

Keep fans coming and don't forget to make them stay

A qualitative analysis of Netflix's brand community relationship management

Student Name: Alana Hendrikx
Student Number: 478011

Supervisor: Dr. Deborah Castro

Master Media Studies – Media and Creative Industries
Erasmus School of History, Culture and Communication
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Master's Thesis
June 2019

Abstract

Although linear television is still an important player in our mediascape, the television industry has surely undergone a major transformation in the last decade. Subscription video on demand services such as Hulu and Netflix are now household staples, allowing the latter to become an authority in both content distribution and production. Netflix is also often exalted for its admirable presence on social media. Social media, like subscription video on demand services, are a major part of the contemporary mediascape. Although social media have been noticeably present for over a decade now, social media based brand communities (SMBBCs) have only started gaining ground in recent years. Nonetheless, consumers and brands alike are now vigorously using SMBBCs to connect with brands and (peer) fans. Since they are relatively new, in-depth research into specific social media based brand communities is slim and Netflix's brand community has not been studied yet.

One could assume that Netflix has a flourishing brand community, as the brand has 58 million fans on Facebook and is often praised for its social media marketing. To research the validity of this assumption, a qualitative thematic analysis was conducted on 100 posts and 826 comments from Netflix's US Facebook page. The main research question for this study was: *How is Netflix employing brand community relationship management on its US Facebook page?* To guide this analysis, Ang's (2011) three pillars of community relationship management were operationalized and utilized to assess Netflix's conduct, leading to three main themes emerging from the data. The first theme, *lopsided dedication*, describes the tension between parts of the community that Netflix is dedicated to and other community management duties that the brand is seemingly ignoring. The second theme, *predominant humanization*, narrates how the brand employs a human voice, but also shows that its fans often deny these efforts. The theme *fan entitlement* reveals how displeased fans are generally negative towards the brand, which is a likely consequence of Netflix generally ignoring them.

The results of this study show that brands should keep in mind that community relationship management is a continuous, iterate process that requires dedication on multiple fronts. This is something that Netflix itself could strive to perfect as well, as this study found few traces of community relationship management efforts from Netflix. In addition, this study has also provided a framework, inspired on the aforementioned pillars, for community relationship management that is useful for brands in designing their own community management strategies and for scholars in examining specific SMBBCs and the management of those communities.

KEYWORDS: Subscription video on demand services, Netflix, Facebook, social media based brand communities, community relationship management.

Table of contents

Abstract	1
List of abbreviations	4
1. Introduction	5
1.1 Research question	7
1.2 Scientific relevance.....	8
1.3 Social relevance	8
1.4 Thesis outline.....	8
2. Theoretical framework	10
2.1 Subscription video on demand services.....	10
2.1.1 SVoD market United States	11
2.2 Netflix	11
2.2.1 Subscription plans	12
2.2.2 Netflix Originals	13
2.2.3 Netflix's recommender system	13
2.2.4 Netflix's marketing	15
2.3 Social media.....	17
2.3.1 Facebook	18
2.4 Communities	18
2.4.1 Traditional offline communities	18
2.4.2 Online communities	19
2.4.3 Brand communities	20
2.4.4 Social media based brand communities.....	22
2.5 Community relationship management	22
2.5.1 Connectivity.....	23
2.5.2 Content creation.....	24
2.5.3 Conversation.....	26
2.6 Summary.....	28
3. Methodology.....	29
3.1 Research design.....	29
3.1.1 Qualitative thematic analysis	29
3.1.2 Social media data	31
3.2 Data collection	31
3.2.1 Units of analysis.....	31
3.2.2 Sampling strategy	32
3.2.3 Data collection and processing.....	34
3.3 Operationalization.....	36
3.3.1 Operationalization connectivity	36
3.3.2 Operationalization content creation	36
3.3.3 Operationalization conversation.....	37
3.3.4 Operationalization: in summary.....	37
3.4 Data analysis	38

3.4.1 Open coding	38
3.4.2 Axial coding.....	40
3.5 Reflexivity.....	42
3.5.1 Validity and reliability.....	42
3.6 Ethical considerations	43
3.7 Summary.....	43
4. Results and discussion	44
4.1 Themes and subthemes: an overview.....	44
4.2 Lopsided dedication	45
4.2.1 Prevailing content management	45
4.2.2 Non-engaging passivity.....	49
4.2.3 Scarce proactive webcare.....	52
4.3 Predominant brand humanization	54
4.3.1 Netflix as a living, feeling peer	54
4.3.2 Arbitrary distantiation	55
4.3.3 Lack of self-brand connections.....	57
4.4 Rejection induced entitlement.....	58
4.4.1 One-sided relationships.....	58
4.4.2 Entitlement.....	60
4.4.2 Disloyalty	63
4.5 Summary.....	65
5. Conclusion.....	67
5.1 Answer to the research question	68
5.2 Theoretical implications	69
5.3 Social implications	70
5.3.1 Recommendations for Netflix	71
5.4 Limitations and further research.....	71
Literature and references	74
Appendix A. Initial dataset.....	86
Appendix B. Additional data set.....	94
Appendix C. Axial coding.....	95

List of abbreviations

CoRM: community relationship management

eWOM: electronic word of mouth

SMBBCs: social media based brand communities

SVoD: subscription video on demand services

WOM: word of mouth

1. Introduction

For the past decade the phrase “TV is dead” has been uttered increasingly frequent. As innovation and media convergence have sped up in recent years, some scholars are entertaining the thought that linear television is quickly approaching its end (e.g. Breitman, Endler, Pereira, & Azambuja, 2010; Given, 2016). Other scholars, however, say that this is an exaggeration (e.g. Wayne, 2017) and that “television is not dead; it has merely entered a new phase” (Katz, 2009, p. 8). This new phase in the television industry is filled with *subscription video on demand (SVoD) services*, which are often seen as the successors of linear television (Jenner, 2016), and can be defined as online platforms that give access to a streaming library full of movies and shows. As the global mediascape is now filled with subscription video on demand services (Wayne, 2017) ranging from start-ups to conglomerates (Jenner, 2018), the number of SVoD using households worldwide is expected to rise to 777 million by 2023 (“Number of subscription video on demand subscribers worldwide from 2017 to 2023”, 2019). Out of all of the available suppliers, Netflix is currently the largest globally (Lobato, 2019). Consequently, the company has amassed much clout both offline and online.

Because of its global successes, ‘Netflix’ is now no longer just the name of a company. It is a term describing today’s era; *the age of Netflix* (Barker & Wiatrowski, 2017), a verb used to define a beloved leisure activity; “*I’m going to Netflix it*” (Lobato, 2019), a *publishing model* that encourages binge watching (Jenner, 2018; McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2016), and an *umbrella term* coined to name all subscription video on demand services, with Netflix as dominant force on top (Jenner, 2018). The company started out as a DVD rental service and has since evolved into a global online streaming platform (Abraham, 2013). The service now offers several subscription plans, tens of thousands of titles to stream (Cook, 2019; Gómez & Quevedo, 2018), a sophisticated recommender system that helps users decide what to watch (Gomiz-Uribe & Hunt, 2015), and even the option of downloading content to watch offline (Gómez & Quevedo, 2018). The streaming titan is said to have re-invented television by changing viewing practices (Jenner, 2018), and has amassed over 149 million subscribers worldwide (Richter, 2019), having its biggest footprint in the United States (Barker, 2017; Ramsey, 2018). In addition, the company has also gathered a large following on social media.

Social media have become a vital part of contemporary society and, also, the creative industries. The open character of social media has made it easy to sign up to different platforms (Schlosser, 2005), and today, many individuals use social media to communicate with their peers, share opinions about entertainment products, interact with producers, and become members of an online community (Park, Kee, & Valenzuela, 2009; Shao, 2009; Whiting & Williams, 2013). Moreover,

social media platforms play a pivotal role in the online strategy of many companies, including those that are part of the entertainment sector. For example, previous research shows how traditional broadcasters use Facebook and Twitter to not only promote their programs, but also to foster the creation of an online community around them (Lacalle & Castro, 2016). Accordingly, Gómez and Quevedo (2018) state that social media are heavily featured in Netflix's marketing strategy. The company not only uses social media to promote new content, but also to connect with subscribers and support other, more traditional marketing efforts.

Netflix says to enjoy talking about entertainment with its fans¹ on social media ("Netflix social media", 2016). To do so, the company has opted to develop several separate social media accounts for different regions of fans, amounting its page count to 75 in total: 19 Facebook pages, 20 Twitter handles, 18 Instagram accounts, 17 YouTube channels and 1 LinkedIn account ("A deep dive into the social media habits and performance of Netflix", 2018). With a total of almost 58 million page likes on Facebook worldwide, Facebook is Netflix's main social platform (Letki, 2016), and thus the main place for the company to connect with its subscribers and build a community.

Communities have been a natural part of social life for many centuries, uniting like-minded individuals that share a bond (Bess, Fisher, Sonn, & Bishop, 2002; Martínez-López, Anaya-Sánchez, Aguilar-Illescas, & Molinio, 2016; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). Accordingly, communities play an important role in the development of social life, as they help individuals to shape their identities and give them a safe place to share their opinions, thoughts, and beliefs (Brown, Broderick, & Lee, 2007; Shao, 2009; Sonn, Bishop, & Drew, 1999). It should therefore not come as a surprise that communities have massively grown in popularity since the emergence of the Social Web (Martínez-López et al., 2016), and many individuals are now part of an online community.

Where consumers are, brands are usually not far behind. Consequently, brands have started to pick up on the trend of online communities and are using *social media based brand communities (SMBBCs)* to build relationships with their fans, increase brand loyalty and brand trust (Laroche, Habibi, Richard, & Sankaranarayanan, 2012; Martínez-López et al., 2016), and foster and encourage the dispersion of positive electronic word of mouth (Martínez-López et al., 2016). Since SMBBCs can thus be so beneficial and social media audiences are generally easy to engage (Gómez & Quevedo, 2018), traditional broadcasters and SVoD services alike are actively using brand communities to promote content and foster their relationships with fans (Andrejevic, 2008; Lacalle & Castro, 2016).

As brand communities are vital for brand building nowadays, it is important for brands to manage their social media based brand communities adequately (Cottica, Melancon, & Renoust, 2017; Noble et al., 2012). This is what that Ang (2011) calls *community relationship management*

¹ *Fans* of a brand are defined as social media users that choose to engage with this brand or that choose to engage with other social media users on a platform generated by the brand.

(CoRM). Online community relationship management is built on three major pillars: *connectivity*, *conversation* and *content creation*. Connectivity is paramount for building communities, so brands need to provide a platform such as Facebook that is easy for users to connect on and encourage social interaction on this platform. Once connectivity is provided, brands can start conversing with their fans. Moreover, brands should provide regular content to the community to stimulate conversations, and users should also be invited to share their own content (Ang, 2011).

1.1 Research question

Although Netflix is often praised by marketers, brand managers, and other field professionals for its “revolutionary” and “amusing” social media strategy (e.g. Beer, 2019; Duczminski, 2019; Letki, 2016; Stevens, 2018), in-depth academic research into Netflix’s social media strategies is still in its infancy. This project, thus, contributes to this field of research by exploring how Netflix employs community relationship management on Facebook. The motivations for focussing on this specific social media platform are two. First, Facebook is shown to have a strong potential for community building (Shao, 2009), and, second, Facebook is Netflix’s largest social media platform (Letki, 2016)². Particularly, the project focuses on the Facebook page created for the United States market, as most of Netflix’s subscribers are based in this region (Barker, 2017; Ramsey, 2018), and it can therefore be assumed that this Facebook page is an important tool for Netflix.

Methodologically, a qualitative thematic analysis is carried out. This analysis focuses on the three pointers of community relationship management, connectivity, conversations, and content creation, as described by Ang (2011). To collect sufficient relevant data to study Netflix’s community management on all three pillars, the thematic analysis is conducted on two aspects of Netflix’s Facebook page: the posts that Netflix publishes on its Facebook page and the comments that both fans and Netflix itself publish underneath those posts. This provides a thorough vision of Netflix’s strategy and ensures an in-depth answer to the proposed research questions. The research question and sub-questions guiding this research project are, again, based on Ang’s (2011) three pillars of community relationship management, and are the following:

RQ: How is Netflix employing brand community relationship management on its United States Facebook page?

SQ1: How is Netflix employing ‘connectivity’ in its posts and comments?

SQ2: How is Netflix employing ‘conversation’ in its posts and comments?

² Letki concludes that Facebook is Netflix’s largest social media platform based on a comparison of follower numbers per platform. Since this source is from 2016, the researcher has corroborated if this is still accurate and found that Facebook indeed still is Netflix’s biggest platform.

SQ3: How is Netflix employing 'content creation' in its posts and comments?

SQ4: How are fans using Netflix's United States Facebook page to communicate with Netflix?

1.2 Scientific relevance

This study is scientifically relevant, as it adds new research to a body of literature that is still quite lacking. Although research on brand community management and potential benefits of online brand communities already exists, Kuo and Hou (2017) mention that the fast growth of online brand communities in recent years should be accompanied by even greater academic attention for online brand communities. In addition, there seem to be no studies as of yet that focus specifically on Netflix's brand community. In this vein, Laroche et al. (2012) indicate that the academic field could benefit from more research on specific brand communities, which this study thus does. Moreover, there seem to be no other studies that are directly using Ang's (2011) three pillars of community relationship management as an analysis framework, therefore allowing this study to provide a unique addition to the research field. As this research focuses on several aspects of community relationship management, which are the three pillars aforementioned, it provides a wholesome view of Netflix's community management strategy that has not been provided yet. In addition, this study can also be advantageous in further development of research on other aspects of Netflix's social media strategy, which, in turn, can help advance research on general subscription video on demand services promotion.

1.3 Social relevance

The social relevance of this study is twofold. Firstly, this research is beneficial for other companies, and specifically other SVoD services, that are looking to shape their social media strategies. Learning from a company as dominant as Netflix can be very insightful, and this study can therefore provide a framework for other companies to strategize their community relationship management accordingly. Secondly, this study is also beneficial for Netflix itself, as it provides clear insight into the workings of its community management and might uncover aspects of its strategy that need to be reconsidered. Although it can be assumed that Netflix already has insight into its own strategy, and the company has the additional benefit of unlimited access to its internal workings, it also pays to conduct an objective, third-party review. By providing such a review, additional insight into its community management that may be hard to spot for the company itself can be provided.

1.4 Thesis outline

The remainder of this thesis is structured as follows. There are a total of five chapters, including this introduction, which together present a linear description of the contents, processes and outcomes of this study. The next chapter provides the theoretical background, which outlines

relevant literature on the SVoD industry and Netflix and theories on brand community management that together provide a solid context for this study to be carried out in. The third chapter explains the method that is used in this study. The chapter addresses the selected data analysis method (i.e. thematic analysis) and provides a justification for this choice. The method chapter also offers a detailed description of the data collection and analysis processes and addresses possible ethical concerns that arise from using social media data in a study. The fourth chapter presents the results of the analysis and, here, the core themes and subthemes that emerged in the analysis are discussed in detail and in relation to the previous discussed literature. The discussed themes and subthemes together provide an answer to the stated research question, and this answer is further concretized in the final chapter. Lastly the research question and sub-research questions are answered based on the results obtained in the conclusion. Moreover, this chapter also outlines a few limitations of this study as well as recommendations for future studies.

2. Theoretical framework

This chapter presents the theoretical framework for this study. A general overview of subscription video on demand services and their industry is first provided, followed by a detailed review of Netflix and its core services. In following sections, attention is paid to two important concepts related to this project, which are social media platforms and social media users. Next, the existence and development of communities, with especial consideration for social media based brand communities, are discussed. Finally, Ang's (2011) pillars of community relationship management serve as a base for the discussion of community management and are used to design a framework for the upcoming analysis.

2.1 Subscription video on demand services

As happens with many developments, there comes a point at which they are no longer deemed enough. At that point, digitization and innovation often swoop in to transform products into newer and often very different versions of themselves. The transformation of the DVD rental industry is a prime example of this process, as the emergence of subscription video on demand services is causing audiences to shift from renting to streaming (Chao & Zhao, 2013) and making the act of physically going to a rental store to pick out a DVD a distant memory. In addition to leaving most rental services in their dust, SVoD services are also affecting television broadcasters by offering audiences new ways of watching television (Lotz, 2017) and thus providing an alternative to linear television (Wayne, 2017). Consequently, a 3% drop in viewing time of linear television among United States audiences is linked to the popularity of SVoD services (Wayne, 2017).

Subscription video on demand services are online platforms that offer instant access to a streaming library of media content in exchange for a monthly fee. As these libraries are based online, they can store large amounts of titles and therefore appeal to a wide range of tastes (Gómez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015). SVoD services are often credited for revolutionizing the television industry, because they do not require time-specific viewing, and therefore give audiences the autonomy to pick their viewing as they wish without being dependent on broadcasting schedules (Lobato, 2018; Lotz, 2017). By facilitating non-linear viewing and often uploading entire seasons of series at once (Gómez & Quevedo, 2018), SVoD services also stimulate binge watching. Scholars often define *binge watching* as watching more than one episode of the same series in a row (Godinho de Matos & Ferreira, 2017) in one's own time and space (Merikivi, Bragge, Scornavacca, & Verhagen, 2019). Jenner (2016), however, argues that a binge is defined through individual habits and therefore different for everybody. Either way, an important feature of binge watching is that it is disconnected from linear television programming (Jenner, 2016), making it a typical trait of SVoD services.

As subscription video on demand services are often seen as the successors of linear television (Jenner, 2016), it should not come as a surprise that the contemporary mediascape is now filled with many different SVoD suppliers (Wayne, 2017). These suppliers include, but are not limited to, YouTube TV, Xfinity instant, CBS All Access, HBO, Hulu, Amazon and Netflix (Hayes, 2019). Out of all of the existing SVoD suppliers, Netflix is currently the largest globally (Lobato, 2019). This streaming titan is expected to reach 201 million subscribers by 2023 (Ramsey, 2018) and has its biggest footprint in the United States (Barker, 2017; Ramsey, 2018).

2.1.1 SVoD market United States

The analysis for this study is performed on Netflix's Facebook page created for the United States market, because most of Netflix's subscribers are based in this region (Barker, 2017; Ramsey, 2018). As Lotz (2017) indicates, the last two decades have brought immense change to the television industry in the United States, and SVoD services are now heavily featured in its mediascape. Currently, the SVoD penetration rate for the United States population is 38%, meaning that almost 125 million Americans are subscribed to a subscription video on demand service. This number is only expected to grow over the coming years, as the number of Americans using SVoD services is estimated to rise to 130+ million by 2023 ("Video streaming (SVoD) United States", 2019). Accordingly, in global comparison most SVoD revenue is generated in the United States ("Video streaming (SVoD) worldwide", 2019).

Although subscription on demand services in general, and Netflix in particular, are often very protective of their viewership data (Hayes, 2019), independent studies have shown that Netflix is currently the largest SVoD supplier in the United States ("Netflix's annual revenue from 2002 to 2018", 2019). While Amazon, Netflix's biggest competitor in the US, is following the company on close foot, other competitors such as Hulu and HBO are lagging quite far behind (McDonald, 2018). In addition to being the biggest SVoD supplier, Netflix is also dominating the originals category in the United States. In 2018, Netflix premiered 139 Original shows in the United States, which accounted for 68% of the total amount of original titles produced by SVoD services in the United States that year (Hayes, 2019).

2.2 Netflix

Netflix started out in 1997 as just one of many online-based DVD rental services. Its original business model was based on mailing rented DVDs to subscribers with an attached return envelope, and an extensive network of distribution centres helped the company achieve its goal of next day deliveries (Abraham, 2013). A decade later, however, the company announced that it would be introducing a streaming service (Jenner, 2016). Although the company is still earning significant

revenues from its original rental service (Cook, 2019), the main focus is now its subscription video on demand platform. Today, the company has compiled a massive catalogue with over 15,000 advertisement-free titles across all its regional libraries (Cook, 2019; Gómez & Quevedo, 2018). These titles are instantly available for streaming by its 149 million subscribers (Richter, 2019) on numerous Internet-connected devices (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015). In addition, the brand added the feature of downloading content and watching it offline to its services in 2016 (“Downloading on Netflix just got smarter”, 2019; Gómez & Quevedo, 2018).

2.2.1 Subscription plans

Netflix offers its subscribers three different subscription plans, which they can terminate at any time without additional costs. With the basic plan, subscribers can stream on one device at a time in Standard Definition. The standard plan allows subscribers to stream content in High Definition on two devices simultaneously. The premium plan allows subscribers to stream content in High Definition and Ultra High Definition on four devices at a time (“Streaming-abonnementen van Netflix”, n.d.). American subscribers pay \$9 per month for a basic subscription, \$13 for a standard subscription and \$16 for a premium subscription. The standard plan is the most popular amongst US subscribers (Alexander, 2019).

To allow individuals to get a feel for the platform before subscribing, Netflix traditionally offers a free trial month. This seems to be changing however, as people are noticing that Netflix is shortening, and sometimes even completely discarding, its trial periods (García, 2019) and Netflix itself is now noting that trial periods differ between regions (“Gratis proefperioden”, n.d.). Netflix seems to be doing this as a test to see if individuals will still subscribe if offered a shorter (or no) trial period (García, 2019) and therefore to examine the value that Netflix has for its users.



Illustration 2.1: different individuals living in the same region are offered different trial periods

As two of the abovementioned subscription plans allow subscribers to stream content on multiple devices simultaneously, it is not uncommon for users to share an account. In fact, data shows that 65% of American Netflix subscribers are sharing their account with others (Mander,

2015), and that there are, on average, 2,5 users for every 1 paid Netflix account (Carpenter, 2016). This means that, in reality, Netflix's total audience size is substantially larger than 'just' its 149 million paid subscriptions, as 1 paid-for subscription does not equal just 1 user. In fact, it is estimated that Netflix's actual audience size is tens of millions users larger than subscription data shows (Mander, 2015). Consequently, Netflix is now referencing its subscriber count as 149 million "paid memberships" ("About Netflix", n.d.), instead of deeming this the actual number of Netflix users.

2.2.2 Netflix Originals

Since Netflix started out as a DVD rental service and the majority of its service still revolves around offering content previously shown in theatres or on television, the service is traditionally associated more with DVDs and the Internet than with programming and broadcasting (Jenner, 2016). In recent years, however, Netflix has utilized its dynamic competences to distance itself from those associations (Jenner, 2016) and its competitors (Rataul, Tisch, & Zámborský, 2018). The company therefore started to create its own *Netflix Originals*, which are titles that are (co-)produced by Netflix and distributed on the Netflix platform (Rataul et al., 2018). The first Original series aired in 2013 (e.g. *House of Cards*, *Orange is the New Black*) and the first movie (*Beasts of No Nation*) followed in 2015 ("Netflix Timeline", n.d.). Netflix's Original content has generally been successful (Rataul et al., 2018), as they have garnered an unprecedented amount of Emmy and Golden Globe Award nominations ("Netflix Timeline", n.d.; Rataul et al., 2018) and won two Oscars ("Netflix Timeline", n.d.).

The marketing for Netflix's Original content highlights both quality and binging, hence Netflix positioning itself as a producer of binge-worthy, quality content. In recent years Netflix has also emphasized the concept of diversity in its Original marketing, and the brand is now presenting itself as a platform that showcases a wide collection of experiences (Jenner, 2018). As Netflix's SVoD service has thus transitioned from the distribution of content to producing content, the brand now sits at the beginning of the media exhibition chain (Jenner, 2016) and positions itself as a replacement for linear television (Wayne, 2017). Moreover, the brand also has a growing influence on the movie industry as well, as it is influencing "how movie distribution deals and laws pertaining to online bandwidth usage and traffic are made" (Keating, 2012, p. 457).

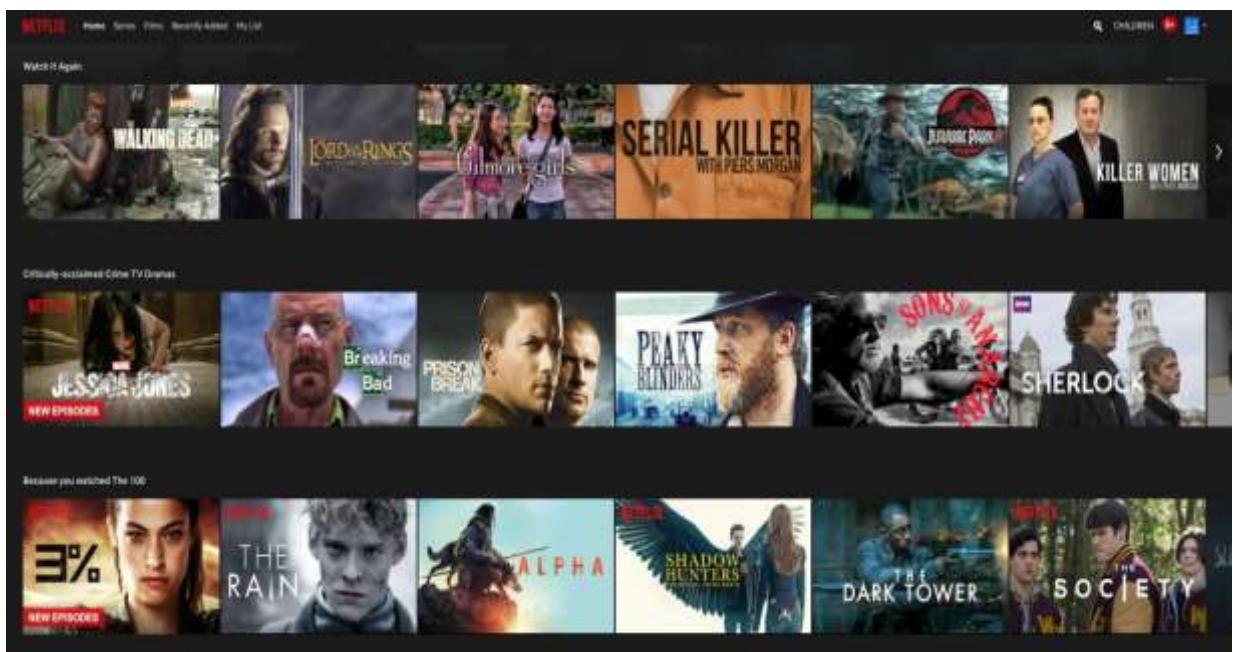
2.2.3 Netflix's recommender system

As aforementioned, SVoD services have the advantage of carrying many streaming titles and appealing to a wide range of tastes by including niche titles that are only interesting to a small group of users (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015). The challenge, however, is linking the titles to the right subscribers. According to Gomez-Uribe and Hunt (2015), who are both Netflix Inc. employees, most

subscribers lose interest after 60 to 90 seconds of skimming the Netflix platform. After that point, a subscriber either finds something to watch “or the risk of the user abandoning Netflix increases substantially” (p. 2). By providing suitable recommendations, Netflix can save its users the effort of sorting through the enormous catalogue of content and, as a consequence, build loyalty and drive sales (Adomavicius, Bockstedt, Curley, Zhang, & Ransbotham, 2019). Throughout the years Netflix itself has discovered that incorporating content recommendations based on user data can have enormous value for its services, as it personalizes the ‘Netflix experience’ (Amatriain, 2013).

