

**‘Quality Television’ on Netflix: Uncovering the Dynamics of Cultural Capital in Television Viewing on Netflix.**

*A qualitative research to explore the perception of ‘quality television’ among the higher educated and the lower educated in Dutch society.*

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Master’s Thesis

June 21<sup>st</sup>, 2022

## ABSTRACT

Over the years, scholars started to deny the idea that people with a high social status solely value complex culture because of their high cultural capital. People developed a taste for a variety of cultural forms; both 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow'. This, for instance, has led to a reappraisal of television. One of the reasons that has set this change in motion is the emergence of streaming services. These popular platforms offer a greater variety in television, and among these streaming services is Netflix. Through high production values and technological advancement, Netflix aims to offer what scholars have introduced as 'quality television'. The term has been increasingly used in television studies regarding linear television content, but how do viewers perceive 'quality television' on a streaming service? This study explores how Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital experience 'quality television' on Netflix. Relatively few researchers have investigated the concept of 'quality television' on streaming platforms, which makes this thesis relevant and a contribution to existing literature. Using semi-structured interviews, 12 Netflix viewers, both male and female between the ages of 22 and 78, were interviewed. They were asked about their opinions on 'bad' and 'good' television content and their experience with Netflix. To investigate these opinions and experiences, theoretical knowledge is included in the theoretical framework of this thesis that focuses on the traditional cultural capital theory, the concept of emerging cultural capital, 'quality television' from a viewer's perspective, and Netflix as a quality platform. These theories serve as a fundament for this thesis. The analysis provided four significant themes that arose from the data. The first theme shows that the higher educated are more culturally omnivorous as they have a broad range of preferred genres to choose from, while the lower educated are limited in their preferences. The second theme indicates the higher educated as 'camp viewers' as they admit enjoying watching 'bad' television programming. The third theme shows that Netflix viewers value content that matches their interests which is determined by their preferences, content or genre diversity, and innovation. Furthermore, the freedom to choose anything, at any time and any place, and Netflix's substantive usability enhance the viewing experience among Netflix viewers. This is indicated as the fourth theme of this thesis. Finally, the last theme explains the controversy of 'good television' versus 'quality television' through the value judgments of the audience about the technical characteristics of television. In summary, it can be concluded that the concept of 'quality television' is predominantly used among scholars rather than viewers to indicate a specific category of television, but viewers do not directly label television as 'quality television' when they assess the content as 'good'. Both groups evaluate television based on their preferences and interests, but also on their needs and personal moods. According to them, Netflix is considered a high-quality platform, but Netflix's reputation among viewers is on thin ice due to its lack of innovation and oversaturation, but also due to the emergence of other 'quality' streaming services.

**KEYWORDS:** *Quality Television, Cultural Capital, Netflix, Viewer's perspective, Netherlands.*

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## 1. Introduction

Until the 1980s, television was perceived as a form of ‘low culture’, cultural ‘trash’, and distasteful (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2015; Lavie & Dhoest, 2015; Logan, 2016). Recently, a renewed interest in aesthetics and narrative complexity has led to a higher cultural status of television in society, which has attracted more narrow niches (Dhoest, 2014; Logan, 2016; Nelson, 2006). Furthermore, critics have started to associate several TV shows and serial television dramas with ‘quality’, and with the rise of streaming services, this had led to a reappraisal of television (Dhoest, 2014; Nelson, 2006).

One of the agents setting change in motion is HBO, defining itself by its tagline ‘It’s Not TV. It’s HBO’ (Dhoest, 2014; Nelson, 2006). They contributed to the increasing fragmentation of the audience which has guided the continued production of fiction programming (Logan, 2016). The audience fragmentation initiated new niche audiences that consist of the new petite bourgeoisie, and they started to influence taste preferences (Nelson, 2006). In the past, taste was established within the framework of traditional high culture because this group was considered to have high cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Bourdieu’s traditional distinction between ‘lowbrow’ and ‘highbrow’ culture is largely based on educational level; the people with high cultural capital have obtained a high educational level and vice versa (Bourdieu, 1984; Lavie, 2014; Lavie & Dhoest, 2015; Prieur & Savage, 2013). This theory holds that the curriculum of the higher educational levels is organized in such a way that children who are not familiar with ‘highbrow’ activities will have a difficult time keeping pace with children who are familiar with ‘high culture’ (De Graaf et al., 2000). Therefore, for a long time, the higher educated group was able to influence which culture was seen as ‘highbrow’ or ‘lowbrow’ because of their social status. In this distinction television used to be associated with ‘low culture’, however, nowadays this approach has taken a turn (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2015). The newly formed niche audiences started to establish taste preferences and the rise of streaming platforms has set change in motion in the television landscape (Castellano and Meimaridis, 2021; Nelson, 2006; Wayne, 2017). These platforms have allowed for television content that ‘suits all tastes’ (Castellano and Meimaridis, 2021; Wayne, 2017). In other words, streaming services offer a greater variety of television content which allows television to be no longer automatically considered to be ‘lowbrow’ culture. Experts started to label specific productions as ‘quality television’ by using certain criteria to assess its quality such as originality, script, and acting (Dhoest, 2014).

As previously mentioned, the television industry has been greatly influenced by the rise of streaming services. Among these streaming services is Netflix; the largest subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) platform in the world (Wayne, 2021). Netflix has made its entrance in more than 190 countries and counts more than 200 million subscribers of which the Netherlands gained 3 million in 2019 (Statista, 2020b; Wayne, 2021). When the company started producing in 2011, Netflix has largely followed HBO’s model to establish its brand identity (Wayne, 2021). Netflix conceptualized ‘the act of streaming’ as a more engaging form of television and their subscriber-based revenue model

has reinforced the position of streaming as the inevitable replacement of linear television (Wayne, 2017).

Previous literature has provided some interesting insights on the viewer's perspectives on 'quality television' regarding linear TV programming, however, little research has focused on the perception of the audience regarding 'quality television' on streaming services (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Etayo et al., 2021; Manero et al., 2013). Furthermore, relatively few scholars have included cultural capital in their assessment of audience perceptions of 'quality television' (Krolo et al., 2020; Lavie, 2014; Lavie & Dhoest, 2015). Therefore, it is interesting to explore how this concept is perceived by audiences with various levels of cultural capital and how they make decisions about what to watch on a platform such as Netflix. The research question that this thesis aims to answer is '*how do Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital experience 'quality television' on Netflix?*'. In order to structure this research and to accurately formulate an answer to the main research question, three sub-questions are proposed. Firstly, the perception of viewers regarding 'quality television' is found to be complex and can have different meanings (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). Therefore, the different perspectives of 'quality television' are explored and explained in the context of cultural capital. This leads to the following sub-question:

1. *What do Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital (high versus low) consider as 'quality television'?*

Secondly, the conditions upon which the two different groups make their choices about what to watch on Netflix are taken into consideration. Therefore, the second sub-question is formulated as follows:

2. *How do Dutch Netflix viewers make their choices on Netflix regarding what to watch?*

Finally, it is important to zoom in on how quality is connected to the streaming service on which it is being shown (Burroughs, 2018). Thus, the third sub-question that this thesis aims to answer is:

3. *To what extent do the two groups consider Netflix a 'quality platform'?*

This thesis builds upon previous literature as it explores the concept of 'quality television' on streaming services rather than linear TV programming. Furthermore, different levels of cultural capital are considered in this investigation. In other words, this thesis focuses on how Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital experience 'quality television' on Netflix. For this research, respondents are chosen based on the condition to have either a high or a low level of cultural capital. This level is based upon the traditional distinction by Bourdieu (1984) whereby a high educational

level is equivalent to a high level of cultural capital and vice versa. Through semi-structured interviews, this thesis aims to explore how these groups experience ‘quality television’ on Netflix. While previous studies generally describe Bourdieu’s traditional distinction in cultural capital, this study focuses on exploring this concept and its emerging forms by looking for underlying meanings through interviews. Thus, this research sheds new light on the original distinction of cultural capital regarding the perception of ‘quality television’. Moreover, this study aims to contribute to research on ‘quality television’ by concentrating on Netflix, the world’s largest subscription video-on-demand service (Wayne, 2021). Previous literature regarding ‘quality television’ generally sheds light on linear television content, however, this study zooms in on the content that Netflix offers. Thus, this research fills a gap in existing knowledge and is academically relevant. Since the idea of cultural capital is still actively present nowadays, the television industry could benefit from this study in terms of how they act and anticipate on people’s experiences with ‘quality television’ on Netflix. This research could contribute to the decision-making process of new strategies by players in the television industry to benefit from viewers’ choices in what they watch and why they do so. Exploring the concept of ‘quality television’ on Netflix from the perspective of Netflix viewers and their cultural capital can contribute to the understanding of how ‘good’ and ‘bad’ television content is perceived in society. Therefore, this study additionally provides practical and societal relevance.

## **1.1 Thesis Outline**

This section provides a brief outline of the following chapters of this thesis. Firstly, chapter 2 includes a theoretical framework that gives an in-depth overview of theories and previous literature that are relevant to the matters addressed in this thesis. The theoretical framework is divided into two main concepts and four sub-concepts. The main concepts that structure this chapter are ‘the idea and importance of the cultural capital theory’ and ‘quality television’. The first concept is then divided into ‘traditional cultural capital’ and ‘emerging cultural capital’. The second concept is split into: ‘viewer’s perspective of quality television’ and ‘Netflix as a quality platform’. Together, this provides the necessary theoretical knowledge that is fundamental to this thesis.

Secondly, a detailed method section is provided in chapter 3. This section is divided into five separate paragraphs: the choice of method, sample and data collection, operationalization, data analysis, and the validity and reliability of this research.

The fourth chapter of this study discusses the most significant results of the analysis. From the analysis, five main themes have been derived: ‘among the higher educated cultural omnivorousness is clearly present, while the lower educated show firm preferences’, ‘the pleasure of watching ‘bad television’ creates camp viewers and generates a sense of superiority among the higher educated’, ‘Netflix viewers value television that matches their interests which is determined by their preferences, content or genre diversity, and innovation’, ‘the freedom to choose anything, at any time and any place, and Netflix’s substantive usability enhance the viewing experience, but oversaturation may be

lying in wait', and 'the controversy of 'good television' versus 'quality television' through value judgments of the audience about the technical characteristics of television'.

Finally, the last chapter includes the conclusion of this thesis in which the central and sub-questions of this thesis are answered. Furthermore, this section includes a critical analysis of the study while it touches upon the limitations and provides recommendations for future research.

## **2. Theoretical Framework**

In this chapter, previous studies on the concept of cultural capital are discussed, as well as academia specifically related to ‘quality television’ regarding both the viewer’s perspectives and Netflix as a quality streamer. Firstly, the idea and importance of the cultural capital theory are outlined. In this section, both the traditional idea of cultural capital as Bourdieu initiated is presented, and this is followed by the concept of ‘emerging cultural capital’ that includes the development of the ‘cultural omnivore’. Secondly, an overview of previous research on ‘quality television’ is given to support the analysis and to help interpret the results. This overview discusses both the viewer’s perspective of ‘quality television’, which is found to be a complex and difficult concept, and Netflix as a ‘quality platform’.

