

**Instagram as a mirror of brand identities:**

A qualitative analysis of Netflix communication strategy on Instagram in the United States

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## ABSTRACT

The growing influence of social media platforms in the strategic communication of businesses is an observable trend. The opportunities that social networking sites provide spread through factors such as ease of viral reach, efficiency in terms of costs and chance for reaching niche audiences. Social media marketing along with brands' presence online offer both companies and consumers an environment where, on one side, the brand can manifest its identity and, on the other, the consumer can engage with the brand in an informal setting, without feeling bombarded with targeted promotional content. Even though certain businesses use social media platforms to solely showcase their products or services, it becomes apparent that there are other alternatives to this strategy that result in higher engagement levels and more loyal and enthusiastic brand community base. Instagram is a distinctive social media platform as its features are mainly focused on visual communication. This allows brands to create a gallery-like experience but also create a strategy that takes into consideration the perks of the platform and how to use them to engage users. As an on-demand streaming service provider, Netflix sells visual content. Instagram turns out to be a convenient place for the company to promote itself.

This research explores the Netflix' use of the Instagram platform on their US account in search of the types of content Netflix publishes and what kind of brand identity it presents. This project is based on a qualitative content analysis of 170 Instagram posts gathered from the Netflix US account. Within the theoretical framework, concepts such as social media marketing, band engagement, brand community building, brand loyalty and brand identity are described and incorporated in analyzing the company's marketing efforts online. This study established that Netflix combines the visualization platform's ability to display its brand identity and build a brand community but through using distinctive humorous brand voice, representation of a positive and light attitude, expression of witty opinions and emotions. The findings indicate that the advertised content is mainly focused on shows streaming on Netflix, but strong attention is also paid to the cast of Netflix Originals.

This study is scientifically relevant as it acquires understanding of how specific features of Instagram are used to establish brand communities through published content. The project simultaneously contributes to gaining academic knowledge about a media innovator in the digital age, Netflix, and the use of social media marketing on a rapidly growing platform such as Instagram. Furthermore, this research is socially relevant as it offers an external perspective of Netflix communication strategy which can serve the company itself, but also other brands interested in the implementation of Instagram in their marketing.

**KEYWORDS:** *NETFLIX, INSTAGRAM, ENGAGEMENT, BRAND IDENTITY, QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS*

## **Preface**

I hereby express my enormous gratitude to my supervisor, Dr. Deborah Castro Mariño, who has been a constant inspiration and guidance throughout this journey. This experience and the final result would not have been the same without her valuable suggestions and support.

I am deeply grateful to my parents who were there for me during every step of the way - supporting, loving, and never doubting my achievements and the path I chose to follow. Furthermore, I want to thank my little brother for always bringing happiness and optimism to my days.

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## 1. Introduction

Brands' social media activity can serve as a mirror that reflects the brand's identity and through which the brand's voice echoes. Social media marketing is a phenomenon with a growing significance. Social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram provide brands with a communication channel through which they can spread their ideas to broader audiences and simultaneously interact with them (Bright, Margetts, Hale, & Yasseri, 2014). This alternative to traditional advertising (commercials, ads across radio, newspapers, billboards, etc.) is being explored and more commonly used by businesses. Consequently, social media data can serve as a source of insights within studies connected to defining brand identities and their communication approach based on the content they share.

### 1.1 Instagram and Netflix

Social networking sites (SNSs) are an omnipresent global phenomenon with an everyday role in people's lives. According to statistics as of March 2016, Instagram had 400 million active users (Statista, 2015; Patruti-Baltes, 2016). However, the latest statistic as of April 2019 indicate that Instagram has a billion active users (Global social media ranking 2019 | Statistic, 2019). This immense growth in numbers indicates the huge expansion of the platform's influence and its potential to be used as a tool for viral marketing communication strategies.

93% of the most well-established companies such as Apple Inc., Google LLC, and Nike Inc. have integrated Instagram in their marketing mix (Patruti-Baltes, 2016). Furthermore, 71% of well-known brands (e.g. Channel, Starbucks, and H&M) already use Instagram as a marketing channel, and predictions indicate that Instagram usage as a tool in the field of business will continue growing (Patruti-Baltes, 2016). Instagram helps to "capture the attention of the market target with an interest in the offered product or service" (Stevens, 2013 in Patruti-Baltes, 2016, p. 323). Netflix is among the leading providers of video on demand streaming services globally, and represents a company with active social media presence. This research explores how Netflix uses Instagram to reach and engage Instagram users.

According to data from Spring 2017, Netflix' availability reaches 190 countries and has 100 million subscribers; it should be taken in consideration that those users most probably come from countries that are financially stable and have electricity and Internet connection (Jenner, 2018). Even though Netflix transnational reach is expanding, the highest percentage of subscribers is located in the US (less than 50%) (Jenner, 2018). This suggests that their communication strategy applied across the

United States provides the richest amount of data and can be used as a signifier of their overall marketing approach. Latest data shows that in the first quarter of 2019, Netflix has a total of 148.86 million subscribers (Number of Netflix paying streaming subscribers, 2019), 60.23 million of which come from the US (Quarterly Netflix paid subscribers count in the U.S. 2019 | Statistic, 2019). This indicates that Netflix continues growing with rapid speed and maintains the tendency of having its highest consumer base within the territory of the United States. The increase of number of users further reflects the growing power of this media-service provider, additionally turning it into an interesting and relevant topic of research. Furthermore, the latest statistics as of April 2019 show that the United States is a leading country in number of Instagram users, 110 million (Countries with most Instagram users 2019 | Statistic, 2019).

The decision for this study to focus on the US market resides in the aforementioned reasons, namely the highest amount of Netflix subscribers living in the US and highest amount of Instagram users also ranked in the United States. Moreover, Netflix' active social media presence and its "extensive use of original messages and social media conventions such as hashtags, emoticons and gifs" (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019, p. 127) give the research the needed database to conduct the study and explore a company usually referred to for its successful boost of audience engagement achieved through viral social media marketing (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018).

Social media has become a constant factor in the communication strategies of both consumers and corporations (Patruti-Baltes, 2016). Patruti-Baltes's study explores how brands are digitalizing their business communication with consumers and how they are incorporating storytelling techniques in order to share their story in a more engaging and dynamic fashion. The author discusses how platforms such as Instagram provide an opportunity for visualization of messages which success rates override the traditional communication approaches. This work further mentions the multiple advantages of this strategy: attracting and engaging current and potential customers, establishing long-term relations and brand communities, reaching new markets and sustaining a constant interaction with users. The study describes the simplicity and cost-effective price of digital communication as a tempting and seemingly very rewarding communication strategy.

Despite the large body of academic literature on the usage of social media platforms for branding purposes, little is known about Netflix' social media strategy and, in particular, the usage of Instagram. This study aims to fill that gap. Instagram consists mainly of content in the form of videos and images, allowing the company to create and share online promotional videos, entertaining memes,

short interviews with actors as well as brief messages. Furthermore, this platform provides the company with a channel to share content created specifically for Instagram users as well as achieve digital visual engagement; a type of engagement that positively affects the consumer's intention to purchase (Valentini, Romenti, Murtarelli, & Pizzetti, 2018), in the case of Netflix, a subscription. As of now, May 31, 2019, Netflix US Instagram page has 14.9 million followers, making it the biggest existing Instagram account of Netflix (Netflix)<sup>1</sup>.

## **1.2 Research Problem**

This study finds inspiration, on the one hand, the growing penetration of Instagram in consumers' social life, and, on the other hand, the growing usage of Instagram as a business tool. Considering the growing influence of Instagram and its focus on visual content it is intriguing to research the ways in which television broadcasters or on-demand streaming platforms can advertise their content (as taken in consideration its visual nature). The social media platform's potential deserves research attention due to the positive effect it could bring not only in terms of monetary gains and cost-efficient marketing techniques, but also due to its ability to nourish the relationship between brand and audience. Netflix turns out to be a captivating case due to the magnitude of its activities and its established use of social media to promote its content. Furthermore, its brand identity and humorous tendencies represented across its Instagram channels (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019) provide an intriguing case to observe while gaining valuable information for the industry and the possibilities social networking sites hold. This leads to the following main research question (RQ) and three sub-research questions (Sub-RQ):

RQ: How is Netflix US using the Instagram platform as a branding tool?

Sub-RQ1: What type of content does Netflix US share on Instagram?

Sub-RQ2: For what promotional purposes is Netflix US using Instagram?

Sub-RQ3: What is Netflix US brand identity on the Instagram platform?

Methodologically, a qualitative content analysis of 170 Instagram posts is performed. The qualitative content analysis approach has been often used in similar studies interested for example in the analysis of the role of Instagram in the promotional mix of electronic cigarettes (Laestadius, Wahl, & Cho, 2016).

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<sup>1</sup> Information found on Netflix US Instagram account, checked on May 31, 2019.

### **1.3 Scientific Relevance**

This study is scientifically relevant as it not only sheds light on one of the most popular entertainment companies of the current digital age, but also tackles a specific aspect that has been under-researched. As it was mentioned previously, little is known about Netflix' social media strategy on Instagram.

Social media marketing is a topic that has previously been a center of analysis and aspects such as brand identity, brand engagement and brand loyalty have been observed thoroughly. Existing research has focused on the connection between big companies and their use of Twitter (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010). A link between television ratings and active Twitter use by the broadcasters has also been explored (Wang, 2016). In particular, when talking about Netflix, previous research has tackled its communication strategy and agendas achieved through online presence on Twitter in variety of countries considering the success of viral marketing in terms of specific shows streaming on the on-demand service platform (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018). The research studies focused on determining engagement levels and the specific role of Twitter in marketing campaigns. However, little attention has been paid to Instagram and Netflix' efforts to establish brand communities on the platform as well as how the specific features that this social networking site possesses help the streaming platform thrive through the content it publishes.

This project seeks an answer to a question that contributes to the better understanding of how Instagram can be used as a tool to present the brand and attract audiences. The study focuses on analyzing the type of content published by Netflix through qualitative content analysis but further pays attention to the responsiveness of users based on their likes and comments to different contents. Thus, academic knowledge is gained both in terms of an innovator in the digital age such is Netflix and social media marketing application, and users' response to that phenomenon. To conclude, this study adds to the overall understanding of social media marketing, more specifically, on the Instagram platform and fills the existing gap with insights on the Netflix US communication strategy on the platform, which represents a relatively newly introduced field of study.

### **1.4 Social Relevance**

Additionally, this project is socially relevant since the obtained results provide an external perspective on Netflix' online activity on Instagram. This knowledge can be of interest both for Netflix itself, but also for other companies considering incorporation of Instagram in their social media strategy or reconsider the way they are currently utilizing the platform.

Identifying for what promotional purposes Netflix US uses the Instagram platform can be useful for businesses in general. Acknowledging the influence of social media and in particular social networking site with such strong focus on visualization such as Instagram, provides brands with a space for depicting their brand identity and engaging audiences through targeted messages containing opinions and beliefs that represent the core values of a brand. This is a potential way of users to get involved in the existence of the brand and be exposed to certain meanings a brand wants to convey. By manifesting those values and using Instagram as a “gallery” of the principles and ideals certain brand carries, users are invited in the brand’s “world” and could ultimately become part of the brand’s community. The feeling of belonging then raises the levels of brand loyalty towards the brand (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). This research contributes to the better understanding of how an established giant like Netflix uses the power of social media presence to reach and attract audiences and provide them with better opportunity for communication and experience with the brand (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). That practical knowledge can be valuable both for businesses and consumers. On the one hand, it offers guidelines for companies that want to develop their communication strategy in a cost-efficient way in order to achieve greater profitability. On the other hand, it makes consumers aware of the meaning behind the content they are consuming and its purpose.

As mentioned before social media can be characterized with the extensive role it plays in users' life on everyday basis (Treem, Dailey, Pierce & Biffl, 2016). The knowledge this research provides about the successful rates of publishing certain types of content further carries social relevance as it partially represents the social impact a brand can have through its communication strategy. The concept of digital identity is relevant here as users create a certain image online that is defined by the things they engage with and respond to through liking, commenting, or simply lurking (Ding, 2017). Moreover, “social media is evolving as a platform for civic deliberation and a forum for the exchange of ideas”, which indicates that social networking sites such as Instagram turn into a place where brands meet consumers to exchange thoughts and beliefs (Treem, Dailey, Pierce & Biffl, 2016).

## **1.5 Thesis Outline**

This sub-section provides an outline of the conducted research. Chapter 2 consists of an overview of relevant for this study theory and previous research that this project is based on and inspired by. The chapter contains sections defining and explaining Social Media Marketing (SMM), the Instagram influence and its role in the communication strategies of businesses. Furthermore, topics such as brand engagement, brand community building and brand loyalty are tackled and their essence and

relevance to the research is described. Brand identity is one of the central concepts in this study, thus its meaning and application in terms of Netflix brand identity is explained in detail.

Chapter 3 focuses on the methodology behind this research. A thorough description of the research design and rationale behind choosing qualitative research method is provided. A section on sampling explains the chosen purposive method of gathering the dataset and the reason behind this choice. The operationalization of this study containing the main concepts used during the analysis is further included. The process of data collection and data analysis are described and relevant choices concerning the different steps of the analysis are justified. Additionally, the chapter contains sections on ethical considerations and the overall credibility and reflexivity of the project.

The following part, Chapter 4, reflects on the result of the conducted analyses by describing and relating the extracted codes to relevant segments of the theoretical framework. The main categories that were formed focused on the advertised Netflix content on Instagram, types of content published on Instagram, purpose of content, overall emotion communicated through the post, and additional elements part of the message. Each category contributed to answering of the research question or the sub-questions.

Lastly, Chapter 5 focuses on a discussion of the gained insights and answers to the posed research question and three sub-questions. Additionally, it provides the reached overall conclusion of this study along with its limitations and possibilities for future research in the context of social media marketing and on-demand service platforms such as Netflix.

## 2. Theory and previous research

To explore Netflix' communication strategy on Instagram in the US market, the study is built upon theories that define the usage of social media as a marketing tool to connect with audiences. Particularly, this project is based on theory related to brand identity, the need of consumer brand engagement through social media, and community building. The theoretical framework consists of literature on social media marketing, research on the Instagram platform, analysis of the concept of brand identity and in particular the brand image of Netflix, and an overview of brand engagement, brand community, and brand loyalty.

### 2.1 Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Social media platforms provide brands with a place to create a personal connection with consumers and build long-lasting relationships that form a brand community (Bacik, Fedorko, Nastisin, & Gavurova, 2018). These relationships are mainly built on a variety of emotions activated through certain content that brands publish online; and which represent triggers for audiences to act in a certain way (Bacik et al., 2018). Such experiences with the brands directly affect and build a certain brand image in the consumers' subconscious (Bacik et al., 2018).

Generally, brands develop integrated social media strategies that include different platforms. Web 2.0 (O'Reilly, 2007), "the second generation of Internet-based applications", has increased the levels of engagement with audiences, has stirred viral marketing, has expanded the reach to larger amount of audiences and creates a place for consumers to experience the brand identity and form an opinion as well as communicate that opinion with others (Thackeray, Neiger, Hanson, & McKenzie, 2008, p.338). Incorporating Web 2.0 applications such as Instagram in promotional plans are beneficial due to their efficiency in terms of low-cost and extended audience reach (Thackeray et al., 2008). The findings of a study on the Bollywood movie industry and the incorporation of social media in order to achieve visibility further discovered that it is integral for movie studios to include an integrated social media strategy that not only exists before and during the premiere but also after the initial release (Nanda, Pattnaik, & Lu, 2018). In the case of Netflix, the company publishes content on social media that presents star actors with short video announcements, brief interviews, etc. This may indicate Netflix' reliance and development of para-social relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956) with consumers with the intent of engaging them with those celebrity figures.