This personalization starts on the Netflix homepage, which is arranged in multiple horizontal rows, as displayed in figure 2.1. Each row contains several titles that are meaningfully grouped together based on certain similarities, and together these rows make up the *Netflix recommender system* (Amatriain, 2013). This system uses 8 interacting algorithms (Amatriain, 2013; Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015) that generate the rows, decide which rows to show and determine the ordering of the rows (Amatriain & Basilico, 2015). The first algorithm within the recommender system is the *personalized video ranker*, which orders the entire catalogue for each user in a personalized way. The *Top-N video ranker* subsequently finds the best recommendations for each user. Once a user has watched several titles, the *video-video similarity* algorithm ensures that similar titles are recommended to the subscriber. Moreover, the *trending ranker* and *continue watching ranker* show users those titles that are currently trending and titles that they previously started watching. Lastly, the *page generation* algorithm uses all of the aforementioned algorithms to arrange the homepage into rows, taking into account the relevance for the subscriber (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015).

Illustration 2.2: Netflix’s row-filled homepage



Although the company has made a lot of changes to it ever since (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015), Netflix's recommender system was initially created and improved in a community setting. In 2006 Netflix released more than 100 million customer movie ratings as part of the Netflix Prize challenge (Bell & Koren, 2007). The company offered a reward of 1 million dollars in exchange for a 10% improvement in its recommender system, in hopes of attracting talent around the world to help with this task (Villarroel, Taylor, & Tucci, 2013). To smoothen this process, Netflix provided a dedicated community platform that facilitated communication between participants. Although a 10% improvement was never reached, Netflix ended the challenge in 2007 by paying a portion of the prize money to the team that offered the most improvement (Villarroel et al., 2013).

As Netflix's recommender system influences choice for 80% of hours streamed at Netflix globally (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015), the company has shown to be extraordinarily successful in recommending the right titles to its subscribers (Rataul et al., 2018; Weinman, 2015). Research shows that Netflix users generally do not view the recommender system as an actual algorithm or list of statistics, but instead experience a feeling of receiving personalized, in-person recommendations (Lobato, 2018). In addition to allowing subscribers to easily and effectively find titles to watch, Netflix's recommender system is therefore also a strong tool for personalized marketing (Shen, 2014).

2.2.4 Netflix's marketing

As the SVoD industry is so ripe with competitors (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015), offering certain product advantages alone is not enough; it is also vital to employ the right promotion to your services. Accordingly, previous research has found that Netflix is vigorous in using its marketing strategy to distinguish itself from its many competitors (Gómez & Quevedo, 2018). As traditional network promoting strategies, such as on-air promotion, can often not be applied to SVoD services, subscription video on demand services are continuously searching for innovative ways to promote their content (DeCarvalho & Fox, 2016). As a result, Netflix is increasingly using native advertising as a promotion tool (DeCarvalho & Fox, 2016), which is a way of advertising that mimics the editorial style of the publication in which the advertisement is placed. In addition, the brand is also known for using a combination of live events and interactive storytelling, such as the 'Crazy Pyes Food Truck' that featured women in orange jumpsuits handing out free deserts in order to promote the prison series *Orange is the New Black* (DeCarvalho & Fox, 2016). Moreover, Netflix also regularly partners with national and regional television and Internet providers such as Vodafone, Orange and T-Mobile. This entails, for instance, these providers offering three months of free access to Netflix when individuals purchase a smartphone or television subscription. In turn, these brands promote Netflix.



Illustration 2.3: Spanish advertisement from Orange offering clients 3 months of free Netflix access



Illustration 2.4: Dutch advertisement from T-Mobile offering clients 3 months of free Netflix access

Social media is another marketing tool that both traditional broadcasters (Lacalle & Castro, 2016) and SVoD services (DeCarvalho & Fox, 2013) are increasingly using, because they are relatively inexpensive (DeCarvalho & Fox, 2016) and can introduce new content and facilitate fan engagement (Gómez & Quevedo, 2018). As Netflix is a hybrid system that is naturally responsive to emerging developments (Lobato, 2018), it is also heavily using social media to promote content, connect with fans and support other marketing efforts such as billboard advertising (Gómez & Quevedo, 2018). In fact, Netflix is often praised by marketing and branding professionals for being relatable and speaking the language of its audience (Duczeminski, 2019) by using a unique and casual rather than rigid tone of voice (Beer, 2019; Stevens, 2018), as well as consistently offering entertaining content (Letki, 2016), listening to its fans (Letki, 2016; Stevens, 2018), and giving “attention, positive vibes and care” to all fans (Letki, 2016) on its social media pages. Accordingly, the brand was the winner of ‘The Best of Social Media’ Annual Shorty Award in 2016 (Letki, 2016).

2.3 Social media

Social media are “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the foundations of Web 2.0³ and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010, p. 61). They are often used to share knowledge, experiences, and opinions (Laroche et al., 2012), and are, according to Boyd (2009), driven by user-generated content⁴. Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) propose a classification system that divides all social media into seven distinctly different categories. Based on this classification system, Facebook, the platform on which this analysis is performed, would be classified as a social networking site. McKenna, Myers and Newman (2017), however, argue that the boundaries between different types of social media are blurring, since platforms are continuously adding new functionalities and becoming more versatile. This study therefore uses the terms social media and social networking sites (SNSs) interchangeably.

Millions of people worldwide use social networking sites to interact with each other on a daily basis (Van Dijck, 2013), generally spending more than a third of their waking day consuming social media (Laroche et al., 2012). Accordingly, using SNSs has become one of the most popular online activities globally (Chu & Kim, 2011), supporting, thus, the importance of this study. While the global social media penetration rate stood at 45% in 2018, the penetration rate in the United States was 79% (“Social media usage in the United States - Statistics & Facts”, 2019), implying that Americans are especially prone to using social media.

Social media users use them for a variety of reasons, which include consuming content, participating in conversations, and sharing knowledge and content (Heinonen, 2011). However, not all people have the same motivations for using social media (Shao, 2009). There are three types of social media users that can either be defined as active or passive (Heinonen, 2011): *posters* actively disseminate their own content on social media, *participants* actively react to posters’ content, and *lurkers* passively follow and consume content, but do not post nor manifest their reactions (Schlosser, 2005; Shao, 2009). Previous research suggests that most social media users fall in the category of participants and use social media for social contact and community building (Shao, 2009; Whiting & Williams, 2013). Accordingly, social media generally stimulate social interaction and use the creation of profiles and contacts to facilitate that interaction (McKenna et al., 2017; Meikle & Young, 2012).

³ Web 2.0 is a more Social Web that permits easier communication, entertainment and sharing in such a way that users can become creators (Martínez-López et al., 2016). Users therefore cooperate with organizations on Web 2.0 and add value to ventures with their own data (O'Reilly, 2007).

⁴ User-generated content is published content that is individually or collaboratively created outside of professional routines and practices (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010; Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012).

2.3.1 Facebook

As previously indicated, the analysis for this study was performed on the Netflix US Facebook page, which contains videos, pictures, and gif's, all related to current streaming titles. Facebook is a social networking site created in 2004 with the initial aim of enhancing interaction between students. Today, the platform has over 2.32 billion monthly active users and is the largest social media platform in the world ("Most popular social networks worldwide as of April 2019", 2019). In their study on Facebook usage, Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert (2009) describe Facebook's functionalities as follows: users can maintain a profile that contains basic personal information and inform others about what they are doing by changing their status. Users can also maintain a friend list by sending friend requests, which receivers can either accept or reject. Communication on Facebook can occur between friends by posting public messages on each other's walls, but it can also occur in groups, which users can create and join. Offline social interactions can also be facilitated through Facebook by, for instance, creating invitations to events.

Although most scholars frequently use the term 'social media', Voorveld, Van Noort, Muntinga and Bronner (2018) argue that this term is not adequate as a general descriptor. The term suggests that all platforms are social and facilitate social connections, but their research shows that not all SNSs are experienced as such by their users. In fact, Voorveld et al. (2018) found that Facebook is one of few platforms that are specifically used as a tool for social interaction, which is confirmed by Ellison, Steinfield and Lampe's (2007) finding that Facebook plays an important role in assembling social capital. Moreover, Shao (2009) states that Facebook has some key elements that make it socially attractive, as its core is rooted in meeting social needs and it can therefore contribute to the founding and maintenance of online communities. Once Facebook opened its platform to companies in 2006, more than 4000 organizations joined within 2 weeks and many brands since have developed their own brand-related communities on Facebook (Waters, Burnett, Lamm, & Lucas, 2009).

2.4 Communities

2.4.1 Traditional offline communities

Before discussing the topic of online (brand) communities, it is useful to explore the original concept of: *traditional communities*. At their most basic level, communities are groups of people that have meaningful common interests and a desire to regularly be together (Martínez-López et al., 2016; McMillan & Chavis, 1986). At the base of every community and the (unconscious) desire to belong to a community lies the *sense of community* (Martínez-López et al., 2016), which also provides insight into the gratifications that individuals receive from belonging to a community. Many academics have aimed to define the sense of community; yet universal agreement has not yet been

reached (Bess et al., 2002). To still provide a general description for this study, two widely recognized definitions from Sarason (1974) and McMillan and Chavis (1986) are fused, as indicated by Bess et al. (2012). This leads to the following proposed definition: sense of community is the feeling of being similar to others and therefore belonging with them, whilst accepting (inter)dependence on these others and maintaining this interdependence in exchange for the feeling of mattering to and caring for the community, and the belief that needs can be met by staying in the community.

Even though all humans are part of multiple communities (Bess et al., 2002) such as their families, occupational organizations and nations (Gusfield, 1978), people have grown so accustom to the existence of communities that they hardly notice being a part of them anymore. This probably stems from the fact that the concept of communities is older than humanity itself. In fact, communities can be traced back to as early as the era of the Hominids (Martínez-López et al., 2016), who lived a colossal five million years ago (Gibson, 2010). Although individuals often do not actively recognize the communities they belong to as such, these communities do impact their behavior (Martínez-López et al., 2016) as they provide individuals with meaningful roles in life and help them develop their identity and relationships with others (Sonn et al., 1999).

As communities are such vital parts of social life, they are much discussed in various disciplines (Cobigo, Martin, & McHeimech, 2016; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), amounting to a large body of literature that this study is aiming to add insight to. In 1955, Hillery bundled the then existing studies on communities and found that traditional communities are characterized by three traits: they (1) involve social interaction, (2) are based on a shared bond and (3) they are local. Locality used to be an important feature, because individuals had limited access to other regions and were therefore bound to their own regions (Martínez-López et al., 2016). Traditional communities were therefore also referred to as *locational communities* (Bess et al., 2002). This, however, changed with the invention of the Social Web, and there are now tireless amounts of online communities that can be joined by everyone with an Internet connection, no matter their location (Martínez-López et al., 2016).

2.4.2 Online communities

Online communities are online social aggregations that unite like-minded individuals who share goals and interests and have on-going discussions to the point that personal relationships between members are formed (Brown et al., 2007; Rheingold, 1993). Consequently, members engage in online communities because they feel that these communities are a safe place and a positive environment for them to share opinions in (Brown et al., 2007; Shao, 2009), something that they might not always experience in their offline worlds. By joining an online group individuals often receive the same gratifications as in traditional offline communities, such as a sense of community

(Shao, 2009). It is therefore common for members of online communities to become attached to their community and have regular, on-going exchanges with other members concerning commonly valued things and shared interests (Shao, 2009; Ridings & Gefen, 2004).

Since digital communities are located online and do not have physical locations (Ridings & Gefen, 2004) for their members to meet at, one could assume that the relationships within online communities are rather superficial compared to traditional communities. However, relationships are actually often the dominant focus within online communities (Martínez-López et al., 2016), and online communities often become just as valuable for members as their traditional communities (Shao, 2009). It could even be argued that online communities could be even more valuable for members than traditional communities, as membership of traditional communities is often a locational given, while participation in online communities is voluntarily (Galston, 2000) and not preceded by any pre-established or naturally binding factors. Although communication in online communities is primarily digital (Ridings & Gefen, 2004), there can be times where the lines between online and offline blur and established relationships are transferred to the online realm or vice versa (Martínez-López et al., 2016). Seeing that online communities can have great benefits for their members, it should not come as a surprise that they have gained significant popularity in the last two decades (Park & Cho, 2012).

2.4.3 Brand communities

The popularity of online communities has captured the attention of marketing professionals everywhere. The contemporary mediascape is highly competitive and over-saturated (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015; Sung, Kom, Kwon, & Moon, 2010), making brand building an essential part of every successful company. As communities are effective tools for brand building (Sung et al., 2010), many companies are invested in developing online communities around their brands (McWilliam, 2000; Scarpi, 2014). This could be considered an advantageous development, as brand communities can provide companies with a clear(er) understanding of their fans and allow them to facilitate a place where consumers can diffuse *electronic word of mouth*⁵ (*eWOM*) for the brand (Martínez-López et al., 2016). Research even suggests that larger communities, such as Netflix's 58-million-likes-strong US Facebook page, are more suitable for the dispersion of brand-related WOM than smaller communities are (Scarpi, 2014). As word of mouth is vital in shaping consumer behaviour (Brown & Reingen, 1987) and influencing product judgements (Bone, 1995), because individuals generally trust their peers (Lee & Youn, 2009), it is recommendable for brands to encourage *eWOM* dispersion. This

⁵ Word of mouth entails communication regarding a brand between a receiver and communicator, whom the receiver perceives as non-commercial (Buttle, 1998). Word of mouth is given new significance by the emergence of the Internet (Dellarocas, 2003), leading to electronic word of mouth.

does, however, come with its own set of challenges for managing compliments and complaints, which is detailed further in upcoming sections. In addition, brand communities are also considered a great tool for positively influencing the relationship between brand and (potential) customer (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001) and building brand loyalty (Scarpi, 2014).

Brand communities can be defined as “specialized, non-geographically bound communities that are based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of a brand” (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412). An important difference between traditional communities and brand communities is the explicit commercial nature of brand communities. They are not geographically or general interest bound, but stem from a collective commercial relationship to (Scarpi, 2010) and admiration for a brand (Brogi, 2014). There are two general types of relationships within brand communities: between different members of the community and between the brand and the members (Martínez-López et al., 2016; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), leading brand communities to be triadic rather than dyadic (Scarpi, 2009). This study primarily focuses on the latter relationship as initiated and maintained by Netflix.

Brand community members often become emotionally attached to the community (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), resulting in a feeling of *we-ness* (Brogi, 2014; Galston, 2000; Scarpi, 2009). This feeling does not only provide emotional advantages for members, who experience a feeling of belonging (Brogi, 2014), but also has several benefits for brands. Firstly, members who are emotionally attached will likely remain loyal to the community, including to the brand (Martínez-López et al., 2016), as switching to another brand would likely result in a separation between community and member (Scarpi, 2010). Once a fan is loyal, it is likely that he/she also will engage in positive WOM dispersion and will remain loyal for a longer time, provided that brand satisfaction does not lower (Veloutsou & McAlonan, 2012).

Another benefit for stimulating the feeling of *we-ness* is that it can cause members to experience a distinct separation between users of their brand and users of other brands (Brogi, 2014), something that Gusfield (1978) terms *consciousness of kind*. This separation between members and non-members can, in turn, result in *oppositional brand loyalty* (Kuo & Hou, 2017; Madupu & Cooley, 2010), meaning that members not only have a high loyalty towards their supported brand, but are also highly opposed and even (playfully) hostile towards rival brands (Kuo & Hou, 2017; Muniz & Hamer, 2001). As the SVoD market is densely populated with many suppliers (Gomez-Uribe & Hunt, 2015), a highly loyal and even oppositional loyal community could surely be beneficial for Netflix.

2.4.4 Social media based brand communities

Online brand communities have been present in the United States for a long time (Sung et al., 2010) and date back to the Web 1.0⁶ era, when a few companies would create portals for their fans to be active on. Their global popularity, however, only came to be once the Web 2.0 was initiated and social media started gaining ground (Madupu & Cooley, 2010; Martínez-López et al., 2016). As social media allow companies to be in direct contact with their fans more efficiently and at a relatively low cost (Jiao, Ertz, Jo, & Sarigollu, 2018; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010), many marketers are now using social networking sites to create and manage their *social media based brand communities* (SMBBCs). Social media based brand communities are thus a subset of both online communities and online brand communities, but differentiate themselves by being based on SNSs (Laroche et al., 2012).

Social media based brand communities can create value for both brands and fans, and increase brand loyalty and trust by allowing brands to foster a relationship with their fans (Laroche et al., 2012; Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013; Martínez-López et al., 2016). Laroche et al. (2012) found that SMBBCs have many of the same benefits as online brand communities do, such as the dispersion of eWOM (Martínez-López et al., 2016), but they also have the additional advantage of social media users being easier to engage than other audiences (Gómez & Quevedo, 2018). In addition, SMBBCs can improve market segmentation by targeting specific audiences, reduce marketing costs by potentially making mass marketing redundant (Martínez-López et al., 2016), and facilitate the development of new products by enhancing insight (Füller, Matzler, & Hoppe, 2008; Martínez-López et al., 2016). Given their abounding benefits, media producers are now actively using SMBBCs to promote programs (Lacalle & Castro, 2016) and connect with fans (Andrejevic, 2008).

2.5 Community relationship management

Although social media based brand communities can thus be highly beneficial for brands (Laroche et al., 2012), they do also have some potential negative effects. They do, for instance, allow rumours about the brand to be spread easily (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), as it just takes one click to share an untrue message with friends and followers (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). In addition, SMBBCs unconsciously allow brand saboteurs, which are hostile consumers that are determined to cause damage to a brand (Kähr, Nyffenegger, Krohmer, & Hoyer, 2016), to sabotage the brand from within (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001), as SMBBCs are often open-access. Gray (2003) uses the term 'anti-fan' when discussing brand saboteurs and states that anti-fans can be detrimental to a brand.

⁶ Web 1.0 was the predecessor of Web 2.0. It was rather limited in terms of social functionality compared to Web 2.0 and was mainly used to publish documents and conduct transactions (Martínez-López et al., 2016).

SMBBCs also contain more heterogeneous groups of actors, such as the brand, customers of the brand, and fans of the brand (Thomas, Price, & Schau, 2013), than regular communities do. This, in turn, increases the risk of conflicts (Dineva, Breitsohl, Garrod, 2017). It is therefore vital for brands to manage their brand-related online communities actively and adequately (Cottica et al., 2017; Noble et al., 2012), although they should also realize that they cannot control everything within their communities (Quinton, 2013; Noble et al., 2012). This is what Ang (2011) calls *community relationship management (CoRM)*. The framework of the 4C's of CoRM contains the four pillars on which community management is built: connectivity, content creation, conversations, and collaboration⁷.

2.5.1 Connectivity

Connectivity is vital in building a strong brand community, a goal that brands can achieve by providing an easy-to-use platform that enables fans to connect with both brand and peers (Ang, 2011). As SMBBCs aim to facilitate communication with and among fans (Dineva et al., 2017), brands should focus on providing social benefits by encouraging fan-to-fan interactions (Dholakia & Vianello, 2011; Gummerus, Liljander, Weman, & Pihlström, 2012; Sung et al., 2010). In this vein, Facebook has shown to be a fruitful platform for building and managing online communities and fulfil the need for social interaction (Shao, 2009). The fact that Netflix, on average, posts content on Facebook every 3,5 hours ("Netflix social media", 2016)⁸ illustrates the value that Netflix is attaching to this platform.

With the facilitation of fan interactions also comes the responsibility of managing these interactions. Brands should not aim to influence civil interactions between fans when they are, for instance, discussing a certain Netflix streaming title or just having a friendly conversation (Noble et al., 2012), as interaction stimulation is one of the main goals of community relationship management (Ang, 2011). However, brands should consider intervening when these interactions lead to fan-to-fan conflicts (Dineva et al., 2017). In such fan-to-fan conflicts, fans are rude (Fisk et al., 2010) and verbally attack other fans on the community page (Dineva et al., 2017). These conflicts can occur between supporters of rival brands when anti-fans engage with fans on the public brand page, but can also occur between supporters of the same brand that have different experiences with the brand. Conflicts are especially common in broad communities that are large in number and consist of people that have loose social ties build on a shared commitment to a brand (Husemann, Ladstaetter, & Luedicke, 2015), such as the Netflix US Facebook community.

⁷ As the fourth pillar, collaboration, is mostly used in project-related communities such as Wikipedia (Ang, 2011), this pillar is not taken into consideration for this study.

⁸ There are no recent sources to be found that narrate Netflix's posting schedule. The dataset gathered for this study, however, indicates that this estimate from 2016 is still valid.

Fan-to-fan conflicts often cause emotional distress to both fans involved in the conflict as well as to fans that are observing it (Dineva et al., 2017). Moreover, fan-to-fan conflicts also often negatively impact brand reputation and brand credibility, because fans tend to blame the brand when they are verbally attacked on the brand's page (Dineva et al., 2017). This, in turn, can cause fans to not return to the brand page (Dineva et al., 2017) and therefore weaken the community. According to Berry and Seiders (2008), brands should therefore acknowledge when fans are behaving unfair and manage this effectively; a belief that is shared by several other scholars (e.g. Dineva et al., 2017; Sibai, De Valck, Farrell, & Rudd, 2015).

Dineva et al. (2017) distinguish five strategies for fan-to-fan conflict management. In a *non-engaging strategy*, brands choose to not intervene in conflicts at all and avoid resolving the conflict. Despite research findings suggesting that brands should actively intervene in conflicts, the non-engaging strategy is the most often used conflict management strategy. The second strategy, *censoring*, is more active compared to the first strategy and involves brands permanently removing certain content that includes bad language or attacks on other fans. The third strategy, which is *pacifying*, refers to a brand posting a comment that asks fans to adjust their behavior. This can also include brands taking further actions if fans keep behaving badly. The fourth strategy, which is *bolstering*, is less focused on fans that are creating the conflict and instead involves a brand posting a comment that affirms a fan that is defending the brand. Lastly, the strategy of *informing* involves a brand posting information to rectify a comment that has led to a fan-to-fan conflict.

2.5.2 Content creation

The second pillar of CoRM, which is *content creation*, is based on the knowledge that human beings generally like to create and share (Ang, 2011). In the context of social media, this refers to the first type of social media user abovementioned, namely the posters. By encouraging posters to publish their own user-generated content on the community page, brands can foster their relationship with fans (Ang, 2011), as user-generated content is considered an important way for fans to express themselves (Smith et al., 2012). A brand asking for help in creating content also establishes interdependence between brand and fan, which in turn also positively affects their relationship (Fournier, 1998). In addition, user-generated content is more influential in driving potential purchases than marketer-generated content is (Goh, Heng, & Lin, 2013). Tsimonis and Dimitriadis (2014) therefore add that brands should reward fans that disseminate user-generated content by acknowledging and appreciating their contributions.

Most social media users are, however, not posters, but participants that do not post content but instead actively react to content of others (Schlosser, 2005; Shao, 2009; Whiting & Williams, 2013). Although content replies are considered user-to-content interaction and not user-generated

content (Shao, 2009), asking fans to react to content can greatly benefit SMBBCs (Kumar & Reinartz, 2018) for multiple reasons. Firstly, likes and comments are beneficial for a brand's social media presence, which can make it easier for potential fans to find a community and increase the credibility of the community (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). Secondly, encouraging fans to be active in the brand community and share their opinions with the brand can positively affect the relationship between the brand and its fans (Gummerus et al., 2012). As Gummerus et al. (2012) have found; both posting and participating are essential creation behaviours in brand communities, as without the participation of fans, there is no community.

Together with encouraging user-generated content, brands should also create their own content to add value to the community (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). This is especially true for Netflix managing its US Facebook page, as American social media users are generally more attracted to communities that display marketer-generated content (Jiao et al., 2018). Previous research suggests that the marketer-generated content that a brand posts should, at the very least, provide *entertainment benefits*, to provide fans with relaxation and fun and motivate community participation. Brands can offer entertaining elements by posting light-hearted videos or photos that are relevant for the community and make fans smile (Gummerus et al., 2012). Moreover, fans, and American fans in particular, also look to brands to provide them with informational content that offers them additional knowledge on the brand and its services (Jiao et al., 2018). Ideally, brands should post daily content to their communities (Gummerus et al., 2012), as witnessing inactivity within the brand community can turn off both potential and established fans (Waters et al., 2009).

Previous research also provides several implications for the *tone of voice* that brands should use when engaging in their communities, which is also an important part of the third pillar of CoRM. Brands can attract fans by promoting values through their branding (Kemp, Childers, & Williams, 2012), and studies have therefore found that it is increasingly important for companies to humanize their brands and assign personality traits to them (e.g. Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Kuo & Hou, 2017; Martínez-López et al., 2016). If brand humanization is employed consistently, it allows fans to see a brand as a human being (Kniazeva & Belk, 2010; Stinnett, Hardy, & Waters, 2013) and establish a self-brand connection that leads them to consider the brand as an important part of their identities, which stimulates brand loyalty and oppositional brand loyalty (Dwivedi, Johnson, & McDonald, 2015; Kuo & Hou, 2017). Self-brand connections are therefore established when brands embody traits that are seen as favourable by fans and represent a certain uniqueness (Kemp et al., 2012), leading fans to perceive brands as like or a part of themselves (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017).

Brand humanization is generally attractive to fans, because human beings already have a natural tendency to see human elements in nonhuman entities (Kim & Kramer, 2015) and therefore have a need to humanize nonmaterial objects to enhance their relationship with these objects

(Geuens, Weijters, & De Wulf, 2009). Brands can humanize their brands in several ways, ranging from assigning human-like qualities to them to enlivening the brand as an actual thinking and feeling entity with a human-like mind (Fournier, 1998; MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). When humanizing their brands, some organizations even go as far as personifying and portraying a brand as a person (Aaker, 1997; Veloutsou & Taylor, 2012), leading fans to often see fictional human beings in brands (Kniazeva & Belk, 2010). Aaker and Fournier (1995) accordingly describe a brand as a character, partner and person. Lieven (2018) even argues that the only way to increase brand trust, brand loyalty, and self-brand connections is to make the brand a person. In assigning personality traits to their brands, brands should take their heritage and authenticity into consideration, as these traits are now often valued by consumers (Martínez-López et al., 2016). These traits can be displayed by invoking “the history of a brand, including all its personal and cultural associations” (Brown et al., p. 20).

As brand humanization thus ranges rather broadly between assigning limited qualities to making a brand an actual person, and can therefore differ greatly between various brands, Geuens et al. (2009) categorize four approaches in assigning personality to brands: organizations can organize their brand as (1) a symbol, (2) a product, (3) an organization and (4) a person. Based on the abovementioned literature on brand humanization, these four approaches are listed from being dehumanizing to fully humanizing. This means that the brand as a symbol is dehumanizing and the brand as a person is the most humanizing. In contrast to humanization, dehumanization occurs when brands are perceived as objects (Fiske, 2013; MacInnis & Folkes, 2017) and leads to others denying a brand's humanity (Fiske, 2013). Brand dehumanization usually occurs when brand values are not in line with fan values; fans are then likely to then reject the brand's humanizing efforts (Puzakova, Kwak, & Rocereto, 2009).

2.5.3 Conversation

Finally, *conversation* is the third pillar of community management, which is closely related to the idea of connectivity (Ang, 2011). In today's digital era, establishing direct interactions with fans is essential for a brand's success and reputation, as customer engagement is a key determinant in successful social media conduct for brands (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015). These interactions can be fostered by conversing with fans, as Fournier (1998) states that brands should become active and reciprocal conversation partners to foster a relationship with their fans. Dialogue and communication is, after all, what social media are all about (Baird & Parasnis, 2011). In addition, comments from a brand are likely to fuel more exchanges within the community (Ang, 2011). This relates to the *reinforcement theory*, which states that people are more likely to repeat an action if that action is reinforced by positive reactions (Joyce & Kraut, 2007). A positive response from a brand on a fans'

comment it therefore likely to reinforce fans to respond with even more messages (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015).

