, she sometimes has to settle for content that she does not like: "Sometimes you watch something that you don't really like. You have to adjust to the taste and interests of somebody else". It seems that Jasmine prioritizes spending time together with roommates above her preferred content. This obstacle can also turn into a good experience. For instance, Kehlani interprets this obstacle as something positive: "You sometimes watch something that you wouldn't choose yourself but eventually turns out really well". In short, the main motive of co-viewing is to spend time together despite the differences in preferred content.

Furthermore, there is also a certain group pressure present to stop or continue watching when you personally do not want to. When watching in a group, you have to be considerate of others. Sometimes it happens that you want to stop watching television (e.g. too tired, lost interest) but the other members of the group want to continue. In Xiomara's case it was the opposite:

I never really care if a movie is bad. I will always finish watching it regardless. Other people sometimes just want to stop watching when it's bad. That's something that annoys me because I always like to see the end.

Apparently, an important factor of co-viewing is that you are dependent on other co-viewing members.

In conclusion, several obstacles occur during co-viewing. The participants experience talkative group members as one of them. Another obstacle is the fact that watching content together usually results into watching different content than personally preferred. Finally, the participants find that you are too dependent on others when watching in a group.

4.10 Advantages of co-viewing

Throughout all the interviews the respondents claim the social aspect of co-viewing to be the biggest enjoyment. According to the interview results co-viewing stimulates conversations, whether it is about the content on television or other topics. Whenever it is about the content on television it is usually discussions in which the co-viewing group members analyze the program and share opinions with each other, joke or laugh together and ask questions or give explanations to one another:

I really like to watch football together because we discuss and analyze the game and talk about which player is good or bad. That's way more fun with others than when you watch it by yourself. The same counts for when you watch a movie together. You discuss it afterwards or even during the movie you talk about the story or what happens to the actors. You can just speculate and analyse. Watching together just leads to more conversation. Sometimes even days after watching the movie or football game. (James, 25)

James also states that the conversation about certain content between him and his roommates can sometimes continue for days after watching it together. He clearly notes that the social part of co-viewing is very much appreciated and even preferred over watching something by yourself due to the lack of sociability. The amount of sociability is also dependent on content genre. The respondents seem to have a preference for particular content that is more appreciated in a co-viewing setting. James for instance already notes that live football is

something considered to be more fun in a co-viewing setting rather than watching it alone. In addition, comedy or other content that is considered 'light' (not too serious) are more popular among co-viewing groups:

I really like the social part of it. You don't really watch what's on tv, it's more a form of being social together. So, when you're watching a program like Boer zoekt Vrouw and you're complaining about a person in the show or you make inappropriate jokes it's so much more fun to watch. Because the program in general is pretty lame. But if you watch it with four more others for example it's fun because everyone has something to say about it. (Levy, 24)

According to Levy, even programs that do not necessarily have high quality content are things that become more fun when it is being watched in a joint setting. More serious content is, according to the respondents, more preferable to watch by yourself or in a group with no more than two or three people.

Lastly, when talking about the advantages of co-viewing in a student household, participants indicated that they enjoy living in a household in which they are free to do whatever they want without feeling the obligation to spend time together (e.g. fixed dinner days). Being away from home a lot due to a busy schedule as well as spending time alone when at home are things that minimize the ability to co-view together. However, these are common characteristics of a student household and not feeling guilty because of it is very much appreciated among the participants. According to Nikki, such an environment makes co-viewing even more fun:

With my roommates I don't feel a social obligation like I used to have when I lived with my family. You don't need to justify what you are doing anymore. This makes co-viewing much more relaxed because you only join when you want to and not because you have to.

Even though Nikki made it clear that she enjoys watching television together with her roommates, she also states that she values the flexible and open environment in which she can determine whether or not she wants to spend time together.

To conclude, according to the respondents the social part of co-viewing plays a substantial role and is an experience you cannot have when you watch television by yourself.

In addition, sociability between the co-viewing group depends on the content and there are certain content genres that enable even more conversation. Finally, another advantage of co-viewing in a student household is the flexibility and freedom in which it takes place. There are no obligations or rules attached for it to happen.