Netflix original messages can be found across different social media channels and their various forms (hashtags, emoticons, memes, gifs, etc.) play an important role for the brand (Fernández Gómez &

Martín Quevedo, 2018). In the Spanish context Netflix' use of social media platforms has been described as distinctive in comparison to other streaming platforms and television broadcasters because social media is “heavily” present in their marketing strategy and has the “ability to mount viral social media campaigns and boost audience engagement,” while television networks are still attempting to connect with consumers on those platforms (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018, p.128). Similar strategy was used when Netflix was promoting series such as *Orange is The New Black* across the US (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018). The marketing strategy implemented by Netflix differs from the traditional approach executed by others in this industry and represents an example of successful incorporation of social media in their marketing endeavors when entering the Spanish market in 2015.

In contrast to television broadcasters and other streaming platforms, in general Netflix provides subscribers with unlimited access to content that is free of advertisements, releases entire seasons at once and encourages binge-viewing, and incorporates Big Data analytics to create a personalized recommendation system based on algorithms. The company successfully communicates those messages through social media (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018). In the case of Spain, two facts make Netflix stand out – the use of Big Data to create personalized experience on the platform and the incorporation of social media networks in their communication strategy to boost engagement. Netflix social media efforts on the Twitter platform stand out due to the “extensive use of original messages and social media conventions such as hashtags, emoticons and gifs” (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018, p.127). The aforementioned research found that Netflix has managed to attract more users to like and retweet the on-demand platform’s posts. Focusing on the second factor, it is important to mention the visual aspect of social media and its effect on consumers as “still pictures and videos featured in newsfeeds stimulate viewer engagement” (Maciá & Santoja, 2015, p. 39; Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018, p.130). Analyzing such branding initiatives could provide businesses with insights on how to reach audiences through active social media presence. Since Netflix is escaping some traditional communication strategies such as ads on the platform, social media is an appealing and efficient way to engage audiences with the potential to reach millions of consumers. Netflix continues to use email and outside advertising<sup>2</sup>, however, SMM represents an important part of their marketing initiatives. Netflix is also being promoted through its partners in the face of national and regional operators. Such example is the partnership between Telefónica and Netflix in Spain<sup>3</sup>. “Although Netflix places traditional advertisements in publications such as *Wired*, *The Atlantic* and *The New York Times*, it

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<sup>2</sup> Example of outside advertising connected with social media: <https://www.merca20.com/netflix-convierte-el-tweet-de-un-hater-en-su-mejor-publicidad-exterior/>

<sup>3</sup> Example of the partnership between Netflix and Telefónica: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6chNhnu3HV4>

also uses messages posted on Twitter and other social networking platforms to build expectation about live events and flesh out story lines before, during and after series are presented" (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018, p.130). Similar to its Twitter account and the average publishing of new content between two and five times a day (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018), Netflix US Instagram account seems to have analogous activity. This provides an opportunity for research to be conducted in terms of the distinctive features and users' behavior on this particular platform. Social networks provide the opportunity to engage audiences and turn certain published content into a viral phenomenon (Ytreberg, 2009; Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018). However, since every social media platform carries different features and satisfy different needs, specific attention should be paid to each individually. This would be discussed specifically about the Instagram platform in the following section.

## **2.2 Instagram**

Launched in 2010, Instagram has been incorporated in the communication strategies of brands as a platform to present their brand personalities in a creative and expressive way (Ginsberg, 2015). Ginsberg's (2015) research is based on leading food brands such as McDonald's, Ben & Jerry's, etc. and their promotional activity of Instagram. The researcher discusses that food brands are among the largest practitioners of Instagram marketing due to its effectiveness when reaching audiences and low cost when communicating their brand tactics. In 2013, only three years after the launch of Instagram, brand engagement was estimated to have grown 3.5 times due to the extensive increase in brands using this platform (Ginsberg, 2015). The research concludes that Instagram is seen as a direct path to consumers' lives, hobbies, values, and identities. Moreover, through that knowledge brands are improving their targeting tactics and showcasing their own brand identities in a strategic way with the means of visual storytelling.

According to the previously mentioned research on the effects of Instagram when shaping the identities of top food brands, the platform gives an opportunity for brands to vividly show the added value to their consumer's life if they choose their brand. Ginsberg (2015) mentions Bui's statement about the giant food industry and its presence on Instagram; the published content should be engaging and entertaining, not solely focused on the offered product but rather including diverse visual materials. In 2015 it was established that McDonald's was the brand with highest popularity on Instagram with vastly diverse content, 13% of which focused on news from around the world about variety of current hot topics and events (Ginsberg, 2015). This variety of posts indicates that consumers do not want to be flooded with photos of the product but are looking for engagement based on content not solely related to the product or service that is being offered (Ginsberg, 2015). Further findings of the study discuss that

the presence of social-integrative aspects attract audiences much more successfully than simple promotional materials. That is observable in Netflix' strategy as their US Instagram account does not solely rely on posting trailers and promotional materials about their upcoming programs, but instead engages the audience with personal videos of starring actors, brief Q&A sessions, humorous photos about their shows, etc.

SMM provides brands with the opportunity to reach niche audiences due to the ability for businesses to share specifically targeted audiovisual content (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019). As observed prior, there is a vast amount of research done on the integration of Twitter in the communication strategy of Netflix and other television broadcasters and streaming platforms to create buzz around upcoming productions. However, little is known about how the Instagram platform can contribute to promotional initiatives. For example, Wang (2016) investigates the growing use of social media networks for the marketing promotion of television productions (Wang, 2016). Wang's findings, based on content analysis of Twitter posts of US television networks, indicate a strong connection between active Twitter presence and high television ratings (Wang, 2016). Even though Instagram's influence as a platform for brand exposure is growing (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019), little academic attention has been paid to how the platform could be used to contribute to promotional initiatives. Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, and Segado-Boj's research paper observes the employment of Instagram by HBO and Netflix in Spain and the United States. Even though, Twitter is known as the go-to platform for television networks in terms of fostering engagement, Instagram is building its way through the noise as a social media platform through which niche audiences can be reached and involved in the brand's community (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019). However, it is important to understand the motives and needs of individuals using Instagram, in order to establish how Netflix is using those factors in its communication strategy on the platform (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015).

Instagram can be characterized with its strong emphasis on visual content (photos and relatively short videos) as it does not provide the chance to publish simple text without a visual element (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). The findings of a study on the motivation of consumers to use this particular social media platform indicate five main reasons for users to be on Instagram: "social interaction, archiving, self-expression, escapism, and peeking" (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015, p.552). As the fastest developing social media platform, Instagram deserves research attention, especially since findings show the users' anticipation to find people with similar interests and connect is satiated through the use of

this social network (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015). Thus, in terms of communication strategy, Instagram can play an important role in community building.

Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez and Segado-Boj (2019) research examines the posted content that serves as online representation of Netflix and HBO and analyzes their success in achieving engagement. The study showed that strategies vary among the observed platforms in different markets. It was further revealed that more than a third of Netflix US' content is related to promoting their programs, followed by informational posts (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019). Promotional posts focused on content related to different movies and series that could be found on the platform, while the informational posts contained information on the variety of features that Netflix provides such as the option to download films and watch them offline. 86.5% of the promotional posts presented Netflix' own original programs. Most cases represented leading series such as *Stranger Things* for the Netflix platform. An overarching phenomenon, however, was the use of promotional content as mentioned earlier. By observing the established US market and the new Spanish market, the authors discovered a difference in the periods of time before an announcement such as a sneak peek or a trailer (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019). In the case of Netflix in terms of the American market, announcements about new programs were made with shorter notice than in Spain. Most of the published content on Netflix US featured celebrities that played different characters in their original series.

Furthermore, Netflix US communication strategy was found to heavily use positive tone and humor in their Instagram presence, which strongly affected the engagement levels of the audience. Findings showed that content that was not obviously promotional but contained emotional aspect and humorous tone fostered more engagement. Netflix creates a brand image that overall conveys light and positive emotions (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019). Comparing the success rates of engagement, Netflix seems to attract more consumers even though HBO's Instagram accounts in both markets were more active in terms of the number of posts published in comparison to Netflix (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019). Consequently, Netflix communication strategy on Instagram particularly for their biggest market, US, represents an interesting phenomenon to be observed in order to gain insights that could be further implemented by other businesses.

Brands consistently begin to integrate online presence in their communication strategy in order to create a certain brand image and communicate it to consumers in hope for them to engage (Greer & Ferguson, 2017). A study on businesses' self-presentation achieved through the Instagram platform revealed the importance of the type of content published and the outcomes. Currently, a new trend

indicates young audiences' preference to use Instagram instead of Facebook due to fact that they desire visual content that does not represent ads but depicts the philosophy behind a certain brand (Greer & Ferguson, 2017). What younger audiences are looking for are new trends to follow and a community that resembles their self-identification (Greer & Ferguson, 2017), which the Instagram platform seems to successfully provide judging by its increasing number of users and businesses that implement it in their marketing promotion (Greer & Ferguson, 2017). However, more efforts should be put into understanding the effect certain content and strategy has on consumers when published on particular social media platform and the interaction with the brands' content that follows. For that reason, this research project examines the posted content on Instagram in order to determine the kind of content Netflix publishes and how does that affect its brand identity. Moreover, as predictions about the future suggest that online advertising, in particular SMM will surpass broadcast television advertising (Wayne, 2018), the following chapter provides an overview of brand engagement, brand community building and brand loyalty achieved through active social media presence. Businesses expect to reach wider audiences through Internet advertising and this shift further supports the increasing importance of social media presence.

## **2.3 Brand Engagement, Brand Community Building, Brand Loyalty**

### **2.3.1 Brand Engagement**

In terms of brand engagement achieved through social media, the discussion focuses on the consumer's interactive experience with the brand across different platforms. To bring a brand closer to the consumer, online engagement takes a central role (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Consumer brand engagement consists of three dimensions "cognitive processing, affection, and activation" (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014, p.149). Interacting with branded content online results in a change of consumers' self-concept: sense of relevance, understanding, and activeness (Hollebeek et al., 2014). The interactional stage is followed by affection known as a positive association with the brand (Hollebeek et al., 2014). This project focuses on the first stage of audience engagement by observing the responsiveness of Instagram users; number of likes and number of comments on different types of content published by Netflix. However, interaction in this case is defined by active participation: liking or commenting. Consumer brand engagement can be defined with three aspects: cognitive, emotional and behavioral (Hollebeek et al., 2014). Different content stimulates different aspects or a combination of them. Consequently, it could be concluded that business value can be increased through engaging social

media presence and community building. This occurs due to the positive correlation between engaging consumers through social media networks and building brand communities (Hollebeek et al., 2014).

The result of engaging consumers and forming brand communities that rely on trust and consumer satisfaction is further observed in the context of Netflix and their brand community on Instagram built through a specific type of content. To create a community, companies invest in building relationships with brand advocates who later contribute to the promotion of the business with their activity across online platforms, word of mouth, etc. (Culnan, McHugh, & Zubillaga, 2010). To achieve that, organizations engage consumers, build a sense of loyalty and belonging and seek a way to keep the consumer connected to the brand (Culnan et al., 2010). A link between engagement, trust and community building exists. Social media networks create an environment for consumers to actively participate in brands' existence (Habibi, Laroche, & Richard, 2014).

Social media platforms allow users to experience "multiple community memberships" which establishes a relationship between the consumer and the product or the brand (Laroche, Habibi, & Richard, 2013, p. 159). Previous studies on brands such as Starbucks, Nike, Adidas, suggest that ensuring the establishment of such community increases the cases of booming numbers of subscriptions as the chance of a consumer buying a subscription rises when that individual follows the brand across its social media platforms (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016). 73% of participants in a study on brand interactions responded that they follow brand pages across social media platforms (Nisar & Whitehead, 2016). The data was gathered from retail services users by a global research company. Netflix' strategy is similar – fostering relationships with consumers by online interaction and participation. Social media is a tool to achieve the organizations' goal of bringing the elements which define a brand community closer together, namely "brand, product, customer, company" (Laroche et al., 2013, p. 77).

### **2.3.2 Brand Community Building**

Social media platforms vary in their brand community related outcomes on users, such as engagement, commitment, intent to purchase and identification (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). Business actively use social networking sites to "to increase brand exposure, attract website traffic, develop loyal fans, and gain marketplace intelligence" (Stelzner, 2015; Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017, p.412). On the other hand, consumers become more involved with businesses' social media activity in search of information about products/services and brands (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). This provides brands with multiple touchpoints to engage users and introduce them to the brand in question (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). Phua, Jin and Kim's (2017) study examines the motivations and brand communication effects of different social networking sites (SNSs) (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat) on users' preference from where

to obtain brands' related information. The researchers base their project on the uses and gratification theory that sees the consumer not as a passive recipient but as an active figure (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). Even though all these platforms provide businesses with the opportunity to interact, each differs in its interactive features. This raises the question of what advantages each SNS brings. In terms of SNSs, two tendencies can be observed. First, consumers use multiple social media platforms as they satisfy different needs and possess different features (Lenhart, Duggan, Perrin, Stepler, Rainie, & Parker, 2015). Second, such platforms are seen both as a tool for communication and gathering information, which satisfies informational, social, and emotional needs.

Muniz and O'Guinn (2001) define brand community as "a specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relationships among admirers of a brand" (Muniz & O'Guinn, 2001, p. 412). Such experiences allow consumers to identify with other individuals with similar interest that align with certain brand identity. Social media platforms provide brands with the opportunity to present their brand image through specifically crafted message and using a particular brand voice. Consumers' identification with a brand and their conformity with a brand community on a social media platform increase the level of brand trust and persuasiveness of brand messages, possibility for consumers to share brand-related information to others and demonstrate higher levels of brand loyalty (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017).

Overall, Phua, Jin and Kim's research established that from the participants' responses in the questionnaire, the highest number (38.0%) stated that the most commonly used platform to follow brands was Instagram (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). Furthermore, the individuals who used the Instagram platform the most showed highest levels of affection towards the brands they were following. Thus, Instagram contributes to individuals' need to show gratification, care, encouragement, etc. (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). Those individuals further revealed considerably higher rates of sociability (showing affection, sharing opinions, displaying commitment and engagement, etc.) in comparison to other platforms (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017). Those high levels of brand community engagement and loyalty indicate that Instagram is supposedly an efficient and convenient way for brands to showcase their brand, reach to consumers and provoke an emotional response in a language spoken by visual content.

Social media, as a tool to share and participate, sparks academic interest due to the central role of audience engagement in media studies (Moe, Poell, & van Dijck, 2016). The rapid development of social media platforms requires the reevaluation of audience engagement and further gathering of insights on how to incorporate it in communication strategies. This chapter discussed the significance of online presence and the uses of social media platforms such as Instagram to successfully reveal brand

identity. Netflix incorporates polls to stimulate response and it integrates popular culture within its Instagram posts mixing it with elements from its shows. By introducing memes and humor through its brand representation, Netflix seems to build an appealing brand identity. All those choices indicate Netflix' good understanding of what attracts Instagram users and what is the essence of the platform and turn it into a relevant topic of research.

### **2.3.3 Brand Loyalty**

The concept of brand loyalty takes central position within marketing initiatives (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). Many strategies have been implemented with the goal of establishing brand loyalty: with the most recent one being social media marketing (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). Brand loyalty can be defined as “the final dimension of consumer brand resonance symbolizing the consumer’s ultimate relationship and level of identification with a brand (Keller, 2008; Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). This concept gains its importance since brands develop a positive and substantial role in consumers’ minds, they gain a loyal audience for which the brand is alluring and unique (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012) As a result, revenues and market share increase. SMM is defined as the process that empowers individuals to promote their websites, products, or services through online social channels and tap into a much larger community that may not have been available via traditional channels (Weinberg, 2009; Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012).