When it comes to conversing with fans, *webcare* is an essential and popular strategy (Bekkers, Edwards, & De Kool, 2013). Brands can use webcare to engage in online interaction with fans to act on their questions, complaints and statements (Willemsen, Van Noort, & Bronner, 2012). When done right, webcare can strengthen fans' loyalty and increase their level of satisfaction, generate positive WOM (Wangenheim & Bayón, 2004) and contribute to the creation of a strong community (Ang, 2011). According to Schamari and Schaefers (2015), it is important for brands to also humanize their webcare by employing a *human voice* that is personal and informal. Generally speaking, webcare can be used for several purposes, ranging from managing negative comments to building a relationship between brands and consumers by responding to positive messages.

There are two general approaches to webcare: reactive and proactive. *Proactive webcare* is directed towards both negative and positive messages (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015) and, here, organizational responses are often not preceded by any request from fans (Van Noort et al., 2015). This type of webcare can therefore be considered more as a tool for relationship building and can also be used to encourage and reinforce positive WOM from fans (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). In contrast, *reactive webcare* is concerned with replying to requests from consumers to respond to their complaints or critiques (Van Noort, Willemsen, Kerkhof, & Verhoeven, 2015) in order to enhance fans' satisfaction with the brand. Although marketing specialists often advise brands to consider complaints as opportunities to prevent potential problems, studies show that brands often ignore or even censor negative comments (Dekay, 2012), indicating that brands should start fostering their reactive webcare more. In fact, Noble et al., (2012) have determined that one of the key factors in determining the success of SMBBC is the extent to which *intervention* occurs in negative commenting situations. This means that brands should intervene when fans are posting negative comments, although comments should first be assessed based on their effect on the brand, the legitimacy of the complaint and the possibility of salvaging the relationship before intervening (Noble et al., 2012).

According to Noble et al. (2012), brands can use one of four strategies to moderate negative comments. The suitable approach for a certain situation is dependent on both the topic and the validity of the complaint. If a complaint addresses the core of a product, such as pricing, and has legitimacy to it, Noble et al. (2012) recommend a strategy of *promotion*. Brands should promote their services by offering an explanation for the experienced shortcoming in combination with a subtle promotion. However, if there is no legitimacy to the complaint and it has malicious intent, Noble et al. (2012) recommend a strategy of *action* where the brand should aggressively but fact-based respond to the commenter in order to debunk the accusations. If a complaint does not address the

core of brand, but instead focuses on supplementary factors, Noble et al. (2012) suggest that brands should take a different approach. If such a complaint has legitimacy to it, brands are often best off using a strategy of *passivity*, in which they do not directly respond to the complaint, but monitor it and use it to adjust their strategy to accommodate this complaint. If, however, a supplementary complaint does not have legitimacy to it, Noble et al. (2012) suggest that brands should follow a strategy of *correction*, in which they post a mild response to clarify or debunk the complaint.

Although brands thus seem to be hesitant to use reactive webcare to their benefit (Dekay, 2012), previous studies have shown that a reactive webcare strategy is actually generally better received by social media users and is therefore more effective in establishing direct interactions between fans and brands than a proactive strategy is (Van Noort & Willemsen, 2012). This suggests that brands should only act on a comment if the poster specifically requests a response. Moreover, Schamari and Schaefers (2015) have found that webcare directed at positive consumer engagement, which is considered proactive webcare, is only effective when it is not employed on a brand-generated platform. As this research is focused on Netflix's Facebook page, which is indeed a brand-generated platform (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015), this could suggest that any proactive webcare that Netflix might be employing is not effective. These findings seem, however, not in line with Ang (2011), Baird and Parasnis (2011) and Fournier (1998), who all suggest that fans are looking for brands to be active conversation partners. This analysis of this research will therefore show which webcare strategy Netflix is employing and how Netflix's fans are responding to this in their comments.

2.6 Summary

Netflix provides a range of sophisticated services and therefore seems to have plenty of advantageous abilities to set itself apart from its competitors. To promote these advantages, Netflix has jumped on the bandwagon of social media based brand communities, which can provide both emotional benefits for community members as well as strategic benefits for brands, if managed correctly. As Netflix is often praised for its so-called revolutionary social media strategy, one would assume that the brand also knows exactly how to manage its US Facebook community. To corroborate if this is indeed the case and provide an in-depth review of Netflix's community relationship management, Ang's (2011) three pillars of connectivity, conversation and content creation are used as a framework. The method that is used for this analysis is discussed in the upcoming chapter.

3. Methodology

This chapter describes the design of the study, starting with a rationale for the applied data gathering method, gathered data and method of analysis. After that, the sampling procedure and data gathering process are discussed in the second paragraph and the key concepts from the research question are operationalized in the third paragraph. Moreover, the procedure of analysing the data is described in detail in paragraph four. Finally, some possible concerns about the reliability and validity of this research are discussed, as well as some ethical considerations.

3.1 Research design

The purpose of this study is to provide a wholesome view of Netflix's community relationship management. To do so, a research question and several sub-questions are formulated, as previously stated in chapter 1. These questions are addressed by means of a qualitative thematic analysis, with which both posts and comments from the Netflix US Facebook page are analysed. The research questions guiding this project are the following:

RQ: How is Netflix employing brand community relationship management on its United States Facebook page?

SQ1: How is Netflix employing 'connectivity' in its posts and comments?

SQ2: How is Netflix employing 'conversation' in its posts and comments?

SQ3: How is Netflix employing 'content creation' in its posts and comments?

SQ4: How are fans using Netflix's United States Facebook page to communicate with Netflix?

3.1.1 Qualitative thematic analysis

Babbie (2017) defines *qualitative research* as the "examination and interpretation of observations, for the purpose of discovering underlying meanings and patterns" (p. 391). Qualitative research methods are interpretive and use language to understand people's experiences and interpret meaningful relationships (Brennen, 2017) and are therefore able to go beyond the explicit layer of (social media) messages and delve deeper into the latent essence of a message (Schreier, 2013). Since the aim of this research is to interpret the meaning behind what Netflix is communicating to its fans on Facebook and how they are responding, a qualitative approach to the research question is most appropriate. In addition, previous research states that key indicators for the three pillars of CoRM, such as word of mouth and loyalty, are hard to quantify (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

The gathered data is analysed following a *thematic analysis*, which is an approach to encoding data that focuses on identifying, analysing, and reporting themes and patterns within

gathered data (Aronson, 1995; Braun & Clarke, 2006). Themes and patterns found in data describe observations and interpret phenomena, and can be identified at both a manifest and latent level. Latent identification is, however, more common within qualitative research, as studies aim to describe underlying phenomena (Boyatzis, 1998). Thematic analysis is carried out following a three-phase coding system (Boeije, 2010) that builds on Strauss and Corbin's Grounded Theory Method (GTM) (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis does differentiate itself from traditional GTM, however, as it is not wedded to a pre-existing theoretical framework and less theoretically bounded. Thematic analysis therefore leaves more room for inductive coding to be combined with deductive coding (Alhojailan, 2012; Braun & Clarke, 2006). The possibility of coding data inductively is relevant for this research, as the fourth sub-question is mostly analysed inductively, which is further detailed in the operationalization.

Thematic analysis is especially useful for written texts such as social media posts and comments, but can also be used for visual analysis (Teo, 2014), and is therefore appropriate for the full analysis of this study. Using a thematic analysis allows the possibility to show which themes are prevalent within the gathered data, and based on these themes, an inclusive answer to the proposed research question can be provided. The major benefit for using thematic analysis is its ability to systematically and replicable compress the vast amount of gathered data into a few core categories that are based on explicit coding rules (Stemler, 2001).

This study could, in a sense, be deemed *ethnographic* in nature. Ethnography focuses on understanding behaviour and believes, and is used in media studies to assess people's behaviours and to go beyond their self-reported activities and opinions. In the contemporary media field, researchers are using digital ethnography, also referred to as *netnography*, more and more to study virtual communities (Brennen, 2017). Digital ethnographers often combine existing data with interviews, field observation, and other research methods, and often immerse themselves in the group that they are studying (Brennen, 2017). As direct interaction with fans, either in the form of interviews or community participation, is not within the scope of this study, this study cannot be deemed fully ethnographic. However, Postill and Pink (2012) argue that social media ethnography requires a different approach than 'normal' digital ethnography that is less reliant on field research and more focused on finding the quality of and interactions within online relationships. As this research is indeed aiming to understand the interactions between Netflix and its community by observing communications within the community, there is a partial ethnographical approach to this study.

3.1.2 Social media data

The main motivations for utilizing data from Facebook for this analysis are three. Firstly, as has been discussed in the previous chapter, social media have now become important sites for brands to engage on and manage their brand-related communities (Cottica et al., 2017; Gummerus et al., 2012). As social media have become such vital brand community sites, the importance of using data from Netflix's Facebook page to answer the proposed research question is greatly. Secondly, previous research shows that social media provide rich opportunity for insight into communities. For instance, Mckenna et al. (2017) have found that the emergence of social media provides qualitative research with many new opportunities to study worlds, experiences and interpretations. Kozinets, Dolbec and Earley (2013) also support the notion of online social spaces as important fields for qualitative research, and stress that analysis of social media data can provide a rich and thick description of, for instance, communities. Thirdly, an additional benefit of using data that is readily available, such as Facebook comments and posts, is that it can be collected unobtrusively without being affected. Affecting the outcome of a study by studying it is a possible impediment for some other qualitative methods, as people are likely to behave differently if they know they are being studied (Babbie, 2017; Stemler, 2001).

3.2 Data collection

3.2.1 Units of analysis

McKenna et al. (2017) recommend that researchers using social media data use a mixed method that triangulates different types of data in order to increase the reliability of the outcome of the analysis. Usage of multiple research methods is not within the scope of this research, but the recommendation for using multiple sources of data is followed. For this reason, two separate parts of Netflix's US Facebook page (www.facebook.com/netflixus/) are analysed for this study, which are posts and comments. Each of these data types can be used to confirm or provide a different perspective on Netflix's community management (McKenna et al., 2017).

Posts are the blocks of content that are posted by Netflix itself on its Facebook page to inform, amuse, or engage the community about certain topics. These posts provide insight into how Netflix is addressing its community and how it is initiating the conversation with its fans. Both the textual and the visual parts (e.g. images and videos) of the posts are gathered to ensure a complete and inclusive analysis. On the other hand, *comments* are messages, written by either Netflix or fans, that are published underneath a post. Comments can either be a direct reply to the post or in reply to another comment. The analysis of these comments therefore provides insight into both the conversations between multiple fans and between Netflix and its fans. In addition, it shows which

types of comments Netflix typically does and does not reply to and can therefore present if Netflix is using a proactive or reactive webcare strategy (Van Noort et al., 2015).

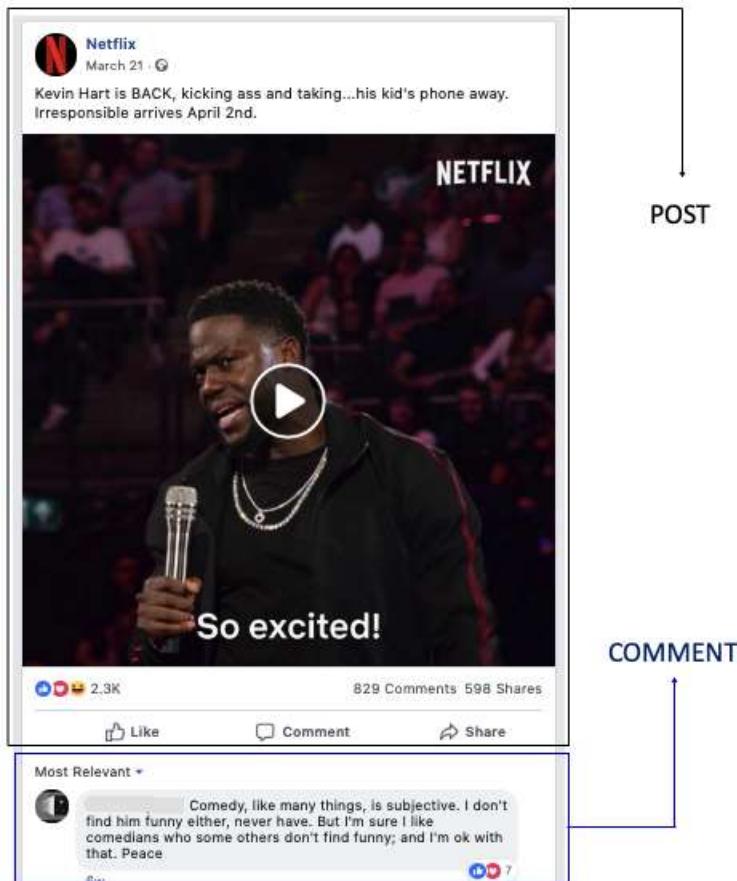


Illustration 3.1: Posts versus comments

3.2.2 Sampling strategy

Facebook data shows that Netflix's US Facebook page was created on November 12, 2007, meaning that there is a vast amount of data available for this analysis. As the scope of this study, or any other study for that matter, is not large enough to analyse all available data, and Facebook's algorithm does not allow for a random way to gather a sample from all available data, *non-probability sampling* was used (Babbie, 2017). The sample of posts and comments was gathered through a *purposive sampling* strategy, which is a sampling strategy in which posts and comments are selected based on the researcher's judgement about which criteria the data needs to meet in order to be relevant for the study (Babbie, 2017).

A total of 100 Facebook posts from the Netflix US Facebook page was sampled to ensure that a sufficient amount of data is analysed. This sample proved to be broad enough to allow for an in-depth analysis and the reaching of data saturation. With the objective of analysing Netflix's current community management strategy and making the sample as representative as possible, the 100 most recent posts from the page were sampled. By collecting a broad sample it was also ensured

that all different types of content are included in the analysis. As Facebook's standard is to rank the posts on a page by most recent to least recent, there were no issues for the selected method. To ensure that the researcher conducting this study was able to accurately analyse the posted content, only posts that were written in English were sampled. This did not provide any issues either, as all posts on the Netflix US Facebook page evidently are written in English. In summary, the selected posts had to:

- Be posted on the Netflix US Facebook page;
- Be posted by Netflix itself;
- Be one of the 100 most recent posted posts;
- Be written in English.

As Facebook comments are often short (Ang, 2011), it is crucial to include a large number of them in the sample in order for the analysis to reach data saturation. With, again, the objective of analysing Netflix's current strategy, the included comments were sampled from underneath the 100 sampled posts, ensuring that the comments were recent as well. Moreover, this technique also ensures that the posts and comments collected match and therefore do not give a skewed view of Netflix's community management. For this reason, an initial dataset of *800 Facebook comments* was collected. Unlike the posts, the comments from underneath the 100 posts were not sampled based on being the most recent, but instead the 'most relevant' setting was used. This setting automatically sorts comments to show those that received many likes or replies or that have been replied to by a verified account, such as Netflix's account, first ("Wat betekent meest relevant bij een paginabericht?", n.d.). This way, only comments that have been noticed by many fans or that Netflix has replied to were included in the sample. It can be assumed that this provides more insightful data than sampling messages chronologically would.

Every comment, either posted by Netflix or by a fan, was eligible for the data sample, whether a comment is direct towards Netflix or not. This allows the study to not only research the communication between Netflix and its fans, but also to identify current communication trends within the community. Comments that include emoticons or pictures without textual accompaniment were collected, since this may help in the identification of potential communication trends, but were not counted as part of the sample, as emoticons and pictures can have a very ambiguous meaning and are therefore hard to interpret correctly without textual aid. In summary, comments in the sample had to:

- Be posted underneath one of the sampled 100 posts;
- Be one of the top 8 'most relevant' comments underneath those posts;
- Include at least one word of text;

- Be written in English.

Once the gathering of the initial dataset was complete, the statistics of this dataset indicated a severe lack of comments from Netflix. From all the comments collected for the initial dataset, a mere 3% ($n = 24$) was written by Netflix. In line with this finding it is noteworthy to, again, mention that the sampling of the initial dataset was biased to actually gather more comments from Netflix, as the 'most relevant' setting is set up to show comments from verified accounts first. Although the lack of comments from Netflix is an interesting result in itself, it was decided that it would be useful to attempt to gain a bit more insight into Netflix's webcare strategy. To do so, an *additional dataset of 26 comments from Netflix* was gathered, totaling the amount of comments written by Netflix in the complete dataset to 50.

The comments in the additional dataset were sampled from underneath the 100 posts already collected for the initial dataset, to ensure that the data is not skewed. For this sampling procedure, the researcher started at the top of the initial dataset, thus being the most recent post in the sample, and scrolled through all the comments underneath this post in search for a comment from Netflix. Every comment from Netflix posted underneath this post was gathered, no matter the amount of comments from Netflix underneath that post. This was done consecutively for every post in the initial dataset, until 26 comments from Netflix were collected. For this additional dataset, every comment posted by Netflix was eligible for the sample, whether a comment was posted as a separate comment or in response to a fan. Comments that only include emoticons or pictures without any textual accompaniment were collected, but, again, not counted as part of the sample. In summary, comments in the additional sample had to:

- Be posted by Netflix;
- Be posted underneath one of the sampled 100 posts;
- Not already part be of the initial dataset;
- Include at least one word of text;
- Be written in English.

3.2.3 Data collection and processing

The gathering of the initial data set of both comments and posts took place on the 5th of May 2019. To prevent any cookies, algorithms, or other systems from possibly influencing the sample, the researcher cleared all history from the browser before starting and did not log in to any account on Facebook, therefore keeping an unidentified profile. The comments and posts were assessed on their fitness for the determined criteria during the sampling, and only those that indeed met the set criteria were gathered.

There were no posts that did not meet the selection criteria, meaning that the 100 selected posts are indeed the 100 most recent posts on the Netflix Facebook page as of May 5th. For the comments, however, there were a few that did not meet the sampling criteria and therefore were not eligible for the sample. However, there were enough comments underneath all of the 100 posts to still be able to collect 8 comments per post, so no deficit was formed. A complete overview of the initial dataset is attached in Appendix A. As this appendix shows, the dataset for the analysis consist of 100 posts and 832 comments, of which 800 are counted towards the sample. The remaining 32 comments are not eligible for the sample due to only containing pictures or emoticons, but are used to learn more about the communication behaviours of the community. Of all the comments collected in the additional dataset, 776 are written by fans and 24 are written by Netflix.

As mentioned in the previous section, the lack of comments from Netflix in the initial dataset led to the decision of collecting an additional dataset of 26 comments written by Netflix. This additional dataset was sampled on the 23rd of May, and these 26 comments were collected from underneath the first 34 posts from the initial dataset. The same precautions relating to keeping an anonymous profile were used for the sampling of this additional dataset. A complete overview of the additional dataset can be found in Appendix B. As this appendix shows, a total of 26 comments eligible for the sample and an additional 6 comments not eligible for the sample were collected.

As there is a vast amount of data to analyse for this study, the best and most feasible way to perform the analysis is by using computer assisted qualitative data analysis software (CAQDAS) (Brennen, 2017; McKenna et al., 2017). CAQDAS allows researchers to manage their projects more easily and effectively by helping them analyse large volumes of data (Babbie, 2017; Brennen, 2017). The posts and comments were therefore entered into Atlas.ti, which is a software program designed for qualitative research to process large numbers of documents, track notes and memos, code texts and evaluate and analyse images and videos (Brennen, 2017).

As McKenna et al. (2017) recommend that researchers using social media data include visual images in their analyses, both the textual and visual components of the posts and comments were included in the analysis. To enter the textual components of the posts and comments in the Atlas.ti program, the text of all posts and comments were saved in a Word document as text. To enter the visual components of the posts in the Atlas.ti program, the visual components of all posts were viewed by the researcher and described in general terms of their content and noteworthy components and also added as a text file. There were two text files created in total: one containing all posts and comments written by Netflix, and one file containing all comments written by fans. Both files were coded within the same Atlas.ti project, as the posts and comments from underneath those posts function as an interacting whole and should therefore be coded as such to provide a wholesome view on the brand community. Codes that related to posts and comments from Netflix

were given a red colour and codes from fans were given a yellow colour to ensure a continuously clear overview of the dataset.

3.3 Operationalization

The main concepts for this study are Ang's (2011) three aforementioned pillars of CoRM: connectivity, content creation and conversation. Each of these pillars is the subject of one of the previous stated sub-questions, and the assessment of all of these concepts together therefore provides the answer to the main research question. Every CoRM pillar is operationalized based on previous research, and the entire operationalization is visually summarized in table 3.1.

3.3.1 Operationalization connectivity

The concept of connectivity was assessed on two criteria: interaction facilitation and interaction management. Firstly, *interaction facilitation* is understood as Netflix's facilitation of social interaction between its brand community members (Gummerus et al., 2012; Sung et al., 2010). Examples of expression of this criterion are active statements from Netflix directly encouraging fans to connect with their fellow fans, as well as subtler encouragement by positively engaging in conversations between multiple fans. Secondly, *interaction management* is understood in terms of Netflix intervening in fan interactions when these interactions become malicious and lead to fan-to-fan conflict (Berry & Seiders, 2008; Dineva et al., 2017; Sibai et al., 2015). This criterion was assessed on observed actions from Netflix that are directed towards fan-to-fan conflicts, and can include several actions, such as asking for behavior adjustment, affirming positive comments and providing information to dispute the conflict (Dineva et al., 2017).

3.3.2 Operationalization content creation

For the assessment of content creation it is first important to note that there are two types of content creation important in this study: user-generated content creation (Ang, 2011; Fournier, 1998) and marketer-generated content creation (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014). The employment of *user-generated content creation* was criticized in the sense of encouraging fans to create their own user-generated content (Gummerus et al., 2012). Examples of this criterion are active statements from Netflix asking fans to share their own content (Ang, 2011; Smith et al., 2012), active statements from Netflix asking fans to either like or comment on other content (Kumar & Reinartz, 2018), and active acknowledgement and appreciation from Netflix towards fans that create user-generated content (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

The concept of *content creation in Netflix's own content* was assessed on several criteria and the extent to which these criteria are present in Netflix's content. These criteria are the following: providing entertainment benefits (Gummerus et al., 2012), providing informational benefits (Waters

et al., 2009), a humanizing approach to the Netflix brand (Brown et al., 2003; Kuo & Hou, 2017; Martínez-López et al., 2016) and stressing Netflix's authenticity and heritage (Martínez-López et al., 2016). Examples of entertainment benefits are posts or comments that include more light-hearted content such as videos and photos that make fans laugh and feel good (Gummerus et al., 2012). On the other hand, examples of informational benefits are posts or comments that provide fans with extra knowledge on Netflix and Netflix streaming titles (Waters et al., 2009). The presence of a humanizing approach was assessed on factors such as the attribution of personal traits to the brands as well as treating of the brand as a living entity (Fournier, 1998). Lastly, it was also assessed if the personal traits that are potentially attributed to Netflix are emphasizing the brand's heritage and/or authenticity, such as its unique attributes and cultural associations (Brown et al., 2003).

3.3.3 Operationalization conversation

For the concept of conversation Netflix's webcare strategy was assessed, as the management of and involvement in direct interaction with fans is an important part of the pillar of conversation (Ang, 2011; Fournier, 1998). Comments were therefore assessed based on what kind of content they are responding to: examples of reactive webcare are responses to complaints or feedback from fans that mandate a response, whilst examples of proactive webcare are comments that are directed towards complements and positive statements, as well as more negative statements that do not mandate an organizational response (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015; Van Noort et al., 2015).

3.3.4 Operationalization: in summary

The abovementioned key concepts relate to the first three sub-questions of this study. These concepts and their corresponding criteria are formulated based on previous research on related subjects, for which Ang's (2011) pillars of community relationship management provide the framework. The data gathered from these three sub-questions together provides the primary answer to the main research question, as this data allows an in-depth analysis of Netflix's community relationship management. The fourth sub-question, however, is less directly linked to the main research question, but does provide useful insights into fans' side of the brand community triad. As relationships within brand communities should be based on interdependence between fans and brand (Fournier, 1998), it is important to also highlight fans' side. Whilst the first three sub-questions are analyzed more deductively based on concepts emerging from previous research, the last sub-question was analyzed inductively and less based on previous research, where the focus was on identifying communication trends within the community.

Concept	Criteria	Description
Connectivity	Interaction facilitation Interaction management	Netflix encouraging fans to connect Netflix intervening in fan-to-fan conflicts
Content creation	User-generated content creation	Netflix encouraging fans to share own content
	Marketer-generated content creation	The provision of entertainment and informational benefits
	Humanizing approach	Enlivening the Netflix brand
	Authenticity and heritage	Awarding traits that display authenticity and heritage to the brand
Conversation	Proactive webcare	Comments that are aiming to build a relationship
	Reactive webcare	Comments that are addressing complaints and questions

Table 3.1: Operationalization of key concepts

3.4 Data analysis

Once all relevant data was collected, a thematic analysis was used to process and analyze this data. As stated in the research design; thematic analysis follows a three-stage coding process, in which all data is systematically coded and analyzed. The three coding phases are called *open*, *axial* and *selective* coding (Boeije, 2010; Braun & Clarke, 2006), and each phase builds forth on the previous one. Finally, a list of core categories, or themes, is defined and these together provide the answer to the stated research question (Boeije, 2010). During the coding process, the collected data is dismembered into smaller fragments with the aim of filtering out the most relevant data, allowing the analysis to transition from observation to interpretation (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Both the text and the visual components of comments and posts were analysed and therefore coded. Visual analysis of the posts was primarily focused on *general identification* of what kind of visual content Netflix is using to address the community. More implicit visual aspects of the posts, such as camera angles and compositions, were not analysed, as this information is not relevant in the realm of this research.

3.4.1 Open coding

Open coding is the process of breaking down and carefully examining all the data in the dataset, in order to code each relevant piece of information accordingly (Boeije, 2006). To do so, the complete dataset was first read multiple times to become familiarized and already get a sense of the contents. Once the researcher was acquainted with the entire dataset, the data was divided into smaller fragments. Consequently, each piece of text was compared amongst each other and coded

accordingly (Boeije, 2006). During this coding process especial attention was paid to theory-related material, repetitions in the dataset and metaphors and analogies, including certain abbreviations used in dialogues, as recommended by Bryman (2012). Moreover, an open mind was also kept to be able to recognize emerging codes that are not related to the previously discussed literature.

The initial codes consisted of both descriptive codes, which were coded similarly to their original text, and more interpretive codes, which already started to interpret the meaning behind a code (Boeije, 2006). The complete dataset was re-read several times again during the open coding, to ensure that all data relevant to the research question was covered with a code until no new codes were found, thus reaching data saturation. The open coding set initially consisted of 792 codes in total. After careful reviewing, a few more codes that had no relation to the research question were deleted, as recommended by McKenna et al. (2017), leaving a total of 766 open codes.