5. Discussion and conclusion

The television industry is changing due to digitalization and technological innovations. This has consequences for many aspects in the television landscape. One of these aspects is television viewing behaviour (Tse, 2016). Linear television has been the most conventional way of watching television in the past (Morley, 1986). However, in the previous two decades new online forms of television have emerged and challenged the traditional television viewing practices. The audience is no longer limited by place, content and time. In fact, with nonlinear television they are in charge of when, where and what they prefer to watch (Cook, 2016). This is shaping the work of content producers, TV advertisers and traditional television broadcasting companies. One of the most prominent forms of nonlinear television that has an impact on television viewing behaviour are VOD services and in particular, SVOD services. These SVOD services, such as Netflix are increasing in number and diversity and offer a continuously expanding collection of content (Chaney et al., 2014; Tse, 2016). Leading individuals in the industry even expect traditional linear television to be completely replaced by nonlinear television in the future (Easton, 2019, October 17). Linear television was long established as a social activity usually done in the presence of others (e.g. family, romantic partners) (Lull, 1980, 1982; Morley, 1986). However, the increase in online television viewing is shifting this social element of television consumption to a more individualistic way of viewing, especially among the younger audience (Commissariaat voor de Media, 2019, p. 29; Gomillion et al., 2017). The rise of mobile phones, SVOD services, personalized content and binge-watching each contribute to this more solitary way of viewing. Due to these factors watching television in a joint setting, better known as co-viewing, is becoming less appealing (Nee & Barker, 2019; Rigby et al., 2018; Rubenking et al., 2018; Tse, 2016). Even though a shared television experience brings benefits, both socially and economically (Mora et al., 2011; Pires de Sá & Roig, 2016; Tal-Or, 2019). Therefore, this research takes co-viewing practices under the loop while focusing on a younger and less traditional co-viewing group: student households. The aim of this study is to seek the answer to the research question ‘how have co-viewing practices been reshaped by digital television?’. To find the answer to this question, in-depth interviews were conducted with Dutch university students in the Netherlands living in a student household. Finally, the interviews were analyzed by doing a thematic analysis. This research design enabled the opportunity to gather information about personal experiences and identify patterns on co-viewing practices in student households. The findings that emerged from this research are

categorized into themes, which each contribute to answering the research question. Conclusions will be drawn from the main findings of the results. Subsequently, these conclusions will be compared to existing literature. In addition, this previous literature on co-viewing was more relevant in the past than it is now. This was both a limitation and an opportunity. Because it was more relevant in the past, there was a lot of earlier research available. This resulted in a solid foundation on the historical aspect of co-viewing. However, more recent literature on co-viewing is limited, which made it difficult to be completely informed about current co-viewing practices. Therefore, the theoretical foundation on contemporary co-viewing practices is less thorough. However, the lack of recent co-viewing literature does serve as an opportunity for this current study because there were a lot of aspects to explore regarding this topic. Finally, the last section of this chapter presents the limitations of this study as well as the recommendations for future research.

In previous research, the social benefits are continuously repeated as the main motive to participate in co-viewing practices (Ducheneaut et al., 2008; Gomillion et al., 2017; Morley, 1986; Morrison & Krugman, 2001; Rubenking et al., 2018; White, 1986). In fact, it is a motive that has been recurring continuously in U&G studies of co-viewing practices (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015). This driver of co-viewing remains to play a significant role among the student households in this current research. After the analysis of this current study, it is clear that the social interaction that emerges from co-viewing is still highly valued among the participants and also one of the main drivers to do it. Knowing the significance of the social benefits of co-viewing it is unrealistic to assume that a more individualistic way of television viewing will take over at the expense of co-viewing (Tse, 2016). However, even though these new technological devices and VOD services are some of the factors that encourage more individual viewing it does not necessarily mean less co-viewing. The findings from this research present that even the age group that are known as the main adopters of these contemporary ways of viewing (university students) still find a way to do this in a social setting. The sociability of co-viewing also increases due to the type of content being watched. This is something that is already familiar among scholars. Webster and Wakshlag (1982) reveal that co-viewing compromises a person's preferences and therefore decreases someone's individual loyalty towards a certain program type or genre. Therefore, television program choice is influenced by co-viewing. Furthermore, content genre influences the social aspect of co-viewing. In fact, certain genres can enhance sociability even more in a co-viewing group. Since the social aspect is considered by the participants as one of the most important advantages of co-viewing, specific content is preferred in a co-viewing setting due