### **2.1 The Idea and Importance of the Cultural Capital Theory**

Over time, several theoretical reflections on cultural capital have been proposed (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Prieur & Savage, 2011). In cultural studies, Bourdieu’s definition of the term has taken the dominant position (Throsby, 1999). Originally, the term was used to explain the unequal opportunities in education for children because of the different social classes leading to an unbalanced distribution of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1984). Familiarity with ‘highbrow’ culture – prestigious or legitimate cultural expressions – make it easier for these children to succeed in school (Prieur & Savage, 2011). Connecting the idea of cultural capital to the creative industries, it is argued that the various social classes distinguish themselves based on certain preferences of tastes (Rebers et al., 2006). These differences in tastes are dependent on the families that they grow up in and, consequently, the education that they obtain (Rebers et al., 2006). Several studies represent cultural capital through the educational level of the respondent or that of their parents (Anheier et al., 2004; Robinson & Garnier, 1985). Van Eijck and Kraaykamp (2009) found a relationship between parents’ educational level and the degree to which their children participate in cultural activities and own cultural goods. Here, higher educated families contribute to the preference of their children for ‘highbrow’ culture. Furthermore, their children also have a higher chance of valuing and purchasing cultural goods (Van Eijck & Kraaykamp, 2009). From their parents and in school, children learn how to give meaning to, and value cultural products and services. This knowledge is what Bourdieu defines as cultural capital (Rebers et al., 2006). Thus, Bourdieu identifies a one-on-one relationship between cultural capital and the pleasure of complex, ‘highbrow’ culture (Rebers et al., 2006). However, several scholars have argued that people with high cultural capital do not solely value complex culture (Peterson & Simkus, 1992; Peterson, 1992). Peterson (1992) was the first to introduce the idea of the cultural omnivore as he has indicated that individuals with a high cultural capital tend to appreciate a range of music and are thus not limited to the more complex forms of music.

These changing relations between class and cultural capital are further highlighted by other scholars such as Gripsrud et al. (2011) and Prieur and Savage (2011). They describe this changing

relation between class and cultural capital as emerging cultural capital. This relatively new phenomenon has gradually evolved due to the increase of diverse cultural genres which constituted the rise of the cultural omnivore (Prieur & Savage, 2011). As the concept of cultural capital has been increasingly used across the social sciences and still plays a role nowadays, it is important to understand this concept with regard to this research. Therefore, both the traditional idea of cultural capital, as well as the newly formed ideas surrounding this concept (i.e., emerging cultural capital), are discussed.

### **2.1.1 Traditional Cultural Capital**

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, in cultural studies Bourdieu's original definition of cultural capital has taken the dominant position (Throsby, 1999). In his work called *Distinction*, Bourdieu was the first to describe the term and according to him cultural capital exists in three forms: "the *embodied* state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; the *objectified* state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.) ...; and in the *institutionalized* state, a form of objectification...." (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 17). According to Bourdieu (1986), the embodied state is the most important as he states that "most of the properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment" (p. 17). In his work *Distinction*, distinction refers to the judgment of quality and taste that comprises the 'mass' capitalist production and the 'restricted' artistic production (Bourdieu, 1984; Lavie, 2014; Lavie & Dhoest, 2015). In this distinction, 'restricted' artistic production is related to the idea of art for art's sake and is often referred to as 'highbrow' culture such as fine arts and classical music (Bourdieu, 1984; Prieur & Savage, 2011). Taste is related to social class and within these social classes, social groups exist that distinguish themselves by taste (Rupp & Haarmans, 1994). That said, individuals who favor the restricted artistic production are generally considered to have high cultural capital and 'good taste' due to their high educational level and familiarity with 'highbrow' culture (Bourdieu, 1984; Prieur & Savage, 2013).

Furthermore, because of the relatively high social position that this group has, they influence institutions in society that have legitimizing power which can be linked to the institutionalized state of cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In this case, the relation between social upbringing and cultural taste emphasizes a favorable taste for 'highbrow' culture which allows them to distinguish themselves from other social groups. This group has acquired cultural power and imposes its cultural values and norms on others (Rupp & Haarmans, 1994). These cultural standards serve the elite by excluding others from 'highbrow' art and, as a result, from certain occupations and social networks (Rupp & Haarmans, 1994). In contrast to the individuals that have considerably high cultural capital, there is a group that has not obtained a significantly high social position in society and therefore they do not benefit from cultural knowledge, habits, and taste (Bourdieu, 1984; Prieur & Savage, 2013). Bourdieu argues that this group has obtained low cultural capital during their lives and these people thus feature different

lifestyles, tastes, and cultural affairs (Bourdieu, 1984; Prieur & Savage, 2013). According to the cultural capital theory, the latter group has little cultural power compared to the first group and is thus less capable of acknowledging what is valuable in the artistic order (Rupp & Haarmans, 1994). While the first group favors small-scale production with a high degree of autonomy, the second group favors mass-production – ‘commercial’ cultural goods – (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). Despite the large proportion of popular cultural production and its tremendous social and cultural importance nowadays, Bourdieu’s theory largely ignores the ways in which these – the most widely consumed cultural products – are consumed (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). Bourdieu’s limited interest in the restricted production of culture has led to the ignorance of the transformations in the field of cultural production in the 20<sup>th</sup> century; particularly the growth of the media industries (Hesmondhalgh, 2006). Additionally, Prieur and Savage (2011) point out Bourdieu’s interchangeable use of cultural capital with ‘legitimate culture’ that is associated with ‘highbrow’ culture, and they argue that Bourdieu’s analysis of popular culture lacks both sophistication and accuracy. However, they argue that Bourdieu nevertheless acknowledges the changes in evaluation and is aware of the transformation in ‘highbrow’ culture leading to commercialized popular culture (Prieur & Savage, 2011). Over the last decades, society has changed as individuals started to admire various forms of culture, which has led to different ideas about what is worthwhile (Krolo et al., 2020; Rebers et al., 2006). For instance, over the years, television has taken an increasingly prominent position in society due to several technological changes through which we view and receive television (Lotz, 2018). Especially the shift from cable and linear television toward digital and streaming services has transformed the television industry tremendously (Krolo et al., 2020; Lotz, 2018). Television went from broadcast to narrowcast which led to a niche focus instead of a mass audience (Krolo et al., 2020; Lotz, 2018). Zooming in on Netflix, its strategy is to conglomerate niches that they call ‘taste communities’ (Lotz, 2018). This strategy is possible because of their access to audience behavior data and the affordances of internet distribution (Lotz, 2018). Thus, the rise of the cultural omnivore – a cultural development where individuals start to favor a greater variety of forms of culture than before – has reconsidered Bourdieu’s original distinction of cultural capital (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Warde et al., 2007). Furthermore, the rise of the streaming era with a prominent focus on attracting niche audiences, creating taste communities, and gathering audience data has greatly changed the television industry and instigated a new angle toward the idea of cultural capital (Krolo et al., 2020; Lotz, 2018). This newly formed idea of cultural capital, defined as emerging cultural capital, is further explained in the next section.

### ***2.1.2 Emerging Cultural Capital***

As mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, the changing relationship between class and cultural capital has led to the introduction of a new phenomenon called emerging cultural capital (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Prieur & Savage, 2011). According to Peterson (1992), people with a high cultural capital do

not solely value complex culture. Due to the rise of ranging cultural genres across people, sociologists recognized the more fluid relationships between social structure and cultural life (Savage & Gayo, 2011). With this development, the concept of the cultural omnivore arose (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Savage & Gayo, 2011). Peterson (1992) was the first to introduce the idea of the cultural omnivore as he has indicated that individuals with a high cultural capital tend to appreciate a broad range of music and are thus not limited to the more complex forms of music as Bourdieu argued. In other words, this group has developed a taste for a variety of cultural forms as they appreciate both 'highbrow' and 'lowbrow' forms of culture (Sintas & Álvarez, 2002). This classifies them as cultural omnivores.

The idea of 'cultural omnivorousness' criticizes Bourdieu's original idea of cultural taste. Peterson (1992) argued that the distinction between omnivores and univores replaced Bourdieu's distinction between the snobs and the masses. Rather than an exclusive preference for 'highbrow' culture, it is argued that the elite started to appreciate a greater variety of forms of culture than they did before (Peterson, 1992; Ollivier, 2008). Thus, cultural omnivores develop a taste for all kinds of cultural forms including the popular forms of culture. Popular culture includes cultural products such as reality TV, electronic dance music, and films by Steven Spielberg (Savage & Gayo, 2011; Warde et al., 2007). These new aesthetics of the elite status replaced 'highbrow' snobbishness as a means of class distinction (Ollivier, 2008). Although cultural omnivorousness was initially conceptualized solely as an elite attribute, the term is now less closely associated with 'highbrow' cultural forms and measures "the total number of genres or activities that people prefer or practice" (Ollivier, 2008, p. 123). Cultural omnivorousness interacts with 'highbrow', 'middlebrow', and 'lowbrow' culture, and is linked to the degree to which people are 'open' to a diversity of cultural genres and activities (Ollivier, 2008). Openness depends on the know-how and other transposable cultural resources but also on individual personal qualities such as flexibility and tolerance (Ollivier, 2008). However, people who are classified as 'lowbrows' generally do not participate in 'highbrow' activities and are classified as univores (Ollivier, 2008). As a result, this group is perceived as the embodiment of having undesirable attitudes and personalities that are the opposite of being 'open' (Ollivier, 2008). It is found that those who occupy positions of power are the most likely to embody desirable attitudes; in the case of a cultural omnivore, he or she tends to be "young, urban, and well-educated" whereas univores are among the less educated (Ollivier, 2008, p. 126). However, the problem is that sometimes the surveys on which the outcomes are based tend to be built from the view of 'highbrow' culture (Ollivier, 2008). Therefore, the items that are included in the surveys may be more biased toward legitimate culture than to popular culture (Ollivier, 2008). In other words, if people are less engaged and have low scores on quantitative scales – e.g., because of a lack of interest – it could be because of the survey being more biased toward 'highbrow' culture. Omnivores should embody the attitudes of tolerance and flexibility which have shown to be two very difficult criteria to indicate in a survey (Ollivier, 2008). Through interviews, the present research tries to undercover the underlying dynamics of cultural capital in television viewing which constitutes the engagement of 'lowbrows' and 'highbrows'.

The idea of cultural omnivorousness is noticeable across several cultural industries, including the television industry. In the past, television used to be associated with what Bourdieu would consider as ‘low culture’. He viewed the media as a cultural industry that is shaped by the logic of capitalism and profit instead of the art field that follows a more autonomous field of cultural production (Lavie & Dhoest, 2015). He concluded that no product of the media, including television, could be socially constructed as a work of art (Lavie & Dhoest, 2015). However, in recent years, cultural sociologists have argued that forms of popular culture could be considered as autonomous works of art and be part of capitalist-industrial popular culture (Baumann, 2001; Hesmondhalgh, 2006). More specifically, Hesmondhalgh (2006) identifies all cultural fields, including the arts, as part of global commerce and capitalism. Despite the limitations of Bourdieu’s distinction theory, Hesmondhalgh (2006) argues that the increasing literature on ‘quality television’ rearranges the field of restricted production regarding television production. The distinction as Bourdieu once initiated is not quite as straightforward anymore today as it was before. The question is whether certain groups still distinguish good television from bad television. Although the shift from snob to omnivore should logically lead to a decline in the critiques of the mass culture, Ollivier (2008) found that people still value this discourse, especially among those who are classified as appreciators of ‘highbrow’ culture. In her analysis, she found that both ‘middlebrows’ and ‘lowbrows’ are less likely than ‘highbrows’ to reject specific genres and activities because of what they perceive as poor esthetic value (Ollivier, 2008). These groups generally perceive television as active and appreciate items such as reality television instead of ‘highbrows’ who criticize reality television and view the medium as a passive activity (Ollivier, 2008). Interestingly, Ollivier (2008) argues that the rhetoric of openness to cultural diversity should be considered when looking at the traditional distinction discussed by Bourdieu. It can be concluded that the traditional distinction as Bourdieu once initiated is reconsidered and redefined by many scholars over the past decades. Here, the rise of the cultural omnivore plays a key role, and this is linked to the idea of emerging cultural capital where the population starts to favor a greater variety of forms of culture than they did before (Ollivier, 2008; Prieur & Savage, 2013; Savage & Gayo, 2011; Warde et al., 2007).