Code	Illustrative quote
● Airdate added in comment	“Now streaming” is added as a comment by Netflix on 05/02/2019 6:00pm
● Hump day treat	“As a hump day treat, you can finish our series Bonding”
● #beyoncehomecoming	#beyoncehomecoming
● Big news	“BIG NEWS:”
● Awesome job	“Awesome job Netflix!”
● Awful	“This looks awful”
● #Bringbacksantaclaritadiet	“#Bringbacksantaclaritadiet”
● Bye Netflix	“Bye bye Netflix”
● Can’t wait to watch this	“I CANNOT WAIT!”
● Bravo	“Bravo for you Netflix”
● Discussion: I do like this show	“I like this show lol”

Table 3.2 Sample of open descriptive codes. ● Netflix, ● Fans

Code	Illustrative quote
● Distant rather than humanizing	"Coming to Netflix US"
● Humanizing the brand	"Me in every meeting"
● Offering alternative take on what a fan is perceiving	"TONS of women have to give birth and go back to work! This experience is hard and emotional and intense"
● Informational content	Additional information about the wildlife and global warming is provided during the video
● Personal attack on peer fan	"No one cares about your opinion"
● Complaint about show cancellations	"You'll just cancel it after a few seasons"
● Real-life relationships get involved in the community	"I, my husband, and my close friends beg for more seasons"
● Sharing current viewing	"I will probably start episode 4 tomorrow"
● Sharing details of personal life	"When I need to nap between my newborn's naps"
● Using content of post to mention a different title	"Nobody cares about hallmark movies. Stop funding this crap and get Santa Clarita Diet back for another season"

Table 3.3: Sample of open descriptive codes. ●Netflix, ●Fans

3.4.2 Axial coding

During the second coding phase, which is axial coding, it was determined which elements of the research are dominant. To do so, the codes that were forming during the open coding were analyzed again, combined based on similarities and renamed if necessary. In addition, redundant codes were removed. The entire dataset was re-read again and the open codes were assessed on their relevance to the research question and interpreted in relation to Ang's (2011) pillars of CoRM. Consequently, the remaining codes were merged into overarching, mutually exclusive groups that each contain several codes and identify interrelations among the data (Alhojailan, 2012). This resulted in a much shorter list of the best representative codes (Boeije, 2010) that describe the bulk of the data (Alhojailan, 2012).

The result of axial coding process is a list of 9 overarching groups and 35 codes, as displayed in table 3.4. Illustrative quotes for each code are provided in Appendix C. The first two groups, *positive fan sentiments* and *negative fan sentiments*, contain codes that represent relevant fan feelings towards Netflix. In line with the latter group is the group *disloyalty*. This group contains several codes that indicate disloyalty within the Netflix community. The fourth group, which is called *fan feedback*, combines several codes that indicate requests from fans and Netflix according responses. Moreover, the group *community interactions* combines codes that describe the

interaction between Netflix and fans and different fans. The sixth group, called *informational content*, describes different types of information that is provided in Netflix's posts. In relation to this group is the seventh group, *missing information*, which describes several scenarios in which informational details are missing from Netflix's posts. Lastly, groups eight and nine contain codes that relate to the humanization and dehumanization of the Netflix brand.

Based on these groups and codes, a final list of dominant codes, or *themes*, was created during the selective coding phases. These themes all relate to the research question and, if possible, the previous discussed literature, and together provide a wholesome description of Netflix's community relationship management. This description further discussed in the results chapter.

Group	Codes
Positive fan sentiments	Fans complimenting cast of streaming title Fans complimenting streaming title Fans expressing excitement over new content Fan complimenting Netflix and Netflix services Fans defending Netflix
Negative fan sentiments	Complaints about show cancellation Complaints about current Netflix content Complaints about Netflix price raises
Disloyalty within the community	Threatening to cancel subscription Notifying of subscription cancellation Leaving Netflix for competitor Brand saboteurs
Fan feedback	Fans demanding: bring this title back Fans using content of post to mention other streaming title Fan questions unanswered Fans feeling unheard Netflix using fan feedback in posts
Community interactions	Fans arguing with peer fans Fans personally attacking peer fans Fans: 'we', 'us', 'our' Fans sharing personal details with Netflix
Informational content	Netflix discussing ethnicity and representation in posts Netflix mentioning (previous works of) involved cast in post Netflix providing background info on creative processes and projects
Missing information	Either title or (expected) streaming date not mentioned in Netflix post Netflix adding missing data in separate comment underneath post Netflix replying to fan to provide missing data Fans complaining about missing information in post
Humanizing the Netflix brand	Fans deeming Netflix singular, human-like Netflix deeming Netflix singular, human-like Netflix being relatable as peer

	Netflix expressing personal feelings and opinions Netflix making jokes
Dehumanizing the Netflix brand	Fans deeming Netflix as plural, not a person, objectifying Netflix deeming Netflix as plural, not a person, objectifying

Table 3.4: Axial codes

3.5 Reflexivity

An important part of qualitative research, and of ethnographic-related studies in particular, is *reflexivity*: researchers' ability to think critically about their role in the research process, as well as possible implications of the outcomes of a study and the possible boundaries that come with using a particular research method (Brennen, 2017). Reflexivity for this study is discussed below in terms of validity and reliability.

3.5.1 Validity and reliability

In ethnographic-related studies it is important to understand that, as an outsider, a researcher can only get a limited understanding of the dynamics within a community (Brennen, 2017). This is especially true for studies in which researchers do not participate in the community, such as the case is in this study. It is also noteworthy that there is an insurmountable bias in the gathered data, as there are three types of social media users, but only two of these types are represented in the sample, since lurkers only passively consume social media (Schlosser, 2005; Shao, 2009), and their interactions are therefore not included. For these reasons it is stressed in the conclusion chapter that the results of the analysis only show how the social media based brand community of Netflix is *represented* in the analyzed posts and comments (Brennen, 2017), rather than presenting the results as overall definitive rules that fully explain the dynamics within the Netflix brand community.

A potential benefit for the validity of the observations made in this study, however, is that Jiao et al. (2018) have found that there are differences between how Easterners and Westerners experience social media based brand communities, but there is no indication for substantial differences between the brand community experiences of inhabitants from different Western countries. As the researcher conducting this study is a native inhabitant of The Netherlands, a Western country, it is likely that the researcher has similar cultural associations as the members of the Netflix US Facebook community and can therefore correctly understand and analyze the represented dynamics.

In addition, by using two sources of data, being both posts and comments, a more complete overview of the representation of Netflix's brand community is provided (Stemler, 2001), making this research more valid. In addition to guarding the validity of this study as much as possible, the

reliability of this study is also increased by making the process of data gathering and data analysis as transparent and insightful as possible in the previously discussed data collection, operationalization and data analysis sections. This ensures that other researchers would be able to conduct the same study in a similar way and the study is therefore thus reproducible (Stemler, 2001). As thematic analysis allows analysis and interpretation to be systemized, this, again, increases the reliability of this study (Alhojailan, 2012).

3.6 Ethical considerations

This study uses data from Netflix's US Facebook page to analyse its brand community management. Although the data used for this analysis is publicly available online, the usage of messages from social media users that have not given their informed consent, which involves the process of informing participants about the study so they can decide whether or not they want to participate, poses an ethical dilemma (McKenna et al., 2017). Although there is an overall academic agreement that researchers are free to use public data such as social media posts and comments (McKenna et al., 2017), researchers should still be actively involved in protecting the involved social media users as much as possible and make sure that the research does not cause them any harm.

To ensure a level of anonymity to the involved social media users, all the (nick)names from the fans whose comments are included in the sample are left out and not mentioned in the report for this study. When quoting certain texts, the texts are therefore attributed to either (Netflix) or (fan), instead of using (nick)names. In addition, if fans or Netflix tag other fans in their comments, these tagged (nick)names are replaced in the dataset with <tagpeerfan> or <tagfan>.

3.7 Summary

This chapter has detailed how, with the use of a thematic analysis, the comments and posts within the dataset of this study were reviewed. The coding processes of both open and axial coding have provided rich data and have allowed the researcher to comprise a list of themes and subthemes that together provide the story of Netflix's community relationship management. The upcoming chapter discusses the themes and subthemes that have emerged from the analysis in relation to the previous discussed literature and uses quotes to illustrate the community dynamics.

4. Results and discussion

The results of the analysis that included 100 posts and 826 comments show that there are three prevalent main themes that describe Netflix's community relationship management and the resulting community dynamics. The gathered data suggests that Netflix, to an extent, has a strong *dedication to its brand community*, yet this dedication is rather *lopsided*, focusing on only providing marketer-generated content rather than managing the community itself. In its marketer-generated content Netflix does show a strong tendency of *humanizing the Netflix brand*, as it often portrays the brand as a living entity, which research suggests is likely to be enjoyed by fans (Kim & Kramer, 2015). The downside of only focusing on the marketer-generated part of the community, however, is that a *rejected sense of entitlement* is created within the community, leaving fans to demand rather than discuss and creating one-sided relationships. In the next sections, every theme and its coordinating subthemes are discussed and illustrated in detail. Moreover, the last paragraph provides a discussion that ties all the discussed results together.

4.1 Themes and subthemes: an overview

As aforementioned, the coding process for qualitative thematic analysis consists of three coding phases: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The process and results of the first two phases are discussed in the previous chapter. In the final analysis phase of this study, which is the selective coding, the remaining categories and codes from the first two coding phases were re-examined in such a way that connections between the various categories could be made, resulting in overarching themes that explain the observations from the field (Boeije, 2010) and aid in answering the research questions. As data analysis and theory are often intertwined within qualitative research (Babbie, 2017), the previous discussed literature and theories were heavily taken into consideration when defining the themes and subthemes. The made observations were therefore linked to already existing theories, whilst still keeping an open mind towards identifying themes that might not be explained by existing theories. As result of this analysis, three overarching themes with each three subthemes were defined.

Theme	Subtheme
Lopsided dedication	Prevailing content management
	Non-engaging passivity
	Scarce proactive webcare
Predominant brand humanization	Netflix as a living, feeling peer
	Arbitrary distantiation
	Lacking self-brand connections
Rejection induced entitlement	One-sided relationships
	Fan entitlement
	Disloyalty

Table 4.1: Results of selective coding

4.2 Lopsided dedication

Although Netflix is lacking in multiple facets of its community relationship management, which is something that is discussed in detail throughout this chapter, it would be too stark to conclude that the brand does not show any dedication or willingness towards maintaining its social media based brand community. In fact, it seems as though there are parts of its community relationship management that Netflix really is on top of. The dedication that the brand shows is, however, very lopsided, and almost solely concentrated on a rather small part of community management.

4.2.1 Prevailing content management

Within its entire brand community, Netflix is very dedicated to its own content management. Based on the literature discussed in the theoretical framework, it is established that the effectiveness and suitability of marketer-generated content for a brand community can be assessed on three factors: activity in posting schedule (Gummerus et al., 2012; Waters et al., 2009), the entertaining and informative values of posts (Gummerus et al., 2012; Jiao et al., 2018), and the tone of voice that is used in these posts (Brown et al., 2003; Kuo & Hou, 2017; Martínez-López et al., 2016).

As the dataset shows, only 44 days were needed to collect 100 posts, averaging Netflix's posting ratio to roughly 2 posts per day. A closer look at the dataset, however, reveals that the brand actually generally posts 3 to 5 times a day, but there were 4 out of 6 weekends (67%) within the dataset in which Netflix did not post any content, therefore lowering the average and actually indicating an interesting pattern within Netflix's posting schedule. There is no explanation provided

for skipping posting during weekends, as Netflix generally seems to have enough consistency in new content to keep posting at all times. For instance, the popular Original documentary series *Our Planet* was released on April 5th, yet Netflix only published one post during the entire weekend of April 6th and April 7th, which, surprisingly, was not even related to *Our Planet*. The same goes for the weekend of April 13th and April 14th, as *The Perfect Date* was released on April 12th, yet there were no posts at all during the following weekend.

Limited availability of Netflix Inc. employees during weekends might provide a possible explanation for this interesting posting pattern. However, Facebook posts can be planned to automatically be posted on a set time and date, so this should not necessarily be an issue. Moreover, Netflix is not the only brand that generally does not post during weekends, as previous research indicates that 86% of all brand postings on Facebook are done during weekdays (Sabate, Berbegal-Mirabent, Cañabate, & Lebherzd, 2014). Nonetheless, Sabate et al. (2014) actually indicate that brands should also post during weekends, as weekend posts receive equal amounts of likes and comments as weekday posts do. Although Netflix's posting schedule might thus benefit from more consistency, the brand is decently well fulfilling fans' need for an active posting schedule full of marketer-generated content (Gummerus et al., 2012; Waters et al., 2009), especially since American fans are generally more attracted to marketer-generated content (Jiao et al., 2018). It is also noteworthy to mention that every post within the sample is unique, as no two posts contain the exact same content. This, again, shows that Netflix is dedicated to consistently generating new content.

In terms of the marketer-generated content that brands should provide within their communities, American social media users generally prefer a balanced mixture of entertaining content (Gummerus et al., 2012) and informational content (Jiao et al., 2018). Netflix seems very well informed about its fans desires in this department, as the brand indeed offers a well-balanced mixture of different content. For starters, every post within the dataset is accompanied by a visual component such as an image or video, of which videos are most prevalent ($n = 89$). Providing a visual component to posts can instantly provide both entertainment and information by giving fans an interesting visual to look at and adding extra information not mentioned in the textual part of a post. Moreover, posts that include videos or photos are also more prone to be liked (Sabate et al., 2014).

The data shows a range of different content, of which certain posts are mainly entertaining ($n = 27$), other posts are mainly informational ($n = 16$) and many posts combine both ($n = 57$), such as posts that show promo's and trailers for upcoming titles. Netflix claims that it is "entertainment's biggest fan" and therefore wants to provide as much entertainment as possible ("Netflix Social Media", 2016). This statement has previously been corroborated by marketing and branding professionals, who found that Netflix consistently posts entertaining and humorous content (e.g.

Letki, 2016). In this vein, the findings of this study indeed show that Netflix commonly uses humour and entertainment in its posts and comments. Prime examples of mainly entertaining posts are post 42 and 43 from the dataset. Both have high entertainment value, are very light-hearted, include jokingly content and are generally entertaining to watch (Gummerus et al., 2012). In addition, both videos are rather short, meaning that fans can easily come across them whilst scrolling through their news feed, take a minute to watch it, have a laugh, and go about the rest of their day.

(Post 42: 04/12/2019 10:32AM | Netflix)

“This is weird even for the Weird Sisters.”

0:43 video: *Kiss & Tell* with the cast of *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*.

Three cast members touching strange objects, such as a large fake spider, whilst being blindfolded.

(Post 43: 04/11/2019 03:01PM | Netflix)

“If *Our Planet* was narrated by Iliza Shlesinger & Jeff Ross it would be a LOT filthier.”

0:45 video: actors narrate nature scenes whilst making jokes such as ‘I can’t feel my nose – so much cocaine’ for a clip showing a polar bear walking in snow.

In contrast to these mainly entertaining posts, Netflix also posts more informative content in which more background information about certain projects is given. In doing so, the brand provides explanations for creative choices, as well as supplementary background information for stories that are narrated in streaming titles. These types of posts allow fans to gain additional knowledge about and insight into Netflix’s products and services (Jiao et al., 2018), thus providing brand-related informational benefits. In addition, Netflix also regularly ($n = 48$) mentions which cast members play in a certain title, as well as previous works of those involved cast members, presumably in order to provide fans with more background information on the title.

(Post 4: 05/02/2019 12:11PM | Netflix)

“When asked why not just make a sequel to *Set It Up*, producer Justin Nappi says, “We are excited by the thought of creating a new, distinct film that explores different romantic comedy tropes while still being anchored in everything that we loved about the first movie.”

(Post 66: 04/03/2019 10:03AM | Netflix)

"A pivotal moment in The Highwaymen was actually shot at the location where law enforcement confronted Bonnie & Clyde. Director Hancock said doing this allowed the actors to feel the weight of the location and exactly what transpired there."

In addition to providing brand-related information, Netflix also addresses more controversial topics, such as minority representation, in its posts. This is done in such a way that seems intended on educating fans on these topics. By doing so, it could be argued that Netflix is, again, providing its fans with informational benefits. These types of posts still relate to the brand, as they involve Netflix streaming titles or actors playing in Netflix streaming titles, but do, however, address more profound topics than the brand-related informative posts abovementioned. Netflix has created a special format for these types of posts, which it calls [Seen & Heard]. In these clips, Netflix interviews actors from titles streaming while these actors reflect on issues that are important to them. Making a point of discussing issues of minority representation is in line with the earlier discussed findings by Jenner (2018), who states that Netflix aims to make diversity a central part of its platform.

(Post 34: 04/18/2019 03:29PM | Netflix)

1:39 Video of interview [Seen & Heard] with Punam Patel talking about her ethnicity and representation and the role that representation has in 'Special'.

(Post 41: 04/18/2019 03:24PM | Netflix)

1:16 Video of interview [Seen & Heard] with 'Special' creator and star Ryan O'Connell talking about his experience with being gay and disabled and how 'Special' has helped him in accepting himself more.

Although Netflix is thus very invested in offering informational content, there could be something said for the brand's consistency. There are several instances within the dataset ($n = 26$) in which Netflix seems to have forgotten to add either the title or (expected) streaming date in posts that are promoting streaming titles. These details are then sometimes later added in a separate comment underneath the post, although this is not always the case either. More than once, fans have indicated to find this conduct annoying and unprofessional.

It is interesting to note that an intriguing pattern can be identified as to the instances in which Netflix later adds information missing from the initial post in a comment. In all instances in the dataset, these comments were posted almost exactly – give or take a few minutes – 9 hours after the initial posts. It, thus, seems possible that Netflix is intentionally leaving out information from posts to

later publish this in a comment as part of a strategy. This, however, does not explain the inconsistency, since only some posts miss titles or dates, whilst others do contain all necessary information.

The third factor relevant in assessing the effectiveness of marketer-generated content is the tone of voice used in that content. As previous research has shown, fans are drawn to brands that humanize their brands (Brown et al., 2003; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Kuo & Hou, 2017; Martínez-López et al., 2016). The gathered dataset shows that Netflix, indeed, is very aware of this concept, as the brand strongly humanizes the brand on its US Facebook page. In fact, humanization is such an important part of Netflix's community relationship management that it is discussed at length in the second theme.

4.2.2 Non-engaging passivity

Netflix's US Facebook page is quite filled with complaints from its fans, indicating that brand satisfaction is rather low. While the issue of fans not being satisfied and therefore not loyal is discussed more in-depth in the third theme, the following statements already illustrate just a small selection of complaints on Netflix price raises ($n = 17$), current content ($n = 44$) and show cancellations ($n = 68$):

(fan | 04/27/2019 06:23PM)

“You keep raising prices and dropping the best shows. You do have competition now. I'm one more price hike or show cancellation away from cancelling you.”

(fan | 04/03/2019 12:20AM)

“Wtf Netflix?!! They just said on the news that you're raising prices AGAIN! You just did!!! Time to shop around I guess.”

(fan | 05/01/2019 07:09PM)

“Netflix Why should I watch anything you put out? You'll just cancel it after a few seasons for something new and cheaper after you raise prices again.”

Although there are many fans that are using the community page to be positive and compliment Netflix, something that is also discussed more in-depth in the upcoming sections, there are thus also many complaints. For the most part, these complaints address Netflix's core product and discuss price raises and show cancellations. Complaints in the sample about show cancellation feature the titles *Santa Clarita Diet*, *One Day At A Time*, *Between*, *Dare Devil*, *The Punisher*, *The Curious Creations of Christina McConnell*, *Travelers* and *The OA*, which are all Netflix Originals. This,

to an extent, makes sense, since Netflix does not have the power to cancel shows that it does not own. It is interesting, however, that there are no complaints at all in the sample about other (non-Netflix Original) titles getting deleted from the platform or Netflix not acquiring the rights to distribute new seasons of current streaming titles. Cancellation complaints, thus, focus solely on Netflix Originals.

For complaints that address the core product of a brand, a strategy of either promotion or action is recommended, depending on the legitimacy of the complaint and whether or not the relationship seems salvageable (Noble et al., 2012). It could be argued that the abovementioned complaints are, at least partially, valid, as many news items address Netflix shows getting cancelled⁹ and prices for the US being raised¹⁰. In addition, at least two out of three of the relationships abovementioned seem redeemable, as fans talk about potentially leaving, but seem still subscribed as for now. It is therefore highly likely that a comment from Netflix explaining its price raises and show cancellations, consistent with a promotional strategy (Noble et al., 2012), could therefore help diminish negative feelings. And even if Netflix would decide that there is no legitimacy to the complaints, it is still recommended that the brand would use a strategy of action and respond to the allegations (Noble et al., 2012). For instance, a statement such as “you’re raising your prices again while you just did” might not have legitimacy to it, and could therefore easily be refuted by Netflix.

Despite all these recommendations and the potential for negative comment intervention to be used to a brand’s advantage by responding to complaints, this is not what Netflix is choosing to do in the instances within the dataset. In fact, Netflix seems to be doing what most other brands have been shown to do as well, which is to ignore fan complaints as much as possible (Dekay, 2012). Out of all of the complaints addressing show cancellations and price raises included in the sample for this study, none actually received a response from Netflix. On the other hand, it also does not seem likely that Netflix is censoring complaints either. As Dekay (2012) found, some companies do not only ignore negative comments, but even go as far as censoring them. As roughly a third of the collected fan comments actually contains a negative sentiment towards Netflix, it is unlikely that the brand is actively censoring negative comments by deleting them from the page.

It is important to keep in mind that there is no way of stating with a 100% certainty that Netflix is completely ignoring complaints when this research does not have any access to the internal workings of the company. In the best-case scenario Netflix is actually employing a strategy of passivity and thus accurately monitoring complaints to use them to alter its strategy in such a way that it accommodates the complaints (Noble et al., 2012). A hint of Netflix using a strategy of

⁹ e.g. <https://mashable.com/article/netflix-cancels-santa-clarita-diet-twitter-reactions/?europe=true>

¹⁰ e.g. <https://bgr.com/2019/01/15/netflix-price-increase-2019-standard-basic-premium/>

passivity is provided in post 58. This post contains a clip of the actors of *Lucifer* addressing that the show has made it to the “promised land”, a.k.a. Netflix, because of fans’ persistent requests. This indicates that Netflix indeed picked up on complaints and requests and consequently added *Lucifer* as a streaming title. Additional hints of a possible strategy of passivity are also provided in 2 other posts that both show tweets from fans, again indicating that Netflix does monitor the comments that it receives. It could be argued, however, that it would be more influential for the Facebook brand community if comments from Facebook were shown, instead of tweets from Twitter, to make members of the Facebook community feel heard as well.

(Post 13: 04/29/2019 3:24pm | Netflix)

“On My Block is officially coming back for another season!”

0:15 Video with inserted tweets of fans asking for another season of

On My Block, ending with the phrase “On My Block season 3 is on the way”.

A strategy of passivity would also be in line with statements from various marketing and branding professionals, who state that Netflix is very good at listening to its fans (Letki, 2016; Stevens, 2018). Although a strategy of passivity is, thus, not the recommended approach for complaints addressing a brand’s core, it is, of course, a large improvement from ignoring them. It would therefore be relevant for future research to study if Netflix is actually using the feedback it receives to alter and improve its strategy.

The passivity of Netflix’s moderation extends beyond the intervention of negative commenting situations. In addition to there being a lot of negativity within the community that is directed towards Netflix, there is also a lot of negativity that is directed towards peer fans, as far-reaching discussions between several fans are quite prevalent. Now naturally, SMBBCs are places where individuals come to share their interests, beliefs and opinions (Brown et al., 2007; Shao, 2009), and therefore there is nothing wrong with civil, constructive fan discussions. However, fan discussions within the Netflix brand community often turn malicious, and personal attacks from fans on peer fans are far from uncommon ($n = 64$).

(fan in response to peer fan | 04/22/2019 06:24PM)

“Looks great, sounds like a moron.”

(fan in response to peer fan | 04/30/2019 12:59AM)

“Piss off, and whine somewhere else.”

(fan in response to peer fan | 05/03/2019 12:55PM)

“<tagpeerfan> You’re annoying alright.”

To make the brand community a safe place for fans, scholars suggest that brands should intervene in fan-to-fan conflicts (Berry & Seiders, 2008; Dineva et al., 2017; Sibai et al., 2015). The analysed data, however, shows that this is not what Netflix is choosing to do. The brand currently seems to be employing a non-engaging strategy, meaning that it is not intervening at all. This could be detrimental to the brand, since fans generally blame brands they are verbally attacked in fan-to-fan conflicts and it can therefore impact brand reputation and credibility (Dineva et al., 2017). In this case, it is again unlikely that Netflix is censoring certain comments and therefore intervening with a strategy of censoring, since the sample actually contains numerous fan-to-fan attacks.

Previous research suggests that it could be a great decision for Netflix to start employing a strategy of bolstering, in which the brand would affirm and appreciate comments from fans that are defending the brand to resolve fan-to-fan conflicts (Dineva et al., 2017). Bolstering would be a good tactic for Netflix, because there are several instances in which fans are defending Netflix, which in turn often leads to more conflict. By bolstering these comments, Netflix could provide some clarification for its fans and end conflicts.

(fan in response to peer fan | 03/28/2019 06:48PM)

“<tagpeerfan> in order for this show to be successful, it’d need to have people watching it. Netflix is a company, they cancelled one day at a time because it wasn’t making enough money. If Netflix kept the shows that weren’t making enough money, they’d go under and would cease to exist.

(fan | 04/12/2019 02:57)

“People! Do research! Netflix is not raising prices AGAIN. They announced a price raise in January but didn’t switch accounts to new price until now. The price stated in January will be the price in May. Netflix is amazing and I would pay far more than \$13 a month for it.”

4.2.3 Scarce proactive webcare

As already mentioned, there were very few comments from Netflix to be found on its US Facebook page during the gathering of the required data sample. From the 826 comments collected in the combined datasets, Netflix wrote only 50. Of these 50 comments, 16 comments are actually independent comments from Netflix not in response to any fan comment that provide informative

details. These informative details usually include title and airdate for streaming titles that Netflix might have forgotten to mention in the initial post, as aforementioned. Another 6 comments from Netflix provided the same informative details as aforementioned, but were in response to fans asking this information. Deducting these comments leaves 28 comments from Netflix that are actually in response to fans on a total of 100 posts. This finding is highly contradictory to earlier findings of several field professionals, who actually state that Netflix very often engages with its fans on its US Facebook page (e.g. Letki, 2016; Stevens, 2018). This, however, seems no longer the case as of this moment. It would therefore be relevant for future research to zoom in on Netflix's current webcare strategy in relation to its strategy in previous years, to see if and to what extent it has changed and what thought process have initiated that change.

As has been established in the second subtheme, the few comments that Netflix does post as a response to fans are not part of a reactive webcare strategy, which deals with commenting on negative feedback (Van Noort et al., 2015). Instead, Netflix uses its scarce responses to respond to messages that do not directly require or request a response, which is consistent with a proactive webcare strategy. Netflix's comments seem aimed at building a relationship with fans by portraying the brand as a humorous, relatable peer and using a human voice (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015). The humanization of the Netflix brand is discussed in-depth in the upcoming paragraphs, but the comments from Netflix listed below illustrate that the brand uses a proactive webcare strategy in the rare instances in which it responds to fans.

(Netflix | 04/16/2019 09:25PM)

“literally on the edge of my seat going RUN BABY SEAL RUN”

(Netflix | 04/23/2019 11:14PM)

“that sounds like a lot of fun tbh!”