to the extra social benefits it creates. This is confirmed by White (1986) who claims that certain content is chosen based on the amount of sociability it creates. The respondents show to have a preference for live sports events, talent shows, reality tv and even low-quality movies. In most cases these conversations came down to analyzing and discussing the people involved in these programs. In fact, the ability to make fun of people or poor-quality content plays a significant role in this. These findings are in line with previous research. Ducheneaut et al. (2008) mention the same type of genres in their study and claim that this social aspect related to those content genres is a good way to encourage social interaction between co-viewing group members. A finding from this current study that is not so familiar among previous co-viewing research are the implications of the duration of the content being watched. This is most likely due to the fact that previous research was mainly focused on traditional households like families and romantic partners. However, in this current study it shows that university students try to avoid long-term content (e.g. series with multiple seasons) as much as possible. This is related to the contrasting lifestyles of each individual living in a student household. According to the respondents, long-term content requires a lot of planning when everyone of the co-viewing group needs to be present to continue watching. Therefore, content that can be watched in one sitting such as movies are preferred among this sample. This is usually not an issue in households that consist of families or romantic partners because their lifestyles and schedules tend to be more alike.

The conflicting schedules in student households is one of the main drivers that minimizes the chances for the participants to co-view. Co-viewing in a student household is therefore more complicated to take place because everyone usually has their own individual schedule and lifestyle. Ducheneaut et al. (2008) also show that conflicting schedules can prevent people from social gatherings such as co-viewing. Another factor that can make co-viewing less appealing is a longer selection process. Hayes (2019) mentions that too much choice in content offered by SVOD services can result in a ‘audience paralysis’. This suggests that the decision-making process of television audiences can take an extended period of time, after which some individuals even decide not to watch at all anymore. Especially in a group setting, selecting something to watch can be even more of a burden because people have to take into consideration the interests of others as well. This can make co-viewing and more specifically the selection process a more complicated and lengthy process. In fact, due to the latter, Bergsma (2019) argues that people rather watch something of their own interest instead of spending time choosing something to watch with others. However, sometimes people also just want to participate in co-viewing to be physically

together with others and therefore do not really care about what is playing on television (Holz et al., 2015). This claim is in line with the findings of this current research. Participants claim that the social benefits in a co-viewing setting sometimes outweigh the content being watched. Therefore, the (longer) selection process is not always perceived as a burden. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the other previous claims by Hayes (2019) and Bergsma (2019) are not present among the sample of this study. In fact, the respondents also mention the difficulty of a co-viewing selection process. In most of the cases, the selection process is extended due to an overload of content. However, it is very rare among this sample that they eventually decide not to watch something together anymore or turn to a more individualistic approach. This is most likely because they mainly participate in co-viewing for social purposes, which are less likely to attain when watching something by yourself.

Academics have emphasized the issue of technological advancements (e.g. other technological devices, SVOD services) in the television industry and how that will lead to less co-viewing (Tse, 2016). According to the findings of this current research, the participants enjoy watching both linear and nonlinear television on a larger screen. Therefore, the television screen remains an important device, even in student households. In fact, the participants observed that co-viewing usually only takes place when there is a television screen present. The television screen was associated with a comfortable way of viewing because of the large screen as opposed to alternative devices (e.g., laptops, tablets, mobile phones). Nee and Barker (2019) mention that these smaller screens are used mostly individually, which is in line with the results from this current study. According to the respondents, these alternative devices were associated more with watching television alone. Nevertheless, a larger screen is still favored, even when watching individually. Therefore, even though these technological gadgets such as mobile phones and tablets make it easier for people to watch individually, it is not necessarily preferred. In some way, it can be concluded that technological advancements do result in less co-viewing, but not in such a direct way (more individual viewing means less co-viewing). A more indirect way to explain how co-viewing is decreasing can be due to distractions. Distractions during co-viewing are quite common. More precisely, the mobile phone turns out to be the biggest distractor among university students. This distraction is not necessarily perceived as a distraction among the participants since the mobile phone has become such an integral part of one's (social) life. However, the findings show that the majority of mobile phone users during co-viewing lead to a decrease in attention levels. Because the more a person is distracted by one's mobile phone, the less this person pays attention to their surroundings (e.g. television content, co-