Erdoğan and Cicek’s (2012) study on SMM impact on brand loyalty indicates that SMM is a non-traditional way of establishing better communication with audiences with less resources and time investment that achieve higher levels of brand loyalty (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). Social media presence further predisposes audiences to become a part of online communities consisting of brand enthusiasts (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). According to the findings of the same study, it is not only brand loyalty that SMM boosts – it additionally expands brand awareness, recognition and recalling of certain brand (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). The essence of SMM is different than traditional marketing; here instead of attempting to sell its product, the brand tries to make a connection with the audience (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). Establishing those connections requires a strategy (Erdoğan & Cicek, 2012). As mentioned before Netflix is thriving through its social media presence, which poses the question what their strategy behind it is.

The next section focuses on the research design of this project. It consists of a description of the research method along with justification of why it was chosen. The processes of data collection and data analysis are discussed in detail.

## 2.4 Brand Identity

“Brands are intangible assets that can build shareholder value” (Nandan, 2005). This added value is called brand equity and it provides the company with resistance to competition, opportunity for safer launching of new products or services, etc.; brand identity contributes to the establishment of brand equity (Nandan, 2005). Brand identity is a concept that is related to the creation of a product or service that possesses unique features and can be distinguished from other products or services already existing on the market (Nandan, 2005). It is considered an essential element of a strong brand (Nandan, 2005). The brand identity of a company represents how the company attempts to identify itself. “A company will often use branding strategy as a means of communicating its identity and value to consumers and other stakeholders” (Nandan, 2005, p. 265) It is a means through which the company communicates its individuality to the publics of its interest.

### 2.4.1 Netflix Brand Identity

The few existing academic works focused on Netflix branding strategy suggest that the provider of video on demand streaming service has established an image of diversity in terms of representing different segments of society based on culture, sexuality, gender, etc. and a source of original content. Wayne (2018) explains that Netflix has built their brand name through the Netflix Originals. The branding strategies of subscription video on demand portals vary. Netflix presents itself as an original content provider. However, it is currently integrating portal-as-brand strategy (Wayne, 2018). A part of this tactic is the Netflix’ tendency to “blur the lines between its original programming and other content” by buying the rights and distributing programs internationally without acknowledging their creators (Wayne, 2018, p.726).

Another related element that takes a central role in Netflix’ brand identity is the ability of users to choose and be in control of what and when they watch. Even though Netflix defines its brand through that open choice, the platform’s algorithms aim at nullifying consumer’s alternatives (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018). Those systems prevent users from fully defining everything by themselves and the autonomy of completely free choice. The platform aims at removing the uncertainty and indecision as factors (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018). Thus, Netflix model is built on the continuous data monitoring procedures (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018).

Netflix positions itself as a provider of ‘quality’ TV that is worthy of binge-watching (Jenner, 2018). Similar to HBO’s brand identity as a provider of quality television ever since the second part of 1990s, Netflix also relies on its programming to market itself (Jenner, 2018). As a trend setter and a main contributor to turning the practice of binge-watching into a mainstream occurrence, this remains a

central message in their marketing efforts (Jenner, 2018). In general, Netflix brands itself through binge-watching and through its individualized programming. The brand image of Netflix depicts the platform as an innovator and disruptor free from the rules of the traditional television industry (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018). The role of binge-watching in Netflix marketing of original content in the end of 2012 and beginning of 2013 with the launch of the series *House of Cards* indicates the unconventional approach Netflix has to its business and marketing strategies (Jenner, 2018). It is important to mention the series as they were a main element in the introduction of users to the Netflix' brand (Jenner, 2018). Jenner (2018) describes Kevin Spacey's contribution and important role in the marketing initiatives of *House of Cards* and what Netflix tried to represent and teach consumers how to use Netflix. Spacey promoted binge-watching as the highest form of control viewers possess and further describing the show as 'quality' television, by also referring to his own background as an actor in films such as *The Usual Suspects*, *American Beauty*, *Se7en*, etc., which indicated his performance in quality and repeatedly re-watched productions, giving credibility to the launch of the new show.

The years after 2013 can be characterized with Netflix focus on using its in-house productions for branding and promoting its platform (Jenner, 2018). By establishing the binge model, Netflix created the mainstream wave of 'binging', even though not its inventor, Netflix managed to successfully build its marketing strategy on the phenomenon (Jenner, 2018). Netflix bravely made a reference to rereading good novels and implied that binge viewing along with the quality of Netflix' productions were a comparable phenomenon (Jenner, 2018). Even though, Netflix built its brand on the parallel between the platform and quality television it is still hard to define Netflix' brand image as consistent (Jenner, 2018). Due to the constant expansion of Netflix, it is almost constantly adapting its marketing strategy. Currently, the platform takes a step further and started focusing on promoting its diverse content: "The extension of its in-house productions led to a re-definition of its brand from delivering 'quality' television for the purpose of binge-watching to emphasizing diversity" (Jenner, 2018, p.171). Netflix recognizes the importance of building a strong network brand identity (Wayne, 2018) and "what emerges in the current cultural moment is an emphasis on diversity to build a transnational brand" (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018, p.140). Netflix accomplishes that in many different aspects - through algorithms the platform creates personalized versions for each consumer, producing linguistically and ethnically diverse productions due to its transnational growth and need to appeal to those audiences.

In conclusion, Netflix' brand relies on quality and inclusion. The platform focuses its efforts on diversity and niche marketing as its transnational reach increases rapidly.

## 2.5 Conclusion

The research made on Netflix and its use of Twitter in Spain indicates that the platform is a successful tool to “connect with social media users in general and young people” (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018, p.133). Here, a distinction between traditional and social media audiences could be observed. A parallel could be made with the usage of the Instagram platform in the United States by Netflix as this research paper is interested in a similar phenomenon, namely the way certain social media communication strategy affects a particular audience. Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo’s (2018) findings indicate that Netflix is successfully incorporating social media networks in their marketing which distinguishes the platform from traditional broadcasters and other on-demand streaming services. Thus, this research paper observes particularly Instagram’s role in Netflix’ marketing strategy, specifically targeting the American audience.

The observed theoretical background indicates the potential the Instagram platform holds to further develop as a marketing tool for television broadcasters and on-demand platforms. With its rapid growth of users and their anticipation to connect with people with similar interests (Lee, Lee, Moon, & Sung, 2015), Instagram presents an opportunity for extensive community building. Furthermore, the platform’s visual nature, allows distributors of visual content such as Netflix to use the platform to showcase and engage users. The social networking site further provides Netflix with a place to communicate not only promotional content but the company’s brand identity with a positive and humorous brand voice conveying lightness and appreciation for quality (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019). However, as Netflix is constantly growing, its brand identity also evolves due to the need to adapt to the market. For that reason, Netflix appears to be an interesting case to research in terms of the social media aspect of its communication strategy as it provides insights both in terms of the use of social media platforms as a marketing tool but also the strategies that giants such as Netflix use to communicate their brand messages.

## 3. Methodology

This chapter describes the research method used in order for the main research question and sub-questions to be answered. The study focuses on Netflix’ communication strategy on Instagram for the US market and what is the brand identity Netflix presents on that social media platform. This research paper further establishes what types of published content generates consumers’ biggest approval. Section 3.1 observes the research design and the rationale behind this choice. Within this section: sub-section 3.1.1 delves into the definition and justification of using qualitative research

approach while sub-section 3.1.2 explains the reason behind using qualitative content analysis. The following section, 3.2 explains the process of sampling of Instagram posts and sub-section 3.2.1 describes the units of analysis that are going to be included. Continuing with section 3.3, which touches upon the operationalization of the research method and further investigates key steps of the data analysis. Section 3.4 describes the specific steps taken during the data collection and data analysis. The next section, 3.5, discusses the credibility, design and rationale of this research study. Lastly, section 3.6 explains the absence of ethical consideration.

### **3.1 Research Design and Rationale**

This section observes the research design and the rationale behind it. It discusses the essence of content analysis as a chosen method of research and explains its use. It further provides the reasoning behind the choice and a justification for the use of content analysis. This study answers the research question “For what promotional purposes is Netflix US using Instagram?” and the three sub-questions: 1) “What type of content does Netflix US share on Instagram?” 2) For what promotional purposes is Netflix US using Instagram? 3) “What is Netflix US brand identity on the Instagram platform?” through a qualitative research approach. The essence of this project suggests the use of qualitative approach, in particular by using qualitative content analysis. When applying qualitative research, the researchers interprets the available data and tries to make meaning of it. After posing the research question, the researcher interprets the data available on Instagram and establishes its meaning for the case of Netflix. Since the study explores qualitative aspects such as the types of content published on the Instagram platform and the brand identity Netflix builds there, this research method is an appropriate choice.

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

The selection of this research approach is explained by its useful application in terms of exploratory questions and the understanding of specific phenomena (Neuman, 2011). By using qualitative approach, the data is being filtered and further compared and connected to different aspects within the dataset (Neuman, 2011). Since this method consists of continuous comparison, analytic induction, and theoretical sensitivity it manages to follow the variations of certain phenomenon while using a specific theoretical direction (Boeije, 2010). The study is based on an observation of well-established media-service provider’ communication strategy on a fast-developing social networking site. Therefore, the research question is relevant and worthy of exploration. A further advantage of this approach is the existence of rich content to work with (Silverman, 2011). By evaluating the Netflix’ choice of content, an opportunity to answer the posed research question is provided. Due to the active

Netflix US presence on the Instagram platform there is a sufficient amount of data to be observed and analyzed by the means of a qualitative content analysis.

### **3.1.2 Qualitative Content Analysis**

Qualitative content analysis is chosen because it allows the researcher to categorize textual data and extract repeating patterns to establish existing relationships (Julien, 2012). Furthermore, it allows reduction of big amounts of data into smaller fragments through coding (Neuman, 2011). This data analysis method is appropriate for this research as it offers an opportunity to reduce the amount of data gathered from Instagram posts and establish their meaning in the context of Netflix' communication strategy. Qualitative content analysis is an unobtrusive research method, which suits the research question as it does not require the direct involvement of other people, but allows the analysis of a recorded interactions, in this case: published content online. This approach allows the researcher to interpret the existing dataset, create codes and transform them into themes (Julien, 2012). Those themes analyzed through the existent theoretical frameworks allow the better understanding of the phenomenon in question (Julien, 2012). Moreover, content is not only analyzed based on the different themes it could be assigned to, but also pays attention to the use of certain words and the reoccurrence of their meaning (Julien, 2012). In the context of Netflix, finding themes within their communication strategy contributes to gathering insights on the way the brand identity is being presented and the essence of the messages they communicate with Instagram users.

## **3.2 Sampling**

This section focuses on the way Instagram posts were sampled along with the way additional information about engagement was collected. It further justifies the choice of this dataset and clarifies its meaning.

### **3.2.1 Units of Analysis**

The units of analysis for this study consist of Instagram posts that Netflix publishes on their US Instagram account.<sup>4</sup> To ensure feasibility and provide realistic opportunity to conduct the study within the timeframe and scope, the sample size includes 170 Instagram posts published on Netflix US Instagram from February 1, 2019 until May 3, 2019. The selection of the data is based on purposive sampling (Flick, 2007) as the included posts in the observation are chosen to be the most recently published ones in the time of the study.

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<sup>4</sup> Link to the Netflix US account on Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/netflix/>

The choice of starting date is based on the intent to capture the most recent events and strategic goals of Netflix' communication strategy at the time of conducting this research. Additionally, it prevents the occurrence of bias and subjectivity since the researcher is not selecting data randomly from different time periods. Moreover, based on the assumption that the content might vary on different days of the week, a calendar is created in order to take this factor in consideration. The calendar consists of thirteen Mondays, thirteen Tuesdays, thirteen Wednesdays, thirteen Thursdays, fourteen Fridays, thirteen Saturdays, and thirteen Sundays. Consequently, insights are gathered on Netflix online activity. A conclusion is made on how the coded items affected engagement on different weekdays.

In this study the analyzed data consists of the Instagram posts' visual part (photographs, memes, short videos, etc.) and the description underneath that accompanies it, including the time and day of the publication. To gather additional data on the levels of engagement and interaction with different types of content, the analysis also includes the number of likes and comments related to each of the posts collected on May 18 – May 19, 2019. That information helps evaluate the responsiveness of Instagram users to the published content and better understand what fosters engagement.

### **3.3 Operationalization**

To answer the main research question and sub-research questions, the following concepts have been operationalized: engagement, type of content posted on Instagram, type of promotion, overall emotion transmitted through the post, and additional elements included in the message. This section presents a description of the categories formed in the process of analyzing the dataset and their relevance to the theoretical framework.

#### **3.3.1 Operationalization of engagement**

Engagement is assessed by analyzing the number of likes and comments each post has gathered. The importance of the count of likes and the like button has previously been related to the Facebook platform and movie success (Ding, 2017). Previous research has proven its importance and influence on consumers and box offices (Ding, 2017). That provides a reason to believe that this phenomenon is also relevant to other social media platforms such as Instagram. It is worth mentioning that Instagram does not provide the information of how many times a certain post was shared. For that reason, the number of likes remains a main criterion of the engaging abilities of different types of content.

### 3.3.2 Operationalization of “type of content”

To identify the *type of content* that Netflix publishes on Instagram, the units of analysis were assessed from two perspectives (a) the type of advertised Netflix content the posts refer to and (b) the type of posts Netflix publishes on Instagram, that is, “Videos” or “Images”.

To start with, the category “Type of Advertised Netflix Content” provides additional information on the communication strategy that Netflix uses on the platform. It further delivers insights that are valuable for answering the main research question and the first sub-question by delving into matters such as whether Netflix promotes more series or movies and to what extent the posts found on Instagram are devoted to certain movies/series.

The codes that apply to this category are “Movie”, “Series”, “Both”, and “Other”. The code “Movie” includes productions that do not have multiple episodes and whose storylines are developed within a usual duration of 1-2 hours. “Series” are cultural products divided into a set of episodes usually organized into seasons. For example, television fiction shows such as *Stranger Things*, and reality shows like *Queer Eye*. Under the code “Both” could be found posts that refer to both types of productions (i.e. movies and series). Usually, these are posts with multiple posted pictures, multiple videos or “Compilations”. Finally, the code “Other” consists of content that does not relate neither to movies nor to series but is related to, for instance, public events, footage of the actors outside of the studio, reposted content, Netflix brand messages with social relevance, etc. This category distinguishes between movies and series unlike the following four categories. This is due to the fact that the other categories are based on an overall observation of the posted content, while this one attempt to explore Jenner’s (2018) observations and Netflix’ tendencies to promote itself mostly through series rather than movies.

Concerning the type of posts Netflix publishes on Instagram, Table 1 and Table 2 present and describe the different sub-categories created ad hoc.

Table 1. Type of Post – Videos

Codes	Description
Compilation	A collection of video materials that are unrelated. In most cases, this code presents footage that combines highlight moments from different parts of a production or scenes focusing on one character and his part of the story.
Movie/ Series Segment	Footage from a single scene or an excerpt of a movie/series, with a brief duration (around 30 seconds). In general, such shots present a specific

	moment from a show; depicting a significant or emotionally intense part.
Trailer	Official videos created to promote movies/series. They include key moments from the production as well as information about the premiere day.
Video Interview	Interviews with actors and other members of the production team.
Special Video	Video materials with special brand messages that carry social relevance. Additionally, these could be promotional videos about certain movie/series through which a socially relevant Netflix brand message is being communicated.
Video Discussion	Behind the scenes, discussions, and opinions on movie/series done by actors, producers or other members of the production team. It has a more unofficial atmosphere when compared to the “Video Interview”.

Table 2. Type of Post – Image

Codes	Description
Meme	Altered image generally created with the intention to convey humor. <sup>5</sup>
Photoshoot	Single or multiple photos taken by a photographer; with apparent professional touch.
Movie Poster	Specifically created poster (image) to promote movie/series.
Scene Screenshot	An image or images that are screenshots of a single or multiple scenes in a movie or series.
Reposted Content	Re-shared content that was taken from another source and posted on the Netflix US Instagram account.
Other	Footage from public events, moments behind the scenes, personal images, etc.