(Netflix | 03/29/2019 10:16PM)

“let the binge weekend begin!”

As discussed, a benefit of using a proactive webcare strategy is that it gives brands the tools to build relationships with fans (Van Noort et al., 2015), which Netflix seems to be aiming to do with its few webcare responses. However, it is likely that its lack of consistency in responding to fans holds the brand back from building long-term relationships, as many fans thus do not get a reply at all and others are likely to receive only one response while potentially sending multiple comments.

4.3 Predominant brand humanization

Previous research on brand community management has shown that brands can strongly benefit from humanizing their brand by assigning personality traits to them, as this can add value to the brand identity and increase brand loyalty (e.g. Brown, Kozinets, & Sherry, 2003; Kuo & Hou, 2017; Martínez-López et al., 2016). As abovementioned, Netflix seems well aware of this trend, as it strongly humanizes its brand on its Facebook. There are, however, instances in which Netflix suddenly, or so it seems, stops humanizing its brand. This, in turn, might explain why fans generally seem to not develop self-brand connections with the brand.

4.3.1 Netflix as a living, feeling peer

(Post 17: 04/26/2019 12:57pm | Netflix)

“‘Vulnerability is the path back to each other, but we’re so afraid to get on it. How can you let yourself be loved if you can’t be seen.’
Brene Brown cut me to the core with this.”

(Post 35: 04/18/2019 10:02am | Netflix)

“This open letter from Michelle Obama congratulating Beyoncé sums up all my feelings about Beyoncé Homecoming.”

(Post 44: 04/11/2019 11:55am | Netflix)

“Brie Larson is me in every meeting”
1:04 clip of ‘Unicorn Store’ with Brie Larson acting silly in an office meeting

If the above stated quotes would not have been accompanied by an author designation, that is, chances are that a reader would have assumed them as statements from fans, because they are written in singular terms and display personal feelings. However, as the designations indicate, these are actually prime examples of the way that Netflix humanizes its brand. Previous research indicates that brands nowadays should focus on humanizing their brand in order to stimulate self-brand connections and loyalty from fans to the brand (Brown et al., 2003; Kuo & Hou, 2017; Martínez-López et al., 2016).

Brand humanization can be done in several ways, ranging from a limited form of humanization that assigns some human-like qualities to a brand to actually fully humanizing a brand by enlivening it with a human-like mind (Fournier, 1998; MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). Netflix is choosing to do the latter, and enlivens the brand as if it is an actual person (Aaker, 1997; Veloutsou & Taylor, 2012), by using singular terms such as ‘me, my and I’ and transferring personal feelings in statements such as “sums up all my feelings”. Moreover, Netflix aims to give the brand a distinct humours

personality, as it continuously uses humour in both its posts and comments, which is also illustrated by the third quote abovementioned. According to Geuens et al.'s (2009) categorization for brand humanization, Netflix is thus using the most humanizing approach in its branding by organizing the brand as a person.

Netflix, in addition, seems to be set on not only portraying the brand as a living person, but more specifically portraying it as a living *peer*. In the scarce proactive webcare comments that the brand posts, it is often mirroring the language of its fans in order to appear as a peer. The quotes below illustrate Netflix's consistent lack of use of a capital letter at the beginning of a sentence, the popular adding of extra vowels, the use of popular abbreviations and the use of all capitals to emphasize a statement. In addition, Netflix also uses gif's and emoticons without any textual accompaniment to respond to fans, a communication trend which data shows is also present amongst Netflix fans. These findings are corroborated by previous findings of various field professionals that have previously stated that Netflix is exceptionally well in speaking its fans' language (e.g. Beer, 2019; Duczeminski, 2019; Stevens, 2018).

Based on the findings of this study and Beer's (2019) characterization of Netflix as "a meme-happy fan who lives for TV and movies", this study would characterize Netflix as the *happy-go-lucky class clown that always keeps you laughing and also happens to have a strong addiction to Netflix*.

Netflix	Fans	Similarity
"tbh wish i was invited" "that sounds like a lot of fun tbh!"	"Tbh, I can understand that you might not like..."	Use of popular abbreviation 'tbh'. Meaning: to be honest.
"LISTEN it could work" "its SO good"	"I STILL call him Fox" "put some RESPECK on her name" "I'm really PROUD of you guys"	Using all capitals to emphasize a word.
"love her!!!!" "right??????!"	"OMG!!!" "Casper and The Dark Crystal?!?!? I am so excited for May!!!!"	Using extra punctuation marks for emphasis.
sameeee Enjoyyyyy	"boyeeee" "yessss" "Yussss!"	Use of extra vowels.

Table 4.2: Netflix's peer language

4.3.2 Arbitrary distantiation

There is, of course, a reason for titling the second main theme *predominant* humanization rather than just humanization. Although Netflix seems to be rather strong in its branding, as it seemingly knows its audience very well and therefore knows how to speak its language, there could,

again, be something said for the brand's consistency. For some reason, there are some (seemingly) arbitrary moments ($n = 7$) in which Netflix strays from its own chosen path of portraying its brand as a person and breaks its class clown-character. In these moments, the brand suddenly starts characterizing its brand as an organization (Geuens et al., 2009) and is referring to itself in a more neutral and distant way. The brand then also uses plural pronouns instead of the previously mentioned single pronouns.

(Netflix | 04/01/2019 07:56PM)

"we didnt :)"

(post 26: 04/24/2019 07:16AM | Netflix)

"Here's everything that's coming to Netflix US in May!"

(post 73: 04/01/2019 11:47AM | Netflix)

"Here's the photo Ross and Noah Centineo sent us to accompany this news."

Post includes a photo of both actors in a weird position with laughing faces.

Speaking in plurals is not necessarily a way of dehumanizing a brand, but it is a more distant approach to branding than portraying the brand as an individual person (Geuens et al., 2009). This distantiation in humanization exists in both comments and posts, and no clear pattern can be discovered as to the exact instances in which Netflix decides to use less humanizing terms. This distantiation therefore seems arbitrary rather than a conscious choice. For instance, the previously discussed themes have already shown that Netflix generally humanizes its jokes and it would therefore make sense for the brand to also use the same approach in post 73. However, as the abovementioned quote from that post illustrates, the brand all of the sudden chooses to use a plural pronoun instead of a singular pronoun by saying "the actors sent *us* this photo". In this case 'us' could have easily been replaced with 'me', which would have been more humanizing and also more consistent with the rest of Netflix's posts.

Now, admittedly, it might be harder to use a singular pronoun in post 26, as it could be rather confusing to state 'Here's everything that's coming to *me* in May'. It is imaginable that fans would not directly understand the meaning of this post if it was phrased this way. However, Netflix could have chosen to either add another sentence to the post or phrase it differently, in order to still employ a more humanizing approach. For example, 'here's everything that's coming in May!' or 'here's everything that's coming to Netflix US in May! I'm so excited!' would have been suitable and more consistent options. As consistency is key in branding ("If you want to humanize your brand on

social media, try these 10 tactics”, 2018), this inconsistency could undo a lot of the effort that Netflix is putting into characterizing its brand as a person.

4.3.3 Lack of self-brand connections

Although Netflix thus generally humanizes its brand as a person, this humanization does not seem to resonate as much with the Netflix community fans, as fans generally do not identify Netflix as a singular, living peer, even though the brand is generally presented as such. Fans are thus rejecting Netflix's brand humanization's efforts (Puzakova et al., 2009). The abovementioned inconsistency and arbitrary distantiation of the Netflix brand might have something to do with this, although an actual causal relationship cannot be established based on the data for this study. Although there definitely are instances in which fans address Netflix with “you”, singular ($n = 18$), which is consistent with brand humanization, fans are twice as likely to address the brand as “you guys”, “itself”, “they”, or any other plural or objective way ($n = 38$), and are therefore categorizing the brand as an organization or even an object (Geuens et al., 2013). By addressing the brand as an object or a larger group of people, instead of a person, fans are distancing themselves from the Netflix brand and in some cases even objectifying and thus dehumanizing the brand (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017).

(fan | 04/03/2019 06:10AM)

“They will cancel you with no wait. “

(fan | 04/21/2019 04:35PM)

“Netflix itself hasn't announced it yet.”

(fan | 04/24/2019 06:17PM)

“Netflix you guys should really write the name of the show in the caption...”

(social media user | 04/09/2019 11:21PM)

“Y'all filmed this in Chicago and didn't tell me.”

As fans are thus generally rejecting Netflix as a person and distancing themselves from the brand, it is unlikely that they are establishing self-brand connections, since brand humanization allows fans to establish these connections (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Kuo & Hou, 2017). Since many fans are addressing Netflix as a company or object rather than an individual person, it seems that there are limited self-brand connections established. If self-brand connections would have been established, fans would be identifying with Netflix as an important part of themselves (Kuo & Hou,

2017), and it is unlikely that this is indeed the case when fans are not even addressing the brand as a person. As the establishment of self-brand connections stimulates fans to become brand loyal and even oppositional brand loyal (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Kuo & Hou, 2017), the lack of self-brand connections within the brand community could (partially) explain why most fans are not loyal and definitely not oppositional loyal. This disloyalty is further discussed in the third theme.

Other than the already mentioned inconsistency, another possible explanation for fans rejecting Netflix's humanization could either be a discrepancy between fans' values and Netflix's values (Puzakova et al., 2009) or fans feeling that a brand is not representing a unique persona (Kemp et al., 2012). To improve the chances of more fans humanizing the brand and therefore establishing self-brand connections with Netflix, Netflix could therefore focus future branding efforts on portraying the brand's heritage more. Previous research has indicated that heritage and authenticity are often valued traits for fans (Martínez-López et al., 2016). As Netflix has already established that it wants its brand to be linked to diversity as much as possible (Jenner, 2018), the brand could use this to its advantage in its brand humanization efforts.

4.4 Rejection induced entitlement

There are two types of relationships in SMBBCs: relationships between fan and brand and relationships between fans (Martínez-López et al., 2016; Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001). As the previous discussed themes have already indicated, there seem to be issues within the Netflix US brand community in both of these types relationships. Accordingly, this theme focuses on the one-sided relationships that exist within the community and the negative consequences that this has.

4.4.1 One-sided relationships

As stated before, Netflix is hardly responding to comments from its fans, therefore reducing the likelihood of building long-term relationships between Netflix and its fans. Moreover, there are plenty of instances ($n = 367$) in which fans are complimenting either Netflix streaming titles or Netflix in general, which are being ignored. Compliments for streaming titles and the cast in those titles are more common ($n = 316$), but there are also a decent number of compliments that focus more on Netflix in general ($n = 51$). No matter the exact content of the compliment, though, not one of the compliments within the gathered sample received a response from Netflix. In consequence, a lot of word of mouth opportunities are missed. If Netflix would choose to respond to these compliments, it is very likely that this positive reinforcement from the brand would encourage fans to disperse even more positive word of mouth (Joyce & Kraut, 2007; Schamari & Schaefers, 2015). Especially since there is also a lot of negativity on the Netflix US Facebook page directed towards Netflix, it is highly recommendable for Netflix to seize every opportunity available to encourage the dispersion of

positive word of mouth in order to combat the negative comments in the community. As individuals generally trust their peers (Lee & Youn, 2009) and word of mouth is therefore vital in shaping fan behaviour (Brown & Reingen, 1987), more positive WOM within the community could convince potential fans to become actual fans and could convince negative fans to give Netflix another chance.

(fan | 04/15/2019 07:33PM)

“I love this page. As soon as I see something I like I go to search on my Netflix app and add it to my watch list. And then get a notification when it’s ready. Soooo cool.”

(fan | 04/13/2019 07:08PM)

“Netflix thank you so much for all you do and the amazing movies and documentaries you guys have been involved in. Especially Our Earth and The Photographer of Mauthausen. You guys are incredible. I am a member for life.”

(fan | 03/30/2019 04:44PM)

“YOU KNOW WHAT NETFLIX?? I'm really PROUD of you guys! You're getting better and bigger movies! I haven't been to an actual Theater in 5 months now and I don't miss it one bit! Thank You Netflix.”

An especially important missed opportunity is one that is stated in the quotes above, as one fan actually states that he/she is “a member for life”. As there is quite a lot of disloyalty within the Netflix brand community, which is discussed in further detail in upcoming subthemes, it would be very beneficial for Netflix to reward any fan that actually does indicate to be loyal by positively responding to these types of comments (Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014).

In addition to fans often complimenting Netflix and Netflix ignoring these compliments, fans also share personal details about their lives with Netflix, although on a slightly less regular basis ($n = 62$). The sharing of personal details generally includes rather superficial statements such as fans sharing their birthdays in relation to airdates: “Yay on my birthday! Thanks Netflix” (fan | 04/26/2019 07:13AM) or simple details about their daily lives: “especially after a long week” (fan | 04/06/2019 04:51AM). Some fans, however, get more personal and share intricate information about themselves:

(fan | 4/06/2019 03:49PM)

“My grandmother has Alzheimer's and it is very hard to get her to watch anything, but for a week straight like 3 or 4 times a day, when we needed her to calm down, we would just play Our Planet and she was transfixed,

each time we pressed play it was new to her again. Thank you for making something that helped us with her!"

(fan | 04/13/2019 09:29PM)

"Watching it now it's hard to see. My bio dad wasn't around and my mom's boyfriend put up with me as much as he could because he loves my mom. I was treated ok, but nothing more than tolerated and dismissed. The relationship hits close to home."

Now again, neither of these comments has received a response from Netflix. By not responding to these types of comments, Netflix is, in a sense, rejecting fans that are trying to establish a connection with the brand. This rejection could potentially even be perceived as hurtful by fans, because they are opening themselves up only to get ignored and be left in a one-sided relationship in which they are not cared for: "Netflix you don't care about your viewers." (fan | 05/01/2019 7:11PM).

Netflix is thus skipping out on a lot of opportunities to build relationships with its fans, which is almost ironic since SMBBCs are generally created for brands to be in direct contact with fans (Jiao et al., 2018; Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010) and foster a relationship with them (Laroche et al., 2012; Laroche et al., 2013; Martínez-López et al., 2016). The abovementioned findings are also highly contradictory to earlier statements from marketing and branding professionals, who actually indicate that Netflix gives "attention, positive vibes and care" to all its fans (e.g. Letki, 2016). As Netflix currently seems to blatantly ignore most fans, these findings are not corroborated in this study. This, again, raises the question if Netflix has adapted its social media strategy in recent years.

4.4.2 Entitlement

By rejecting fans' attempts to contact Netflix, the brand is also leaving a lot of questions and complaints unanswered, something that other themes have touched upon as well. Because Netflix is consistently ignoring them, fans frequently seem to get agitated over not being heard. It seems as though fans generally feel unheard within the community, as one fan states: "Never understood why Netflix needs a commentary thread on something they're going to show regardless of what people say" (fan | 03/24/2019 11:17PM). Fans' dismay with not being heard even goes as far as some fans vowing to keep posting messages until they are finally heard, as one fan states "I'm asking this on every post until they respond! Join the cause!" (fan | 05/01/2019 04:21PM), and another even states "We're not going away Netflix" (fan | 05/02/2019 06:09PM). Consequently, there are indeed some instances within the dataset in which the same fan has commented the same comment underneath multiple posts.

As a consequence of this lack of response there are quite a few instances ($n = 31$) in which fans are using the content of a post to mention a different streaming title, presumably in the hopes of finally getting a response from Netflix. This is not only a nuisance for fans, but could also be considered a waste of Netflix's content creation efforts. As fans are presumably rather occupied with getting answers from Netflix and therefore posting comments underneath whatever post, it is likely that they are not fully taking the time to enjoy posts as they maybe normally would.

(Post 12: 04/30/2019 08:00AM | Netflix)

“In honor of National Adopt a Shelter Pet Day, the Fab Five worked their magic on a puppy trying to find her forever home!”

(fan in response to post 12 | 04/30/2019 08:41PM)

“Happy for the puppy not so happy you haven’t decided to right your wrongs with canceling Santa Clarita Diet.”

(Post 9: 05/01/2019 07:00AM | Netflix)

“Sex Education is officially in production on Season 2!”

(fan in response to post 9 | 05/01/2019 04:08PM)

“That's great, love that show! I also love Mindhunter and would love an update on season 2.”

(Post 4: 05/02/2019 12:11am | Netflix)

“Set It Up stars Zoey Deutch & Glen Powell are reuniting with the film's writer for a new romantic comedy, tentatively titled Most Dangerous Game!”

(fan in response to post 4 | 05/03/2019 2:46AM)

“Santa Clarita Diet had plenty of amazing, hilarious romance.

#bringbacksantaclaritadiet”

Now, again, based on just this analysis, it cannot be stated with 100% certainty that Netflix is not monitoring these complaints behind the scenes. However, it is clear that fans generally feel that Netflix should be more responsive to their requests and complaints, and a certain entitlement to being included in the brand's decision-making processes seems to arise. The reason for fans feeling entitled to sharing their opinions and being included in decision-making processes most likely stems from the foundations of social media and the Web 2.0 in general, as these technological developments have allowed consumers to become creators and many brands have since started to invite consumers to develop their brands with them (Martínez-López et al., 2016), establishing an interdependence between brand and fan (Fournier, 1998).

(fan | 04/30/2019 01:20AM)

“Other than calling, emailing or direct messaging (which I have done) this is the available avenue. I am going to post when I am unhappy with something because myself and the other subscribers are the reason this company is profitable.”

(fan | 04/27/2019 06:23PM)

“Hey Netflix, since I can't post on your page I'll stick it here. You keep raising prices and dropping the best shows. ”

(fan | 04/03/2019 03:55PM)

“Places like this were designed for consumer feedback... Which this is.”

In addition to showing a certain fan entitlement, the quotes above also contain an indication that fans do not only feel unheard on the Netflix US Facebook page, but also on other Netflix contact channels. Although other contact channels are not within the scope of this study, it is an interesting and possibly telling finding that fans are seemingly having trouble to connect with Netflix on multiple platforms. Future research could be used to delve into this more.

Because Netflix does not treat its fans as equals and there is no interdependence between fans and brand established, fans seem to become dictating and demanding in their comments. Whereas questions and complaints might have been phrased more civil at first, it seems that some fans are so fed up with not being heard that they are shifting from asking to demanding ($n = 73$), some even threatening Netflix. Although, again, a causal relationship cannot be established based in this study, it is likely that the dismay of not being heard causes this fan behavior.

(fan | 04/28/2019 04:33AM)

“Uncancel Santa Clarita diet or I will end you Netflix!”

(fan | 04/26/2019 01:18AM)

“Netflix I will cancel my subscription if The Office is canceled”

(fan | 04/07/2019 04:38PM)

“Keep it Netflix your days will be numbered”

(fan | 04/21/2019 02:00PM

“Cancel this show and I cancel Netflix.”

4.4.2 Disloyalty

As the quotes that are stated above already indicate, there are quite a few fans within the community that are expressing rather strongly that they are not loyal to the Netflix brand. In fact, there is only one fan within the entire sample that indicates to be loyal to Netflix, while there are 6 fans that indicate to already have canceled their subscription and another 27 fans that are threatening to cancel their subscription. Naturally, if these fans would be loyal, they would not be threatening to leave the brand. As the scales are thus so negatively balanced into the direction of the community not being loyal, this should be of great concern to Netflix. As both brand satisfaction and brand relationship influence loyalty and disloyalty (Veloutsou & McAlonan, 2012), it is reasonable to assume that the issues earlier discussed, such as the existence of many fan-to-fan conflicts, the one-sided relationships and the missing reactive webcare, are together resulting in a disloyal fan base.

Some of the fans that indicate disloyalty actually provide a reason for their disloyalty, and most of these fans are complaining about their favorite shows being canceled “without consideration for the viewers” (fan | 05/02/2019 10:07PM). In fact, more than once fans indicate to actually be “heart-broken” and “devastated” by the cancellation of a show, which previous research indicates is a natural reaction to show cancellation (Williams, 2011). Because Netflix generally does not provide any heads-up or reason for a show being cancelled, this often leads to fans reconsidering their Netflix subscriptions. One fan actually states that if Netflix would listen to its fans more and give them more consideration, the brand would have a very loyal fan base.

(fan | 05/02/2019 10:07PM)

“Hey Netflix here’s an idea maybe if you stop cancelling great shows on their third season without any consideration for the viewers you would retain a huge loyal customer base. For now I’m waiting for Disney Plus.”

As there is very little loyalty within the community, it should not come as a surprise that fans also are not oppositional loyal, which is also demonstrated in the quote above. If fans would be oppositional loyal, they would be highly opposed to Netflix’s competitors (Kuo & Hou, 2017; Muniz & Hamer, 2001). This, however, does not seem to be the case for Netflix’s fans, as they regularly compare the brand to competitors such as other SVoD services (e.g. Hulu and Disney) and linear television. In these comparisons, Netflix is generally the negative and the competitor is often the positive. Moreover, the earlier discussed lack of self-brand connections within the community is also likely fueling this lack of oppositional loyalty (Dwivedi et al., 2015; Kuo & Hou, 2017).

(fan | 04/27/2019 08:23AM)

“I guess i'll have to give Hulu a chance now. It's been nice knowing you Netflix.”

(fan | 04/27/2019 08:28AM)

“Netflix cancelled. Too many other apps out there to put up with their BS [bullshit].”

(fan | 04/28/2019 07:56AM)

“Bye bye Netflix. Hello Hulu and Amazon Prime!!”

(fan | 04/03/2019 01:41AM)

“Might as well just get cable... Netflix ain't that good.”

Another factor that could be contributing to the disloyalty within the Netflix brand community is the missing feeling of we-ness. When there is a feeling of we-ness, fans are likely to become emotionally attached to the community and are therefore loyal to both the brand and the community as a whole (Martínez-López et al., 2016; Scarpi, 2010). Moreover, the feeling of we-ness can also cause members to become oppositional loyal, because it allows fans to feel a distinction between themselves and fans of another brand (Kuo & Hou, 2017; Madupu & Cooley, 2010).

The data reveals that some fans ($n = 23$) indeed identify with the community as a group, which shows a certain feeling of belonging. This is, for instance, the case when fans speak for the community as a whole while addressing certain feelings: “Netflix why would we get attached to anything ever again after your broke our hearts with Santa Clarita” (fan | 05/01/2019 11:04PM). However, in all other cases than the aforementioned 23, fans did not indicate a community feeling or a feeling of we-ness. This is likely caused by the many existing fan-to-fan conflicts within the community. As there is thus generally no feeling of we-ness, this is likely also holding back the community from experiencing loyalty and oppositional loyalty.

Although the disloyalty within the community should already be of enough concern to Netflix, there is another small group ($n = 7$) of ‘fans’ in the community that can potentially have a detrimental effect on the community as well as the brand. These ‘fans’ are not just disloyal, but are actually actively trying to sabotage the Netflix brand, or so it seems, by encouraging other fans to (also) cancel their Netflix subscriptions. It would be recommendable for Netflix to intervene in these sabotaging instances before this group of brand saboteurs grows in numbers and negatively influences other fans (Kähr et al., 2016). By responding to anti-fans in a friendly way, Netflix also has an opportunity to make them less hateful towards the brand and even convert these anti-fans into non-fans, who are entirely less harmful to the brand (Gray, 2013).

(fan | 03/22/2019 03:38PM)

“DON’T WATCH NETFLIX DON’T SUPPORT NETFLIX.”

(fan | 04/27/2019 07:05AM)

“Everyone should “unfollow” Netflix to retaliate.”

(fan | 04/27/2019 08:49AM)

“We should cancel Netflix too!!!”

4.5 Summary

The results that are discussed in this chapter show a tension in the dataset between Netflix’s dedication to showcasing an entertaining, human peer that wants to be your friend on the one hand, and a lack of attention to the follow-up that will actually make friends stay on the other hand. The brand is almost solely focused on creating engaging content, which it admittedly does very well, but in the process seems to forget that engaging content alone does not make, and certainly does not keep, an engaged fan. In fact, it is almost ironic that Netflix is not capitalizing on relationship building and eWOM dispersion opportunities within this brand community, as those are generally the main motivations for creating social media based brand communities (Laroche et al., 2012; Laroche et al., 2013; Martínez-López et al., 2016), especially since Facebook’s functions are rooted in meeting social interaction needs (Shao, 2009). Just the provision of a brand platform, however, is not enough to stimulate fan interactions, and Netflix is showing a (seemingly) lack of care for its fans by not encouraging or even allowing them to meet their needs within the community. If anything, the brand seems to strategize its community relationship management based on a community full of lurkers, who would be content with passively looking at Netflix’s admiring content and not getting any opportunity to create, share or interact (Shao, 2009). This is not a very viable strategy, however, as creating content and sharing content are vital fan behaviors for the survival of a community. Again: without the participation of fans, there is no community (Gummerus et al., 2012).

The results of this study also show a tension within the Netflix brand community itself, as the community field seems to be divided into two camps of fans. On the one hand, there is a group of fans that are actually fans of the Netflix brand: they are friendly, enthusiastic and full of compliments, and even try to build a relationship with the brand by sharing intricate details of their personal lives. On the other hand, however, are the not so-fans, who have a lot of unheard complaints and are desperately trying to get Netflix’s attention in order to fix their complaints. Not surprisingly, tensions between these two camps often rise, leading to many conflicts and making the establishment of a sense of community and the feeling of we-ness a far-fetched goal. By ignoring

both fans and not so-fans and letting these vastly different camps cohabitate within the same community without any guiding, Netflix is not only missing some great opportunities, but also risks actual fans getting fed up with being ignored and attacked, causing them to join the not so-fans or even becoming anti-fans.

5. Conclusion

Social media based brand communities have increasingly become more popular in the last few years amongst both SVoD services (Laroche et al., 2012; Martínez-López et al., 2016) and traditional broadcasters (Lacalle & Castro, 2012), because they are strong tools for fan-relationship building and brand promotion (Laroche et al., 2012; Martínez-López et al., 2016). Because Netflix is a mainly digital brand that is generally very responsive to new technological developments (Lobato, 2018), and the brand is often applauded by field professionals for its innovative and engaging social media conduct (e.g. Beer, 2019; Duczminski, 2019; Letki, 2016; Stevens, 2018), one could assume that Netflix is also revolutionary, or at the very least adequate, in managing its brand communities. To study if this indeed is the case, and by doing so also adding relevant insights to the brand community management literature, Netflix's community relationship management on its US Facebook page was examined in this study. The research questions guiding this research project are:

RQ1: How is Netflix employing brand community relationship management on its United States Facebook page?

SQ1: How is Netflix employing 'connectivity' in its posts and comments?

SQ2: How is Netflix employing 'conversation' in its posts and comments?

SQ3: How is Netflix employing 'content creation' in its posts and comments?

SQ4: How are fans using Netflix's United States Facebook page to communicate with Netflix?

At the base of this analysis lies a framework that is divided in three pillars, which are connectivity (SQ1), content creation (SQ2) and conversation (SQ3). To assess Netflix's conduct on each of these three pillars, and additionally provide insight into fans' responses to Netflix's CoRM, a qualitative thematic analysis was conducted. The dataset for this analysis consisted of 100 posts published by Netflix on its US Facebook page and 826 comments from Netflix and its fans that were written underneath those posts, which were all posted in a time span of 44 days. The data was subjected to a coding process consisting of three phases, and this resulted in three overarching themes. The first theme, which is *lopsided dedication*, reveals a tension in the data between Netflix being a strong provider of content that is very relevant for its fans, while on the other side giving barely any attention to other aspects of its community relationship management. The second theme, which is *predominant humanization*, reveals a likely reason for why Netflix's content is so strong, which is the humanization of the Netflix brand. Despite of Netflix's content creation efforts, however, the third theme, *fan entitlement*, narrates multiple negative consequences that seem to appear as a result of neglecting other parts of community relationship management.