## **2.2 ‘Quality Television’**

This study’s aim is not to construct a pre-defined interpretation of ‘quality television’. Instead, this research aims to explore the concept through the different perspectives, meanings, and values among the two distinctive groups having either low or high cultural capital. Therefore, the concept of ‘quality television’ is not extensively addressed in this chapter as there is room left for the respondents to individually interpret and give their perception of the concept. Although this research does not aim to discuss the definition of ‘quality television’, this chapter does address the viewer’s perspective of ‘quality television’ to help interpret the results. Moreover, to better understand the concept of ‘quality television’, it is important to focus on the audience as they perceive things through different lenses, but

it is also valuable to zoom in on the streaming platform itself (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Burroughs, 2018). Although quality could be evaluated through the assessment of cultural professionals in the field which is defined as ‘professional quality’, the aim of this study is to explore ‘quality television’ from a viewer’s perspective categorized as ‘receiver use quality’ and therefore excludes professional’s assessment of quality (Shamir, 2007). This section firstly discusses previous literature on the viewer’s perception of ‘quality television’. Secondly, ‘quality television’ is connected to Netflix and discusses Netflix as a quality platform with quality streams.

### ***2.2.1 Viewer’s Perspective of ‘Quality Television’***

This research focuses on the viewer’s perception of ‘quality television’ which is found to be complex and can have different meanings (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). Bayo-Moriones et al. (2015) have defined this viewpoint as the subjective perspective that focuses on understanding the contents that the audience chooses and the gratification that they experience from it presupposing that these are conditioned by their preferences and needs. Since this study aims to explore how Netflix viewers experience ‘quality television’ on Netflix, the viewer’s perspective is predominant in the assessment of the concept. However, the extensive and intangible nature of media makes it difficult to define quality in this field (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). It is found that ‘quality television’ refers to both satisfaction of one’s own needs and a public service that chases social goals (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). Thus, television is both a consumption product pursuing audience gratification and a public service that functions at its best when it offers innovative yet attractive content (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; d’Haenens, 1996). To understand the concept of ‘quality of television’, Manero et al. (2013) identified three key aspects in the assessment of quality: “interest in the programme, the suitability of the programme to the viewer’s tastes, and utility” (p. 153). In line with Manero et al. (2013), other scholars have found that the quality of television is based on the audience’s interests, opinions, needs, and demands (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Etayo et al., 2021). The existing differences in values, uses and gratifications among audiences produce different quality judgments (Shamir, 2007). These judgments can be based on several types of television quality such as viewers’ preferences, diversity, and truth-telling (Shamir, 2007). Interestingly, audiences’ interest in and enjoyment of television programs do not depend on their evaluations of whether the content is ‘good’ or ‘bad; as it is found that viewers admit to watching content that they classify as poor quality (Shamir, 2007). The heterogeneity among viewers in their preferences and needs is caused by personal variables such as personality traits, culture, and political orientation (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). It is important to understand that viewers’ evaluation of ‘quality television’ is subjective and depends on different factors such as originality, entertainment, and diversity (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Shamir, 2007).

In terms of diversity, the value of content diversity as an aspect to assess ‘quality television’ has been highlighted in various studies (Bayo-Moriones, 2018; Etayo et al., 2021; Shamir, 2007). Content diversity allows viewers to choose anything that suits their tastes which leads to the

perception of freedom (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Etayo et al., 2021). Innovation in content seems to play a key role in creating this diversity (Bayo-Moriones, 2015). However, reflecting on the article by Ollivier (2008), the value of content diversity is linked to the degree to which people are 'open' to the diversity of cultural genres and activities. That, together with the subjective character of 'quality television', creates the assumption that not everyone is likely to consider the increase in content as an advantage to their viewing experience (Bayo-Moriones et al. 2015). Besides the appreciation of content diversity among the audience, it has also been found that this concept is important in the assessment of the quality of a streaming service itself (Burroughs, 2018). This is further elaborated upon in the next section of this chapter.

Besides the dominant position of 'quality television content' for this study, the platform on which the content is being shown, Netflix, also plays a significant role. Netflix produces its own original content and generates revenue through subscriptions. Its strategy to provide original content through subscriptions without advertisements has led to a quick global expansion of the platform and induced more complex and 'quality' narratives (Burroughs, 2018; Jenner, 2018). This will be further discussed in the following section.

### ***2.2.2 Netflix as 'Quality Television'***

This research focuses on the content that Netflix offers on its platform, and it is therefore important to zoom in on how quality is connected to this platform. Netflix is the world's largest subscription video-on-demand platform with over 200 million subscribers in more than 190 countries (Wayne, 2021). As Netflix generates revenue through monthly subscriptions and through carriage fees paid by pay-television providers to be included in Netflix's content library, its success is conceptualized in more abstract notions such as critical acclaim and 'quality' (Wayne, 2021). With HBO as the initiator of positioning itself in the same cultural category as cinema or literature, Netflix has followed this strategy by establishing its brand identity (Wayne, 2021). Netflix focuses on big-name actors, high production values, and cinematography to imitate the conventions of quality programming in movies and television like HBO (Burroughs, 2018). In doing so, Netflix tries to craft quality streaming content to legitimate and distance itself from other streaming platforms (Burroughs, 2018). Furthermore, quality content on Netflix is connected to the digital affordances and storage capacity of streaming as the platform invest in content for niche audiences to engage with fans' tastes (Burroughs, 2018). Thus, the audience is getting more complex which allows for digital quality content without the need to directly satisfy advertisers (Burroughs, 2018). As HBO once defined itself by its tagline 'It's Not TV. It's HBO', Netflix defined its primary goal in 2013 to 'become HBO faster than HBO can become us' (Wayne, 2021). In the same year, Netflix publicly stated that Internet TV will globally replace linear TV in the coming decades (Netflix, 2013). Netflix views linear television networks as its primary competitors and explicitly emphasizes streaming as the better form of television consumption (Wayne, 2017). The brand puts itself on a stand by creating a brand identity of high production values and

technological advancement that is superior to that of competitors (Wayne, 2017). Netflix's subscription-based system allows the company to decide on its own scheduling formations. For instance, the decision to release an entire season all at once leads the audience to consume in certain ways that uplift the show's status to 'complex' (Burroughs, 2018). This strategy induces live viewing where viewers need to watch an entire season to keep up to date with the show on, for example, social networks (Burroughs, 2018). As Burroughs claims "quality and complexity become intertwined with long-form viewing and scheduling" (2018, p. 9).

The link between quality and long-form viewing has additionally been emphasized by Jenner (2018) as structuring forces on which Netflix relies. As Burroughs (2018) stated, Netflix tries to reach a more sophisticated audience by investing in content for niche audiences and Jenner (2018) adds to this notion by arguing that Netflix increasingly moved toward more popular tastes to reach transnational expansion. This strategy has worked, because the company has enriched its content library over the years "that is designed to be viewed for as long as possible" (Albornoz & García Leiva, 2021, p. 63). Due to the increase in subscriptions and availability of algorithmic data, Netflix continuously invests in several different types of content to reach a broader spectrum of audience tastes (Jenner, 2018). By providing a diverse content library, Netflix can conceptualize its success through the notion of quality (Wayne, 2021). However, the question that arises is: can the increase in quantity maintain high standards of quality? Therefore, it is important to consider Netflix as a quality content provider on which diverse content is offered to reach a broader spectrum of audience tastes and make the audience more complex.

### 3. Method

In the following chapter, the methodology of this study is discussed. Firstly, the choice of method is explained in detail. Secondly, the sample and data collection are discussed. Thirdly, the operationalization is given and fourthly, the steps of thematic data analysis are outlined. Lastly, the research method is critically evaluated, and the ethics of the study are presented.

#### 3.1 Choice of Method

This research focuses on exploring the concept of ‘quality television’ from the perspective of Dutch Netflix viewers and aims to answer the research question: *how do Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital experience ‘quality television’ on Netflix?* The research question is answered through 12 semi-structured interviews with Dutch Netflix viewers between the ages of 22 and 78 years old. This study aims to explore how these Netflix viewers assess and define ‘quality television’ and how they experience this concept on Netflix. It is interesting to explore the perspectives of viewers regarding ‘quality television’ because of the subjective and comprehensive character of the concept as people provide different meanings to ‘quality television’ (Bayo-Moriones et al. 2015).

For this study, a qualitative approach is used to look for people’s experiences, meanings, and perspectives (Hammarberg et al., 2016). Using language to understand how Netflix viewers experience ‘quality television’ is the goal of this research and this connects perfectly to what qualitative research aims to achieve (Brennen, 2017). Furthermore, qualitative data collection is an effective method to answer the question of how Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital experience ‘quality television’ on Netflix because this method stresses the idea that reality is socially constructed and might not always be expressed accurately in numbers (Brennen, 2017). Rather than finding a correlation, qualitative research tries to understand the sophisticated relationships in our society (Brennen, 2017). A qualitative approach allows the respondents to have sufficient room for explaining what they perceive as ‘quality television’ which supports an accurate and valid analysis of the concept.

In order to assess the perceptions and meanings of audiences regarding ‘quality television’, semi-structured interviews are used. In qualitative interviewing, researchers desire rich and detailed answers from the interviewee (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, qualitative interviews are concerned with what the interviewee sees as relevant and important which makes this type of data collection appropriate to what this study aims to explore, namely individual meanings and experiences on ‘quality television’ (Bryman, 2012). Previous studies regarding this topic have used semi-structured interviews as a suitable method, for instance Koliska et al. (2021) conducted interviews to get a better understanding of the audience’s perceptions of, and preferences for, online news videos. Semi-structured interviews allow for flexible and fruitful answers to the questions in which the interviewee’s point of view is emphasized (Bryman, 2012). Therefore, it is expected that the interviews contribute to an open conversation with the participants and thus give insight into what the interviewee sees as relevant based on the topic (Bryman, 2012). Although semi-structured interviews allow for the

interpretation of both the interviewee and the interviewer, a set of questions will be created that contains non-abstract questions to avoid having different interpretations (Bryman, 2012). The interview guide is leading the interviews, which allows for the data to be comparable (Bryman, 2012). However, flexibility is important as follow-up questions and changes in order were necessary at times. This flexibility allows the interviewee to elaborate on their answers which provides more rich and detailed data (Bryman, 2012).

Regarding the sample, Dutch Netflix viewers, between the ages of 22 and 78 who (regularly) watch Netflix, were selected to participate in this study. As presented in the theory, the concept of cultural capital has evolved as scholars started to reconsider the traditional definition of the concept. Due to the rise of different perceptions of cultural capital and the massive growth in popularity of television, this study focuses on a large age range (Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Ollivier, 2008). Furthermore, it is found that Netflix has more than 3 million subscribers in the Netherlands reaching 40% of all Dutch households (Brom et al., 2019; Statista, 2020a). Among these subscribers' diverse demographics are present, and this allows for different ways of television viewing (Van Blitterswijk, 2021). Therefore, different age groups are chosen to provide a thorough understanding of the developing concept of cultural capital. Furthermore, the traditional distinction between 'lowbrow' culture versus 'highbrow' is generally based on educational level; people with high cultural capital have obtained a high educational level and vice versa (Bourdieu, 1984). This study uses education as an indicator of cultural capital. The educational level is based on the Dutch *Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek* (Central Bureau of Statistics). It is stated that low educated people have obtained primary school, pre-vocational secondary education (vmbo), the first three years of general secondary education (havo)/preparatory science education (vwo), or the 'assistant training' (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2019). A high educational level includes a higher vocational education degree (hbo) or a university degree (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2019).