### 3.3.3 Operationalization of “type of promotion”

To understand for what promotional purposes Netflix US uses on Instagram, the following three codes were created: “Content Promotion”, “Actor Promotion”, “Platform Promotion”:

- (a) “Content Promotion” focuses on promoting a certain show – the visual part of the post as well as the caption revolve around a movie or series.
- (b) “Actor Promotion” refers to content that revolves around actors’ career or their role in a particular movie, their private life or relations with other co-stars. A

<sup>5</sup> In theory, memes are described as “objects appropriated, re-coded, and slotted back into the internet infrastructures they came from” (Nooney, 2014, p.249).

central decision criterion for that code is the information in the caption of the post; whether it talks about the show itself or the actors and their role.

(c) "Platform Promotion" indicates that the content was published with the goal of marketing the Netflix platform and its brand identity. A decision rule for this code is the type of advertised content, which in most cases is neither series, nor movies but a special video or reposted content that touches upon a socially relevant topic through which the audience gets a sense of what Netflix' values are. Another characteristic to recognize this code are other Netflix accounts tagged within such posts, which creates a network of related to the platform accounts that promote it.

### **3.3.4 Operationalization of "overall emotion"**

As explained in Lee and Hong's study, entertainment is a key element of an effective SNS advertising that increases the persuasiveness of the distributed message. However, they argue that "emotional appeal is an integrative concept inclusive of entertainment, as it encompasses a wide range of emotions including fun" (Lee& Hong, 2016, p.364). For that reason, entertaining (fun) captions are included under the code "Humor" and defined as an emotion. Generally, their study supports the decision of forming the category "Overall Emotion (Caption)" due to the central role of emotional appeal in the brand voice and the effect on users.

The aspect of informativeness is included in the code "Neutral" and is defined such as "ability to inform users about product alternatives that enable them to make choices yielding the highest value" (Rotzoll, Haefner, & Sandage, 1990; Lee & Hong, 2016). Contrary to the emotional appeal, this factor is based on rational appeal and it resonates to helping users make an informed decision (Lee & Hong, 2016). Informative message across social media platforms are found to build a positive image of certain brand as it provides information based on which the consumers makes a purchasing decision which is related to a sense of gratefulness for the assistance (Lee & Hong, 2016).

The code "Provoking" does not necessarily refer to a provocative emotion rather than it can indicate the existence of a certain call to action and directing the users towards answering a posed question or expressing their opinion, etc. Such calls to action influence the engagement levels which posts achieve (Stephen, Sciandra, & Inman, 2015). Research findings indicate that people are more prone to answer questions and express points of view and preferences when asked, while competition-like initiatives receive lower levels of engagement (Stephen, Sciandra, & Inman, 2015). What is

observable in the case of Netflix is the described scenario of posing questions and encouraging people to share personal experiences and beliefs. Potentially, this indicates that Netflix' marketing strategy is successful due to the fact that it knows its audiences and it incorporates their preferences in the communication choices the brand makes.

“Nostalgia” refers to a tone that presents a sentimental affection related to for example series that have ended. The code is commonly identifiable within the dataset through information about the launch of a show and mentioning of the first lines of the production. “Anticipation” relates to expressing emotions of eagerness. In this project, the captions of posts were coded as “Anticipation” when they revealed announcements of new premiers and voiced a longing to the see the show. Posts coded as “Inspiration” express uplifting thoughts related to society and interest in the diversity of human beings, commonly depicting ways of achieving better society dynamics. Captions with that essence attempt to stimulate audiences to feel, consider, and do something about the topics in question.

On the other hand, “Positivity” is directed towards relations between people and their private life, inner world, and overall attitude to life. This code focuses on self-love, supporting others, embracing emotions, etc. Generally, it is approached through content about the friendships and love affairs between actors performing in productions that stream on Netflix. “Excitement” refers to captions that show enthusiasm about certain facts. Commonly, the tone of “Excitement” accompanies the revelation of additional information about different shows or the cast of a certain show, usually focusing on the professional aspect of the matter.

### **3.3.5 Operationalization of “additional elements”**

Emojis can be defines as “one of the most distinctive aspects of online communication” (Goldsborough, 2015, p. 9). Emojis represent tiny pictures that can consist of variety of objects, faces, animals, etc. (Goldsborough, 2015). Emojis are used to express a certain emotion or strengthen the ways of which particular meaning can be conveyed (Goldsborough, 2015), and it could be integrated in the concept of emotional marketing. Since based on the theoretical framework, there are grounds to believe that Netflix is implementing such strategies the presence of emojis seems important in the evaluation of whether the content Netflix uses relies on strategies revolving around emotional states and aspirations of consumers.

Another element worth discussing is the hashtag. According to findings of a study based on interviews of college-aged users and their perception of social media marketing, specifically in terms of Instagram, indicates that they consider the feature as a means to personalizing the published content (Chen, 2018). A characteristic related to hashtags that appeared many times among the interviews

described hashtags as “personal” (Chen, 2018, p.28). As mentioned before hashtags are another means through which brands can define certain brand image and present products of services (Chen, 2018). Many well-established companies including H&M and Ben & Jerry’s successfully implement hashtag campaigns on the Instagram platform (Chen, 2018). The strengths of hashtags are further demonstrated by its widespread usage in influencer marketing. For those reasons, the number of posts containing hashtags appears to be relevant for this study information that contribute to evaluating the extent to which this strategy is implemented by Netflix on Instagram.

The tagging practice is another element that deserves attention as during the stage of familiarizing with the data, this happened to be another reoccurring phenomenon. Furthermore, Netflix creates separate Instagram accounts for some of its shows and many of the examples of tagging were of that essence. A common trend that was observed was the fact that Netflix US would post content that refers to a certain show or photos of actors famous for a particular production and would tag the movie/series as well. Possible reasons behind tagging variety of famous figures such as actors, photographers, producers, etc. is the establishment of a community of popular people associated with the Netflix brand. This predisposes to the rising popularity of both parties, namely Netflix and the people affiliated with the company. Moreover, the creation of separate Instagram accounts for the different production allows targeting niche audiences and building smaller branches of communities within the Netflix brand community. This relates to the Netflix branding strategy and the fact the brand defines itself through quality and inclusion (Jenner, 2018). In general, the on-demand service provider evolves into focusing on diversity and niche marketing due to its significant transnational reach increase (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018).

The posed research question focuses on the key concept of branding. In the frame of this project, the concept of branding is defined as the promotion of certain product or service through specific brand identity. Each category that was formed within the codebook contributes to answering the main research question and the three sub-questions, which are focused on promotional strategies and brand identity representation. “Type of Advertised Netflix Content”, “Type of Post”, and “Additional Elements” shed light on the first research sub-question. Analyzing the kinds of shows being promoted along with the types of posts and additional elements such as tags and emojis allow the researcher to conclude “What type of content does Netflix US share on Instagram?”. “Promotional Purpose” takes up a central role in answering the second sub-question “For what promotional purposes is Netflix US using Instagram?”. “Overall emotion” clarifies the third research sub-question “What is Netflix US brand identity on the Instagram platform?”. By observing the tone and emotion incorporated in the captions,

the essence of the Netflix' brand voice can be established. The findings from the five aforementioned categories answer the main research question "How is Netflix US using the Instagram platform as a branding tool?".

### **3.4 Data Collection and Data Analysis**

In this section the processes within data collection and data analysis are thoroughly described. The implementation of the research method is explained.

#### **3.4.1 Data Collection**

The data analysis used in this study was qualitative content analysis. The posts published on Netflix US Instagram account were copied and gathered in a .doc file and then coded. This file consisted of screenshots of the images along with their descriptions published on the platform as shown below. Moreover, as some of the posts were videos, screenshots of the videos were included in the .doc file along with the images. However, the videos were also separately downloaded through the website <https://www.w3toys.com/>. Furthermore, based on the date of the publication of each post a calendar was created for Netflix' online activity on the platform to be observed. To gather insights on the responsiveness to different types of content, the number of likes and comments of each post were registered.



During the analysis, and parallel to the process of coding, the researcher kept track of the different shows mentioned, promoted or related to the published content by making notes for every post. Furthermore, the number of likes and comments in terms of images, and views and comments corresponding to videos were also reflected in the notes. For each post the publication date was further taken into account and the respective day of the week was noted down.

### **3.4.2 Data Analysis**

The qualitative content analysis is based on data description that results in reduced amount of data through coding (Boeije, 2010). In this project the coding was done manually by the researcher. The analysis began with familiarizing with the sample and writing down initial thoughts. The researcher's previous knowledge on the subject along with the guidance of the developed theoretical framework, contributed to validating this research through analytic induction, search for most relevant theoretical structure in order to sensitize concepts (Boeije, 2010). This process of making assumptions and testing them with small portions of the data represents the initial stages of extracting concepts. Qualitative content analysis includes data organization and summary followed by interpretation of the importance of the themes detected by the researcher in terms of the considered dataset (Boeije, 2010). Identifying those patterns, analyzing them and reporting those findings were essential for this study since by establishing that the research and sub-questions were directly answered. Following cues within the visual and textual data creates a data-driven approach that can reach the core of the phenomenon in question. The themes were further segmented and reassembled which leads to the formation of certain findings (Boeije, 2010).

Therefore, it was possible to distinguish between different types of content and their purpose within Netflix' posts. After the research question was chosen and the materials that were included in the analysis were selected, the next step in qualitative content analysis was the creation of a coding frame that consists of categories and sub-categories (Schreier, 2013). Those categories were defined by "a category name, a description of what is meant by that name, positive examples, and decision rules" (Schreier, 2013, p.176). After a revision of the coding frame, the researcher proceeded with applying the frame to the entire dataset; namely segmentation (Schreier, 2013). As a result of the trial coding that followed, the consistency and validity of the analysis were evaluated (Schreier, 2013). Afterwards, the step of main analysis began where modifications of the coding frame were no longer possible (Schreier, 2013). The final stage consisted of the presentation of results (Schreier, 2013).

By implementing qualitative content analysis, the research attempts to determine the clusters of data and the degree of importance that each one holds (Julien, 2012). The deductive aspect of

content analysis refers to the attempt of relating themes to the preselected values within the framework (Julien, 2012). In that sense, after conducting the analysis the findings were evaluated on the bases of existing theory on community building, engagement, and brand identity. The qualitative approach, however, could also be characterized as inductive due to the extensive focus on textual and non-written data and the seeking of hidden meanings (Julien, 2012). This investigation includes a mixed approach where some of the codes were extracted from the theoretical framework and others emerged after the analysis of Instagram posts. Once the careful analysis of the content and the formulation of thematic categories were done, the comprehensiveness of the groupings was evaluated due to the integral importance of validity and reliability of judgement of the conducted research (Julien, 2012).

### **3.5 Validity, Reliability, Credibility, and Reflexivity**

This study is based on a qualitative research method that essentially tries to find the meaning attached to certain content published on a social media platform. This is achieved through interpretation that consists of identifying, coding and categorizing data, which ultimately could be used in practice by other businesses or as a theoretical guidance in future research (Boeije, 2010). The analysis contributed to finding meaning behind Netflix' communication strategy on Instagram for the US market and additionally helped gather data on the engagement it fosters. Thus, the conduct of qualitative research method was an appropriate choice for the answering of the main research question and the posed sub-questions. The limited research done on the Instagram platform and how it could be used for marketing initiatives along with the existing research gap on Netflix social media presence, specifically for this social networking site, provided an opportunity for this study to contribute with new and relevant information in the field. Furthermore, it presents and confirms Instagram's ability to serve as a platform for brands to showcase their brand identities and build brand communities with the ultimate goal of engaging users. However, certain limitations in terms of measurements are present. Even though the sample is representative, and it contributes to extracting meaning related to the analyzed phenomenon (Silverman, 2011), it includes limited posts and potentially misses elements from the initial launch until the observed period of the Netflix' US Instagram account. In this case, when discussing certain theoretical concepts and connecting them to the analyzed advertisements, the researcher plays a role where she could try to fit the data to an ideal conception of the framework. The credibility of a qualitative research resides in the avoidance of initial assumptions that might be influenced by the data (Silverman, 2011). Here, the research question was posed before the researcher got familiar with the chosen dataset, which indicates that it was not influenced by her interpretation of the sample, nor it was based on prior opinions or experiences.

The credibility of this project could be further evaluated based on the concepts of validity and reliability. According to Silverman (2011) validity refers to the “truthfulness of findings,” while reliability focuses on the “stability of findings” (Silverman, 2011, p.360). The reliability of this study is guaranteed due to the extensive theoretical framework and the transparency implemented in creating it. On the other hand, the clear findings which directly answer the posed questions and generally fit with previously established results, indicate the validity of this study. The answers found within the scope of this project apply only for the branding strategy of Netflix in the US market. Therefore, the result could not be generalized for the communication strategy of other businesses on the Instagram platform, but could be used as a practical guidance for other brands.

As the researcher’s role in qualitative data analysis is critical, the concept of reflexivity needs to be tackled. Reflexivity refers to the “self-critique and personal quest, playing on the subjective, the experiential, and the idea of empathy” (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998, p.395; Brennen, 2012). It further takes into consideration the obstacles that might arise based on the researcher’s theoretical views and observations, which can have alternative meanings (Brennen, 2012). In order to avoid subjectivity, the theoretical framework was constantly being developed throughout the research process with newly published information or other relevant data. The concept of reflexivity was considered during the conduct of this study so that a critical process of thinking could be sustained. For bias to be minimized, the researcher kept a reflexive journal throughout the conduct of the study, where important observations and explanation of certain decision were gathered.

### **3.6 Ethical Consideration**

No ethical concerns arose in the scope of this study as the subject is not sensitive and does not harm individuals, rather it simply analyses aspects of a social phenomenon. Furthermore, issues concerning users’ privacy also did not occur as the investigation only looked into Netflix’ published posts and the number of likes and comments from Instagram users without including personal information such as nicknames, age, gender, nationality, etc.

## 4. Results

In this chapter, the results of the qualitative content analysis are presented and discussed in relation to theory. The dataset consists of 170 Instagram posts published by Netflix US from February 1, 2019 to May 3, 2019. It contains a description of the coding frame and the codes that were extracted from the dataset.

The coding frame consists of five categories:

- a. Type of advertised Netflix content distinguishes whether the certain post agenda is related to advertising movies or series
- b. Type of post indicates the type of post published on Instagram by Netflix US
- c. Promotional purpose identifies the promotional agenda behind a certain post
- d. Overall emotion (caption) directs to the tone of a certain post's caption in order to establish what kind of feeling it conveys
- e. Additional elements refer to expressive signs or external links (tagging)

Based on the process of data analysis described in section 3.4, the information was then imported in Excel with the purpose of calculating how many times each code appeared, different correlations between the codes and further calculations with the additionally gathered information mentioned above. The table below presents a summary of the estimated calculations and the finding of this research. Each segment is discussed thoroughly in this chapter.