viewing members). Even though the mobile phone can enhance the television viewing experience and attention levels by using content related applications or engaging in conversations online through WhatsApp or other social media (Tse, 2016). The majority of the respondents observe that their mobile phone use during co-viewing is almost never related to the content on television. Therefore, mobile phone use during co-viewing can be considered as one of the main distractions that jeopardizes the attention levels of television in student households. In that sense, if two people are watching television together of which one person is mostly on their mobile phone, it is inaccurate to still interpret that as co-viewing. Because it is most likely that this situation does not generate the same (social) benefits as a co-viewing group that is not distracted by their mobile phone. Therefore, it is valuable for future co-viewing research to gain a better understanding of the complications of co-viewing in relation to distractions. There are however also distractions that lead to an improved co-viewing experience. The most prominent internal distraction according to the participants is the conversations that emerge during co-viewing. Tal-Or (2019) argues that talking during television viewing can interfere with an individual's understanding of the media text. This is due to people possessing limited cognitive abilities to process information. Therefore, when people participate in other activities beyond television viewing, their ability to engage with the content decreases. However, the majority of the participants in this current research indicate that the conversations during co-viewing are mostly related to the content on television. This translates to making fun of people on television, discussing and explaining content related topics. On the contrary of what Tal-Or (2019) claims, other research presents that there is an improvement in the consumption of television content and viewer engagement during co-viewing because of the discussions that are stimulated by group viewing. These conversations during co-viewing, when related directly to the content, leads to shared meaning-making and therefore higher viewer attention (Mora et al., 2011; Pires de Sá & Roig, 2016). Therefore, the internal distractions of the participants in this current research can be associated with an increase in attention levels as long as conversation topics are related to the content on television.

In terms of the more traditional way of television viewing (nonlinear) versus the contemporary way of television viewing (nonlinear), both bring their own advantages and disadvantages. According to the findings, one of the main factors that results in the participants leaning towards nonlinear television is commercials. Due to SVOD services eliminating commercial breaks as well as releasing entire seasons of series in one go, binge-watching emerged. This can also be considered as a factor that leads to less co-viewing.

According to Riddle et al. (2017) binge-watching is a common practice among college students. Moreover, Sung et al. (2018) mention in their research that binge-watching is predominantly done individually rather than in a group setting. Both of these claims are in line with the findings of this current study. All of the respondents indicate that they binge-watch every now and then and mostly do this by themselves. The respondents observe that they prefer to binge-watch alone due to the contrasting schedules of their roommates. In terms of the popularity of SVOD services, Brouwer (2018) mentions that consumers will eventually pay for two or more SVOD services in the future. This partly matches the outcome of this current research. Using two or more platforms is common among the respondents. In this case, Netflix and Videoland are the most popular among the sample. However, the participants indicate that they sometimes do not pay for the SVOD services they use. This is due to the fact that people tend to share their SVOD account details with others, which allows them to have access to these platforms for free. They mostly use the SVOD accounts of either their friends or family members. This was quite a common practice among the participants and therefore makes the claim by Brouwer more complicated. However, being aware of the growth in online television viewing together with the increase in SVOD services and personalized content, it is appropriate to assume that audiences will eventually pay for two or more nonlinear platforms. Overall, it is wrong to underestimate the significance of linear television and assume that nonlinear television will eventually replace linear television completely as multiple scholars and experts in the industry have previously done (Easton, 2019, October 17; Gomillion et al., 2017; Tse, 2016). Even though linear television turns out to be less popular among university students. The respondents that do make use of linear television mainly use it for specific content only. These participants identify linear television as a meaningful, familiar and trustworthy medium that helps to stay up to date about what is happening in society and the world. Therefore, despite the negative aspects associated with linear television as opposed to nonlinear television it still maintains a certain value among young adults.