5.1 Answer to the research question

Netflix is no stranger to the principals of communities, as the brand already capitalized on the knowledge of a talented community many years ago with the Netflix Prize challenge (Bell & Koren, 2007; Villarroel et al., 2013). The brand also knew, back then, that communication was vital for communities and therefore created an entire platform for the community to facilitate easier communication between contestants (Villarroel et al., 2013). The emergence and evolution of the Social Web has made creating and managing brand communities much easier (Martínez-López et al, 2016), but Netflix's community management seems not to have grown much over the years. In fact, this study argues that Netflix's community relationship management hardly exists at all (RQ1).

Community relationship management is, thus, built on three pillars that together make a wholesome management strategy that allows a brand to receive maximum benefits from its social media based brand communities. The data shows that Netflix, at least in the cases represented in the data set, actually hardly employs any community relationship management on its US Facebook page, as its efforts are almost solely focused on only half of one of these three pillars (RQ1). The first pillar of CoRM, which is connectivity, contains two important concepts: interaction facilitation and interaction management. Both of these concepts seem strangers to Netflix, as the brand is not displaying any efforts to either stimulate fans to interact with each other in a positive way (Gummerus et al., 2012; Sung et al., 2010) or managing the established interactions that turn vicious (Berry & Seiders, 2008; Dineva et al., 2017; Sibai et al., 2015) (SQ1). By not engaging in connectivity measures at all, Netflix's conduct is representing a lack of care for its fans. The brand seemingly does not have any interest in helping fans fulfill their interaction needs or protecting fans that are being attacked by other fans (SQ1). In a community as heterogeneous as Netflix's brand community (Thomas et al., 2013), the brand should be providing much more guidance and management (Dineva et al., 2017).

The second pillar of CoRM, which is content creation, contains two important concepts: the encouragement of user-generated content creation and marketer-generated content creation. As has been established, Netflix is strongly focusing on its own content creation, and the data shows that the brand is employing many recommendable strategies to make its content relevant for its fans (SQ2). The brand is keeping an active posting schedule, providing informational and entertainment benefits (Gummerus et al., 2012; Waters et al., 2009), and uses a predominantly humanizing approach to give its posts character and make them appealing to fans (Fournier, 1998; MacInnis & Folkes, 2017). The brand, however, does not encourage any user-generated content to be shared on the platform and does also not encourage any other engaging behaviours such as commenting, sharing and liking (Ang, 2011; Kumar & Reinartz, 2018; Smith et al., 2012; Tsimonis & Dimitriadis, 2014), therefore only focussing on half of the content creation pillar (SQ2).

The third pillar of CoRM, which is conversation, is also very much neglected in Netflix's community relationship management. The brand hardly ever seizes opportunity to indulge in positive interactions with fans, therefore missing numerous chances that could be very beneficial for the brand. Moreover, the brand seems to blatantly ignore all the negative messages that it receives, therefore in all likelihood only increasing the number of negative messages that it receives (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015; Van Noort et al., 2015) (SQ3).

5.2 Theoretical implications

As has been stated on multiple occasions throughout this paper, Ang's (2011) pillars of community relationship management have provided the base for this analysis. To deepen this analysis, the content and meaning of these pillars were all extended with additional insights from previous research on brand communities and other related topics. By doing so, this study has developed a framework for studying brands' community relationship management conducts. This framework can aid future research dedicated to specific brand's community relationship management, as the academic field could benefit from more research into specific social media based brand communities (Laroche et al., 2012). This framework is displayed in figure 5.1. As this figure shows, this study has found community relationship management to be an ongoing and continuous process that does not end nor begin with just one of Ang's (2011) three pillars. Activity on all three interacting pillars is necessary to reach an adequate CoRM strategy that provides benefits for both fans and the brand itself.

The findings of this study also corroborate what several other scholars have previously found, which is that brands generally tend to ignore negative interactions within communities, such as fan-to-fan conflicts and complaints from fans (Dekay, 2012; Dineva et al., 2017). Despite scholars and marketing specialists encouraging brands to consider negative interactions as community opportunities (Dekay, 2012), both Dekay (2012) and Dineva et al. (2017) have found that brands generally tend to ignore these negative interactions, which is also a characteristic of Netflix's passive community relationship management. As this can, thus, be considered a trend within the community relationship management field, it would be interesting for future research to delve deeper into brands' hesitation towards managing more negative interactions.

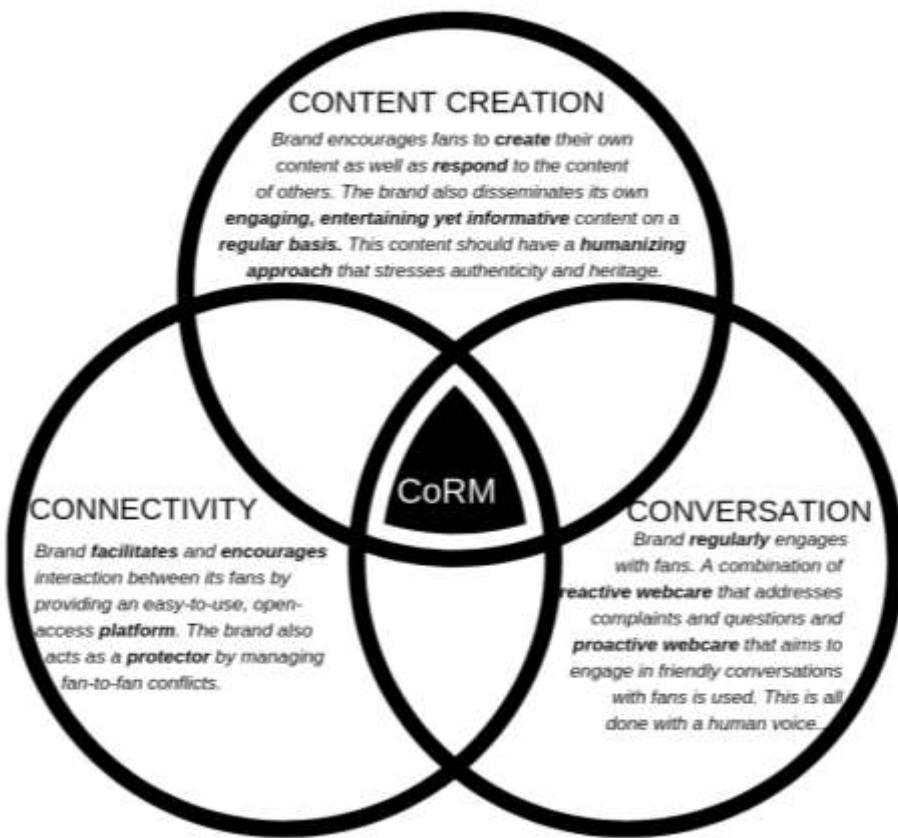


Figure 5.1: A framework for brand community relationship management (research)

This study has proven to be scientifically relevant, as it adds new insights to the body of literature on Netflix, brand communities, and brand community management. Moreover, this study also facilitates future studies on brand community management to be conducted more efficiently, and allows for comparison between these studies by offering a universal set of criteria on brand community relationship management.

5.3 Social implications

The findings of this study are socially relevant and have implications for both brands committed to designing or improving their community relationship management as well as for Netflix specifically.

“Is there anyone so wise as to learn by the experience of others?” - Voltaire

This research provides useful insights and tools for brands to design their CoRM by, indeed, learning from another brand, which so happens to be a rather dominant brand within the SVoD market. This research shows that community management does not end with providing great marketer-generated content, in fact, that is only a small beginning. In designing their own content, brands could definitely take a page from Netflix's strong book of humanizing, engaging content, but

they should also look beyond content creation to see the many other opportunities and responsibilities that SMBBCs provide. Brands should not be hesitant to engage with their audiences on their brand pages, even if the sentiment is not always positive. By designing their community management strategies to accommodate the three pillars of CoRM, brands can connect with their audiences as well as facilitate connections within their peers, provide them with great content and the opportunity to disseminate their own content and start conversations that help build relationships (Fournier, 1998), strengthen loyalty (Wangenheim & Bayón, 2004) encourage positive eWOM dispersion (Schamari & Schaefers, 2015; Wangenheim & Bayón, 2004) and maintain a strong community (Ang, 2011).

5.3.1 Recommendations for Netflix

It would be naïve for this study to conclude that Netflix has no sense of social media marketing and branding in general, as numerous marketing professionals and scholars are praising the brand for its admirable, distinguishing marketing strategy. Moreover, this study itself has also found that Netflix is dominant in strong content creation, though the data shows that the brand is sometimes lacking some vital consistency in its content. This study does, however, conclude that Netflix is not taking full advantage of its admirable marketing and branding skills when it comes to managing its community on its US Facebook page.

It seems as though Netflix has all the tools available to manage its brand community correctly. The brand could, for instance, combat the many complaints about its content and show cancellations by providing fans with personal recommendations for other content to watch, since the company has such a highly successful recommender system at its disposal (Rataul et al., 2018; Weinman, 2015). Moreover, the brand also shows great skills in using a human voice to engage its audience, seems to know its audience very well, and there seems to be no shortage of talent that knows how to be entertaining on social media within the Netflix marketing department. The brand currently is just lacking the commitment to follow through once great content has been provided. Netflix knows how to attract fans to come to its band community, now it is vital to implement connective and conversational means that will make fans want to stay.

5.4 Limitations and further research

As is the case for any academic research, this study is not without its limitations. One limitation of this study is its lack of insight into more secluded parts of the Netflix organization as well as the Netflix US Facebook page. As this study does not have access to the inner workings of the company, some findings, such as Netflix using a strategy of passivity to alter its strategy to accommodate complaints, are based on argued assumptions rather than facts. Moreover, this study

also does not have access to private parts of Netflix's US Facebook page, such as the direct messages that Netflix receives from fans. Having access to the internal workings of Netflix Inc. and Netflix's direct messages would have allowed a deeper interpretation of the results obtained with this analysis. The results of this study can therefore be used in future studies to inform the creation of an interview guide that is used in potential interviews with Netflix brand community managers about their conduct on the US Facebook page.

The posts and comments that are included in the dataset for this study were all posted within a time frame of 44 days. This means that this research provides very adequate insight into Netflix's current community relationship management strategy, but as a consequence, it cannot be used to speak for any longitudinal changes in Netflix's CoRM strategy. As earlier statements from marketing professionals contradict many findings from this study, such as Netflix's lack of conversations with fans while earlier statements applaud Netflix for engaging a lot with its audience, it would be relevant for future research to conduct a longitudinal research. This longitudinal research could be used to study Netflix's community relationship management over an extended period of time, and therefore see if the brand has made changes to its strategy over the last years. In the same vein, it would be also be interesting for future research to focus on a comparative analysis on different Netflix pages and platforms. An explorative look at Netflix's Facebook page for the Netherlands, for instance, already seems to show a much more active webcare strategy, as the brand seems to respond much more frequently to fans. In the same vein, it could be the case that the brand is more involved in fan interaction on, for instance, Twitter, which could be concluded with a comparative analysis.

It is also important to note that netnographic research, which this study is a subset of, can only study how fans' experience of Netflix's community management is *represented* on the Netflix US Facebook page, and can not provide any detail into their thoughts and feelings on this subject (Brennen, 2017). To actually get insight into fans' thought and feelings on this subject, future research could focus on conducting interviews or focus groups. Another disadvantage of using social media data in a study is that social media users can be anonymous by using a nickname on their social media accounts. It is therefore difficult to ensure the authenticity of the data (McKenna et al., 2017). By doing additional research in the form of interviews or focus groups, the findings of this research can be corroborated, therefore validating the authenticity of the data.

When referring to Netflix and comparing the results of this study to previous statements on Netflix's social media conduct, there are quite a bit of references used that are non-academic. Although this is a natural consequence of the topic that is discussed and the fact that research on Netflix's community management is still in its infancy, it would be advisable for more research to be

conducted on Netflix's CoRM in order to compare academic findings. This study can, thus, then be used as a comparative tool for future research as well.

Despite its limitations and the potential for future research to deepen the provided insights even more, however, this study has added useful insight to the body of literature on social media based brand community management and framework an adequate tool from Netflix to enhance its brand community relationship management, other brands to build their brand community relationship management and scholars to study these community relationship building efforts.

Literature and references

A deep dive into the social media habits and performance of Netflix [webpage]. (2018). Retrieved from <https://unmetric.com/brands/netflix#analyze-signup>

Aaker, J. L. (1997). Dimensions of brand personality. *Journal of Marketing Research*, 34(3), 347-356. doi:10.1177/002224379703400304

Aaker, J. L., & Fournier, S. (1995). A brand as a character, a partner and a person: three perspectives on the question of brand personality. In F. R. Kardes, & M. Sujan (Eds.), *NA - Advances in Consumer Research (volume 22)* (pp. 391-395). Retrieved from <http://acrwebsite.org/volumes/7775/volumes/v22/NA-22>

About Netflix [webpage]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://media.netflix.com/en/about-netflix>

Abraham, S. (2013). Will business model innovation replace strategic analysis? *Strategy & Leadership*, 41(2), 31-38. doi:10.1108/10878571311318222

Adomavicius, G., Bockstedt, J. C., Curley, S. P., Zhang, J., & Ransbotham, S. (2019). The hidden side effects of recommendation systems. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 60(2), 13-15. Retrieved from <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/>

Alexander, J. (2019). Netflix raises prices on all streaming plans in US [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.theverge.com/2019/1/15/18183602/netflix-subscription-price-raise-us-streaming-plans>

Alhojailan, M. I. (2012). Thematic analysis: a critical review of its process and evaluation. *West East Journal of Social Sciences*, 1(1), 39-47. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org>

Amatriain, X. (2013, August 11). Big & personal: data and models behind Netflix recommendations. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Workshop on Big Data, Streams and Heterogeneous Source Mining: Algorithms, Systems, Programming Models and Applications/BigMine*, 2013, 1-6. doi:10.1145/2501221.2501222

Amatriain, X., & Basilico, J. (2015). Recommender Systems in industry: a Netflix case study. In F. Ricci, L. Rokach, & B. Shapira (Eds.), *Recommender systems handbook (2nd edition)* (pp. 385-420). doi:10.1007/978-1-4899-7637-6

Andrejevic, M. (2008). Watching television without pity: the productivity of online fans. *Television & New Media*, 9(1), 24-46. doi:10.1177/1527476407307241

Ang, L. (2011). Community relationship management and social media. *Journal of Database Marketing & Customer Strategy Management*, 18(1), 31-38. doi:10.1057/dbm.2011.3

Aronson, J. (1995). A pragmatic view of thematic analysis. *The Qualitative Report*, 2(1), 1-3. Retrieved from <https://nsuworks.nova.edu/tqr/vol2/iss1/3>

Babbie, E. (2017). *The basics of social research (7th edition)*. Boston: Cengage Learning

Baird, C. H., & Parasnis, G. (2011). From social media to social customer relationship management. *Strategy & Leadership, 39*(5), 30-37. doi:10.1108/10878571111161507

Barker, C., & Wiatrowski, M. (Eds.). (2017). *The age of Netflix: critical essays on streaming media, digital delivery and instant access*. Retrieved from https://books.google.nl/books?id=rXC-AQAACAAJ&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false

Beer, J. (2019). Inside the secretly effective—and underrated—way Netflix keeps its shows and movies at the forefront of pop culture [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.fastcompany.com/90309308/by-any-memes-necessary-inside-netflixs-winning-social-media-strategy>

Bekkers, V. V. J. M., Edwards, A. R., & de Kool, D. (2013). Social media monitoring: responsive governance in the shadow of surveillance? *Government Information Quarterly, 30*(4), 335-342. doi:10.1016/j.giq.2013.05.024

Bell, R. M., & Koren, Y. (2007). Lessons from the Netflix Prize challenge. *ACM SIGKDD Explorations Newsletter, 9*(2), 75-79. doi:10.1145/1345448.1345465

Berry, L. L., & Seiders, K. (2008). Serving unfair customers. *Business Horizons, 51*(1), 29-37. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2007.09.002

Bess, K. D., Fisher, A. T., Sonn, C. C., & Bishop, B. J. (2002). Psychological sense of community: theory, research, and application. In A. T. Fischer, C. C. Sonn, & B. J. Bishop (Eds.), *psychological sense of community: research, applications, and implications* (pp. 3-25). doi:10.1007/978-1-4615-0719-2

Boeije, H. (2010). *Analysis in qualitative research*. London: Sage Publications Ltd

Bone, P. F. (1995). Word-of-mouth effects on short-term and long-term product judgements. *Journal of Business Research, 32*(3), 213-223. doi:10.1016/0148-2963(94)00047-I

Boyatzis, R. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, Inc.

boyd, d. (2009, February). *Social media is here to stay... Now what?* Paper presented at the Microsoft Research Tech Fest, Redmond, Washington. Retrieved from <http://www.danah.org/papers/talks/MSRTechFest2009.html>.

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. doi:10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Breitman, K., Endler, M., Pereira, R., & Azambuja, M. (2010). When TV dies, will it go to the cloud? *Computer, 43*(4), 81-83. doi:10.1109/MC.2010.118

Brennen, B. S. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for media studies* (2nd edition). New York, London: Routledge

Brogi, S. (2014). Online brand communities: a literature review. *Procedia – Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 109(1), 385-389. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.12.477

Brown, J., Broderick, A. J., & Lee, N. (2007). Word of mouth communication within online communities: conceptualizing the online social network. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 21(3), 2-20. doi:10.1002/dir.20082

Brown, J. J., & Reingen, P. H. (1987). Social ties and word-of-mouth referral behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(3), 350-362. doi:10.1086/209118

Brown, S., Kozinets, R. V., & Sherry, J. F. (2003). Teaching old brands new tricks: retro branding and the revival of brand meaning. *Journal of Marketing*, 67(3), 19-33. doi:10.1509/jmkg.67.3.19.18657

Buttle, F. A. (1998). Word of mouth: understanding and managing referral marketing. *Journal of Strategic Marketing*, 6(3), 241-254. doi:10.1080/096525498346658

Bryman, A. (2012). *Social research methods (4th edition)*. New York: Oxford University Press

Carpenter, S. (2016). Netflix releases Q2 financials as subscriber numbers and revenue disappoint [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/shelbycarpenter/2016/07/18/netflix-q2-financial-report/#5cc32b3032f7>

Chao, C., & Zhao, S. (2013). Emergence of movie stream challenges traditional DVD movie rental—an empirical study with a user focus. *International Journal of Business Administration*, 4(3), 22-29. doi:10.5430/ijba.v4n3p22

Chu, S., & Kim, Y. (2011). Determinants of consumer engagement in electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM) in social networking sites. *International Journal of Advertising*, 30(1), 47-75. doi:10.2501/IJA-30-1-047-075

Cobigo, V., Martin, L., & McHeimech, R. (2016). Understanding community. *Canadian Journal of Disability Studies*, 5(4), 181-203. doi:10.15353/cjds.v5i4.318

Cook, S. (2019). 60+ Netflix statistics and facts stats that define the company's dominance [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.comparitech.com/blog/vpn-privacy/netflix-statistics-facts-figures/>

Cottica, A., Melancon, G., & Renoust, B. (2017). Online community management as social network design: testing for the signature of management activities in online communities. *Applied Network Science*, 2(1), 2-30. doi:10.1007/s41109-017-0049-9

DeCarvalho, L. J., & Fox, N. B. (2016). Extended “visiting hours”. Deconstructing identity in Netflix’s promotional campaigns for Orange is the New Black. *Television & New Media*, 17(6), 504-519. doi:10.1177/1527476416647495

Dekay, S. H. (2012). How large companies react to negative Facebook comments. *Corporate*

Communications: an International Journal, 17(3), 289-299. doi:10.1108/13563281211253539

Dellarocas, C. (2003). The digitization of word of mouth: promise and challenges of online feedback mechanisms. *Management Science*, 49(10), 1275-1444. doi:10.1287/mnsc.49.10.1407.17308

Dholakia, U. M., & Vianello, S. (2009). Effective brand community management: lessons from customer enthusiasts. *The IUP Journal of Brand Management*, 8(1), 7-21. doi:10.2139/ssrn.1512090

Downloading on Netflix just got smarter [webpage]. (2019). Retrieved from <https://media.netflix.com/en/company-blog/downloading-on-netflix-just-got-smarter-1>

Duczeminski, M. (2019). Netflix: the biggest innovator in marketing? [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://postfunnel.com/netflix-the-biggest-innovator-in-marketing/>

Dwivedi, A., Johnson, L. W., & McDonald, R. E. (2015). Celebrity endorsement, self-brand connection and consumer-based brand equity. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 24(5), 449-461. doi:10.1108/JPBM-10-2014-0722

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., & Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of Facebook "friends": social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 12(4), 1143-1168. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2007.00367.x

Fisk, R., Grove, S., Harris, L. C., Keeffe, D. A., Daunt, K. L., Russell-Bennet, R., & Wirtz, J. (2010). Customers behaving badly: a state of the art review, research agenda and implications for practitioners. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 24(6), 417-429. doi:10.1108/08876041011072537

Fiske, S. (2013). Varieties of (de) humanization: divided by competition and status. In S. Gervais (Eds.), *Objectification and (De)Humanization, Nebraska Symposium on Motivation* (pp. 53-71). doi:10.1007/978-1-4614-6959-9_3

Fournier, S. (1998). Consumers and their brands: developing relationship theory in consumer research. *The Journal of Consumer Research*, 24(4), 343-373. doi:10.1086/209515

Füller, J., Matzler, K., & Hoppe, M. (2008). Brand community members as source of innovation. *The Journal of Product Innovation Management*, 25(6), 608-619. doi:10.1111/j.1540-5885.2008.00325.x

Galston, W. A. (2000). Does the Internet strengthen community? *National Civic Review*, 89(3), 193-202. doi:10.1002/ncr.89302

García, A. (2019). ¿A qué juega Netflix? El periodo de prueba gratis aparece y desaparece sin parar [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.adslzone.net/2019/05/21/netflix-periodo-prueba-aparece-desaparece/>

Geuens, M., Weijters, B., & De Wulff, K. (2009). A new measure of brand personality. *International*

Journal of Research in Marketing, 26(2), 97-107. doi: 10.1016/j.ijresmar.2008.12.002

Gibson, A. (2010). The human family's earliest ancestors [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/the-human-familys-earliest-ancestors-7372974/>

Given, J. (2016). "There will still be television but I don't know what it will be called!": narrating the end of television in Australia and New Zealand. *Media and Communication*, 4(3), 109-122. doi:10.17645/mac.v4i3.561

Godinho de Matos, M., & Ferreira, P. (2017). Binge yourself out: the effect of binge watching on the subscription of video on demand. *SSRN Electronic Journal*. doi:10.2139/ssrn.3045568

Goh, K., Heng, C., & Lin, Z. (2013). Social media brand community and consumer behaviour: quantifying the relative impact of user- and marketer-generated content. *Information Systems Research*, 42(1), 88-107. doi:10.1287/isre.1120.0469

Gómez, E. F., & Quevedo, J. M. (2018). Connecting with audiences in new markets: Netflix's Twitter strategy in Spain. *Journal of Media Business Studies*, 15(2), 127-146. doi:10.1080/16522354.2018.1481711

Gomez-Uribe, C.A., & Hunt, N. (2015). The Netflix recommender system: algorithms, business value, and innovation. *ACM Transactions on Management Information Systems*, 6(4), 1-19. doi:10.1145/2843948

Gratis proefperioden [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://help.netflix.com/nl/node/16282/us>

Gray, J. (2003). New audiences, new textualities. Anti-fans and non-fans. *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, 6(1), 64-81. doi:10.1177/1367877903006001004

Gummerus, J., Liljander, V., Weman, E., & Pihlström, M. (2012). Customer engagement in a Facebook brand community. *Management Research Review*, 35(9), 857-877. doi:10.1108/01409171211256578

Gusfield, J. R. (1978). *Community: a critical response*. New York: Harper & Row

Hayes, D. (2019). Netflix has 71% of global SVoD Market, but new services gain ground – report [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://deadline.com/2019/04/netflix-has-71-of-global-svod-market-but-new-services-gain-ground-report-1202586356/>

Heinonen, K. (2011). Consumer activity in social media: managerial approaches to consumers' social media behaviour. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 10(6), 356-364. doi:10.1002/cb.376

Hillery, G. (1955). Definitions of community: areas of agreement. *Rural Sociology*, 20(2), 111-123. Retrieved from <https://digital.library.cornell.edu/catalog/chla5075626>

Husemann, K. C., Ladstaetter, F., & Luedicke, M. K. (2015). Conflict culture and conflict management in consumption communities. *Psychology and Marketing*, 32(3), 265-284. doi:10.1002/mar.20779

If you want to humanize your brand on social media, try these tactics" [webpage]. (2018). Retrieved from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2018/06/03/if-you-want-to-humanize-your-brand-on-social-media-try-these-10-tactics/>

Jenner, M. (2016). Is this TVIV? On Netflix, TVIII and binge watching. *New Media & Society*, 18(2), 1-30. doi:10.1177/1461444814541523

Jenner, M. (2018). *Netflix and the re-invention of television*. doi:10.1007/978-3-319-94316-9

Jiao, Y., Ertz, M., Jo, M., & Sarigollu, E. (2018). Social value, content value, and brand equity in social media brand communities: a comparison of Chinese and US consumers. *International Marketing Review*, 35(1), 18-41. doi:10.1108/IMR-07-2016-0132

Kähr, A., Nyffenegger, B., Krohmer, H., & Hoyer, W. D. (2016). When hostile consumers wreak havoc on your brand: the phenomenon of consumer brand sabotage. *Journal of Marketing*, 80(3), 25-41. doi:10.1509/jm.15.0006

Kaplan, A. M., & Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the world, unite! The challenges and opportunities of social media. *Business Horizons*, 53(1), 59-68. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2009.09.003

Katz, E. (2009). The end of television? *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 625(1), 6-18. doi:10.1177/0002716209337796

Keating, G. (2012). *Netflixed: the epic battle for America's eyeballs*. New York: Penguin Group

Kemp, E., Childers, C. Y., Williams, K. H. (2012). Place branding: creating self-brand connections and brand advocacy. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 21(7), 508-515. doi:10.1108/10610421211276259

Kim, H. C., & Kramer, T. (2015). Do materialists prefer the "brand-as-servant"? The interactive effect of anthropomorphized brand roles and materialism on consumer responses. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 42(2), 284-299. doi:10.1093/jcr/ucv015

Kniazeva, M., & Belk, R. W. (2010). If this brand were a person, or anthropomorphism of brands through packaging stories. *Journal of Global Academy of Marketing*, 20(3), 231-238. doi:10.1080/12297119.2010.9707349

Kozinets, R. V., Dolbec, P., & Earley, A. (2013). Netnographic analysis: understanding culture through social media data. In U. Flick (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 262-275). doi:10.4135/9781446282243.n18

Kumar, V., & Reinartz, W. (2018). *Customer relationship management: concept, strategy, and tools*. doi:10.1007/978-3-662-55381-7