Table 3. Summary of Contents/ Results

Type of Advertised Netflix Content		
Series 66.47% (n = 113)		
Movies 18.82% (n = 32)		
Other 8.82% (n = 15)		
Both 5.88% (n = 10)		
Video 37% (n = 63)		Image 63% (n = 107)

<b>Type of Post</b>	Movie/ Series Segment 8.82% ( <i>n</i> = 15) Trailer 8.24% ( <i>n</i> = 14) Special Video 8.24% ( <i>n</i> = 14) Video Discussion 7.65% ( <i>n</i> = 13) Compilation 2.35% ( <i>n</i> = 4) Video Interview 1.76% ( <i>n</i> = 3)	Photoshoot 20.0% ( <i>n</i> = 34) Scene screenshot 19.41% ( <i>n</i> = 33) Other 8.82% ( <i>n</i> = 15) Meme 8.24% ( <i>n</i> = 14) Reposted Content 3.53% ( <i>n</i> = 6) Movie Poster 2.94% ( <i>n</i> = 5)
<b>Promotional Purpose</b>	Content Promotion 57.65% ( <i>n</i> = 98) Actor Promotion 34.71% ( <i>n</i> = 59) Platform Promotion 7.65% ( <i>n</i> = 13)	
<b>Overall Emotion (Caption)</b>	Humor 32.94% ( <i>n</i> = 56) Neutral 17.65% ( <i>n</i> = 30) Provoking 12.35% ( <i>n</i> = 21) Excitement 11.18% ( <i>n</i> = 19) Positivity 10.0% ( <i>n</i> = 17) Inspiration 8.23% ( <i>n</i> = 14) Nostalgia 4.12% ( <i>n</i> = 7) Anticipation 3.53% ( <i>n</i> = 6)	
<b>Other Elements</b>	Posts containing tags 64.12% ( <i>n</i> = 109) Posts containing Emojis 18.82% ( <i>n</i> = 32) Posts containing hashtag 14.12% ( <i>n</i> = 24)	
<b>Other Findings</b>	Most advertised content	1. On My Block 10.0% ( <i>n</i> = 17) 2. Chilling Adventures of Sabrina 8.82%; ( <i>n</i> = 15) 3. Sex Education 7.65% ( <i>n</i> = 13) 4. Our Planet 7.06% ( <i>n</i> = 12) 5. Stranger Things 5.88% ( <i>n</i> = 10)

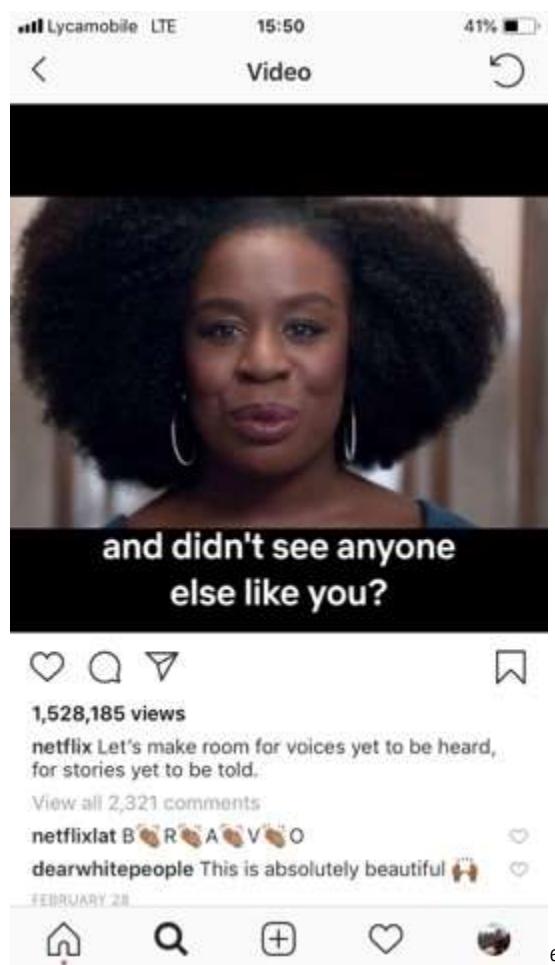
#### 4.1 “Type of Advertised Netflix Content”

As previously explained in the theoretical framework, Netflix positions itself through its ‘quality’ of content and worthiness of binge-watching (Jenner, 2018). Even though Netflix’ library in the US

contains of a significantly higher number of movies compared to series (Netflix International, 2019), after the second part of 1990s, Netflix has usually used series as a main focus of its communication strategy (Jenner, 2018). As a key contributor to the binge-watching practice, this element continues to be a central part of their business and marketing strategy (Jenner, 2018). One of the biggest Netflix' marketing initiatives also revolves around series – *House of Cards*. This reflects in the findings about the content Netflix advertised on Instagram.

The analysis showed that “Series” 66.47% ( $n = 113$ ) are significantly more commonly promoted than “Movies” 18.82% ( $n = 32$ ). Furthermore, there were 8.82% ( $n = 15$ ) that contained “Other” content (e.g. Figure 1 represents a video material that is not related to movies or series but is created to convey a Netflix’ brand message with a social relevance notion), while 5.88% ( $n = 10$ ) included both contents related to movies and series under the code “Both”. This makes a total of 91.18% ( $n = 155$ ) posts of the dataset consisting of content somehow related to movies or series.

Figure 1



Even though most of the promoted shows are Netflix Originals (productions on which the “Netflix Original” logo appears), a possible reason behind the movies versus series difference could be related to the mentioned in the theoretical framework characteristics of Netflix’ brand identity as a provider of original content and binge-watching practices. This could be further proven by the observation of which productions are the ones to appear most commonly across Netflix US Instagram account or have members of the cast being mentioned.

The top five productions turned out to be series: *On My Block* 10.0% ( $n = 17$ ); *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* 8.82% ( $n = 15$ ); *Sex Education* 7.65% ( $n = 13$ ); *Our Planet* 7.06% ( $n = 12$ ); and *Stranger Things* 5.88% ( $n = 10$ ). Within the timeframe this data was collected, the second season of the series *On My Block* premiered, the *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* second part of season one was also released, and the documentary series *Our Planet* first season was launched. Furthermore, the official

<sup>6</sup> Link to the Netflix’ Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BwzsXX5HPVD/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/BwzsXX5HPVD/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

trailer for the third season of *Stranger Things* was released. This indicates that the most advertised content was gravitating around productions that were somehow relevant and had a premier within the period the analysis was conducted. The only exception of this tendency among the most promoted content were the series *Sex Education*, which first season release date was on January 11, 2019, 20 days prior to the dataset timeframe. Yet, *Sex Education* ranked third in the most frequently advertised shows on the Instagram platform, which indicates that Netflix sustains the buzz around shows even after a season's premiere or far before such. This finds proof in the reoccurring content based on *Stranger Things* months before the premiere of a new season.

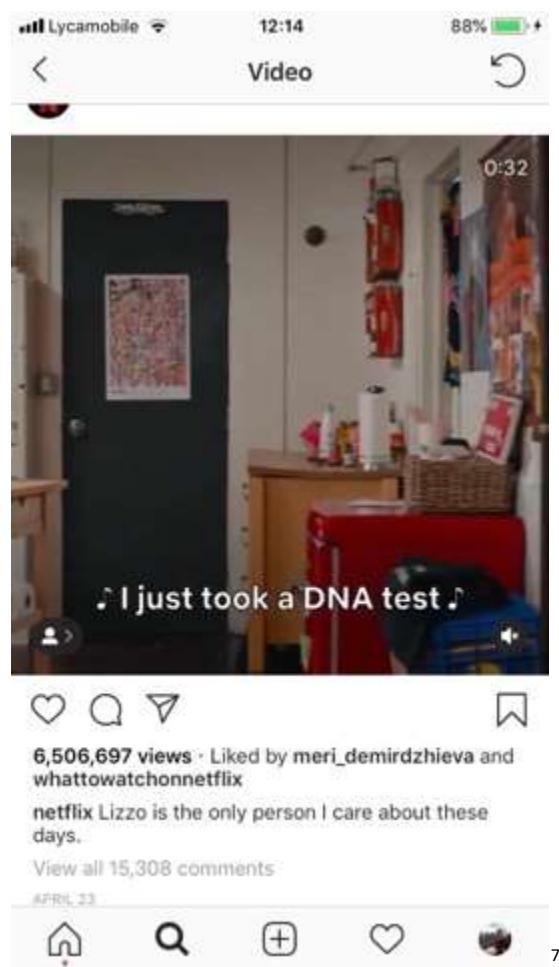
#### **4.2 “Type of Post”**

The category “Type of Post” was formed in order to define the particular types of posts Netflix US shares on Instagram and be able to answer the first sub-question, namely “What type of content does Netflix US share on Instagram?” and further establish an overall understanding of Netflix’ communication strategy and the ways it uses Instagram as a marketing tool. Since young audiences are shifting away from Facebook because of their desire for visual content that does not rely on plain advertisements but communicates the philosophy behind a brand and its values (Greer & Ferguson, 2017), this study is interested in figuring out the ways through which Netflix accomplishes that and the type of content through which the brand communicates on Instagram. Two subcategories emerged during the analysis – “Video” and “Image.” After the investigation, it was established that 37% ( $n = 63$ ) of those posts contained video materials; while 63% ( $n = 107$ ) contained images. The next part consists of a report on the frequency at which the codes appeared.

##### **4.2.1 Frequency and Daily Online Activity**

According to the findings of this study, the codes under the subcategory “Videos” appeared in the following frequency, starting with the most commonly present one to the least: “Movie/ Series Segment” 9.41% ( $n = 16$ ); “Trailer” 8.24% ( $n = 14$ ); “Special Video” 8.24% ( $n = 14$ ); “Video Discussion” 7.06% ( $n = 12$ ); “Compilation” 2.35% ( $n = 4$ ); “Video Interview” 1.76% ( $n = 3$ ). The most frequently observed content is related to shows that could be found on the Netflix platform and present a segment of the show or a trailer about it. Figure 2 is an example of the type of code “Movie/ Series Segment” and it represents a scene from the series *The Umbrella Academy*.

Figure 2



In terms of the subcategory “Images” the codes’ occurrence within the dataset was as follows: “Photoshoot” 20.0% ( $n = 34$ ); “Scene screenshot” 19.41% ( $n = 33$ ); “Other” 9.41% ( $n = 16$ ) (e.g. Figure 3 represents footage from the Emmy Awards); “Meme” 8.24% ( $n = 14$ ); “Reposted Content” 3.53% ( $n = 6$ ); “Movie Poster” 2.34% ( $n = 4$ ). Here, the most commonly found content focuses on photos under the code “Photoshoot” which refers mostly to the professional photos of cast members along with promotional content about the actors and their careers. This indicates an emphasis on the actors as a face of Netflix’ brand rather than a plain marketing strategy focused on the content of a movie or series alone. Figure 4 depicts an example of the code “Photoshoot” representing the actor Ross Lynch, famous for his part in the series *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*.

<sup>7</sup> Link to the Netflix’ Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BwnHK1Rn5a4/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/BwnHK1Rn5a4/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

Figure 3



Figure 4



After taking into consideration the day each post was published and calculating how many of the dataset entries were posted on each day, it became apparent that the distribution is not significantly different over the week. However, the days with least activity were Saturday, Sunday, and Monday. On the other hand, the most posts were published mid-week on Wednesday. As indicated in Table 3, Netflix posts in the form of images represent 63% ( $n = 107$ ) of the sample, while the videos represent 37% ( $n = 63$ ), which means they are not equally distributed. This suggests that the frequency of images on each day of the week would be higher than the number of videos. The content that appeared most frequently was images: on six out of seven days; excluding Tuesday when the most frequently published one was a video under the code "Movie/ Series Segment", 23.08% ( $n = 6$ ) of all the posts published on Tuesdays. But it was immediately followed by "Scene Screenshot" 19.23% ( $n = 5$ ) and "Trailer" 19.23% ( $n = 5$ ). It is

<sup>8</sup> Link to the Netflix' Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BuSLVAKHO9G/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/BuSLVAKHO9G/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

<sup>9</sup> Link to the Netflix' Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BwzsXX5HPVD/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/BwzsXX5HPVD/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

interesting to observe that Fridays contained the highest diversity of types of content. The most commonly published type of content ranked in the top three for each day, excluding Tuesday, were the codes “Scene Screenshot” and “Photoshoot”.

Table 4. Daily Online Activity for the period February 1, 2019 until May 3, 2019

Day	Type of Content (Videos and Images)	Count
<b>Monday</b>	Image: Scene Screenshot	18.18% (n = 4)
	Image: Photoshoot	18.18% (n = 4)
	Image: Other	18.18% (n = 4)
	Video: Trailer	13.64% (n = 3)
	Video: Video Discussion	13.64% (n = 3)
	Video: Meme	4.55% (n = 1)
	Video: Movie Poster	4.55% (n = 1)
	Video: Movie/ Series Segment	4.55% (n = 1)
	Video: Special Video	4.55% (n = 1)
<b>Monday Total</b>		<b>13.10% (n = 22)</b>
<b>Tuesday</b>	Video: Movie/ Series Segment	23.08% (n = 6)
	Image: Scene Screenshot	19.23% (n = 5)
	Video: Trailer	19.23% (n = 5)
	Video: Special Video	11.54% (n = 3)
	Image: Photoshoot	7.69% (n = 2)
	Image: Reposted Content	7.69% (n = 2)
	Image: Other	7.69% (n = 2)
	Meme	3.85% (n = 1)
<b>Tuesday Total</b>		<b>15.48% (n = 26)</b>
<b>Wednesday</b>	Image: Photoshoot	20.69% (n = 6)
	Image: Scene Screenshot	13.79% (n = 4)
	Image: Meme	13.79% (n = 4)
	Video: Trailer	10.34% (n = 3)
	Video: Special Video	10.34% (n = 3)
	Image: Movie Poster	6.90% (n = 2)
	Video: Compilation	6.90% (n = 2)
	Video: Video Discussion	6.90% (n = 2)

	Image: Reposted Content	6.90% (n = 2)
	Video: Movie/ Series Segment	3.45% (n = 1)
<b>Wednesday Total</b>	<b>17.26% (n = 29)</b>	
<b>Thursday</b>	Image: Scene Screenshot	25.00% (n = 7)
	Video: Movie/ Series Segment	17.86% (n = 5)
	Image: Photoshoot	14.29% (n = 4)
	Image: Meme	10.71% (n = 3)
	Image: Other	10.71% (n = 3)
	Video: Special Video	10.71% (n = 3)
	Video: Video Discussion	7.14% (n = 2)
	Video: Trailer	3.57% (n = 1)
<b>Thursday Total</b>	<b>16.67% (n = 28)</b>	
<b>Friday</b>	Image: Photoshoot	20.83% (n = 5)
	Image: Scene Screenshot	12.50% (n = 3)
	Video: Special Video	12.50% (n = 3)
	Video: Trailer	8.33% (n = 2)
	Video: Video Discussion	8.33% (n = 2)
	Video: Video Interview	8.33% (n = 2)
	Image: Meme	8.33% (n = 2)
	Video: Compilation	4.17 (n = 1)
	Image: Movie Poster	4.17 (n = 1)
	Video: Movie/ Series Segment	4.17 (n = 1)
	Image: Other	4.17 (n = 1)
	Image: Reposted Content	4.17 (n = 1)
<b>Total Friday</b>	<b>14.29% (n = 24)</b>	
<b>Saturday</b>	Image: Photoshoot	42.86% (n = 9)
	Image: Scene Screenshot	28.57% (n = 6)
	Image: Other	9.52% (n = 2)
	Image: Meme	4.76% (n = 1)
	Video: Movie/ Series Segment	4.76% (n = 1)
	Video: Video Discussion	4.76% (n = 1)
	Video: Video Interview	4.76% (n = 1)
<b>Saturday Total</b>	<b>12.50% (n = 21)</b>	
<b>Sunday</b>	Image: Scene Screenshot	22.22% (n = 4)

Image: Photoshoot	16.67% (n = 3)
Video: Video Discussion	16.67% (n = 3)
Image: Meme	11.11% (n = 2)
Image: Other	11.11% (n = 2)
Video: Compilation	5.56% (n = 1)
Image: Movie Poster	5.56% (n = 1)
Image: Reposted Content	5.56% (n = 1)
Video: Special Video	5.56% (n = 1)
<b>Sunday Total</b>	<b>10.71% (n = 18)</b>

\*Since Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday appear thirteen times in the aforementioned period while Friday appears fourteen times, the posts published on Friday, May 3, 2019 have been excluded from this calculation in order to avoid miscalculations (last two posts of the dataset).

#### 4.2.2 Engagement

This sub-section discusses the results extracted from the calculations based on the likes and comments of all 170 analyzed Instagram posts. The identification of certain types of content and the levels of engagement it achieves could be beneficial for the communication strategy of other businesses. Such example could be given with the use of memes and what is the level of engagement they incite among Instagram users.