This study explores the concept of 'quality television' on Netflix. Netflix is chosen since it is the world's largest subscription video-on-demand platform often associated with 'quality television' and its success is conceptualized in terms of critical acclaim and 'quality' (Wayne, 2021). With HBO as the initiator of positioning itself in the same cultural category as cinema or literature, Netflix has followed this strategy by establishing its brand identity (Wayne, 2021). Furthermore, Netflix is the most used video streaming service in the Netherlands, and the accessibility to diverse types of content on the platform has increased (Idiz et al., 2021; Van Blitterswijk, 2021). Due to this diverse content library, users can watch anything that matches their preferences which leads to an unstandardized way of consuming television (Van Blitterswijk, 2021). Dutch people spend roughly 6 billion minutes a day using digital media of which more than 25% of this time is devoted to watching content on a VOD platform (Statista, 2020b). Furthermore, Netflix had 3.3 million subscribers in the Netherlands in 2019 compared to an overall population of roughly over 17 million people in that year (Statista, 2020a).

### 3.2 Sample and Data Collection

To find appropriate Netflix viewers, a non-probability sampling method is used which is a sampling technique based on judgment (Sharma, 2017). For this study, a combination of purposive and snowball sampling is used to find the proper respondents. In purposive sampling, participants are sampled in a strategic way relevant to the research (Bryman, 2012). The first interviewee is found in personal networks, but to meet the standards of validity, snowball sampling is used to find other relevant participants including different demographics (Bryman, 2012). In that way, the study can provide comparable and insightful results from which interesting conclusions can be drawn. Though, it should be taken into consideration that the use of both sampling techniques makes it difficult to achieve theoretical or analytical generalization (Sharma, 2017). A set of clear criteria is established to tackle the possibility of researcher bias (Sharma, 2017). In the end, a total of 12 respondents were sampled to be interviewed. All the interviewees are exclusively Dutch as this research focuses on how Netflix viewers experience 'quality television' in the Netherlands.

For this study, participants are selected based on three criteria. Firstly, participants must have a subscription to Netflix which can be either individually or shared (i.e., a family subscription with multiple accounts). Participants who watch Netflix on somebody else's account are also included in this research (i.e., using the account of a family member, friend, or acquaintance). Secondly, respondents must be familiar with watching Netflix content to be selected for this research. Finally, participants are chosen based on their educational level which differs from either having obtained a low educational level (vmbo or mbo level 1 degree) or a high educational level (hbo or university degree) (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2019). Due to time constraints, the intermediate educational level is excluded from this study. However, this research provides a thorough understanding of how both the lower and the higher educated experience 'quality television'. Both groups are created based on the original distinction by Bourdieu (1984) who supported a one-on-one relationship between an individual's educational level and cultural capital. In other words, people with a high educational level are considered to have high cultural capital and people with a low educational level are considered to have low cultural capital. From those two groups, participants from different age groups are selected. The goal was to select two young adults (20-29 years old), two middle-aged adults (38-52 years old), and two older adults (59+) from both groups (Stephens, 1982). This age range is chosen based on a study by Stephens (1982) exploring the effectiveness of time-compressed television advertisements between different age groups. The age ranges for both the young and middle-aged adults were used similarly to Stephens (1982), however, the elderly range is slightly adapted with no age maximum of 75 years old. Instead, for this study, there is no limit on age with regard to the older adults as it is interesting to explore the differences in every age category without limits. Moreover, in the Netherlands, Netflix is mostly used by viewers above the age of 50 years (Voogd, 2018). Furthermore, as this study is not concerned with the ethnicity of Netflix's viewers and because of the relatively small scale of this research, ethnicity is not used as a selection criterium. In

addition, both male and female interviewees were selected to participate in this study in order to get a more varied view on the topic.

Data collection took place over the course of two weeks in March and April 2022. Before the interview, the researcher emphasized the anonymity of the interviewees to protect their privacy. At the start of the interview, a brief introduction to the researcher and this study was provided to the participants. Then, the respondents were informed about the aim of the research. The researcher explained that their answers are used for research purposes only. After this, they gave consent for the researcher to use their answers and this consent was given either verbally or they signed the predetermined consent form.

Ultimately, the 12 selected interviewees were all white Dutch people between the ages of 22 to 78 years. Moreover, the sample consisted of seven women and five men of which five women are indicated as high educated and two are low educated. One man in this study is indicated to be high educated and four men are low educated. The interviewees took between 45 and 66 minutes and took place either face-to-face or via Skype as a result of COVID-19. In the end, seven interviews were held online via Skype and five interviews took place face-to-face either at their homes, at a café, or at work. The overall sample can be found in Appendix A. The interview guide can be found in Appendix B. The following section concerns certain parts of the interview guide to operationalize the theoretical concepts to appropriate elements to use for the analysis. Furthermore, the operationalization aims to translate these theoretical concepts into feasible pieces that the interviewees could relate to.

### **3.3 Operationalization**

The main question is operationalized into a series of sub-questions for two reasons. First, the sub-questions support answering the central question of this thesis. Second, the sub-questions help to organize this study and are answered in the conclusion at the end of this thesis.

- 1. What do Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital (high versus low) consider as 'quality television'?*
- 2. How do Dutch Netflix viewers make their choices on Netflix regarding what to watch?*
- 3. To what extent do the two groups consider Netflix a 'quality platform'?*

The questions largely focus on the most important concept of this study, 'quality television', and this concept is operationalized in this section. The interview guide includes this concept in such a way that the interviewee can easily connect personal experiences to 'quality television'. As 'quality television' from a viewer's perspective is found difficult to assess, this concept is translated into questions that are scattered through various categories (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). For this study, the concept of 'quality television' is divided into two main categories namely 'quality television' in general and 'quality television' on Netflix. Questions related to these categories address and discuss the concept of 'quality television'. The first category, 'quality television' in general, is translated into several questions that allow the interviewees to describe what they generally consider as either 'good'

or ‘bad’ television. Furthermore, this category also covers the interviewee’s experiences with ‘quality television’ on other streaming services than Netflix, or on cable television.

The second category particularly focuses on Netflix and relates to the interviewee’s experiences with ‘quality television’ on the platform. This category consists of two levels; Netflix as a (quality) streaming service and the content that is offered on Netflix. As presented in the theory, besides the importance of how viewers perceive the concept of ‘quality television’, it is also important to zoom in on how they view streaming platforms as a quality content provider (Burroughs, 2018; Wayne, 2021). Interviewees are asked about the advantages and disadvantages of Netflix and what they perceive as the biggest differences between Netflix and other streaming services. By asking these questions, it becomes clear why the interviewees have a subscription to Netflix, how they value the platform and its content, and how they value Netflix compared to other streaming services. This links to the idea that ‘quality television’ refers to the satisfaction of one’s own needs, interests, demands, and opinions (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Etayo et al., 2021; Manero et al., 2013). Interviewees are asked to rank their satisfaction level with the platform, and they are asked to provide a tip and a top to Netflix. These questions leave room for the interviewee to be creative and they encourage them to give their own perspective on the concept. Thus, these questions contribute to this study as it enriches the understanding of how ‘quality television’ on Netflix is experienced by zooming in on the platform that offers the content. Additionally, the interview guide includes questions regarding the quality of the content that is being offered on Netflix. Here, again, the audience’s interest in the program (Manero et al., 2013), and their needs, opinions, and demands (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Etayo et al., 2021) are taken into consideration. The interviewees are asked general questions about their favorite genre, their favorite show, and how they decide on what they watch. Furthermore, a set of descriptive questions are being asked to, again, leave room for the interviewee to be encouraged to give their own perspective. These types of indirect questions are a perfect way to support flexibility and it varies the questioning to remain an active interviewing style (Bryman, 2012). The remaining questions function as support in the overall interview.

The interviews started with an introduction explaining the purpose of the research and began with a simple icebreaker to, as Johnson (2001) states, “get the ball rolling” (p. 8). This research is concerned with personal experiences, therefore an approachable icebreaker and broad first question help the interviewee to loosen up. Additionally, the icebreaker helps to get the interviewee more comfortable which positively supports the research as a whole.

<b>Concept</b>	<b>Level</b>	<b>Possible answers from data</b>	<b>Example of question from the interview guide</b>
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<i>Quality television (QT) in general</i>	QT related what is <i>good</i> and <i>bad</i> television content	‘To me, good television is when the content is original and it matches my interests’ (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Manero et al., 2013).	Can you describe what you consider as good television?
	QT related to television content other than on Netflix	‘I mainly watch cable television to watch the news, but I go to Netflix when it comes to entertainment’	When watching something other than Netflix, what would be the biggest difference between that and watching Netflix?
<i>Quality television (QT) on Netflix</i>	QT related to Netflix as a platform	‘Overall, I am very satisfied with Netflix due to its diverse content library, so I give it an 8’ (Wayne, 2021)	On a scale from 1 to 10, how would you describe your overall satisfaction with the platform?
	QT related to content on Netflix	‘Netflix satisfies my interest in international series compared to other platforms’ (Burroughs, 2018)	To what extent do you value the content available on Netflix compared to other forms of television?

### 3.4 Data Analysis

According to Boeije, data analysis in qualitative research involves two main activities namely “segmenting the data into parts and reassembling the parts again into a coherent whole” (2010, p. 76). The aim of data analysis in qualitative research is to transform the data into findings by looking for patterns and relationships to find explanations (Boeije, 2010). One form of data analysis in qualitative research is thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2012). Although qualitative research can sometimes be vague and conceptually challenging, thematic analysis offers a solution to this challenge as this method allows for accessibility and flexibility (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This method is the most suitable method to analyze the semi-structured interviews since thematic analysis focuses on the analysis of *texts* to assess the meanings, values, and messages behind them and aims to offer insights

into “patterns of meanings (themes) across a data set” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 57; Smith, 2017, p. 1). Since this research aims to explore ‘quality television’ on Netflix and how this is experienced by Dutch Netflix viewers; thematic analysis is the most suitable method to use for data analysis. Qualitative data analysis consists of three parts. First, open coding, then axial coding, and finally, selective coding (Boeije, 2010). The process of “breaking down, examining, comparing, conceptualizing and categorizing data” is called open coding (Strauss & Corbin, 2007, as cited in Boeije, 2010, p. 96). Axial coding is initiated to determine which codes are the most dominant and which are less important (Boeije, 2010). Through constant comparison, similar fragments are assigned with the same code to reduce the data and to define appropriate main themes and subthemes (Boeije, 2010; Silverman 2011). Selective coding aims to look for relationships between categories and determines the importance of these categories. From this process, themes will emerge that describe and explain the main observations of the research. These main observations are presented in the results section of this research. In addition to the three phases of qualitative data analysis by Boeije (2010), Braun and Clarke (2012) suggest a six-phase approach to thematic analysis. For this research, Boeije’s (2010) open coding, axial coding, and selective coding are complemented by phases 1, 5, and 6 from the suggested six-phase approach by Braun and Clarke (2012). Phase 1 is defined as “familiarizing yourself with the data” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 60). For this study, the researcher read and reread the interview transcripts, listened to the audio recordings multiple times, and made notes during this process (Braun & Clarke, 2012). This phase is an extension of what Boeije (2010) describes as the process of open coding. Phases 5 and 6 of thematic analysis are an extension of the process of selective coding (Boeije, 2010; Braun & Clarke, 2012). These phases are defined as: “defining and naming themes” and “producing the report” (Braun & Clarke, 2012, p. 69). Although these phases are indirectly included in selective coding, Braun & Clarke (2012) delve deeper into the significance of both phases and how to tackle these steps (Boeije 2010). Therefore, this study used the six-phase approach by Braun and Clarke (2012) as an extension of Boeije (2010). In the end, five main themes are derived from the analysis: ‘among the higher educated cultural omnivorousness is clearly present, while the lower educated show firm preferences’, ‘the pleasure of watching ‘bad television’ creates camp viewers and generates a sense of superiority among the higher educated’, ‘Netflix viewers value television that matches their interests which is determined by their preferences, content or genre diversity, and innovation’, ‘the freedom to choose anything, at any time and any place, and Netflix’s substantive usability enhance the viewing experience, but oversaturation may be lying in wait’, ‘the controversy of ‘good’ television’ versus ‘quality television’ through value judgments of the audience about the technical characteristics of television. These themes are indicated as the most significant findings of this study and are further explained in the results section of this thesis.