Kuo, Y., & Hou, J. (2017). Oppositional brand loyalty in online brand communities: perspectives on social identity theory and consumer-brand relationship. *Journal of Electronic Commerce Research*, 18(3), 254-268. Retrieved from <https://search.proquest.com/docview/1933854966?accountid=13598>

from <https://www.digitalteurope.com/2018/08/13/us-svod-subscriptions-tipped-to-reach-208m-in-2023/>

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

McKenna, B., Myers, D. M., & Newman, M. (2017). Social media in qualitative research: challenges and recommendations. *Information and Organization*, 27(2), 87-99.
doi:10.1016/j.infoandorg.2017.03.001

McMillan, D. W., & Chavis, D. M. (1986). Sense of community: a definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 14(1), 6-23. doi:10.1002/1520-6629(198601)14:1<6::AID-JCOP2290140103>3.0.CO;2-1

McWilliam, G. (2000). Building stronger brands through online communities. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 41(3), 43-54. Retrieved from <https://sloanreview.mit.edu/>

Meikle, G., & Young, S. (2012). *Media convergence: networked digital media in everyday life*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

Merikivi, J., Bragge, J., Scornavacca, E., & Verhagen, T. (2019). Binge-watching serialized video content: a transdisciplinary review. *Television & New Media*, 41(6), 898-907.
doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2012.02.004

Most popular social networks worldwide as of April 2019, ranked by number of active users (in millions) [webpage]. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

Muniz, M. A., & Hamer, L. O. (2001). Us versus them: oppositional brand loyalty and the cola wars. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 28(1), 355-361. Retrieved from <http://acrwebsite.org>

Muniz, M. A., & O'Guinn, C. T. (2001). Brand community. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 27(4), 412-432. doi:10.1086/319618

Netflix Social Media [webpage]. (2016). Retrieved from <https://shortyawards.com/8th/netflix-social-media>

Netflix Timeline [webpage]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://media.netflix.com/en/about-netflix>
Netflix's annual revenue from 2002 to 2018 (in million U.S. dollars) [webpage]. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272545/annual-revenue-of-netflix/>

Noble, C. H., Noble, S. M., & Adjei, M. T. (2012). Let them talk! Managing primary and extended online brand communities for success. *Business Horizons*, 55(5), 475-483.
doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2012.05.001

Number of Netflix streaming subscribers worldwide from 3rd quarter 2011 to 4th quarter 2018 (in millions) [webpage]. (2019). Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/250934/quarterly-number-of-netflix-streaming-subscribers-worldwide/>

Number of subscription video on demand (SVoD) subscribers worldwide from 2017 to 2023 [webpage]. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/949391/svod-subscribers-world/>

O'Reilly, T. (2007). What is Web 2.0: design patterns and business models for the next generation of software. *Communications & Strategies*, 65(1), 17-37. Retrieved from <https://ssrn.com/abstract=1008839>

Park, H., & Cho, H. (2012). Social network online communities: information sources for apparel shopping. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29(6), 400-411. doi:10.1108/07363761211259214

Park, N., Kee, K. F., & Valenzuela, S. (2009). Being immersed in social networking environment: Facebook groups, uses and gratifications, and social outcomes. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 12(6), 729-733. doi:10.1089=cpb.2009.0003

Pempek, T. A., Yermolayeva, Y. A., & Calvert, S. L. (2009). College students' social networking experiences on Facebook. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology*, 30(3), 227-238. doi:10.1016/j.appdev.2008.12.010

Postill, J., & Pink, S. (2012). Social media ethnography: the digital researcher in a messy web. *Media International Australia*, 145(1), 123–134. doi:10.1177/1329878X1214500114

Puzakova, M., Kwak, H., & Rokereto, J. (2009). Pushing the envelope of brand and personality: antecedents and moderators of anthropomorphized brands. *Advances in Consumer Research*, 36(1), 413-420. Retrieved from <http://www.acrwebsite.org/volumes/14399/volumes/v36/NA-36>

Ramsey, C. (2018). Netflix to reach 201 million subscribers by 2023 [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.tvtechnology.com/news/netflix-to-reach-201-million-subscribers-by-2023>

Rataul, P., Tisch, D. G., & Zámborský, P. (2018). *Netflix: dynamic capabilities for global success*. doi:10.4135/9781526439871

Rheingold, H. (1993). *The Virtual Community: Homesteading on the Electronic Frontier*. Reading: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co

Richter, J. (2019). Netflix reaches 149 million paid subscribers [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/chart/10311/netflix-subscriptions-usa-international/>

Ridings, C. M., & Gefen, D. (2004). Virtual community attraction: why people hang out online. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 10(1), 23-46. doi:10.1111/j.1083-6101.2004.tb00229.x

Quinton, S. (2013). The community brand paradigm: a response to brand management's dilemma in the digital era. *Journal of Marketing Management*, 29(7-8), 912-932. doi:10.1080/0267257X.2012.729072

Sabate, F., Berbegal-Mirabent, J., Cañabate, A., & Lebherz, P. R. (2014). Factors influencing popularity

of branded content in Facebook fan pages. *European Management Journal*, 32(6), 1001-1011. doi:10.1016/j.emj.2014.05.001

Sarason, S. B. (1974). *The psychological sense of community: prospects for a community psychology*. Oxford: Jossey-Bass

Scarpi, D. (2010). Does Size Matter? An examination of small and large web-based brand communities. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 24(1), 14-21. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2009.10.002

Schlosser, A. E. (2005). Posting versus lurking: communicating in a multiple audience context. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 32(2), 260-265. doi:10.1086/432235

Schreier, M. (2013). Qualitative content analysis. In U. Flick (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of qualitative data analysis* (pp. 170-183). doi:10.4135/9781446282243

Shao, G. (2009). Understanding the appeal of user-generated media: a uses and gratification perspective. *Internet Research*, 19(1), 7-25. doi:10.1108/10662240910927795

Shen, A. (2014). Recommendations as personalized marketing: insights from customer experiences. *Journal of Services Marketing*, 28(5), 414-427. doi:10.1108/JSM-04-2013-0083

Sibai, O., De Valck, K., Farrell, A. M., & Rudd, J. M. (2015). Social control in online communities of consumption: a framework for community management. *Psychology and Marketing*, 32(3), 250-264. doi:10.1002/mar.20778

Smith, A. N., Fischer, E., & Yongjian, C. (2012). How does brand-related user-generated content differ across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter? *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(2), 102-113. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2012.01.002

Social media usage in the United States - Statistics & Facts [webpage]. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/topics/3196/social-media-usage-in-the-united-states/>

Sonn, C. C., Bishop, B. J., & Drew, N. M. (1999). Sense of community: issues and considerations from a cross-cultural perspective. *Community, Work & Family*, 2(2), 205-218. doi:10.1080/13668809908413941

Stemler, S. (2001). An overview of content analysis. *Practical Assessment, Research & Evaluation*, 7(17). Retrieved from <http://PAREonline.net/getvn.asp?v=7&n=17>

Stevens, J. (2018). 5 social media marketing lessons from Netflix [webpage]. Retrieved from <https://www.adweek.com/creativity/5-social-media-marketing-lessons-from-netflix/>

Stinnett, R. C., Hardy, E. E., & Waters, R. D. (2013). Who are we? The impacts of anthropomorphism and the humanization of nonprofits on brand personality. *International Review on Public and Nonprofit Marketing*, 10(1). doi:10.1007/s12208-012-0087-z

Streaming-abonnementen van Netflix [webpage]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://help.netflix.com/nl/node/24926>

Sung, Y., Kim, Y., Kwon, O., & Moon, J. (2010). An explorative study of Korean consumer participation in virtual brand communities in social network sites. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 23(5), 430-445. doi:10.1080/08911762.2010.521115

Teo, T. (Eds.). (2014). *Encyclopaedia of critical psychology*. doi:10.1007/978-1-4614-5583-7¹¹_{SEP}

Thomas, T. C., Price, L. L., & Schau, H. J. (2013). When differences unite: resource dependence in heterogeneous consumption communities. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 39(5), 1010–1033. doi:10.1086/666616

Tsimonis, G., & Dimitriadis, S. (2014). Brand strategies in social media. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 32(3), 328-344. doi:10.1108/MIP-04-2013-0056

Van Dijck, J. (2013). *The culture of connectivity: a critical history of social media*. Retrieved from <https://books.google.nl/books?id=A6BqrWGIaFIC&printsec=frontcover&hl=nl&sour>

Van Noort, G., & Willemse, L. M. (2012). Online damage control: the effects of proactive versus reactive webcare interventions in consumer-generated and brand-generated platforms. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 26(3), 131–140. doi:10.1016/j.intmar.2011.07.001

Van Noort, G., Willemse, L. M., Kerkhof, P., & Verhoeven, J. (2015). Webcare as an integrative tool for customer care, reputation management, and online marketing: a literature review. In P. Kitchen & E. Uzunöglu (Eds.), *Integrated communications in the postmodern era* (pp. 77-99). London: Palgrave Macmillan

Veloutsou, C., & McAlonan, A. (2012). Loyalty and or disloyalty to a search engine: the case of young millennials. *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29(2), 125-135. doi:10.1108/07363761211206375

Veloutsou, C., & Taylor, C. S. (2012). The role of the brand as a person in business to business brands. *Industrial Marketing Management*, 41(6), 898-907. doi:10.1016/j.indmarman.2012.02.004

Video Streaming (SVoD) United States [webpage]. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/outlook/206/109/video-streaming--svod-/united-states>

Video Streaming (SVoD) worldwide [webpage]. (2019). Retrieved from <https://www.statista.com/outlook/206/100/video-streaming--svod-/worldwide#market-revenue>

Villarroel, J. A., Taylor, J. E., & Tucci, C. L. (2013). Innovation and learning performance implications of free revealing and knowledge brokering in competing communities: insights from the Netflix Prize challenge. *Computational and Mathematical Organization Theory*, 19(1), 42-77. doi:10.1007/s10588-012-9137-7

Voorveld, H. A. M., Van Noort, G., Muntinga, D. G., & Bronner, F. (2018). Engagement with social media and social media advertising: the differentiating role of platform type. *Journal of Advertising*, 47(1), 38-54. doi:10.1080/00913367.2017.1405754

Wangenheim, F. V., & Bayón, T. (2004). The effect of word of mouth on services switching: measurement and moderating variables. *The European Journal of Marketing*, 38(9/10), 1179-1185. doi:10.1108/03090560410548924

Wat betekent meest relevant bij een paginabericht? [webpage]. (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://www.facebook.com/help/539680519386145>

Waters, R. D., Burnett, E., Lamm, A., & Lucas, J. (2009). Engaging stakeholders through social networking: How nonprofit organizations are using Facebook. *Public Relations Review*, 35(2), 102-106. doi:10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.01.006

Wayne, M. L. (2017). Netflix, Amazon, and branded television content in subscription video on-demand portals. *Media, Culture & Society*, 40(5), 725-741. doi:10.1177/0163443717736118

Weinman, J. (2015). Netflix – entertaining disruption. In J. Weinman (Eds.), *Digital disciplines: attaining market leadership via the cloud, big data, social mobile, and the Internet of things* (pp. 197-209). doi:10.1002/9781119039730.ch13

Willemsen, L., van Noort, G., & Bronner, F. (2012). Een menselijk geluid: het effect van reactieve en proactieve webcare op merkevaluaties. In A. Bronner, P. Dekker, D. de Leeuw, L. Paas, K. de Ruyter, A. Smidts & J. Wieringa (Eds.), *Ontwikkelingen in het marktonderzoek* (pp. 27-43). Haarlem: SpaarenHout Haarlem

Williams, R. (2011). "This is the night that television died": television post-object fandom and the demise of *The West Wing*. *Popular Communication*, 9(4), 266-279. doi:10.1080/15405702.2011.605311

Whiting, A., & Williams, D. (2013). Why people use social media: a uses and gratifications approach. *Qualitative Market Research*, 16(4), 362-369. doi:10.1108/QMR-06-2013-0041

Appendix A. Initial dataset

Posts		Sample comments		Extra comments
#	Date of posting	Collected fan comments	Collected Netflix comments	
1	05/03/2019 12pm	1: 05/03/2019 09:32PM, 2: 05/03/2019 9:54PM 3: 05/03/2019 09:55PM, 4: 05/03/2019 10:03PM 5: 05/03/2019 10:18PM, 6: 05/03/2019 10:31PM 7: 05/03/2019 11:02PM, 8: 05/03/2019 11:02PM	0	0
2	05/03/2019 8:58pm	1: 05/03/2019 06:00PM, 2: 05/03/2019 6:00PM, 3: 05/03/2019 06:05PM, 4: 05/03/2019 06:07PM, 5: 05/03/2019 06:13PM, 6: 05/03/2019 06:16PM 7: 05/03/2019 06:27PM	05/03/2019 5:59PM	0
3	05/02/2019 2:58pm	1: 05/03/2019 06:29AM, 2: 05/03/2019 6:51AM 3: 05/03/2019 06:53AM, 4: 05/03/2019 6:57AM 5: 05/03/2019 09:11AM, 6: 05/03/2019 12:55PM 7: 05/03/2019 02:03PM, 8: 05/03/2019 02:03PM	0	0
4	05/02/2019 12:11pm	1: 05/03/2019 02:46AM, 2: 05/03/2019 6:46AM 3: 05/02/2019 10:07PM, 4: 05/03/2019 12:03AM 5: 05/03/2019 12:07AM, 6: 05/03/2019 6:59PM 7: 05/03/2019 07:57PM, 8: 05/04/2019 4:07AM	0	0
5	05/02/2019 9:01am	1: 05/02/2019 06:07PM, 2: 05/02/2019 06:09PM 3: 05/02/2019 06:09PM, 4: 05/02/2019 06:11PM 5: 05/02/2019 06:16PM, 6: 05/02/2019 06:39PM 7: 05/02/2019 06:55	05/02/2019 06:01PM	0
6	05/01/2019 2:59pm	1: 05/02/2019 1:13AM, 2: 05/02/2019 2:12AM 3: 05/02/2019 2:56AM, 4: 05/02/2019 2:59AM 5: 05/02/2019 3:00AM, 6: 05/02/2019 3:01AM 7: 05/02/2019 3:09AM, 8: 05/02/2019 3:09AM	0	05/02/2019 1:36AM 05/02/2019 1:47AM
7	05/01/2019 12pm	1: 05/01/2019 09:16PM, 2: 05/01/2019 9:32PM 3: 05/01/2019 09:33PM, 4: 05/01/2019 9:34PM 5: 05/01/2019 10:20PM, 6: 05/01/2019 10:36PM 7: 05/02/2019 02:57AM, 8: 05/02/2019 3:15AM	0	0
8	05/01/2019 10am	1: 05/01/2019 07:02PM, 2: 05/01/2019 7:08PM 3: 05/01/2019 07:09PM, 4: 05/01/2019 7:09PM 5: 05/01/2019 07:11PM, 6: 05/01/2019 7:54PM 7: 05/01/2019 9:31PM, 8: 05/01/2019 11:04PM	05/01/2019 7:02PM	05/01/2019 8:45PM
9	05/01/2019 7am	1: 05/01/2019 04:58PM, 2: 05/03/2019 04:14AM 3: 05/03/2019 12:30PM, 4: 05/03/2019 04:49PM 5: 05/01/2019 04:08PM, 6: 05/01/2019 04:15PM 7: 05/01/2019 04:21PM, 8: 05/01/2019 5:13PM	0	0
10	04/30/2019 2:57pm	1: 05/01/2019 03:27AM, 2: 05/01/2019 4:41AM 3: 05/01/2019 04:54AM, 4: 05/01/2019 6:52AM 5: 05/01/2019 07:17AM, 6: 05/01/2019 8:30AM 7: 05/01/2019 08:36AM, 8: 05/01/2019 8:36AM	0	0
11	04/30/2019 11:19am	1: 04/30/2019 08:40PM, 2: 04/30/2019 09:40PM 3: 04/30/2019 09:41PM, 4: 04/30/2019 09:51PM 5: 05/01/2019 01:02AM, 6: 05/01/2019 01:18AM 7: 05/01/2019 01:38AM, 8: 05/03/2019 11:17PM	0	05/01/2019 12:51AM
12	04/30/2019 08:00am	1: 04/30/2019 08:41PM, 2: 05/02/2019 12:06AM 3: 05/02/2019 01:22AM, 4: 05/01/2019 2:06AM 5: 04/30/2019 09:29PM, 6: 04/30/2019 5:45PM 7: 04/30/2019 09:05PM, 8: 05/01/2019 03:11AM	0	0
13	04/29/2019	1: 04/30/2019 12:58AM, 2: 04/30/2019 12:59AM	0	0

	3:24pm	3: 04/30/2019 01:04AM, 4: 04/30/2019 01:07AM 5: 04/30/2019 01:09AM, 6: 04/30/2019 01:10AM 7: 04/30/2019 01:18AM, 8: 04/30/2019 01:20AM		
14	04/29/2019 10:59am	1: 04/29/2019 08:25PM, 2: 04/29/2019 08:43PM 3: 04/29/2019 09:03PM, 4: 04/29/2019 09:42PM 5: 04/29/2019 11:12PM, 6: 04/30/2019 02:47AM 7: 04/30/2019 04:36AM, 8: 04/30/2019 05:03AM	0	0
15	04/29/2019 08:02am	1: 05/01/2019 12:29PM, 2: 04/29/2019 05:25PM 3: 04/29/2019 05:58PM, 4: 04/29/2019 06:04PM 5: 04/29/2019 06:06PM, 6: 04/29/2019 06:41PM 7: 04/29/2019 07:19PM, 8: 04/29/2019 08:25PM	0	0
16	04/26/2019 3:57pm	1: 04/27/2019 04:42AM, 2: 04/27/2019 04:46AM 3: 04/27/2019 06:46AM, 4: 04/27/2019 07:05AM 5: 04/27/2019 07:07AM, 6: 04/27/2019 08:23AM 7: 04/27/2019 08:28AM, 8: 04/27/2019 08:49AM	0	0
17	04/26/2019 12:57pm	1: 04/27/2019 02:43AM, 2: 04/27/2019 09:35AM 3: 04/27/2019 12:24PM, 4: 04/28/2019 05:58AM 5: 04/30/2019 09:03AM, 6: 04/27/2019 06:23PM 7: 04/27/2019 07:53PM, 8: 04/27/2019 08:26PM	0	0
18	04/26/2019 12pm	1: 04/28/2019 12:36AM, 2: 04/28/2019 07:56AM 3: 04/28/2019 08:21AM, 4: 04/28/2019 01:25PM 5: 04/29/2019 12:47AM, 6: 04/29/2019 01:53AM 7: 04/29/2019 04:01AM, 8: 04/29/2019 08:47AM	0	0
19	04/26/2019 10am	1: 04/26/2019 07:00AM, 2: 04/26/2019 07:02AM 3: 04/26/2019 07:05AM, 4: 04/26/2019 07:07AM 5: 04/26/2019 07:13AM, 6: 04/26/2019 07:17AM 7: 04/26/2019 07:28AM, 8: 04/26/2019 07:33AM	0	0
20	04/25/2019 1:59pm	1: 04/26/2019 01:22AM, 2: 04/26/2019 02:29AM 3: 04/28/2019 04:08AM, 4: 04/26/2019 01:06AM 5: 04/26/2019 02:41AM, 6: 04/26/2019 12:55PM 7: 04/26/2019 01:03AM, 8: 04/26/2019 01:10AM	0	04/26/2019 09:58PM
21	04/25/2019 10:00am	1: 04/25/2019 10:37PM, 2: 04/25/2019 11:41PM 3: 04/25/2019 11:57PM, 4: 04/25/2019 11:57PM 5: 04/26/2019 01:24AM, 6: 04/27/2019 01:48PM 7: 04/28/2019 06:35AM, 8: 05/14/2019 07:23PM	0	0
22	04/25/2019 07:04am	1: 04/25/2019 07:08AM, 2: 04/25/2019 09:02AM 3: 04/26/2019 10:27AM, 4: 04/25/2019 07:06AM 5: 04/25/2019 01:13PM, 6: 04/25/2019 07:58AM 7: 04/26/2019 03:55PM, 8: 04/25/2019 11:18AM	0	0
23	04/24/2019 04:15pm	1: 04/27/2019 03:45PM, 2: 04/27/2019 11:05PM 3: 04/28/2019 04:54AM, 4: 04/28/2019 05:58AM 5: 04/28/2019 03:41PM, 6: 05/02/2019 01:56PM 7: 04/25/2019 05:48AM, 8: 04/27/2019 03:22PM	0	04/29/2019 01:41PM
24	04/24/2019 12:06pm	1: 04/24/2019 09:24PM, 2: 04/25/2019 03:44AM 3: 04/27/2019 06:47PM, 4: 04/24/2019 12:08PM 5: 04/24/2019 04:23PM, 6: 04/24/2019 08:41PM 7: 04/24/2019 02:38PM, 8: 04/26/2019 04:18PM	0	0
25	04/24/2019 09:01am	1: 24/04/2019 06:17PM, 2: 24/04/2019 06:34PM 3: 24/04/2019 06:40PM, 4: 24/04/2019 06:59PM 5: 24/04/2019 09:59PM, 6: 24/04/2019 10:14PM 7: 24/04/2019 10:17PM	24/04/2019 06:09PM	0
26	04/24/2019 7:16am	1: 04/24/2019 04:39PM, 2: 04/24/2019 04:47PM 3: 04/24/2019 05:05PM, 4: 04/24/2019 05:25PM 5: 04/24/2019 05:55PM, 6: 04/24/2019 05:57PM 7: 04/24/2019 06:01PM, 8: 04/24/2019 04:24PM	0	0
27	04/23/2019	1: 04/24/2019 03:44PM, 2: 04/24/2019 05:38PM	04/23/2019	0

	1:59pm	3: 04/23/2019 11:07PM, 4: 04/24/2019 06:56AM 5: 04/24/2019 01:17PM 6: 04/23/2019 11:03PM 7: 04/23/2019 11:16PM	11:14PM	
28	04/23/2019 12:20pm	1: 04/30/2019 07:54PM, 2: 04/24/2019 02:34AM 3: 04/24/2019 02:48AM, 4: 04/24/2019 09:28PM 5: 04/24/2019 04:37PM, 6: 04/24/2019 06:51PM 7: 04/26/2019 04:53PM, 8: 05/03/2019 05:44PM	0	0
29	04/23/2019 08:41am	1: 04/23/2019 10:21PM, 2: 04/23/2019 08:44AM 3: 04/25/2019 07:48PM, 4: 04/24/2019 02:43PM, 5: 04/23/2019 11:00PM, 6: 04/24/2019 05:27PM 7: 04/23/2019 06:27PM, 8: 04/23/2019 07:21PM	0	0
30	04/22/2019 12:00pm	1: 04/22/2019 09:02PM, 2: 04/22/2019 09:04PM 3: 04/22/2019 09:08PM, 4: 04/22/2019 09:08PM 5: 04/22/2019 09:34PM, 6: 04/22/2019 09:36PM 7: 04/22/2019 09:38PM	04/22/2019 09:01PM	04/22/2019 09:04PM 04/22/2019 09:13PM
31	04/22/2019 09:00am	1: 04/22/2019 06:11PM, 2: 04/22/2019 06:18PM 3: 04/22/2019 06:24PM, 4: 04/22/2019 06:25PM 5: 04/22/2019 06:26PM, 6: 04/22/2019 06:26PM 7: 04/22/2019 06:34PM, 8: 04/22/2019 06:44PM	0	04/22/2019 06:44PM
32	04/22/2019 07:06am	1: 04/22/2019 04:23PM, 2: 04/23/2019 03:48PM 3: 05/04/2019 07:25AM, 4: 04/23/2019 04:40PM 5: 04/23/2019 09:07AM, 6: 04/22/2019 09:16AM 7: 04/22/2019 04:34PM	04/22/2019 05:33PM	0
33	04/19/2019 7:59am	1: 04/19/2019 08:24PM, 2: 04/20/2019 12:36AM 3: 04/20/2019 08:15AM, 4: 04/20/2019 06:41PM 5: 04/20/2019 06:45PM, 6: 04/20/2019 05:53AM, 7: 04/20/2019 08:13AM, 8: 04/20/2019 08:13AM	0	0
34	04/18/2019 3:29pm	1: 04/19/2019 01:31AM, 2: 04/22/2019 04:53PM 3: 04/19/2019 04:50AM, 4: 04/19/2019 12:45AM 5: 04/19/2019 06:04PM, 6: 04/19/2019 12:43AM 7: 04/20/2019 02:20AM	04/19/2019 12:52AM	0
35	04/18/2019 10:02am	1: 04/18/2019 07:12PM, 2: 04/18/2019 07:19PM 3: 04/18/2019 07:21PM, 4: 04/18/2019 07:22PM 5: 04/18/2019 07:25PM, 6: 04/18/2019 07:30PM 7: 04/18/2019 07:32PM, 8: 04/18/2019 07:33PM	0	04/18/2019 07:14PM 04/18/2019 07:14PM 04/18/2019 07:27PM 04/18/2019 07:27PM
36	04/18/2019 7:55am	1: 04/19/2019 06:18PM, 2: 04/19/2019 03:41AM 3: 04/19/2019 03:01PM, 4: 04/20/2019 02:26PM 5: 04/20/2019 04:14PM, 6: 04/20/2019 04:17PM 7: 04/22/2019 01:38PM, 8: 04/28/2019 03:40AM	0	0
37	04/17/2019 12:01pm	1: 04/17/2019 09:06AM, 2: 04/17/2019 09:08AM 3: 04/17/2019 09:10AM, 4: 04/17/2019 09:11AM 5: 04/17/2019 09:16AM, 6: 04/17/2019 09:17AM 7: 04/17/2019 09:17AM, 8: 04/17/2019 09:19AM	0	0
38	04/16/2019 12:17pm	1: 04/16/2019 09:21PM, 2: 04/16/2019 10:15PM 3: 04/16/2019 09:50PM, 4: 04/16/2019 09:26PM 5: 04/16/2019 09:19PM, 6: 04/16/2019 09:21PM 04/16/2019 09:25PM	04/16/2019 09:25PM	0
39	04/15/2019 02:07pm	1: 04/16/2019 12:09AM, 2: 04/16/2019 12:45AM 3: 04/16/2019 01:43AM, 4: 04/26/2019 01:18AM 5: 04/28/2019 04:33AM, 6: 04/16/2019 04:22PM 7: 04/18/2019 04:39PM, 8: 04/16/2019 05:20PM	0	04/16/2019 09:52AM
40	04/15/2019 7:58am	1: 04/16/2019 01:04PM, 2: 05/03/2019 09:42PM 3: 05/03/2019 09:44PM, 4: 04/15/2019 06:45PM 5: 04/16/2019 05:03PM, 6: 05/03/2019 09:43PM 7: 04/15/2019 07:33PM, 8: 04/16/2019 04:30AM	0	0
41	04/12/2019	1: 04/13/2019 09:49PM, 2: 04/15/2019 08:23PM	0	0