In order to rank the most engaging content, the means of likes, views and comments were calculated for each code of the subcategories “Video” and “Image”. Since the engagement levels of subcategory “Videos” are defined through number of views and comments, while the engagement levels of the subcategory “Images” are defined through number of likes and comments, they become incomparable due to the different measurements. The following Table 5 contains a ranking of the types of content by highest levels of engagement based on average views, likes, and comments.

Table 5. Ranking by achieved highest engagement

		According to views:	Avg. Views	According to comments:	Avg. Comments
Type of Content	Video	1.Special Video 2.Compilation 3.Movie/ Series Segment 4.Trailer 5.Video Discussion 6.Video Interview	2,099,603 2,048,026 1,471,167 1,378,442 1,192,998 939,204	1.Special Video 2.Trailer 3.Compilation 4.Movie/ Series Segment 5.Video Discussion 6.Video Interview	5,058 4,805 3,898 3,606 1,488 1,016

	According to likes:		According to comments:	
Image		Avg. Likes		Avg. Comments
	1.Photoshoot	404,867	1.Meme	6,719
	2.Meme	378,764	2.Other	5,284
	3.Other	339,740	3.Scene Screenshot	3,826
	4.Scene Screenshot	371,728	4. Movie Poster	3,814
	5.Reposted Content	337,265	5.Reposted Content	3,594
	6. Movie Poster	283,305	6.Photoshoot	2,476

\*Based on calculated averages of the sum of likes/views/comments of all the posts of certain code divided by the number of existent posts of that type in the dataset

After calculating the means of likes, views, and comments for each code, it became apparent that in terms of videos, the “Special Video” is the most viewed type of content (average views: 2,075,774) and also the one to gather most comments (average comments: 5,058). Figure 1 discussed above provides an example of a “Special Video” carrying a message about diversity and acceptance. The video ends with the sentence “More room. More stories. More voices.”, written on the screen, which represents their brand message and followed by the Netflix’ logo. In terms of images – “Photoshoots” were the most liked (average likes: 404,867) while “Memes” turned out to be the most commented type of content (average comments: 6,719).

Memes represent an interesting case due to their recent integration in marketing attempts and are now considered a means to communicate with consumers. Due to their entertaining and humorous nature, this type of content is appealing to audiences. Advertising effectiveness is stirred by emotional appeal (Lee & Hong, 2016) and the essence of memes incorporates emotions that are related to fun, which makes this type of content particularly engaging. Furthermore, the explanation of memes, their influence and meaning are related to the book *The Selfish Gene* by Richard Dawkins, who connected Darwinism to the ways of which cultural forces work; “It is similar in action to a gene by replicating itself and evolving, but resides in the “mind” and replicates itself through interpersonal communication and artifacts, evolving in the process” (Williams, 2000, p. 272). When this is applied within the marketing world and the Internet’s ability to replicate ideas and spread them virally is taken in consideration, the usage of memes by Netflix as well as the high engagement levels of this type of content is explained. Figure 5 represents an example of a “Meme”. The content is related to the series *Stranger Things* but simultaneously incorporates a reference to Ariana Grande’s song *7 Rings*, which at the time was at the peak of its popularity, being released just a month earlier. This indicates Netflix’ integration of up to date content in their communication strategy.

Figure 5



The following Table 6 contains the posts with highest number of views and likes for each type of content. It is interesting to observe that of all 12 codes reflecting on the different types of content, top posts appear to be related to movies in only four cases, while series take up a leading position in eight cases. The reason behind this observation could be related to the findings described in the theoretical framework, namely Netflix' focus on series and establishment of an image of binge-watching promoter in their marketing communication (Jenner, 2018). Such tendencies are described by Jenner (2018) in the context of marketing the series *House of Cards* as Netflix original content deserving binge-watching due to its "quality". Thus, similar strategies are evident in Netflix' communication strategy on Instagram through the significantly greater amount of series promoted.

<sup>10</sup> Link to the Netflix' Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BuHDfSjHIMi/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/BuHDfSjHIMi/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

Table 6. Top Posts of each type based on views and likes

Type of Content	Series/Movie	Advertised Content	Views
Video	Movie/ Series Segment	Someone Great	6,506,697
	Special Video	Chilling Adventures of Sabrina	5,478,417
	Trailer	The Perfect Date	4,431,651
	Video Discussion	On My Block	4,194,921
	Compilation	Stranger Things	3,187,197
	Video Interview	Seen & Heard	1,184,905
			Likes
Image	Photoshoot	Riverdale	1,287,399
	Meme	Stranger Things	1,247,405
	Other	The End of The Fucking World	1,002,372
	Scene screenshot	Stranger Things	1,100,228
	Reposted Content	Homecoming	678,843
	Movie Poster	Chilling Adventures of Sabrina	506,309

Based on Table 6, it becomes apparent that the three most viewed and liked posts in the following codes: “Compilation”, “Meme” and “Scene Screenshot” present content related to the series *Stranger Things*. Even though that is not a new production and there are already two existing seasons, it remains a highlight in Netflix’ communication strategy. Constant reminders of the launching of a third season appear across their Instagram account; with no doubt bringing one of the highest levels of engagement in terms of type of advertised content. This might be due to the already established fan communities around the show.

Another finding worth mentioning is the fact that the most viewed video within the dataset presents a “Movie/ Series Segment” from the film *Someone Great*, contrary to the expectation that it would be a series to take the most viewed post. Such brief videos provide the viewer with a taste of the production that is different than a trailer. The viewer’s attention is pointed towards a specific scene instead of taken through the whole storyline. It could make the person relate to what is being exhibited on an emotional or logical level, intrigue him and provoke him to actually watch the full show.

Even though the existing theory suggested that users prefer content that is not simply promotional but also contains other layers of the brand identity, in terms of videos, trailers are ranked number four in most engaging content (average number of views: 1,223,042) and ranked second in terms of comments (average number of comments: 4,805). This indicates that even though solely

promotional, this type of content is still engaging for audiences. However, when talking about images, movie posters (simply promotional content) rank the least engaging (average number of likes 283,305). In terms of comments, movie posters rank forth with an average of 3,814 likes.

The relationship between users' engagement on different days of the week was further investigated. Based on the means of likes, views and comments, it became apparent that people engage the most with published content in terms of likes on Wednesday. When it comes to views, the highest numbers are on Tuesday. Lastly, users commented both images and video the most on Tuesday. This could be related to the fact that as mentioned before Netflix is most active online on those two days of the week.

Table 7. Engagement on different days based on means of likes, views, and comments.

Days	Image	Video	Both
	Avg. Likes	Avg. Views	Avg. Comments
Monday	420,447	856,727	5,185
Tuesday	426,168	2,121,526	13,982
Wednesday	626,459	1,234,279	11,397
Thursday	387,719	1,444,473	8,919
Friday	312,393	888,505	4,257
Saturday	518,401	264,021	3,704
Sunday	327,021	673,456	2,765

\*Since Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, Sunday appear thirteen times in the aforementioned period while Friday appears fourteen times, the posts published on Friday, May 3, 2019 have been excluded from this calculation in order to avoid miscalculations (last two posts of the dataset).

#### 4.3 “Promotional Purpose”

This section explores one of the main elements used when answering the second sub-question “For what promotional purposes is Netflix US using Instagram?”, namely the category “Promotional Purpose”. It tackles issues connected to the promotional purpose behind posting certain content.

In the scope of this project three sub-categories were defined. The codes that apply here are: “Content Promotion” 57.65% ( $n = 98$ ); “Actor Promotion” 34.71% ( $n = 59$ ); “Platform Promotion” 7.65% ( $n = 13$ ). To elaborate, “Content Promotion” focuses on promoting a certain show – the visual part of the post as well as the caption revolve around a movie or series.

More than half of the dataset represents the purpose of promoting content. Figure 6 provides an example of “Content Promotion” with a “Trailer” of the series *Dead to Me*. However, it is interesting to observe that 34.71% of the posts focus on actors, which indicates that to a great extent the Netflix US Instagram account explores topics that are not related to the storylines and details about shows but pay attention to the cast and turns it into a face of the platform across the online space of social media.

Figure 6



As described in the theoretical framework, Kevin Spacey had a significant role in the marketing promotion of binge-watching practices and the series *House of Cards* (Jenner, 2018). Similar to him being the face of the marketing initiatives in the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013 (Jenner, 2018), the participation of actors across the Instagram platform was noticeable within the observed dataset.

<sup>11</sup> Link to the Netflix' Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BwK0wavn4I5/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/BwK0wavn4I5/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

Actors such as Noah Centineo are commonly found on the platform and presented through different types of content – from personal photos and behind the scenes footage to interviews and discussions about their personal life and participation in different productions. Centineo is best known for the movies *To All the Boys I Loved* and *The Perfect Date*. This phenomenon resembles a strategy of building a Netflix family image on Instagram with actors having a fundamental role. When observing the sub-category “Actor Promotion”, it is interesting to follow the relation it has with how Netflix presents the actors; specifically, through what “tone” and “emotion”. Table 8 presents the findings related to this aspect. Out of all the 59 posts devoted to actors, the highest percent of publications were introduced with “Humor” 28.81 ( $n = 17$ ), followed by 15.25% described through a “Neutral” tone. Consequently, the most common way of Netflix referring to actors is through light jokes and humor as well as simple descriptive captions giving information about topics related to the actors either connected to their career or personal life and friendships on stage.

Table 8. “Actor Promotion” in relation to “Overall Emotion (Caption)”

Overall Emotion (Caption)	Count
Humor	28.81% ( $n = 17$ )
Neutral	15.25% ( $n = 9$ )
Excitement	13.56% ( $n = 8$ )
Positivity	13.56% ( $n = 8$ )
Provoking	11.86% ( $n = 7$ )
Inspiring	10.17% ( $n = 6$ )
Nostalgia	5.08% ( $n = 3$ )
Anticipation	1.69% ( $n = 1$ )
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (<math>n = 59</math>)</b>

Another aspect related to the promotional strategy of actors that deserves attention is what type of content is used to market them. Table 9 presents those findings. A significant tendency of representing actors through “Photoshoot” is evident; more than half of the posts 52.54% ( $n = 31$ ). Thus, this indicates an effort to present the actors in a different light rather than just by depicting them in the context of the shows they perform in. This is further confirmed by the significantly smaller number of posts coded as “Scene Screenshots” and “Movie/ Series Segment”.

Table 9. “Actor Promotion” in relation to “Type of Content”

Type of Content	Count
Photoshoot	52.54% (n = 31)
Other	15.25% (n = 9)
Scene Screenshot	13.56% (n = 8)
Meme	5.08% (n = 3)
Special Video	3.39% (n = 2)
Video Discussion	3.39% (n = 2)
Video Interview	3.39% (n = 2)
Movie/ Series Segment	1.69% (n = 1)
Reposted Content	1.69% (n = 1)
<b>Total</b>	<b>100% (n = 59)</b>

When taking in consideration that the promotion of actors and actresses has an important role in Netflix’ communication strategy, it is interesting to observe whether there is a tendency related to male or female characters taking the central role. To do so, the most advertised shows could be taken into consideration. Among the most promoted productions are the series *On My Block*, *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, *Sex Education*, *Our Planet*, and *Stranger Things*. *Our Planet* does not serve as an indicator in this case as it represents a documentary series about nature and it does not develop a storyline focused on the life of imaginary characters and events. *On My Block*, *Sex Education*, and *Stranger Things* represent series that observe the lives of multiple characters without stressing on a leading female or male role. When observing the content Netflix publishes to promote those shows, there is no indication of predominant female or male influence. Usually, there is more than one member of the cast present in the posts found on Instagram. The only production with an established female leading role is the series *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, where Sabrina is the main character. However, the show is mostly being promoted on Instagram through representation of her along with two more male characters from the show. In conclusion, it does not seem like there is a preference for any of the genders in the communication strategy of Netflix on the platform. A more thorough observation of the most advertised shows will follow in section 4.4.

#### 4.4 “Overall Emotion (Caption)”

For a brand to reach the desired online behavior of consumers (i.e. sharing and interacting with content in order to achieve the word of mouth effect and show support for the brand in question) it has

to be aware of what would the audience engage with and how to achieve that (Lee & Hong, 2016). An empirical investigation conducted on the elements that influence the effectiveness of social media marketing indicates the importance of the following elements: emotional appeal, informativeness and creativity (Lee & Hong, 2016). In order to successfully turn social media platforms into an advertising tool the study stressed on integration of emotional appeals; emotion is described as a person's state of feeling in the sense of an affect (Lee & Hong, 2016, p.364). A further distinction is made between positive and negative emotions such as love and happiness versus fear and sadness. Since the researchers directly connect emotion to message's effectiveness, this project also focuses on this element in search of an answer for the third sub-question, namely "What is Netflix US brand identity on the Instagram platform?". According to Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, and Segado-Boj (2019) as discussed previously in the theoretical framework, Netflix presents itself through a humorous and positive brand voice that is achieved not solely through apparent promotional content but also through an emotional aspect in their posts. This study came across similar findings. It is important to be noted that the main criteria for defining the brand identity represented on Instagram in the case of Netflix US within the scope of this research is based mainly on their brand voice and the essence of the messages they communicate.

Within the category "Overall emotion" codes that describe the general tone of the posts' captions could be found. Based on the dataset, the following codes emerged: "Humor" 32.94% ( $n = 56$ ); "Neutral" 17.65% ( $n = 30$ ); "Provoking" 12.35% ( $n = 21$ ); "Excitement" 11.18% ( $n = 19$ ); "Positivity" 10.0% ( $n = 17$ ); "Inspiration" 8.23% ( $n = 14$ ); "Nostalgia" 4.12% ( $n = 7$ ); "Anticipation" 3.53% ( $n = 6$ ). The captions that could be defined with humorous aspects represented the highest segment of the dataset. Figure 7 gives an example of a Netflix' caption that could be defined as "Humor". It contains a joke about dating in relation to a segment of the documentary series *Our Planet* and the mating rituals between birds. In general, the codes that emerged are on the positive spectrum of emotions, which indicates the confirmation of the findings from the studies conducted by Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, and Segado-Boj (2019), and Lee and Hong (2016). It could be concluded that indeed Netflix' brand identity as represented on the Instagram platform can be defined with positivity, humor and lightness.

It should be noted that in the process of coding the data, in the cases where certain post combined two different types of tone, only the main one was coded.

Figure 7



To further reflect on the strategy of advertising content, the relation between emotion and the aforementioned most advertised content was observed. The following conclusion of patterns relating to emotion and content advertised were found: the most frequently found emotion within the posts advertising *On My Block* was "Humor" 29.41% ( $n = 5$ ); *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* – "Humor" 66.67% ( $n = 10$ ); *Sex Education* "Excitement" 30.77% ( $n = 4$ ); *Our Planet* – "Neutral" 41.67% ( $n = 5$ ); *Stranger Things* – "Humor" 40.0% ( $n = 4$ ). This further indicates the wide use of humor and positive emotions within the dataset as it becomes apparent that three out of five most advertised productions are promoted through a humorous tone. A possible reason behind those choices might be the attempt to

<sup>12</sup> Link to the Netflix' Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BvUaCZPn0VE/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/BvUaCZPn0VE/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

align the genres of the shows with the emotions Netflix advertises them through. For example, *On My Block* is defined as a comedy series<sup>13</sup> which relates to the humorous way it is being promoted. It is interesting to observe that although the show *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* is described as drama, fantasy, horror<sup>14</sup>, it is being promoted again through a humorous tone. *Sex Education* is a comedy, drama<sup>15</sup>, but is mostly marketed through “Excitement”, focusing on exciting facts about the series and the cast. *Our Planet* is a mini-series documentary<sup>16</sup> and the use of “Neutral” tone, which mainly serves the purpose to inform and describe, seems like an appropriate choice. *Stranger Things* is a drama, fantasy, horror series<sup>17</sup>. Yet, it is being promoted predominantly through “Humor”. This observation indicates that the genre of a show is not necessarily related to the tone/emotion it is being advertised with.