5.1 Limitations and future research

Like all small sample qualitative research, this project is limited in several ways. The first limitation is the lack of diversity in terms of the sample. However, this can be seen as both a disadvantage and an advantage. Homogenous samples can be a good thing in a scientific study due to the sociodemographic factors (e.g. age, location, occupation) that the

participants have in common. Using such a specific sociodemographic subgroup in a research can generate clearer generalizability, which allows the researcher to generalize more accurately. It does however make the generalizability narrower due to the relatively smaller subgroup that is involved in the research. The diversity of the sample in this research is quite unbalanced in terms of gender. Due to the snowball sampling technique, most female interviewees referred to their other female friends. This resulted in a majority of female participants and only a couple of male participants. This research also did not pay attention to the household compositions besides it being a student household. It is interesting to explore whether there are any prominent differences in co-viewing practices among entire female versus male households.

Finally, this current study only focused on Dutch speaking university students living in the Netherlands. Most of the participants also live in a Dutch speaking household. Therefore, it is recommended for future research to explore co-viewing practices among international households in which the residents speak contrasting languages and perhaps share different cultures. Investigating whether or not different cultures have an influence on how co-viewing practices take place can be an interesting contribution to this field of study.

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Appendix A: Interview schedule

Demographics

1. Introduction questions

- What is your age?
- What is the level of education of your current study?
- Where do you live?

Individual viewing behaviour

2. Individual viewing behaviour

- Do you ever watch television?
- How much do you do this? (hours per day/week/month)
- On what devices do you usually watch? (TV screen, laptop, computer, tablet, mobile)
- What do you usually watch?
 - o Why do you choose to watch this?
 - o How do you go about choosing what to watch? (choosing process)
- Why do you choose to watch linear/non-linear? (motives/motivations)
- Can you tell me more about how you watch by yourself?
 - o When (morning/afternoon/evening) and where (living room/bedroom/on the road)?
- Do you ever do several things at the same time while watching television or do you specifically look at the screen? (concentration)
- Do you ever consciously watch the same movie/series/show with 1 or more people outside your own household at the same time? (physically alone, but communicating with others using a second screen)

3. Individual viewing behaviour – Linear vs. Non-linear

- Which kind of television do you prefer watching alone, scheduled television or on demand television?
 - o Why do you prefer one over the other?

4. Watching television alone

- Are there things that annoy you when you watch television alone? (in comparison to watching with other people)
- Are there things that you enjoy when you watch television alone? (in comparison to watching with other people)

Living situation

5. Household overview

- With how many housemates do you live?
- How many of them are boys or girls?
- Are your housemates in the same life phase as you? (studying/young professionals)

Co-viewing behaviour

6. Co-viewing behaviour with roommates

- Do you ever watch television with your roommates?
- How much do you do this? (hours per day/week/month)
- On what devices do you usually watch with your roommates? (TV screen, laptop, computer, tablet, mobile)
- How does watching together take place? (randomly/fixed times)
- What do you usually watch with your roommates?
 - o Why do you choose to watch this?
 - o How do you go about choosing what to watch with your roommates? (choosing process)
- Why do you choose to watch linear/nonlinear with your roommates? (motives/motivations)
- Can you tell me more about how you watch with your roommates?
 - o When (morning/afternoon/evening) and where (living room/bedroom/other)
- Do you ever do several things at the same time when you watch television with your roommates, or do you specifically look at the screen? (concentration)

7. Co-viewing behaviour – Linear vs. Non-linear

- Which kind of television do you prefer watching with your roommates, scheduled television or on demand television?
 - o Why do you prefer one over the other?

8. Watching television (traditional/digital) with other people

- Are there things that annoy you when you watch television with your roommates? (in comparison to watching alone)
- Are there things that you enjoy when you watch television with your roommates? (in comparison to watching alone)