	3:42pm	3: 04/17/2019 02:02AM, 4: 04/14/2019 08:25PM 5: 04/16/2019 06:05PM, 6: 04/14/2019 08:15AM 7: 04/14/2019 10:56PM, 8: 04/17/2019 09:55PM		
42	04/12/2019 10:32am	1: 04/12/2019 08:10PM, 2: 04/13/2019 03:14AM 3: 04/14/2019 11:54PM, 4: 04/12/2019 09:56PM 5: 04/12/2019 09:15PM, 6: 04/14/2019 01:58AM 7: 04/12/2019 10:09AM, 8: 05/01/2019 01:32AM	0	0
43	04/11/2019 3:01pm	1: 04/12/2019 12:04AM, 2: 04/12/2019 01:20AM 3: 04/12/2019 01:39PM, 4: 04/14/2019 01:59PM 5: 04/13/2019 07:08PM, 6: 04/13/2019 10:11PM 7: 04/15/2019 07:26AM, 8: 04/12/2019 02:57PM	0	0
44	04/11/2019 11:55am	1: 04/12/2019 04:03PM, 2: 04/12/2019 09:20PM 3: 04/12/2019 10:15PM, 4: 04/12/2019 10:20PM 5: 04/12/2019 10:27PM, 6: 04/12/2019 10:53PM 7: 04/12/2019 11:11PM, 8: 04/12/2019 11:16PM	0	0
45	04/11/2019 08:25am	1: 04/12/2019 07:02PM, 2: 04/18/2019 07:48PM 3: 04/22/2019 08:35PM, 4: 04/30/2019 12:26AM 5: 04/04/2019 12:24AM, 6: 04/15/2019 09:57PM 7: 05/03/2019 12:14AM, 8: 04/11/2019 05:40PM	0	0
46	04/10/2019 09:58am	1: 04/10/2019 07:08PM, 2: 04/10/2019 1:06PM 3: 04/11/2019 04:52AM, 4: 04/10/2019 10:10PM 5: 04/26/2019 12:30PM, 6: 04/27/2019 05:30AM 7: 04/10/2019 08:14PM, 8: 04/11/2019 07:08PM	0	0
47	04/10/2019 07:02am	1: 04/10/2019 04:21PM, 2: 04/10/2019 04:22PM 3: 04/10/2019 04:34PM, 4: 04/10/2019 04:38PM 5: 04/10/2019 04:45PM, 6: 04/10/2019 04:54PM 7: 04/10/2019 05:35PM	04/10/2019 04:11PM	0
48	04/10/2019 06:02am	1: 04/10/2019 08:09PM, 2: 04/10/2019 09:20PM 3: 04/11/2019 05:14AM, 4: 04/11/2019 06:43AM 5: 04/11/2019 07:14AM, 6: 04/11/2019 07:33AM 7: 04/11/2019 11:46AM, 8: 04/11/2019 11:52AM	0	0
49	04/09/2019 02:03pm	1: 04/09/2019 11:10PM, 2: 04/09/2019 11:21PM 3: 04/09/2019 11:47PM, 4: 04/10/2019 02:47AM 5: 04/10/2019 03:11AM, 6: 04/10/2019 07:06AM 7: 04/11/2019 03:50PM	04/09/2019 11:04PM	0
50	04/09/2019 10:24am	1: 04/10/2019 01:52AM, 2: 04/09/2019 11:46PM 3: 04/11/2019 01:57AM, 4: 04/11/2019 02:00AM 5: 04/09/2019 11:46PM, 6: 04/10/2019 03:58AM 7: 04/09/2019 10:45AM, 8: 04/10/2019 12:14AM	0	04/10/2019 01:52AM 04/10/2019 03:50AM 04/10/2019 05:21AM
51	04/09/2019 7:00am	1: 04/12/2019 03:28AM, 2: 04/10/2019 02:16AM 3: 04/10/2019 11:58AM, 4: 04/10/2019 12:06PM 5: 04/09/2019 11:05PM, 6: 04/10/2019 10:42AM 7: 04/10/2019 05:02AM, 8: 04/10/2019 02:10AM	0	0
52	04/08/2019 4:10pm	1: 04/29/2019 06:45PM, 2: 04/09/2019 07:32AM 3: 04/10/2019 05:02PM, 4: 04/10/2019 05:10PM 5: 04/10/2019 05:42PM, 6: 04/12/2019 02:35AM 7: 04/26/2019 04:07AM, 8: 04/11/2019 10:18PM	0	0
53	04/08/2019 1:10pm	1: 04/08/2019 10:17PM, 2: 04/09/2019 03:16AM 3: 04/08/2019 10:28PM, 4: 04/08/2019 10:17PM 5: 04/08/2019 10:25PM, 6: 04/08/2019 10:35PM 7: 04/08/2019 10:51PM, 8: 04/08/2019 10:54PM	0	04/08/2019 10:35PM
54	04/08/2019 6:26am	1: 04/08/2019 07:35PM, 2: 04/16/2019 11:22PM 3: 04/12/2019 07:11AM, 4: 04/08/2019 08:24PM 5: 04/08/2019 03:44PM, 6: 04/08/2019 05:43PM 7: 04/08/2019 05:46PM, 8: 04/08/2019 07:12PM	0	04/08/2019 03:49PM 04/08/2019 05:45PM
55	04/07/2019	1: 04/07/2019 04:38PM, 2: 04/07/2019 04:41PM	0	04/07/2019 11:05PM

	6:00am	3: 04/07/2019 09:27PM, 4: 04/07/2019 09:29PM 5: 04/08/2019 12:38AM, 6: 04/08/2019 12:39AM 7: 04/08/2019 12:40AM, 8: 04/09/2019 02:28AM		
56	04/05/2019 1:57pm	1: 04/05/2019 03:05PM, 2: 04/06/2019 06:17AM 3: 04/12/2019 10:35PM, 4: 04/06/2019 03:49PM 5: 04/06/2019 11:58PM, 6: 04/07/2019 02:26AM 7: 04/07/2019 03:03AM, 8: 04/08/2019 04:15AM	0	0
57	04/05/2019 12:00pm	1: 04/05/2019 10:11PM, 2: 04/05/2019 12:52PM 3: 04/07/2019 01:03AM, 4: 04/05/2019 04:52PM 5: 04/05/2019 10:48PM, 6: 04/05/2019 09:10PM 7: 04/05/2019 09:18PM, 8: 04/05/2019 10:38PM	0	0
58	04/05/2019 09:07am	1: 04/05/2019 06:25PM, 2: 04/05/2019 06:30PM 3: 04/05/2019 06:50PM, 4: 04/05/2019 07:49PM 5: 04/05/2019 08:52PM, 6: 04/05/2019 11:13AM 7: 04/05/2019 06:32PM, 8: 04/05/2019 06:14PM	0	0
59	04/05/2019 08:14am	1: 04/07/2019 07:27PM, 2: 04/06/2019 03:01AM 3: 04/06/2019 01:07AM, 4: 04/07/2019 08:58AM 5: 04/10/2019 05:05PM, 6: 04/05/2019 11:53PM 7: 04/11/2019 02:54AM, 8: 04/22/2019 11:48PM	0	0
60	04/05/2019 08:10am	1: 04/06/2019 06:40AM, 2: 04/06/2019 04:51AM 3: 04/07/2019 06:44AM, 4: 04/09/2019 05:01PM 5: 04/09/2019 07:55PM, 6: 04/12/2019 05:21AM 7: 04/14/2019 04:55AM, 8: 04/15/2019 02:18AM	0	0
61	04/04/2019 02:01pm	1: 04/21/2019 04:35PM, 2: 04/21/2019 11:18PM 3: 04/27/2019 03:36AM, 4: 04/27/2019 06:13AM 5: 04/27/2019 08:27AM, 6: 04/27/2019 04:26PM 7: 04/28/2019 01:12AM, 8: 04/05/2019 04:06PM	0	0
62	04/04/2019 11:04am	1: 04/05/2019 12:09AM, 2: 04/05/2019 02:57AM 3: 04/15/2019 07:36AM, 4: 04/08/2019 07:11AM 5: 04/04/2019 09:48PM, 6: 04/04/2019 09:14PM 7: 04/05/2019 12:16AM, 8: 04/06/2019 11:47AM	0	0
63	04/04/2019 08:03am	1: 04/08/2019 04:43AM, 2: 04/05/2019 02:51AM 3: 04/05/2019 06:11AM, 4: 04/04/2019 06:51PM 5: 04/04/2019 05:31PM, 6: 04/04/2019 05:47PM 7: 04/04/2019 09:07AM, 8: 04/04/2019 06:21PM	0	0
64	04/03/2019 01:59PM	1: 04/03/2019 11:51PM, 2: 04/04/2019 12:23AM 3: 04/04/2019 12:45AM, 4: 04/05/2019 10:52PM 5: 04/03/2019 11:18PM, 6: 04/04/2019 03:35AM 7: 04/04/2019 04:50AM, 8: 04/04/2019 04:50AM	0	04/03/2019 11:09PM
65	04/03/2019 11:43AM	1: 04/03/2019 09:13PM, 2: 04/03/2019 09:37PM 3: 04/04/2019 12:41AM, 4: 05/04/2019 08:39AM 5: 04/03/2019 09:07PM, 6: 04/03/2019 09:11PM 7: 04/03/2019 11:53PM, 8: 04/07/2019 06:40PM	0	04/03/2019 09:26PM
66	04/03/2019 10:03AM	1: 04/04/2019 06:31AM, 2: 04/06/2019 11:07AM 3: 04/09/2019 12:45AM, 4: 04/03/2019 07:08PM 5: 04/03/2019 07:09PM, 6: 04/03/2019 07:14PM 7: 04/03/2019 07:19PM, 8: 04/03/2019 07:26PM	0	0
67	04/02/2019 01:30AM	1: 04/02/2019 10:44PM, 2: 04/02/2019 11:52PM 3: 04/03/2019 12:20AM, 4: 04/03/2019 01:40AM 5: 04/03/2019 01:41AM, 6: 04/03/2019 02:08AM 7: 04/03/2019 03:55PM	04/02/2019 10:31PM	04/02/2019 10:34PM 04/03/2019 05:25AM
68	04/02/2019 08:59AM	1: 04/02/2019 06:12PM, 2: 04/02/2019 06:13PM 3: 04/02/2019 06:15PM, 4: 04/02/2019 06:15PM 5: 04/02/2019 06:16PM, 6: 04/02/2019 06:17PM 7: 04/02/2019 06:18PM	04/02/2019 06:12PM	0
69	04/02/2019	1: 04/03/2019 02:33AM, 2: 04/02/2019 11:46PM	0	04/02/2019 05:11PM

	08:00AM	3: 04/02/2019 05:13PM, 4: 04/02/2019 11:10PM 5: 04/03/2019 06:32AM, 6: 04/02/2019 05:08PM 7: 04/02/2019 05:12PM, 8: 04/02/2019 05:18PM		
70	04/02/2019 07:01AM	1: 04/03/2019 06:15AM, 2: 04/04/2019 11:13PM 3: 04/05/2019 06:41AM, 4: 04/02/2019 09:06AM 5: 04/03/2019 01:11AM, 6: 04/04/2019 04:10AM, 7: 04/02/2019 05:00PM, 8: 04/02/2019 07:18PM	0	0
71	04/01/2019 02:00PM	1: 04/21/2019 02:00PM, 2: 04/27/2019 02:00PM 3: 04/29/2019 09:52AM, 4: 05/04/2019 11:13AM 5: 04/02/2019 02:04PM, 6: 04/02/2019 07:08PM 7: 04/02/2019 02:07PM, 8: 04/03/2019 06:21AM	0	04/27/2019 09:38AM 04/27/2019 11:44PM
72	04/01/2019 11:47AM	1: 04/05/2019 03:38AM, 2: 04/05/2019 02:10PM 3: 04/01/2019 11:03PM, 4: 04/02/2019 02:23AM 5: 04/02/2019 04:02AM, 6: 04/02/2019 04:12AM 7: 04/18/2019 06:05PM, 8: 04/26/2019 01:40AM	0	0
73	04/01/2019 09:58AM	1: 04/04/2019 12:44PM, 2: 04/02/2019 10:29PM 3: 04/02/2019 10:11PM, 4: 04/04/2019 07:16PM 5: 04/04/2019 04:48AM, 6: 04/05/2019 05:29AM 7: 04/11/2019 08:40AM, 8: 04/02/2019 09:04PM	0	0
74	04/01/2019 07:02AM	1: 04/01/2019 04:09PM, 2: 04/01/2019 06:09PM 3: 04/01/2019 08:08PM, 4: 04/01/2019 08:13PM 5: 04/01/2019 10:37PM, 6: 04/01/2019 04:20PM	04/01/2019 07:55PM 04/01/2019 07:56PM	0
75	03/29/2019 02:01PM	1: 03/29/2019 03:16PM, 2: 03/30/2019 04:55AM 3: 03/29/2019 11:51PM, 4: 03/29/2019 11:51PM 5: 03/30/2019 06:29PM, 6: 03/29/2019 10:23PM 7: 04/01/2019 07:10PM, 8: 03/30/2019 06:41AM	0	0
76	03/29/2019 11:17AM	1: 03/29/2019 07:49PM, 2: 03/29/2019 07:40PM 3: 03/29/2019 11:31PM, 4: 03/29/2019 07:46PM 5: 03/30/2019 12:09PM, 6: 03/29/2019 09:08PM 7: 03/29/2019 09:10PM	03/29/2019 10:16PM	0
77	03/29/2019 07:59AM	1: 03/29/2019 04:04PM, 2: 03/29/2019 04:48PM 3: 03/29/2019 04:53PM, 4: 03/29/2019 05:53PM 5: 03/29/2019 11:11PM, 6: 03/30/2019 03:08AM 7: 03/30/2019 04:44PM	03/29/2019 04:00PM	0
78	03/28/2019 03:11PM	1: 03/29/2019 02:11PM, 2: 03/31/2019 03:51AM 3: 03/29/2019 04:25AM, 4: 03/28/2019 11:28PM 5: 03/29/2019 12:12AM, 6: 03/29/2019 12:35AM 7: 03/29/2019 01:41AM, 8: 03/31/2019 10:56PM	0	0
79	03/28/2019 02:18PM	1: 03/28/2019 03:11PM, 2: 04/03/2019 06:10AM 3: 03/28/2019 10:30PM, 4: 03/28/2019 10:30PM 5: 03/29/2019 04:08PM, 6: 04/01/2019 08:35AM 7: 03/31/2019 01:04AM, 8: 03/29/2019 06:17PM	0	03/31/2019 11:41AM
80	03/28/2019 11:09AM	1: 03/31/2019 05:30AM, 2: 03/28/2019 10:59PM 3: 04/01/2019 12:50PM, 4: 04/02/2019 06:28PM 5: 03/28/2019 08:01PM, 6: 03/29/2019 05:39AM 7: 03/31/2019 12:28AM, 8: 03/28/2019 08:29PM	0	0
81	03/28/2019 09:13AM	1: 03/28/2019 05:23PM, 2: 03/28/2019 06:48PM 3: 04/15/2019 02:49PM, 4: 04/03/2019 06:12AM 5: 04/26/2019 07:38PM, 6: 04/26/2019 07:39PM 7: 04/18/2019 11:19PM, 8: 03/29/2019 06:18PM	0	0
82	03/27/2019 03:01PM	1: 03/27/2019 11:07PM, 2: 03/27/2019 11:08PM 3: 03/27/2019 11:13PM, 4: 03/27/2019 11:21PM 5: 03/27/2019 11:58PM, 6: 03/28/2019 12:27AM 7: 03/28/2019 09:20AM	03/27/2019 11:03PM	0
83	03/27/2019	1: 03/27/2019 08:28PM, 2: 03/29/2019 06:19PM	0	0

	12:14PM	3: 04/11/2019 09:44PM, 4: 04/02/2019 10:41PM 5: 03/29/2019 04:32PM, 6: 03/29/2019 12:02AM 7: 03/28/2019 07:31AM, 8: 03/29/2019 12:46AM		
84	03/27/2019 09:06AM	1: 03/27/2019 06:19PM, 2: 03/27/2019 05:11PM 3: 03/28/2019 03:17PM, 4: 03/28/2019 04:51PM 5: 03/28/2019 08:11PM, 6: 03/28/2019 08:13PM 7: 03/30/2019 08:04AM, 8: 03/27/2019 12:04PM	0	0
85	03/26/2019 01:03PM	1: 03/27/2019 09:33AM, 2: 03/27/2019 11:41AM 3: 03/27/2019 12:01PM, 4: 03/27/2019 01:26PM 5: 03/27/2019 02:53PM, 6: 03/27/2019 03:23PM 7: 03/27/2019 05:25PM	03/27/2019 05:48PM	0
86	03/26/2019 09:57AM	1: 03/26/2019 06:40PM, 2: 03/26/2019 06:59PM 3: 03/26/2019 07:07PM, 4: 03/26/2019 07:20PM 5: 03/26/2019 07:47PM, 6: 03/26/2019 07:54PM 7: 03/26/2019 08:36PM	03/26/2019 05:59PM	0
87	03/25/2019 03:06PM	1: 03/26/2019 01:00AM, 2: 03/25/2019 11:21PM 3: 03/25/2019 11:13PM, 4: 03/26/2019 01:25AM 5: 03/25/2019 11:29PM, 6: 03/26/2019 12:21AM 7: 03/26/2019 12:58AM, 8: 03/25/2019 11:18PM	0	0
88	03/25/2019 12:04PM	1: 03/26/2019 05:35AM, 2: 04/11/2019 07:30PM 3: 04/14/2019 02:33PM, 4: 04/15/2019 08:21AM 5: 04/15/2019 12:57PM, 6: 04/15/2019 04:31PM 7: 04/24/2019 06:36PM, 8: 03/25/2019 08:37PM	0	04/16/2019 01:10AM
89	03/25/2019 09:28AM	1: 03/26/2019 04:56AM, 2: 03/26/2019 5:56AM 3: 03/26/2019 05:02PM, 4: 03/27/2019 03:53AM 5: 03/28/2019 06:46AM, 6: 03/29/2019 04:49AM 7: 03/27/2019 09:45PM, 8: 03/29/2019 06:11AM	0	0
90	03/24/2019 12:19PM	1: 03/25/2019 08:17AM, 2: 03/24/2019 08:37PM 3: 03/24/2019 11:09PM, 4: 03/25/2019 08:40AM 5: 03/29/2018 06:20PM, 6: 03/25/2019 06:14PM 7: 03/25/2019 04:19AM, 8: 03/24/2019 10:25PM	0	0
91	03/22/2019 02:26PM	1: 03/23/2019 12:05AM, 2: 03/23/2019 12:48PM 3: 03/23/2019 01:05PM, 4: 03/23/2019 01:23PM 5: 03/23/2019 07:26PM, 6: 03/23/2019 07:37PM 7: 03/23/2019 10:22PM	03/22/2019 10:30PM	0
92	03/22/2019 01:27PM	1: 03/26/2019 10:51PM, 2: 03/23/2019 1:14AM 3: 03/24/2019 08:59PM, 4: 03/24/2019 05:00PM 5: 03/22/2019 09:43PM, 6: 03/23/2019 06:45PM 7: 03/22/2019 11:08PM, 8: 03/24/2019 09:34PM	0	0
93	03/22/2019 10:00AM	1: 03/22/2019 10:11AM, 2: 03/22/2019 08:28PM 3: 03/22/2019 08:29PM, 4: 03/23/2019 08:57AM 5: 04/17/2019 10:07PM, 6: 03/22/2019 06:15PM 7: 04/02/2019 01:40AM, 8: 04/08/2019 02:29AM	0	0
94	03/22/2019 08:20AM	1: 03/22/2019 04:29PM, 2: 03/22/2019 04:30PM 3: 03/22/2019 04:40PM, 4: 03/22/2019 04:40PM 5: 03/22/2019 05:19PM, 6: 03/22/2019 04:56PM	03/22/2019 04:28PM 03/22/2019 06:40PM	03/22/2019 04:30PM
95	03/21/2019 02:05PM	1: 03/21/2019 10:23PM, 2: 03/21/2019 10:46PM 3: 03/22/2019 01:50PM, 4: 03/22/2019 04:19PM 5: 03/22/2019 11:56AM, 6: 03/22/2019 05:58AM 7: 03/21/2019 08:45PM, 8: 03/22/2019 02:31AM	0	0
96	03/21/2019 12:00PM	1: 03/21/2019 12:04PM, 2: 03/21/2019 08:50PM 3: 04/13/2019 09:29PM, 4: 03/21/2019 11:29PM 5: 03/23/2019 09:12PM, 6: 05/01/2019 11:14PM 7: 03/22/2019 06:11AM, 8: 03/22/2019 03:38PM	0	0
97	03/21/2019	1: 03/21/2019 08:00PM, 2: 03/22/2019 12:56AM	03/21/2019	0

	09:25AM	3: 03/22/2019 03:06PM, 4: 03/22/2019 09:12PM 5: 03/22/2019 09:13PM, 6: 03/21/2019 10:09PM 7: 03/21/2019 05:27PM	05:28PM	
98	03/21/2019 06:02AM	1: 03/21/2019 06:44PM, 2: 03/21/2019 05:17PM 3: 03/23/2019 08:47PM, 4: 03/21/2019 03:55PM, 5: 03/21/2019 03:06PM, 6: 03/23/2019 03:48AM, 7: 03/22/2019 11:17PM, 8: 03/24/2019 11:17PM	0	0
99	03/20/2019 02:38PM	1: 03/21/2019 12:38AM, 2: 04/26/2019 07:46PM 3: 04/27/2019 09:27PM, 4: 04/28/2019 05:12AM 5: 03/21/2019 02:50AM, 6: 04/07/2019 10:54AM 7: 04/08/2019 10:54AM, 8: 04/08/2019 10:57AM	0	0
100	03/20/2019 12:31PM	1: 03/20/2019 08:50PM, 2: 03/20/2019 08:44PM 3: 03/20/2019 09:22PM, 4: 03/20/2019 10:44PM 5: 03/20/2019 10:44PM, 6: 03/22/2019 10:12AM 7: 03/24/2019 06:18PM, 8: 03/24/2019 09:18PM	0	03/22/2019 01:14PM
Total		776	24	32

Table A1: initial dataset

Appendix B. Additional data set

Posts		Collected Netflix comments eligible for sample	Extra comments
#	Date of posting		
1	05/03/2019 12pm	0	0
2	05/03/2019 8:58pm	0	0
3	05/02/2019 2:58pm	0	0
4	05/02/2019 12:11pm	0	0
5	05/02/2019 9:01am	0	0
6	05/01/2019 2:59pm	1: 05/02/2019 12:37AM, 2: 05/02/2019 12:29AM 3: 05/02/2019 12:26AM, 4: 05/02/2019 12:29AM	0
7	05/01/2019 12pm	1: 05/01/2019 10:35PM, 2: 05/01/2019 10:35PM 3: 05/01/2019 09:07PM, 4: 05/01/2019 10:37PM	1: 05/01/2019 10:35PM
8	05/01/2019 10am	0	0
9	05/01/2019 7am	0	0
10	04/30/2019 2:57pm	0	0
11	04/30/2019 11:19am	0	0
12	04/30/2019 08:00am	0	0
13	04/29/2019 3:24pm	0	0
14	04/29/2019 10:59am	1: 04/29/2019 8:13PM	0
15	04/29/2019 08:02am	0	0
16	04/26/2019 3:57pm	0	1: 04/27/2019 01:07AM
17	04/26/2019 12:57pm	0	0
18	04/26/2019 12pm	1: 26/04/2019 11:58PM	1: 27/04/2019 12:00AM 2: 27/04/2019 12:01AM
19	04/26/2019 10am	0	0
20	04/25/2019 1:59pm	1: 26/04/2019 12:07AM	0
21	04/25/2019 10:00am	1: 04/25/2019 07:12PM, 2: 04/25/2019 07:14PM 3: 04/25/2019 07:02PM, 4: 04/25/2019 09:38PM	1: 04/25/2019 07:02PM
22	04/25/2019 07:04am	0	0
23	04/24/2019 04:15pm	0	0
24	04/24/2019 12:06pm	0	0
25	04/24/2019 09:01am	1: 04/24/2019 06:06PM, 2: 04/24/2019 07:07PM 3: 04/24/2019 06:57PM, 4: 04/24/2019 06:56PM 5: 04/24/2019 07:14PM, 6: 04/24/2019 6:56PM	0
26	04/24/2019 7:16am	0	0
27	04/23/2019 1:59pm	1: 04/23/2019 11:43PM, 2: 04/24/2019 11:44PM	0
28	04/23/2019 12:20pm	0	0
29	04/23/2019 08:41am	0	0
30	04/22/2019 12:00pm	0	0
31	04/22/2019 09:00am	0	0
32	04/22/2019 07:06am	1: 04/22/2019 05:34PM	0
33	04/19/2019 7:59am	0	0
34	04/18/2019 3:29pm	1: 04/19/2019 12:52AM, 2: 04/19/2019 12:52AM	0
Total		26	6

Table B1: additional dataset

Appendix C. Axial coding

Group	Codes	Illustrative quote
Positive fan sentiments	Fans complimenting cast of streaming title	“Very great actors in the movie”
	Fans complimenting streaming title	“Best show on Netflix!”
	Fans expressing excitement over new content	“I can’t wait this is going to be awesome”
	Fan complimenting Netflix and Netflix services	“Netflix did a amazing job!”
	Brand defenders	“Clearly wasn’t up to Netflix, it just didn’t have the numbers it needed.”
Negative fan sentiments	Complaints about show cancellation	“You’ll just cancel it after a few seasons”
	Complaints about current Netflix content	“Keep adding pleb trash like this”
	Complaints about Netflix price raises	“Outrageous price increase”
Disloyalty within the community	Threatening to cancel subscription	“Time to shop around I guess”
	Notifying of subscription cancellation	“Cancelled Netflix”
	Leaving Netflix for competitor	“I guess I’ll have to give Hulu a chance”
	Brand saboteurs	“You should cancel your Netflix”
Fan feedback	Fans demanding: bring this title back	“I want it back bring it back”
	Fans using content of post to mention other streaming title	“That’s great. Now bring back Santa Clarita Diet”
	Fan questions unanswered	“Is this short film or new full length feature?”
	Fans feeling unheard	“Without consideration for your viewers”
	Netflix using fan feedback in posts	“You got <i>Lucifer</i> to the promised land!”
Community interactions	Fans arguing with peer fans	“You are really bothered by this huh”
	Fans personally attacking peer fans	“You have no weewee. You’re welcome”
	Fans: ‘we’, ‘us’, ‘our’	“You broke our hearts”
	Fans sharing personal details with Netflix	“The relationship hits close to home”

Informational content	Netflix discussing ethnicity and representation in posts Netflix mentioning (previous works of) involved cast in post Netflix providing background info on creative processes and projects	Clip of Beyoncé addressing representation “She has one of the most viewed TED talks of all time.” “The mission of the film is...”
Missing information	Either title or (expected) streaming date not mentioned in Netflix post Netflix adding missing data in separate comment underneath post Netflix replying to fan to provide missing data Fans complaining about missing information in post	Either title or (expected) streaming date not mentioned in Netflix post “The silence premieres April 10” “it’s called SOMEONE GREAT” “Maybe throw that on the initial post next time”
Humanizing the Netflix brand	Fans deeming Netflix singular, human-like Netflix deeming Netflix singular, human-like Netflix being relatable as peer Netflix expressing personal feelings and opinions Netflix making jokes	“I know you would make lots of people happy” “literally on the edge of my seat” “we all do man we all do” “cuts me to my core” “Laughing really hard at these robots trying to figure out a cat”
Dehumanizing the Netflix brand	Fans deeming Netflix as plural, objectifying Netflix deeming Netflix as plural, not human-like, objectifying	“Y’all produce nearly exclusively Igntqi and feminism shows.” “we didn’t”

Table C1: axial coding including illustrative quotes