#### 4.5 “Additional Elements”

This section observes the use of additional elements, namely emojis, memes, and tags in the communication strategy of Netflix US on Instagram. Since during the stage of familiarizing with the data it became obvious that there’s a tendency for those elements to be incorporated in the captions of the posts rather often, the researcher established a category named “Additional Elements” referring to those expressive signs and external links (tagging). However, in terms of tagging only tags of other Instagram accounts are considered; this code does not include links to other social media platforms or websites; it solely focuses on tags within the Instagram platform. The findings described in this section contribute to answering the main research question and defining the communication strategies Netflix US uses on Instagram.

This study acknowledges the use of those additional elements as something that characterizes online culture and which use can affect consumers’ engagement (Stephen, Sciandra, & Inman, 2015). Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo’s (2018) research confirms the success of Netflix’ social media strategy on Twitter that implements hashtags, emojis, etc. as mentioned in the theoretical framework. That suggests that even though with different features, similar strategy across social networking sites should be profitable for the brand. Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo (2018) further discovered that such elements engage and encourage users to more actively share (retweet) content posted by Netflix. Since their study describes Netflix as a successful implementer of social media marketing, this

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<sup>13</sup> Link to the page of the show *On My Block* on IMDb: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7879820/>

<sup>14</sup> Link to the page of the show *Chilling Adventures of Sabrina* on IMDb: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7569592/>

<sup>15</sup> Link to the page of the show *Sex Education* on IMDb: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt7767422/>

<sup>16</sup> Link to the page of the show *Our Planet* on IMDb: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt9253866/>

<sup>17</sup> Link to the page of the show *Our Planet* on IMDb: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4574334/>

research paid attention to the content it uses and specifically the frequency of using the elements mentioned above.

Since the use of hashtags, emojis and tags is a typical trend for Instagram, insights were gathered based on the presence or absence of those elements in the Netflix US shared content. In conclusion, after coding the data and estimating the frequency with which each code appeared, it was estimated that the most commonly found element within the dataset was tagging other famous figures and shows 64.12% ( $n = 109$ ), followed by posts containing emojis 18.82% ( $n = 32$ ), and finally 14.12% ( $n = 24$ ) of the posts had a hashtag in the description. Figure 8 exhibits an example of a post containing a tag in its caption of Ncuti Gatwa's Instagram account, actor known for his part in the series *Sex Education*. For the typical frequency of hashtag and emoji usage across Instagram, the results do not indicate a heavy use of those two elements.

Figure 8



<sup>18</sup> Link to the Netflix' Instagram post: [https://www.instagram.com/p/BtqwnV1n0uW/?utm\\_source=ig\\_web\\_copy\\_link](https://www.instagram.com/p/BtqwnV1n0uW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link)

## 5. Discussion and Conclusion

The study's main focus was to answer the research question how the on-demand streaming service provider, Netflix, is using Instagram as a branding tool. This chapter provides an answer to that question along with an answer to the sub-research questions, which contributed to the overall understanding of the phenomenon.

### 5.1 Answers to the Research Questions

The findings obtained in this investigation reveal that Netflix integrates the social networking site in their communication strategy in a few ways. Mainly, it serves to showcase Netflix' brand identity. However, through the visual possibilities Instagram provides, Netflix manages to intertwine this representation of the brand along with promotional purposes. The social media platform turns into an online space where Netflix brand messages carry a specific brand voice that promotes either the content the provider streams, the actors and actresses that are part of its shows, or the platform itself.

When exploring the type of content Netflix US shares on Instagram (Sub-RQ1), two factors are applicable. On the one hand, the type of content published, namely the format of the posts, be it different kinds of videos or images. On the other hand, the type of advertised content, namely whether series, movies, etc. are being promoted. The findings indicate that Netflix posts more images 63% ( $n = 107$ ) than videos 37% ( $n = 63$ ). In terms of frequency, the most commonly published content is "Photoshoot" and "Movie/ Series Segment". Throughout the different days of the week, there is a little difference of Netflix' online activity in terms of the distribution of posts. This reveals their efforts to remain constantly active and engaging, similarly, to their Twitter strategy as mentioned earlier (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018).

After further exploring engagement, it became apparent that "Special Videos", "Photoshoots", and "Memes" attract the highest responsiveness from users. This indicates their appreciation for content that is revealing the values behind the brand and information about actors casting in shows that stream on the platform; content that is not necessarily related to the products Netflix offers. These findings are similar to the explored in theoretical framework fact that social media platforms provide the opportunity for users to have a brand experience that reveals more about certain brand identity (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017) and in order to boost engagement further, the presented content should not be purely promotional (Thackeray, Neiger, Hanson, & McKenzie, 2008). Hence, it could be concluded that Netflix seeks and manages to achieve that balance between posting content that is both promotional and

entertaining without resembling advertising too much. This way the levels of brand trust rise, and the scope of the brand community expands (Phua, Jin, & Kim, 2017).

In terms of the promotional aspect of Netflix online activity on Instagram, three purposes were defined under the category “Promotional Purpose” (Sub-RQ2). The most frequently present one as indicated in the results section was “Content Promotion” 57.65% ( $n = 98$ ). That resonates to the Jenner’s (2018) explanation of Netflix’ marketing and their use of the content they stream (predominantly advertising Netflix Originals) to promote the platform. However, the findings revealed a tendency of integrating actors that cast in the shows being streamed. This kind of posts focus on facts about the actors related to their careers or private lives. The actors turn into the face of the platform and start being associated with the Netflix brand. As mentioned in the theoretical framework, the content being published on social media that focuses on actors and reveals information about them may indicate an incorporation of a strategy that relies on para-social relationships (Horton & Wohl, 1956). Thus, audiences relate and engage even deeper with the brand through those popular figures.

In general, actors are presented through humorous or neutral tone by joking and teasing commentaries and descriptive captions, which further confirms the casual attitude of the brand. Furthermore, it should be noted that the most common type of content through which actors are being represented are “Photoshoots” 52.54% ( $n = 31$ ). This indicates that the marketing initiatives focus on them as individuals rather than simply characters in a show. That way the para-social relationship is further strengthen as the audience gets to know those public figures better. Moreover, as discussed before Netflix branding strategy is based on image of diversity in different aspects such as gender, sexuality, etc. (Wayne, 2018). That is observable in the findings of this study as well; as discovered prior Netflix online presence on Instagram does not reveal a preference for promotion of leading characters based on gender and in general, when content is being advertised, more than one member of the cast is being represented.

In terms of the content Netflix promotes (Sub-RQ2), it becomes clear that the platform sustains its known strategies of predominantly advertising series (Jenner, 2018), which is potentially inspired by the opportunity for longer-lasting engagement and binge-watching practices, usually associated with the Netflix brand (Jenner, 2018). In this sense, Netflix uses Instagram to exhibit elements of its “quality” content and create a gallery of its most worthy shows. As previously noted, the five most common productions to appear on Netflix US Instagram account are series. Furthermore, when it comes to engagement, the highest number of views and likes in eight out of twelve types of published content existent in the dataset, are based on posts about series. It is evident that Netflix communication strategy

is heavily dependent on content related to the series it streams. That suggests the importance of sustaining fan communities around the shows. To take a step back, the relation between the emotions with which those shows are being advertised is also important in the evaluation of Netflix brand identity and strategy. In three out of the five most advertised shows, “Humor” was the most frequently detected tone in the posts’ captions. Those emotional appeals are not necessarily related to the genre of the show in question. It could be concluded that even though the promotion of the content is a main goal, the message Netflix sends has an equally important role of presenting its humorous and light attitude.

Further aspects that contribute to gathering insights in terms of the shared content are the additional elements Netflix uses in its communication strategy. There is an observable tendency for elements such as hashtags, emojis and tags to be present in the captions posted by Netflix. This could be related to the characteristic of the online culture and the attempts to boost engagement (Stephen, Sciandra, & Inman, 2015). The research findings indicate the apparent inclination of the brand to use tags of other Netflix’ Instagram accounts, Instagram accounts of shows streaming on Netflix, and the Instagram accounts of actors. This directs towards the assumption that Netflix is trying to create a vast network of content that leads up to the brand but is also diverse and satisfies different needs. Social media marketing offers an environment for niche targeted content to be distributed (Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, & Segado-Boj, 2019), and this network of accounts within the Instagram platform represents an example of this phenomenon.

When delving into the essence of Netflix US brand identity on Instagram (Sub-RQ3), the third category “Overall Emotion (Caption)” is an indicator of what tone and emotions Netflix integrates in their brand voice and contributes to the evaluation of its brand identity. Netflix’ online behavior expresses mainly positive emotional appeals; “Humor” 32.94% ( $n = 56$ ) being the most common emotion encountered in the data set, followed by “Provoking” 12.35% ( $n = 21$ ). “Excitement”, “Positivity”, and “Inspiration” are not far behind according to their frequency throughout the data. Thus, the brand identity can be described as light, positive, and witty as it strives to provoke and engage the audience in a smart and funny way.

To answer the research question, Netflix US uses the Instagram platform as a place to showcase its brand identity and promote itself through the content it streams and the actors that are part of those productions. By using the visual essence of Instagram, Netflix posts content in the form of images and videos, which has the purpose of promoting the platform, the content or the actors. Netflix uses multiple of the Instagram features and especially the opportunity to tag other Instagram accounts. That contributes to targeting niche audiences and creating smaller communities under the umbrella of the

Netflix brand community. The common appearance of actors throughout the Netflix US account is a further element incorporated to create stronger relationship between the audience and Netflix as it puts a face to the brand. Netflix US turns the Instagram platform into a place where users can experience its light attitude and hear its witty and humorous voice, while being exposed to parts of its "quality" content.

This study was inspired by the visual nature of Instagram, its constantly growing influence and Netflix incorporation of social networking sites in their communication strategy and managed to shed light on the ways in which Instagram serves the interests of Netflix when it comes to distributing messages to viral audiences. The study confirmed that similarly to Netflix' online activity on Twitter, posting content between two and five times a day (Fernández Gómez & Martín Quevedo, 2018), the streaming service provider is also rather active on Instagram. Furthermore, the observation by Ginsberg (2015) that Instagram seems to be a direct way to users' lives, identities, beliefs, etc., is indeed implemented by Netflix by their way of expressing their own brand identity through video storytelling in combination with variety of positive emotions and humorous statements placed in the captions of Instagram posts in order to relate and engage audiences. The Instagram account Netflix US sustains provides users of the platform with a reflection of who Netflix is, what values it holds and what it offers. The social media platform serves as a place for Netflix not only to exhibit the content it streams but to display its own brand identity. Thus, it engages users on two levels: the micro level of small niche communities built around a certain show and the macro level of being part of the Netflix brand community.

## **5.2 Scientific and Social Implications**

The scientific contribution of this study lays in the exploration of the theoretical framework and its comparison to the findings of the project. It further looks through existing literature on Netflix and finds proof of previous observations on their communication strategy (Jenner, 2018) along with providing new knowledge in the under-researched aspect of Netflix' social media marketing on Instagram. Exploring previous research on branding strategies and applying it to the case of Netflix, results in specific findings of what the media giant implements and how it does it. Furthermore, the study provides specific knowledge on the different kinds of content published by Netflix and the responsiveness of the users to it. For example, previous research indicated that users that follow brands on social media platforms tend to be more loyal when the brand communicates its values and expresses its brand identity by avoiding a focus only on apparently promotional content (Greer & Ferguson, 2017). Based on the conducted analysis, it became apparent that Netflix publishes content that even though

promotional in its essence also carries traces that communicate different aspects from its brand identity. The importance of emotional appeal was further discussed based on existing literature (Lee & Hong, 2016) and proven to be widely integrated in Netflix' communication strategy on Instagram. The part of the analysis focused on engagement revealed high levels of responsiveness particularly to the humorous brand voice of Netflix. These are examples that reveal the relevance of this research' findings to existing theory but simultaneously provide additions to the existing academic understanding of the matter by the establishment of an external overview of the online activity of a media giant such as Netflix.

This research focuses on concepts related to branding and marketing initiatives. The conducted investigation expands the practical knowledge related to the different uses of the Instagram platform and how it can be incorporated by brands for promotional purposes as well as a place for brand identity representation. The project can serve as guidance for marketing practitioners in terms of how to implement the social networking site, Instagram, in their social media strategies as the study specifically focuses on the platform and the features it provides. This study explores an alternative to traditional advertising and suggests another option for marketing specialists to consider. This project's acknowledgement of the growing influence of Instagram in consumers' life and the platforms' wide integration as a branding tool could potentially inspire brands to establish a strategy that can not only bring monetary gains while being cost-efficient, but also guide companies into ways of building a strong and loyal brand community. Therefore, it could be used by brands as a tool to gain competitive advantage within the industry.

### **5.3 Limitations and Future Research**

The rapid growth of Netflix subscribers base and its expanding transnational reach predispose the brand to continuously evolve and adapt its brand identity to the market and to the specific social media platforms it uses, such as Instagram. Thus, the content shared on Instagram changes. This study focused on data gathered within the period of February 1, 2019 until May 3, 2019. Consequently, the project was able to extract extensive amount of insights based on the dataset, however, this yet remains a small portion of Netflix online activity on Instagram. Furthermore, the span of roughly three months is not enough to capture the communication strategy in its completeness and all the layers of the brand identity.

Since this research is based on qualitative content analysis which can be defined with extracting meanings and interpreting data in order to categorize it and reduce it (Schreier, 2013), the researcher plays a significant role in the analysis, which can cause biases to arise and alter the results. Firstly, the method of purposive sampling can be characterized with certain level of subjectivity as the decision of

which data to use is based on the researcher's judgement. Secondly, the process of coding the data represents the highest risk of alterations to occur as personal opinions, beliefs and theoretical background can skew the researcher's objectiveness. The possible occurrence of such issues could be decreased with the involvement of another or more researchers to create a coding frame separately and then compare and finalize it, followed by coding the data first independently and agreeing on the final codes together. This way the existence of supervision will diminish the possibility of biased decisions. If implemented, the intercoder reliability could be measured and could serve as an indication of the project's objectiveness and lack of bias (Lombard, Snyder-Duch, & Bracken, 2002).

Although social media marketing is a topic that has been previously explored, and in terms of Netflix a few existing studies focus on its use of Twitter to engage audiences and promote content, still little attention has been paid to the integration of Instagram into Netflix' communication strategy and how it works. Although the conducted study offers insights on Netflix US communication strategy on Instagram, it does not focus on exploring the reasons behind the choice to advertise certain shows and making them a highlight. Wang's (2016) findings of a study on the implementation of social networking sites in the marketing promotion of television productions were based on Twitter posts of US TV networks indicate that there is a connection between persistent online presence on Twitter and a greater number of television ratings. Similar research could be conducted in terms of Netflix advertised content on Instagram in comparison to the movies and series that are not promoted on the platform. The finding of the study will provide an insight on the influence over users that the online content has and the relation to their preferences of what to view and the overall viewing ratings. A further element that could be analyzed is whether the number of subscriptions to the Netflix platform increases as online activity grows.

Numeric factors such as likes and comments were calculated in relation to different published types of content, which provided insights on engagement. However, this study predominantly focuses on the strategic aspect of the choices Netflix makes and the ways it uses the platform rather than exploring Instagram users' responses to the published posts. Future research can be conducted on the engagement levels that Netflix' marketing communication on Instagram accomplishes. By not simply counting the comments but also taking their content in consideration, a deeper understanding of the users' perception of the communicated messages can be achieved. In order to gather additional data, Netflix' comments could also be analyzed as to reinforce the understanding of Netflix' brand identity and its attitude towards users.

Lastly, to better understand how Netflix uses Instagram as a branding tool, this project and its findings could serve as an interview guide for future research. To gather further insights on Netflix' online activity on Instagram, Netflix community managers could be interviewed in order for a research based on internal observation to be conducted. This would provide a new perspective and depth to the analysis.