### **3.5 Validity and Reliability**

In qualitative studies, there has been some discussion about the establishment and assessment of quality (Bryman, 2012). For this study, the quality is assessed through the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and conformability (Bryman, 2012; Korstjens & Moser, 2017).

Credibility is concerned with truth-value and “establishes whether the research findings represent plausible information drawn from the participants’ original data” (Korstjens & Moser, 2017, p. 121). The credibility of this study is ensured in multiple ways. First, this study is credible because it uses data triangulation to enhance the process of the study since the data is gathered from different types of people in terms of gender, age, educational level, and, correspondingly, cultural capital (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Secondly, persistent observation is applied to ensure the depth of insight by constantly reading and rereading the data, analyzing, and revising the central themes and concepts accordingly (Korstjens & Moser, 2017).

In terms of transferability, this research provides a ‘thick description’ of the interviews and the research process to enable the reader to make accurate judgments about the transferability (Bryman, 2012; Korstjens & Moser, 2017). The study provides a detailed explanation of the research process, for instance the context in which the interviews were held, the interview guide, and the demographics of the respondents (Korstjens & Moser, 2017).

The third criterion is dependability. During this research, records of all the separate phases, from coming up with the research problem all the way to its conclusion, are consistently kept and listed (Bryman, 2012). In doing so, the transparency of the research is guaranteed (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Therefore, this study can be described as dependable.

Finally, this research meets the standards of confirmability which means that interpretations are not based on individual preferences and viewpoints, but are grounded in data (Korstjens & Moser, 2017). Although complete objectivity is impossible, the findings of this research are grounded in the data that has been collected (Bryman, 2012). Furthermore, these findings are analyzed in the light of thematic analysis and have not been embedded in personal values or interpretations. The thorough description of how this research was conducted, and how the results are interpreted guarantee its rigorousness, consistency, credibility, and transferability (Janssen & Verboord, 2021).

#### 4. Results

The following chapter focuses on the most significant findings of this thesis after the data was analyzed. It is found that the value of ‘quality television’ – from the perspective of the audience – is dependent on the satisfaction of one’s own needs, interests, demands, and opinions. Therefore, the results are presented through themes that relate to these four levels of satisfaction and describe the various ways in which people with different levels of cultural capital assess ‘quality television’ (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Etayo et al., 2021; Manero et al., 2013). The four levels of satisfaction are a categorization of personal evaluations of quality which are considered to be highly subjective and depend on different factors such as originality and diversity (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Shamir, 2007). While previous literature has predominantly focused on viewers’ evaluation in broader terms, this study goes beyond those theories by including the educational level of the audience (lower educated versus higher educated) that corresponds with their level of cultural capital (low versus high) and what those two groups consider as ‘quality television’: particularly on Netflix.

From the analysis, it became clear that all respondents indicate the difficulty of defining ‘quality television’, especially due to its personal nature and the abundance of taste preferences. As one respondent (respondent 7, female, 78 yrs) put it: “... who decides – what is... [quality] I think it is very personal whether what is considered high quality and low quality”. Another respondent (respondent 4, female, 50 yrs) stated: “... look, what I consider high quality, does not always mean someone else thinks it is high quality”. Additionally, respondent 2 (male, 28 yrs) did not initially link the difficulty of assessing ‘quality television’ to the personal evaluation of taste, but he generally questioned the meaning of quality by stating: “yeah, what is quality?” These quotes emphasize the difficulty in defining ‘quality television’ from the audience’s perspective and is in line with academic literature in this area that highlights the complexity and subjectivity of how ‘quality television’ is perceived by viewers (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2015; Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). Thus, the audience evaluation of high-quality and low-quality television programming appeared to be a difficult task. However, some interesting outcomes have been found in this research. Although both groups show some similarities in how they value ‘good’ and ‘bad’ television content, and how they define ‘quality television’, some significant differences have been found between the two groups. Both the similarities and the differences between the two groups are discussed in the following paragraphs of this section.

At the beginning of the thesis, three sub-questions were proposed, and these will be touched upon throughout the results section, however, the questions are not directly stated in the separate sections. Therefore, to recall the proposed sub-questions: ‘*what do Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital (high versus low) consider as ‘quality television’?*’, ‘*how do Dutch Netflix viewers make their choices on Netflix regarding what to watch?*’, and ‘*to what extent do the two groups consider Netflix a ‘quality platform’?*’.

This chapter is structured as follows. Firstly, the importance of individual needs among, particularly, the higher educated is discussed. Secondly, the pleasure of watching ‘bad television’ among the higher educated is explained. Then, the value of one’s satisfaction of personal interests among, specifically, the lower educated are explained. This section is followed by the differences in demands for both groups regarding the freedom to choose anything, at any time and any place, and the substantive usability of Netflix. Finally, the differences in opinions are considered which delves deeper into the technical characteristics of television from a viewer’s perspective.

#### **4.1 Among the Higher Educated Cultural Omnivorousness is Clearly Present, While the Lower Educated Show Firm Preferences.**

The higher educated largely define ‘quality television’ dependent on the satisfaction of their needs. This group is found to have different needs in their search for television content and these are dependent on their moods. It becomes clear that respondents of this group either want to clear their heads by watching ‘easy’ and ‘light-weighted’ content, or they desire to gain knowledge by watching captivating content that challenges them. The higher educated judge television based on the satisfaction of their needs and through this, they label the content as either ‘bad’ or ‘good’. However, this group recognizes specific genres to be considered ‘bad television’ in society, but they still enjoy watching it because it serves the right purpose: relaxation to get your mind off things. On the contrary, they could also be in the mood of gaining knowledge and getting informed by watching challenging shows and documentaries on Netflix which reinforces theories by Bayo-Mariones et al. (2018) and Manero et al. (2013). At the other end of the spectrum, entertainment is found to be the primary need among the lower educated. This finding together with the pleasure of watching ‘bad television’ among the higher educated and the existence of cultural omnivores among this group are further discussed in the following paragraphs.

According to the higher educated, ‘bad television’ is linked with ‘light-weighted’ and ‘easy to watch’ TV programming. Examples of Netflix programs that are considered ‘bad television’ according to this group are *Inventing Anna* and *Bridgerton*. Interestingly, in terms of movies, mainly genres seemed to be used to describe ‘bad television’ and no particular titles are mentioned. Examples of ‘bad movie genres’ are horror and (Dutch) romantic comedies. Zooming in on Dutch television content, both groups have categorized Dutch television content (that includes either TV shows, movies, or cable TV) as supposedly ‘bad’ due to its repetitiveness, lack of innovation, and unsatisfying offering. For instance, when asked to provide an example of ‘bad television content’, one respondent (respondent 1, male, 41 yrs) mentioned: “just cable television itself honestly... limited programming, limited shows, limited series, limited movies”. In addition, another respondent (respondent 10, male, 25 yrs) stated: “...sometimes I watch it [Dutch movies], but I know beforehand it is going to be a bad movie”. However, among the interviewees, one respondent (respondent 3, female, 25 yrs) has mentioned that other people make her believe that Dutch romantic comedies are considered ‘bad’.

When asked what she would describe as her taste, she mentioned: “Bad? [laughs] ...People talked me into that, especially regarding Dutch romantic comedies”. Thus, what is considered ‘good’ or ‘bad’ can also be influenced by the evaluation of others. Covertly enjoying ‘bad’ types of content can create feelings of embarrassment which is further explained in the next theme. The aversion to local programs contradicts Dhoest’s (2014) stress on authenticity and preference for local drama. The preference for local content is generally not recognized among Dutch Netflix viewers as it has appeared that some respondents are not particularly fond of Dutch television content. In terms of Dutch TV shows and movies, both groups have argued this type of content to be low-quality programming; mostly in terms of poor acting skills which is further elaborated on in the final theme (theme 4.5). Among the higher educated, respondents seemed to talk in a degrading way about Dutch TV shows and movies even though they have admitted to occasionally enjoying that type of content. On the contrary, the lower educated group seemed to be more open-minded toward this type of content and one respondent (respondent 4, female, 50 yrs) even categorized a Dutch romantic comedy, as ‘good’. From the interviews, it can be concluded that people with a high level of cultural capital generally define ‘quality television’ through the extent of the satisfaction of their needs. On the one hand, the higher educated seek relaxation and comfort to get their mind off things by watching ‘easy’ movies and shows on Netflix but, on the other hand, they could also be in the mood of gaining knowledge and getting informed by watching challenging shows and documentaries on Netflix. This reinforces theories by Bayo-Mariones et al. (2018) and Manero et al. (2013) as they have outlined the importance of the individual satisfaction of needs as an indicator to assess ‘quality television’ from a viewer’s perspective. Furthermore, these findings also build upon the article by Shamir (2007) who found that viewers admit to watching content that they classify as ‘poor’ quality. On the contrary, theories by Bourdieu (1984) and Rebers et al. (2006) contradict these findings as they argue that the ‘easy’ and ‘light-weighted’ content is part of ‘lowbrow’ taste which usually corresponds with the lower educated in society and they support a one-on-one relationship between cultural capital and taste preference. However, in the present study, members of the higher educated group are found to participate in popular, ‘lowbrow’, culture and therefore they serve as cultural omnivores in society (Sintas & Álvarez, 2002).

Besides the negative value judgments of Dutch TV shows and movies among a small number of respondents, more than half of the respondents (8 out of 12) have mentioned that Dutch commercial cable television falls short. The main reasons for this are the lack of innovative content (mostly among the lower educated) and unsatisfying programming (mostly among the higher educated). The lack of innovative content is especially applicable to Dutch game shows and entertainment talk shows that seem to be repetitive and insufficient among the lower educated group. For the higher educated group, cable television content does not match their taste or interest which makes the offering unsatisfactory. This group explained that there is really nothing to see on TV that suits their interests, and they frequently refer to cable television content as ‘awful’ or ‘trashy’. Although both groups have

mentioned using cable television to watch the news and get informed about current affairs, this is specifically applicable to the higher educated as they do not watch anything besides thought-provoking content on linear TV, unlike the lower educated group. This is in line with Rebers et al. (2006) stating that the higher educated groups distinguish themselves by not watching less complex TV such as quizzes, talk shows, and soaps, but they do watch more complex TV content such as programs about current affairs and documentaries. Moreover, whereas the higher educated watch linear television content as a complement to Netflix in their goal to keep up with (global) current affairs, the lower educated use it and vice versa as they initially watch cable television before they move to watch Netflix. The latter group is able to find something entertaining to watch on linear TV which appears to be the main reason why they consider linear TV as 'good'.

#### **4.2 The Pleasure of Watching 'Bad Television' Creates Camp Viewers but it Also Generates a Sense of Superiority Among the Higher Educated.**

The previous theme has explained the difference between the higher educated who act more omnivorous in their search for television content and the lower educated who show an obvious need for entertainment in their search. Furthermore, it is found that the higher educated show a liking for what they consider 'bad television'. An example is (Dutch) romantic comedies. Although they seem to talk in a degrading way about this genre, the evaluation of (Dutch) romantic comedies is somewhat paradoxical. Surprisingly, the majority of this group (4 out of 6) has mentioned this genre to be one of their favorites but at the same time, they have stated the potential of this genre to be 'predictable' and 'incredible' which were both found to be indicators of 'bad television' according to this group. One respondent (respondent 8, female, 38 yrs) stated: "Oh yes, another really bad chick flick thing, *Sweet Magnolia's*... that is so fake, even worse than *Virgin River* and *Anne*+...I really binged it [*Sweet Magnolia's*] in two days... it is just really easy to watch...". This genre particularly serves the goal to 'get your mind off things' and 'relax' after a long day. For instance, respondent 9 (female, 39 yrs) explained: "But on a day when I did a lot and I treat myself by just taking moment, then I quickly end up in a light-weighted, romantic comedy-like situation". The type of easy-going content includes romantic comedies but also comprises drama series and comedy shows. Furthermore, one respondent (respondent 3, female, 25 yrs) has mentioned the pleasure of watching 'easy' content while doing other things such as having dinner or surviving a night shift in the hospital. In addition to romantic comedies, a David Attenborough documentary also serves this goal of relaxation. She explained: "...what we [her and her boyfriend] also do [besides watching a romantic comedy or Christmas movie after a long day] together while having dinner is just a simple nature documentary by David Attenborough who films like a lion or something...the images are pretty nice, and it is really about nothing". From these findings, it has become clear that people with higher levels of cultural capital watch 'easy' and 'light-weighted content – that includes romantic comedies, dramas, and to a lesser extent comedies and nature documentaries – to get their minds off things and relax after a long day.

This is in line with theories by Manero et al. (2013) and Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018) stating that from the perspective of viewers, identifying ‘quality television’ includes meeting customer expectations. Although people identify some genres as ‘bad quality television’, these people still show a need for this type of content which is why they consider it ‘good’. The discrepancy between ‘quality television’ and ‘good television’ is further discussed in the final theme (theme 4.5).

Although this group considered ‘easy’ and ‘light-weighted television programs not always high-quality television, it satisfies their need to shut off their minds for a while which is why they enjoy watching it. Therefore, this type of television viewing can be linked to what McCoy and Scarborough (2014) explain as ‘camp’. A camp viewer “reverses the cultural object for how bad it is and admires the vision and passion of the producer” (McCoy & Scarborough, 2014, p. 51). Here, the viewer understands the show to be objectively ‘bad’ or ‘trashy’ but lifts it by using a different set of esthetic standards (McCoy & Scarborough, 2014). As one respondent (respondent 7, female, 78 yrs) argued: “Well *Bridgerton* for example is unplausible [laughs]. Why? Well, the story is exaggerated of course, way over the top, so...It’s too much, but it’s ‘nice too much’ [laughs] ...I believe the costumes are beautiful...That’s something I really like!”. However, camp viewing is not identified among the lower educated group as they experience this ‘easy’ and ‘light-weighted’ content as not particularly ‘good’ nor ‘bad’. This finding suggests a difference in cultural capital between the two groups. While the higher educated disposition has shown to recognize what is acknowledged as ‘bad’ or ‘good’, the lower educated did not. The latter attaches a high degree of importance to the appeal of television offerings in which they are not explicitly concerned with its quality which is further explained in the next theme (theme 4.3).

Interestingly, while McCoy and Scarborough (2014) distinguish camp viewers from ironic viewers this study has found that the two types of viewers can coexist. While the higher educated recognize a show to be objectively ‘bad’ but use a different set of esthetic standards to lift it indicating them as camp viewers, this group also reveals a sense of superiority when talking about watching ‘bad’ or ‘trashy’ television (McCoy & Scarborough, 2014). This corresponds with what McCoy and Scarborough (2014) define as ironic viewers. From the analysis, it is found that most of the higher educated respondents (4 out of 6) started laughing when they were asked if romantic comedies or drama shows could be considered high-quality content. It has become clear that discussing such type of ‘bad content’ creates a feeling of awkwardness to admit that they enjoy it, but it also generates a sense of superiority. As one respondent (respondent 8, female, 38 yrs) explained when she was asked about her preference for either high or low-quality programming, she laughed and said: “yes, a little bit of both I must honestly admit, because if I look back now [at what I said], I think ‘yes it is both nice’”. In terms of superiority, two respondents mentioned that their intellectual capacity is not challenged by either the content that Netflix provides or the way in which Netflix targets specific content toward them. When asked about what she gains from watching a romantic comedy, one respondent (respondent 9, female, 39 yrs) laughed and said: “relaxation... limited expansion of my

horizon...I think I consider a romantic comedy more like entertainment [compared to a documentary]”. Furthermore, another respondent (respondent 2, male, 28 yrs) explained that he really enjoys watching a romantic comedy because it is ‘easy to watch’ and creates a sense of coziness. The same respondent explained in what way Netflix had targeted *Squid Game* to him: “I am very impressionable, I believe. But I do like it when people still have a little respect for [laughs] my intellect and try to do it [targeting *Squid Game*] a little subtle instead of shoving it down your throat”.

All in all, these findings suggest that the omnivorousness among the higher educated is present because, besides the pleasure of watching ‘lowbrow’ television, they also engage in watching what is considered ‘highbrow’ television programming. While the central argument for the higher educated to watch Netflix is dependent on their moods with corresponding needs, the lower educated show a dominant need for entertainment. In other words, the higher educated appreciate a broad range of genres which makes them more culturally omnivorous than the lower educated. The lower educated have a limited range of preferences within which they desire a broad range of choices. This reveals that their assessment of ‘quality television’ is more influenced by the satisfaction of their interests instead of their needs. This is discussed in the next theme (theme 4.3). Finally, the higher educated have shown to recognize what is acknowledged as ‘bad’ or ‘good’ while the lower educated did not. This supports a social aspect of the evaluation of ‘quality television’.

#### **4.3 Netflix Viewers Value Television That Matches Their Interests Which is Determined by Their Preferences, Content or Genre Diversity, and Innovation.**

As the previous paragraphs have shown, people with high cultural capital mostly value television based on the satisfaction of their needs depending on their personal moods. Furthermore, this group tends to operate as a cultural omnivore as they appreciate both ‘highbrow’ and ‘lowbrow’ cultural outings (Sintas & Álvarez, 2002). The satisfaction of one’s own interests in defining what is considered ‘quality television’ is found to be important for both groups, but it is especially present among the lower educated respondents. The interests and taste preferences of this group are firm and more stable compared to those of the higher educated. The latter groups’ interests and taste preferences fluctuate based on their moods similarly to how their moods influence their needs.

The interviews have shown that the lower educated frequently used personal and descriptive judgments to define ‘quality television’ which reinforces the study by Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018). For instance, some of the respondents consider content ‘good’ when ‘it is fun to watch’ or ‘I like to watch it, therefore it is good’. The same group uses descriptive judgments to describe ‘bad’ content, for instance, they said, ‘it does not suit my taste’ or ‘I don’t like it, therefore I don’t watch it’. The higher educated describe ‘bad television’, similarly to ‘good television’, to the extent of the satisfaction of their needs. They referred to ‘bad television’ by using phrases such as ‘it is a waste of time’.

Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018) found that the adjustment to own preferences, variety of contents, and originality appeared to be important for the audience to value television content which invigorates the findings of the present study. Most of the respondents who considered to have low cultural capital valued the ‘quality of television’ (i.e., what they considered ‘good’ or ‘bad’) according to these three indicators. Furthermore, some of the higher educated also defined ‘good television’ according to those indicators. Particularly, both groups have mentioned that if they do not enjoy watching specific content, they quit watching. But, among the lower educated there is little room for discussion as this group cares for distinct boundaries of their own preferences. This finding is linked to the argument by Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018) about the adjustment to one’s own preferences but for this study, the adjustment seems more rigid. For instance, when asked about his preference for choosing between high or low ‘quality television’, one respondent (respondent 10, male, 25 yrs) explained: “It is about the story, not about quality... If it’s a *shitty* movie, you quit watching anyway, I think...I don’t care. No, if it’s enjoyable to me, you know, then I’ll watch...” Another respondent (respondent 5, female, 63 yrs) elaborated: “I just go like ‘oh I think that would be a good one [movie/TV show]’ and then I start reading [info about specific movie/TV show] ‘oh interesting’ and then I start watching ‘no not interesting enough’ and then I quit”. This rigidness has not been found among the higher educated group but is present among the lower educated. This group chooses not to watch something new or specific content they are unfamiliar with. For example, one respondent stated:

...When there is so much to offer...Often it is difficult, I think, to try something [new] because you have a show...something you find really great on the one hand and something sci-fi which I don’t like that much on the other hand...then why would I waste my time...and still watch it? (Respondent 12, male, 22 yrs)

Another respondent (respondent 1, male, 41 yrs) argued: “...But yeah, if I don’t want to watch something, then I really don’t watch it. No...Everyone has their own genre so”. From these quotes, it becomes clear that television is considered high quality when it matches personal taste preferences.

In addition to the adjustment of one’s own preferences, Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018) argued that the variety of contents is also associated with the quality of television. Although their research focuses on the content diversity of television channels, this is also found to be applicable to Netflix’s content library. The more diverse the programming, the more viewers can choose anything that suits their tastes and allows for the platform to meet the expectations of a wider audience which is associated with quality (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). Viewers’ preferences and the value of content diversity are also emphasized by Shamir (2007) and Etayo et al. (2021). One respondent (respondent 10, male, 25 yrs) stated: “...It’s nice that their [Netflix] offer is extensive, and I really like that, you know”. Another respondent (respondent 4, female, 50 yrs) explained: “you can choose whatever you want and yeah, there is just something for everyone”. From this quote, it becomes clear that the viewer feels that

she can watch what she wants. Therefore, the choice has value per se as it produces the perception of freedom (Etayo et al., 2021). The value of one's individual choice to choose anything that matches their preferences is found to be of great importance for both the lower educated as well as the higher educated. However, both groups take a different approach to constructing this value. On the one hand, people who are considered to have low cultural capital appreciate the extensive choice of content within the genres that they enjoy. Thus, the value of choosing anything that you want lies in the extensive offer of content within their preferable genre. This is in line with Wildman and Owen's (1985) view on content diversity regarding the number of different genres included in the programming on linear television, and this can be applied to Netflix's content library. On the other hand, people who are considered to have high cultural capital cherish the extensive offer of content in terms of genre diversity instead of content diversity. For them, the value of choosing anything that you want is linked to – what has been said earlier in theme 4.1 – the ability to watch different genres that matches their moods and corresponding needs. Here, the cultural omnivorousness of the higher educated is present. When asked about what she (respondent 8, female, 38 yrs) would like to watch when she would come home from work and wants to relax, she explained: "...But usually I am watching two things [on Netflix] simultaneously. Then I would perhaps choose the easiest [to watch]...". The discrepancy surrounding content diversity can be partially explained by the rise of the digital era in which the diversity of television content for consumers has greatly increased (Turner, 2019). This expansion has led to some dilemmas for academia to tackle the specificities of this diversity (Turner, 2019). However, among the higher educated, there is also a negative emphasis on content diversity that indicates a feeling of oversaturation and complicates the ability to choose. This builds on theories by Bayo-Moriones et al. (2015) and Ollivier (2008) arguing that the extent to which people view content diversity as an advantage is dependent on the degree to which people are 'open' to the diversity of cultural genres and activities, and the individual perceptions of 'quality television'. This is further explained in the next theme (theme 4.4). Although there is some existing literature regarding diversity as a quality aspect of linear television, little research has focused on the value of content or genre diversity on streaming platforms. Therefore, this result is highly interesting and could contribute to established studies regarding diversity as a quality aspect of 'quality television'.