This study contributes to the academic knowledge of an under-researched aspect of an established media leader's communication strategy on the Instagram platform. This project provides a thorough analysis of what kind of content Netflix publishes by investigation conducted both regarding the type of the content posted on Instagram (videos and images) and the type of content being promoted (movies and series). It further tackles elements such as the emotions that are being transmitted through the posts and additional elements such as emojis and tags. The study also established the promotional purposes behind the content that's shared on Instagram by Netflix US. Through the analysis of those aspects, this research manages to find an answer of how Instagram could be used as a branding tool and provides an external view on Netflix communication strategy which could potentially be used as guidance by other brands. The study explores the uses of SNSs with promotional purposes and exhibits how Netflix presents its brand identity through brand messages that are successfully balanced to be both entertaining and contain promotional elements. The scientific relevance of this project comes from the additional insights gathered based on existing theory but in a direction where a research gap was found. While the social importance of it lays in the potential applicability of those findings by brands in their marketing strategies.

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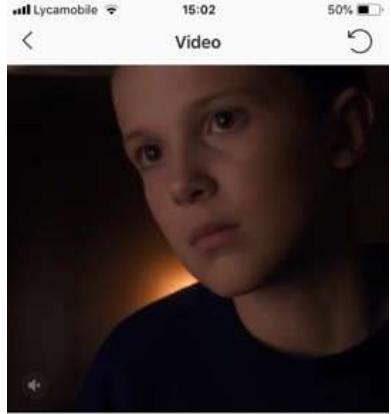
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## Appendices

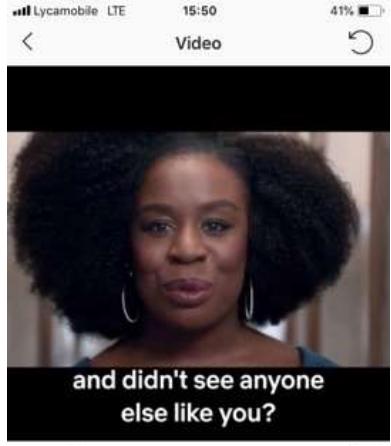
### Appendix A: Coding Frame

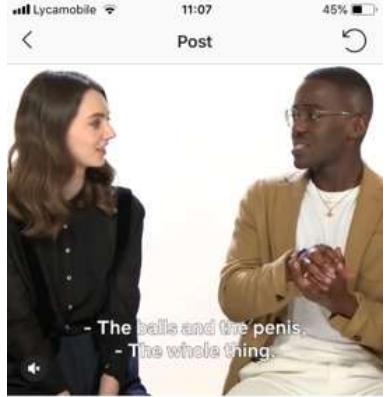
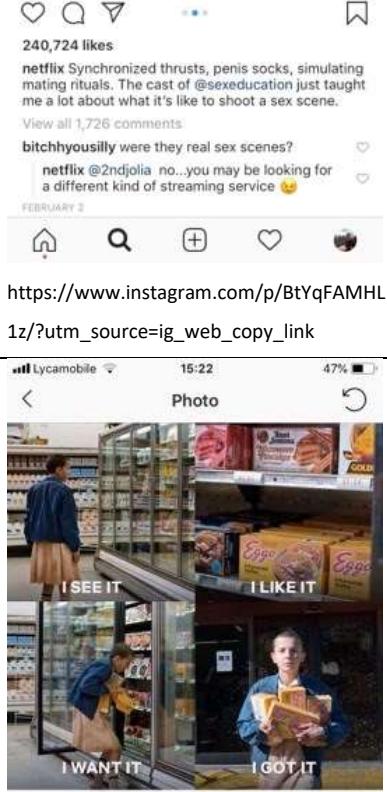
Category	Subcategories	Codes	Decision Rule	Example
Type of Advertised Netflix Content		Series	Cultural products divided into a set of episodes usually organized into seasons	 <a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bu8-YmfHCrW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bu8-YmfHCrW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a>
		Movie	A production that does not have multiple episodes and is usually with a duration between 1 – 2 hours	 <a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv9liZ0nYSD">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv9liZ0nYSD</a>

				/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link
	Both	Containing elements from both movie/s and series		 <p>337,267 likes netflix SO much happened this week View all 2,460 comments rmeshutler Oh i see. 7 comments for 7 slides. See</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv425n-n4WR/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv425n-n4WR/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
	Other	Content that is unrelated to movies/series		 <p>337,267 likes netflix SO much happened this week View all 2,460 comments rmeshutler Oh i see. 7 comments for 7 slides. See</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv425n-n4WR/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv425n-n4WR/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>

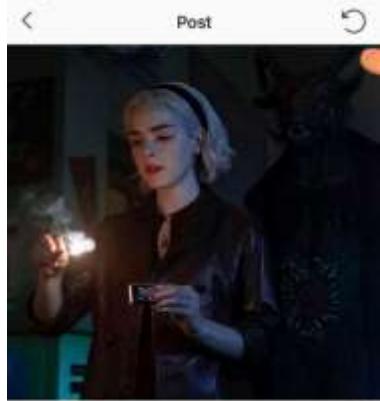
Type of Post	Video	Compilation	Collection of video materials that are unrelated	 <p>3,187,197 views</p> <p>netflix THIS IS NOT THE TRAILER... but I miss Stranger Things too so I compiled a bunch of Mileven's best moments.</p> <p>View all 8,188 comments</p> <p>elmandcherry_ New Content: A concept</p> <p>netflix @paper_grl 😊</p> <p>FEBRUARY 13</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt1QoPuH_xT/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt1QoPuH_xT/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
		Movie/ Series Segment	A single scene or a brief part of a movie/series	

			<p>12:14 88% Video 0:32</p> <p>I just took a DNA test.</p> <p>6,506,697 views · Liked by meri_demirdzhieva and whattowatchonnetflix netflix Lizzo is the only person I care about these days. View all 15,308 comments</p> <p>APRIL 23</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/BwnHK1Rn5a4/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</p>
	Trailer	Specifically created sequence of scenes promoting movie/series	<p>17:43 23% Video</p> <p>I've always wanted to date the most popular girl.</p> <p>4,431,651 views netflix When I tell you I screamed! Yes, #PerfectDate is a movie starring @ncentineo @lauramarano @camimendes and @odiseas, and YES, it arrives on Netflix April 12th. View all 27,010 comments</p> <p>discontinuado Movie looks</p> <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/BveqBvNjYIY/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</p>

	Video Interview	Interviews with actors and other members of the production team	 <p>611,942 views netflix What a dream! @brielarson is all of us on our day off. View all 486 comments APRIL 5</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv4v14-nyW2/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bv4v14-nyW2/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
	Special Video	Video materials with special brand messages that carry social relevance. Additionally, these could be promotional videos about certain movie/series through which a socially relevant Netflix brand message is being communicated	 <p>1,528,185 views netflix Let's make room for voices yet to be heard, for stories yet to be told. View all 2,321 comments netflixlat B R A V O dearwhitepeople This is absolutely beautiful 🌟</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BucPgyLn_hc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BucPgyLn_hc/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>

	Video Discussion	Video materials containing behind the scenes cast reactions and commentary on movie/series related topics	 <p>11:07 Post</p> <p>- The balls and the penis, - The whole thing.</p> <p>240,724 likes</p> <p>netflix Synchronized thrusts, penis socks, simulating mating rituals. The cast of @sexeducation just taught me a lot about what it's like to shoot a sex scene.</p> <p>View all 1,726 comments</p> <p>bitchhyouslylly were they real sex scenes? netflix @2ndjolia no...you may be looking for a different kind of streaming service 😊</p> <p>FEBRUARY 2</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BtYqFAMHL1z/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BtYqFAMHL1z/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
Image	Meme	Altered images usually with humorous purpose	 <p>15:22 Photo</p> <p>I SEE IT I LIKE IT I WANT IT I GOT IT</p> <p>1,247,405 likes</p> <p>netflix Eleven rings. (via @xnxxnetflix) View all 12,356 comments</p> <p>netfixca well, you got it msjamieclayton i just spit out my iced coffee. You win, 🎉🎉🎉</p> <p>FEBRUARY 20</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BuHdfSjHIMi/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BuHdfSjHIMi/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>

	Photoshoot	Single or multiple photos taken by a photographer	 <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/BwzsXX5HPVD/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</p>
	Movie Poster	Specifically created poster (image) to promote movie/series	 <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/BwWPe5UnJ0c/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</p>

	Scene screenshot	Screenshots of certain scene/s from a movie or series	 <p>310,256 likes netflix These stills from part 2 of Chilling Adventures of Sabrina are a good reminder that high school is hell. Especially when you're in the middle of a classic boy next door / mysterious warlock love triangle. View all 1,722 comments subrinanetflix my three boys</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bul6G0-n5JC/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bul6G0-n5JC/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
	Reposted Content	Content that is re-shared and taken from another source	 <p>472,844 likes netflix IT IS HAPPENING @toalltheboysnetflix View all 5,483 comments britsims Woah woah woah, it's really real @annamiddleton netflix @britsims woah woah woah</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvLlg6wHw6J/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvLlg6wHw6J/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>

		Other	Footage from public events; moments behind the scenes; personal images	 <p>174,091 likes netflix Thank you @nxonnetflix, thank you. View all 1,255 comments nxonnetflix IT IS KILLING MEEEEEE</p> <p>FEBRUARY 3</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BtZ2_oGHD3H/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BtZ2_oGHD3H/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
Promotional Purpose	Platform Promotion	Posted content with the goal of promoting the Netflix platform and its brand identity. Also, through referencing to other Netflix Instagram accounts		

	<p>Actor Promotion</p>	<p>Content related to actors and actresses' career and participation in certain movie/series, and their personal life</p>	 <p>15:10 Photo</p> <p>261,505 likes</p> <p>netflix Fun fact about @emmamatmackey: she was born and raised in France, and moved to Leeds at age 17 to pursue studies in English Language and Literature. She also gets mistaken for Margot Robbie...a lot. (📸 by @laetitiafiorencemann for @jalousemag)</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt6NFQvnvME/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">View all 1,304 comments</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt6NFQvnvME/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt6NFQvnvME/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
	<p>Content Promotion</p>	<p>Content focused on promoting certain movie/series</p>	 <p>15:40 Photo</p> <p>331,975 likes</p> <p>netflix To All the Kissing Booths I've Loved Before (📸 via @jennyyhan)</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BuUE9V7n7Qo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">View all 1,420 comments</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BuUE9V7n7Qo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BuUE9V7n7Qo/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>

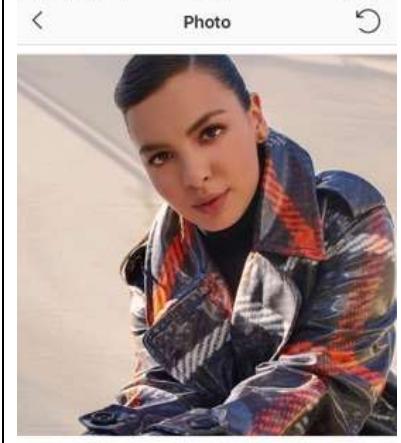
Overall Emotion (Caption)	Humor	<p>Amusing statements predominantly consisting of jokes; sarcasm and funny references and comparisons</p>	 <p>441,779 likes netflix Feels like just yesterday we were all introduced to this totally normal group of teens. View all 4,246 comments</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BvUaCZPn0VE/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BvUaCZPn0VE/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
	Nostalgia	<p>A sentimental affection expressed through content related to series that have ended and depicting information about when they launched and what were the first lines of the show</p>	

				<p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BuEqnMRnp8e/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BuEqnMRnp8e/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p> <p>Caption: "Feels like just yesterday we were all introduced to this totally normal group of teens."</p>
	Anticipation	The emotion conveyed when announcing new premiers of movie/series		 <p>4,431,651 views</p> <p>netflix When I tell you I screamed! Yes, #PerfectDate is a movie starring @ncentineo @lauramarano @camimendes and @odiseas, and YES, it arrives on Netflix April 12th.</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BveqBvNjYI/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BveqBvNjYI/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p> <p>Caption: "When I tell you I screamed! Yes, #PerfectDate is a movie starring @ncentineo @lauramarano @camimendes and @odiseas, and YES, it arrives on Netflix April 12th."</p>

	Inspiration	<p>Attempt to stimulate audiences to feel/do/think about something that has social relevance; human interest</p>	 <p>951,090 views</p> <p>netflix This is the Valentine's Day episode I wish all LGBTQ+ kids could see. Heart, humor, and so much pure love. @odaatnetflix</p> <p>View all 1,910 comments</p> <p>dc_290 One day at a time is literally the best show ever!!!!</p> <p>netflix @dc_290</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt4So5jHQq/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt4So5jHQq/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p> <p>Caption: "This is the Valentine's Day episode I wish all LGBTQ+ kids could see. Heart, humor, and so much pure love. @odaatnetflix"</p>
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		<p>Positivity</p>	<p>Accompanies content that focuses on friendships between cast members; support; self-love; awareness and the revelation of overall positive attitude towards life</p>	 <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/BtjVpJGniKS/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</p> <p>Caption:</p> <p>"I asked <u>@damon_baker</u> the story behind his shoot with <u>@debbyryan</u>, and it makes me adore them both even more. "Creating with Debby was a wonderful experience because we had discussed creating together for a little while and already had an instant relaxed connection. I met Debby at her house actually, through my friend Cole. Debby had invited us to a fun event happening in LA called Emo Night (which believe it or not was my first time in a mosh-pit). Going through that experience together I would say creates a bond, ha. A few months later we arranged to spend a little time on set together to see what happens. We put on a leather jacket, turned on some music and let ourselves go. Since I was seventeen I've been on set and most of the time I am surrounded by people, which is always wonderful because I love to</p>
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				collaborate and combine all of our ideas but I also value the feeling of being one-on-one with my subjects, I got to do this with Debby. No artificial lighting - all natural, no pressure - just Debby, myself, a camera and great energy.””
	Neutral	Predominantly informational and with a descriptive purpose		<p>15:32 44% Lycamobile</p> <p>Photo</p> <p>netflix</p>  <p>200,220 likes</p> <p>netflix The Drapers are both in Toronto shooting Netflix things. @kiernanshipka "Let it Snow" and @januaryjones "Spinning Out"</p> <p>View all 807 comments</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BuPfUkbHN0n/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BuPfUkbHN0n/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p> <p>Caption: “The Drapers are both in Toronto shooting Netflix things. @kiernanshipka “Let it Snow” and @januaryjones “Spinning Out””</p>

	<p>Provoking</p>	<p>Challenging content that contains urge for interactivity achieved through questions and triggering statements</p>	 <p>115,731 likes View all 1,595 comments</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BuEbvlvHPQd/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BuEbvlvHPQd/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>

				<p>Caption: “ Appreciation Post  On One Day at a Time @isabella.gomez plays nerdy queer icon Elena Alvarez. IRL, the Colombian born actress is impossibly cool, incredibly woke, and a champion for Latinx representation. ( by Bennet Perez)”</p>
Additional Elements	Emojis	Digital image posted with the purpose of strengthening an idea or expressing emotion		 <p>https://www.instagram.com/p/BurFZHkn4m1/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</p>

	Hashtags	Word preceded with the following sign: "#"; commonly used in social media as an identifier of a certain topic	 <p>1,020,765 views View all 1,315 comments</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt8tN3CHxcU/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/Bt8tN3CHxcU/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>
	Tags	External tag of another active account on the Instagram platform	 <p>177,243 likes View all 792 comments</p> <p><a href="https://www.instagram.com/p/BtqwnV1n0uW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link">https://www.instagram.com/p/BtqwnV1n0uW/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link</a></p>

\*The column consisting of Examples contains a visual element (screenshot of the post representing the code) and a link to the post

\* For better visualization some elements in question are highlighted