In terms of originality, there is also a difference between the two groups. Most of the lower educated respondents (5 out of 6) have mentioned to value Netflix because of its continuous innovative range of content. However, the higher educated are more critical of the new and contemporary content that Netflix offers which builds on the article by Holt (1997) who argues that people with more cultural capital are more likely to take a critical stance toward cultural objects. Only half of the higher educated respondents supported the existence of innovative content on Netflix and the majority of this group (5 out of 6) has argued that Netflix's content library is unsatisfactory in terms of originality. Especially in terms of offering new, contemporary content. As one respondent (respondent 2, male, 28 yrs) described: "...So I have this feeling that Netflix is a little behind with

upgrading [its content]”. The idea that quality in television requires innovation for the audience to assess it as ‘quality television’ reinforces the article by Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018). Unlike the higher educated, only half of the lower educated respondents has recommended including specific taste-related content on Netflix such as superhero movies and new movie releases. This is most likely related to the fact that the lower educated generally watch more of the same content compared to the higher educated who show a need for different genres that suits their moods. All in all, the satisfaction of one’s own interests is mostly related to the extent to which the content matches own preferences, the availability of content and genre diversity – depending on having either low or high cultural capital – and the existence of innovative content. These three conditions are derived from the study by Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018) and are slightly adjusted to support this thesis. On the one hand, the lower educated have firm personal preferences and definite tastes on which they decide what is ‘good’ or ‘bad’. This group searches for content within their preferred genre and are more critical toward innovation on Netflix than the higher educated. On the other hand, the higher educated search for genre diversity and take a more critical stance toward innovation on Netflix. For them, it is more difficult to cherry-pick the content for every genre that they like to watch.

#### **4.4 The Freedom to Choose Anything, at any Time and any Place, and Netflix’s Substantive Usability Enhance the Viewing Experience, but Oversaturation may be Lying in Wait.**

The first three themes highlighted the audience’s perspective on ‘quality television content’. To make accurate statements about how Dutch audiences experience ‘quality television’ on Netflix, not only its content but also the platform itself should be considered. Netflix’s strategy is to provide original content through subscriptions without advertisements and this has led to a quick global expansion of the platform and induced more complex and ‘quality’ narratives (Burroughs, 2018; Jenner, 2018). This study contributes to prior research by focusing on the audience’s demands regarding the quality of the streaming service. It is found that the value of Netflix as a quality platform is based on two separate demands. Firstly, the freedom to choose anything, at any time and any place, and secondly, the substantive usability of Netflix.

The freedom to choose anything, to watch it at any time and any place, makes it attractive for people to subscribe to Netflix (Auditya & Hidayat, 2021; Etayo et al., 2021; Turner, 2019). This freedom is found to be one of the most important demands of viewers to categorize a streaming service as qualitatively ‘good’. The freedom to choose anything that suits one’s needs or interests has already been discussed in the previous themes. Although the higher educated group values genre diversity to watch different types of content that matches their needs, this group also struggles with the inefficiency to choose ‘quality’ content due to oversaturation. Whereas the lower educated group positively values content diversity, the higher educated group takes a critical stance toward this concept. The extensive choice of content that Netflix offers is frequently associated with and described

as ‘quantity over quality’. This creates a feeling of discontent as it feels like Netflix just pushes new content without considering its quality. One respondent (respondent 2, male, 28 yrs) stated: “...the offering is getting limited as I said before, there is a lot [content on Netflix], but there is also a lot of just filler material”. Another respondent elaborated:

...Sometimes it is hard to choose [something to watch on Netflix]. But there are just so, so, so many different things [to watch] ...maybe the disadvantage of the extensive offer is that you just can’t...well, you still have to decide for yourself of course, but because of that [extensive offer], there is also the possibility of choosing a lot of bad things [content on Netflix].

(Respondent 3, female, 25 yrs).

While the motive to subscribe for the lower educated depend on the literal number of content available on Netflix, the higher educated mostly demand the content to be innovative and new as a motive to subscribe to Netflix. Here, again, both groups refer to the extensive choice of content differently as has already been pointed out in the previous theme (theme 4.3). Overall, the increase in quantity has not been able to maintain high standards of quality for the higher educated.

Regarding the popularity of Netflix, it is interesting to notice the paradoxical stance of the higher educated toward the platform. While this group generally takes a more critical stance toward the platform, most of the respondents (5 out of 6) have indicated Netflix as their primary platform. This ambiguity is two-layered. On the one hand, this group is highly critical of Netflix and its content in terms of offering innovative content or, more specifically, the lack thereof. On the other hand, the respondents have indicated that the use of Netflix feels familiar and secure. The value of Netflix is frequently described in terms of its familiarity and loyalty by referring to Netflix in phrases such as ‘old and familiar’, ‘used the longest’, and ‘certainty to find something fun’. One respondent (respondent 11, female, 59 yrs) argued: “...It’s convenient because I know that when I open Netflix, I am certain to find something [to watch]”. In addition, another respondent (respondent 2, male, 28 yrs) mentioned: “Somehow, I get the feeling that when I scroll on *Prime*, on *Disney+*, on *Videoland*, *NPO*, on, on *HBO*, then I think ‘yeah well, I can’t find anything here anyway’...”. These quotes indicate that Netflix functions as a go-to platform for higher educated respondents, despite their critiques. When asked about using another streaming platform instead of Netflix, one respondent (respondent 8, female, 38 yrs) explained: “Until now, there is just so much [content on Netflix] so I haven’t really thought about that [using another platform] ...I think like ‘yeah, it is very unlikely that I’ll quit using Netflix’”. Thus, the familiarity of Netflix allows the platform to be used as the primary platform while it is not always considered ‘the best in town’. However, the lower educated respondents acted more tolerant toward the platform, and it comes without surprise that all of them have indicated using Netflix as their primary platform. This group puts Netflix on a stand by referring to the platform as ‘the best there is’, ‘no disadvantages’, and ‘a 10 out of 10’. When asked about the disadvantages of the

platform, one respondent (respondent 1, male, 41 yrs) explained: “I haven’t really noticed any [disadvantages]...Genuine cons? No, no, not really”. Another respondent (respondent 12, male, 22 yrs) stated: “It’s actually really a 10, I really have nothing to add...I wouldn’t know how to improve it [Netflix] honestly”. However, half of the higher educated respondents have also argued there are no major disadvantages of the platform, but they act more hesitant in expressing themselves compared to the lower educated. As one respondent (respondent 7, female, 78 yrs) argued: “No I don’t have any disadvantages...Well, of course, there is always something to improve, but I can’t, as a layman, name them so easily...I honestly don’t know what I would improve”. Another respondent (respondent 3, female, 25 yrs) argued: “...I don’t have a lot of disadvantages I think because, in my opinion, everything is there”. The familiarity with the platform is also noticeable in the way several respondents from both groups use Netflix as a verb to describe their active viewing of Netflix’s content ‘to Netflix’. Remarkably, none of the respondents use other streaming services as a verb to indicate their active viewing. One respondent (respondent 8, female, 38 yrs) even mentioned that the verb ‘to Netflix’ is also used when watching content from other streaming services, such as *Disney+*. She stated: “...Yes, they [Netflix] are really doing a great job...I don’t know about other countries, but the Dutch are like when you’re about ‘to Netflix’, even if you watch *Disney*, you call it Netflix, you know, like that”. This uncovers an interesting value judgment of Netflix among audiences that has not been recognized in prior research.

The exclusive content that Netflix offers is found to be very effective for both groups in attracting their attention to engage with Netflix’s content library which is in line with (Audyta & Hidayat, 2021). Furthermore, this thesis adds to the study by Auditya and Hidayat (2021) as it is found that besides attracting subscribers through the offer of exclusive Netflix content, respondents have mentioned sticking with Netflix because of it. One respondent (respondent 9, female, 39 yrs) explained that her preference lies with Netflix’s exclusive content and that that has made a great contribution to the quality of the platform. Moreover, all the respondents mentioned to highly value Netflix’s user interface. Especially in terms of its recommendation algorithm which reinforces the study by Auditya and Hidayat (2021). The personalized recommendation system of Netflix increases user satisfaction in most cases. However, again, some higher educated respondents take a critical stance toward the recommendation system of Netflix. This is specifically related to the accuracy of recommendation which supports the article by Liang et al. (2006) as they state that “personalized services can indeed increase user satisfaction through accurate recommendation or relevant contents” (p. 63). Thus, the promise that algorithms guarantee the love for Netflix programming is, in some cases, delusive (Burroughs, 2018). Furthermore, one respondent (respondent 11, female, 59 yrs) has expressed her skepticism toward the recommendation system of Netflix. She explained: “I think it is interesting that it works that way, I think like ‘wow we are all getting tricked’”. In addition, more than half of the respondents (7 out of 12) have stated that Netflix’s user interface is better than other platforms. Thus, both the freedom to watch anything, at any time and any place, and the substantive

usability of Netflix in terms of their recommendation system including the ‘trending’ and ‘recommended for you’ options have been of great importance in the assessment of Netflix as a quality platform. The popularity of Netflix’s user interface is one of the most important demands for evaluating the quality of a streaming platform.

#### **4.5 The Controversy of 'Good Television' Versus 'Quality Television' Through Value**

##### **Judgments of the Audience About the Technical Characteristics of Television.**

The fifth and last main theme of this study describes the individual opinions on the technical characteristics of television. These opinions are indicated after the data was analyzed and were not explicitly asked for during the interviews. “Technical excellence” has generally been used by professionals to assess ‘quality television’; however, viewers can also have their own opinions (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018, p. 196). The lack of expertise does not hold them back to make general appraisals about high and low technical quality which elaborates on the study by Cummins and Chambers (2011). Furthermore, it is found that the technical characteristics of television explain the extent to which viewers appreciate the program and assess its quality (Shamir, 2007). Technical quality includes script, sound, cinematography, and acting skills. These aspects are partly derived from Dhoest (2014) as he has found that, above all, a TV series or movie needs an engaging storyline that contains a plot with characters that captivate you. When asked about what makes ‘good’ television in their opinion, respondents mostly used phrases such as ‘an engaging storyline that catches my attention’, or ‘when I am captivated by the story or the characters’, and they used adjectives to describe an important element such as ‘great cliffhangers’, ‘cool plot’, or ‘good acting skills’. As one respondent (respondent 5, female, 63 yrs) pointed out: “...There must be a [captivating] story...Otherwise I’ll lose my interest...”. Another respondent (respondent 7, female, 78 yrs) answered: “When it captivates me...when you get lost in the story, right, that you’re able to let go of everything else”. Furthermore, respondent 12 (male, 22 yrs) explained: “I think a good TV show is, of course, a show that you want to keep watching and every time, you’re like ‘I want to know what happens next’”. Thus, being captivated by an engaging storyline is important in the evaluation of what is ‘good’ television for both groups.

However, as Dhoest (2014) already argued in his article, the evaluation of ‘good’ television and ‘quality television’ is not always equivalent. In line with Dhoest’s (2014) article on the assessment of ‘good drama’, ‘good television’ generally relates to what the respondent considers a well-written script with good actors. Indeed, the viewer’s evaluation of what is considered a ‘good script’ or ‘good acting skills’ is more subjective than a similar evaluation by critics (Dhoest, 2014). Critics argue that “a production is good when it is professionally shot, with good sound and good editing” and this goes hand in hand with the availability of time and money (Dhoest, 2014, p. 13). Although the subjective character of evaluating quality is substantially present from a viewer’s perspective, a good filming style, good sound, and good acting skills are mentioned by respondents when they define ‘good

quality television'. This study adds to Dhoest's (2014) evaluation of 'good drama', as it is found that 'esthetically pleasing' is also one of the qualifications for evaluating 'good television' among the higher educated. This group considers specific genres such as dramas and romantic comedies as 'bad television', yet they enjoyed this type of content because of the esthetics which served their needs.

Whereas 'good television' is associated with a 'good script' and 'good acting skills', 'bad television' is to a lesser extent linked to a 'bad script' and 'bad acting skills'. Especially among the lower educated, respondents did not frequently evaluate 'bad television' along the lines of bad opinions. This is linked to the article by Ollivier (2008) as she found that both 'middlebrows' and 'lowbrows' are less likely than 'highbrows' to reject specific genres because of what they perceive as poor esthetic value. This, again, shows a difference in cultural capital between the two groups as the lower educated show a lack to recognize what is acknowledged as 'bad' while the higher educated can. This group uses bad opinions to evaluate 'bad television' especially 'poor acting skills' is frequently used to describe 'bad television'. Additionally, unlike the lower educated, the higher educated refer to 'bad television' using verbally strong words such as 'trashy', 'bad stuff', or 'crappy'. Therefore, it can be concluded that technical characteristics also play a significant role in defining what is 'quality television' among viewers. Despite its subjective character, the definition of 'quality television' from the perspective of the viewer is dependent on judgments of technical characteristics such as script, sound, and acting skills. However, since 'quality television' is not necessarily always perceived as 'good', then what is considered 'quality television' for both groups (Dhoest, 2014)? The answer is found in the conclusion of this thesis.

## 5. Conclusion

This research aimed to explore the concept of ‘quality television’ on Netflix from the perspective of Netflix viewers. More specifically, this thesis has delved into the question of how Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital experience ‘quality television’ on Netflix. The discussed chapters and their corresponding sub-conclusions were necessary in order to answer the central question of this study. This study proposed one central question including three sub-questions, and these are answered in the following paragraphs. Furthermore, this chapter provides a critical reflection on the theory that has been used and discusses the limitations of this study. This chapter ends with recommendations for future research.

The first question that this thesis has introduced was: ‘what do Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital (high versus low) consider as ‘quality television’?’. Based on a qualitative approach conducting 12 semi-structured interviews, it can be concluded that the higher educated put the label ‘quality television’ onto a TV show or movie that shows a good filming style with an original and captivating storyline that draws your attention starring – what they consider – good actors. Furthermore, this group also enjoys watching ‘bad television’. This indicates them as camp viewers as this type of content is not considered ‘good television’, but since it serves individual needs and matches personal moods it is still defined as ‘quality television’. In terms of public service broadcasting, this group considers the news and documentaries as ‘quality television’. This relates to the idea that the higher educated desire to gain knowledge and stay up to date with (global) current affairs in their choice of television content. This group shows a mere desire to watch public service broadcasting and holds back from watching commercial broadcasting as they perceive this type of television as ‘bad’. The lower educated group, on the other hand, assesses ‘quality television’ more in terms of a TV show or movie that has an engaging storyline that matches individual taste preferences and is entertaining. Although this group shows a slight interest in watching linear TV programming that is informative, this group generally considers commercial broadcasting as ‘good television’ on TV, including entertainment programs such as game shows and talk shows. The dominant reason for them to watch this type of content is because they consider it ‘entertaining’ which is why they label it as ‘good television’. Notably, this type of content is considered ‘good’, but this group does not specifically associate commercial broadcasting with ‘quality television’.

The second sub-question is defined as: ‘how do Dutch Netflix viewers make their choices on Netflix regarding what to watch?’. Although the analysis has revealed similarities between the two groups and their view on ‘quality television’, the results have indicated that both groups decide differently regarding what they want to watch. Whereas the higher educated generally make their decisions based on their personal needs and moods, the lower educated largely decide to watch something that is based on their preferences and matches their interests. The latter has a limited range of preferences within which they decide what they want to watch on Netflix. Thus, this group values content diversity within their preferred genre. Within the higher educated group, cultural

omnivorousness is present which indicates that members of this group enjoy watching a large range of genres. For this group, genre diversity is appreciated in their choice regarding what they want to watch on Netflix.

Moreover, the third sub-question that has been introduced was: ‘to what extent do the two groups consider Netflix a ‘quality platform?’’. It can be concluded that both groups generally consider Netflix a ‘quality platform’, but the higher educated are more critical of Netflix than the lower educated. Whereas the lower educated put Netflix on a stand as they largely consider it ‘the best there is’, the higher educated highlight the lack of original content in the assessment of Netflix as a quality platform. The latter is somewhat paradoxical as this group has also indicated using Netflix as their preferred platform. It can be concluded that the use of Netflix is intertwined with people’s lives as the platform creates feelings of familiarity and security. Furthermore, both groups value Netflix’s user interface, especially regarding their recommendation system (the ‘trending’ and ‘recommended for you’ features). However, the higher educated, again, are more hesitant than the lower educated in their evaluation of Netflix’s recommendation system.

Finally, after answering all the sub-questions, the central question of this thesis is answered. The main question of this study is defined as follows: ‘how do Dutch Netflix viewers with different levels of cultural capital experience ‘quality television’ on Netflix?’’. It can be concluded that the concept of ‘quality television’ is predominantly used among scholars rather than viewers to indicate a specific category of television (Hesmondhalgh, 2006; Lavie, 2014; Lavie & Dhoest, 2015). From a viewer’s perspective, television – either available on cable or on streaming platforms – is not directly referred to as ‘quality television’ in case a viewer has assessed the content as ‘good’. Instead, audiences make value judgments about television labeling it as either ‘bad’ or ‘good’, but they do not specifically associate the content with ‘quality television’. Both groups of Netflix viewers evaluate television based on their preferences and interests, but also on their needs and personal moods. Furthermore, Netflix viewers make general appraisals about high and low technical quality based on certain technical characteristics such as script, acting skills, and storyline. In general, Netflix is considered a high-quality platform. However, due to the lack of innovation, the extensive choice of content that may lead to oversaturation, and the emergence of other ‘quality’ streaming services, Netflix’s reputation is on thin ice. This perspective is particularly present among the higher educated.

The following paragraphs discuss the most significant differences between the two groups regarding ‘quality television’. Firstly, the differences that relate to the way in which people search for and choose their television content are discussed. While the higher educated have a broad range of preferred genres to choose from, the lower educated are limited in their preferences. People who have obtained a higher educational level appreciate a broad range of culture which makes them more culturally omnivorous. People with a low cultural capital are more narrow-minded in their preferences as they match the content that they watch to their own preferences. This calls for an extensive content library to choose from to keep this group satisfied. Since the higher educated value genre diversity,

they take a more critical stance toward innovation on Netflix. For them, it gets more difficult to choose the best option for every genre that they like. However, Netflix offers a solution in both cases.

Secondly, people with a high cultural capital have shown to recognize what is considered 'quality television' and take a more critical stance toward television content while the lower educated have not. This elaborates on the article by Holt (1997) who argues that a high cultural capital leads to taking a more critical stance toward cultural objects. Thus, people who have obtained a higher educational level generally have more cultural capital that allows them to make constructive value judgments about television. Although the higher educated recognize what is considered 'bad television' in society or by critics, they do enjoy watching 'good types' of 'bad television'. However, this viewing behavior comes with embarrassment, and they talk about this behavior with irony and distance. This builds on the article by McCoy and Scarborough (2014), who indicate different viewing styles in how viewers watch 'bad' television content. Among these viewing styles are ironic viewing and viewing with a camp sensibility, which are two styles that are found to be present among the higher educated in this thesis (McCoy & Scarborough, 2014). On the contrary, as people with a low cultural capital do not show signs of objectively recognizing what is considered 'good' or 'bad', they do not feel the urge to talk about 'bad television' with distance or irony. They just like what they like and do not differentiate between what is 'good' or 'bad'.

Thirdly, the availability of 'quality television' on Netflix is largely acknowledged among people with a low cultural capital rather than among people with a high cultural capital. People with a low cultural capital tend to put Netflix on a stand having no disadvantages while the other group tends to highlight the platform's flaws and mention other streaming services that do better. In their battle on becoming the largest and the most renowned, Netflix's goal was to 'become HBO faster than HBO can become us' (Wayne, 2021). Interestingly, Netflix seems to be intertwined with people's lives and offers a sense of familiarity and security. This is the main reason why Netflix can be considered a 'quality platform' as it is people's go-to and most used platform.

As prior literature already discussed, this research builds on the idea that 'quality television' from a viewer's perspective can be assessed through four different levels of satisfaction: the satisfaction of one's own needs, interests, demands, and opinions (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Etayo et al., 2021; Manero et al., 2013). The study by Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018) has been frequently referred to in presenting the theoretical knowledge regarding 'quality television' and in the analysis of this thesis. While the authors of this study created a survey and directly asked their respondents what they think 'quality television' is, the present study used a qualitative method and indirectly touched upon how Netflix viewers view 'quality television' (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). Instead of presenting a pre-defined interpretation of 'quality television', this study allows the respondents to give their own perception of 'quality television' and provide examples. Interestingly, Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018) recommend including streaming services in future research due to the increasing importance of these platforms and competition with linear broadcast television. Thus, this thesis builds on the study by

Bayo-Moriones et al. (2018) as it sheds new light on how 'quality television' is perceived by Netflix viewers rather than traditional television viewers. Furthermore, this study provides new insights into this area as it includes meaning-making interviews with people who have obtained different educational levels. While a survey has been the dominant approach to investigating the idea of 'quality television', this study has tried to uncover the underlying dynamics of cultural capital in television viewing through interviews (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018; Etayo et al., 2021; Shamir, 2007; Sintas & Álvarez, 2002). However, as previous studies have already highlighted, it can be difficult to explore the viewer's perception of 'quality television' as it can have different meanings; particularly with regard to the different levels of education (Bayo-Moriones et al., 2018). Including the two levels of cultural capital in this research has contributed to existing literature on the perception of 'quality television' by viewers, but it is also accompanied by a few limitations. The interview guide has been created by the researcher who has obtained a higher educational level. Thus, as Ollivier (2008) already pointed out in her research regarding surveys, the interview questions may be more biased toward 'highbrow' culture than to 'lowbrow' culture (Ollivier, 2008). Since the lower educated naturally tend to dislike 'highbrow' cultural forms, this group may be presented as less culturally omnivorous than the higher educated (Ollivier, 2008). Furthermore, from conducting the interviews, it became clear that the lower educated had more trouble understanding some of the questions compared to the higher educated. This may result in a discrepancy in the answers between the two groups. However, these limitations have particularly been present in studies that conducted a survey to collect the data. Since this research used semi-structured interviews rather than a survey to look for underlying meanings, experiences, and opinions, these difficulties are limited as the interviewer was able to quickly clarify when necessary. Thus, since little research has considered using semi-structured interviews to explore the perceptions of 'quality television' among viewers with different levels of cultural capital, this study is a contribution to existing knowledge in television studies and in the creative industries in general.

The importance of emerging cultural capital in academia has been pointed out by several authors in the past (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Ollivier, 2008; Peterson, 1992; Prieur & Savage, 2013). However, some authors reject the idea of emerging cultural capital as they support a one-on-one relationship between cultural capital and taste preference (Rebers et al., 2006). Despite these denials, this study reinforces the significance of emerging cultural capital in academic research regarding how people with different levels of cultural capital engage with cultural activities or products. Audiences who have a high cultural capital are found to participate in popular, 'lowbrow', culture and therefore they can be labeled as cultural omnivores (Sintas & Álvarez, 2002). This study contributes to prior literature as it has found evidence for the presence of cultural omnivores among the higher educated in society and it shows the univorousness of the lower educated regarding television viewing. This does not fit within the proposed theory of Rebers et al. (2006) who support a one-on-one relationship between cultural capital and taste preference. However, this thesis builds on existing evidence of

cultural omnivorousness among the higher educated and supports the significance of emerging cultural capital in academic research (Gripsrud et al., 2011; Ollivier, 2008; Peterson, 1992; Prieur & Savage, 2013; Sintas & Álvarez, 2002).

Although this research clearly illustrates the differences between the higher and the lower educated regarding their search for and choice of television content, it also raises the question of whether these differences would also be present when conducting large-scale research. This thesis is a relatively small study as it collects data from 12 interviews among a mere Dutch population. Therefore, future research is needed to determine whether these differences are also present among a large population including different demographics. Furthermore, future studies should address viewers' perceptions of 'quality television' of several streaming platforms instead of solely Netflix to enrich the present study. Recently, many streaming platforms have made their entrance into the world of streaming of which not only Netflix is considered a 'high-quality platform'. Streaming services such as *Disney+* and *Prime* are accelerating in terms of subscriptions which calls for a detailed analysis of these platforms regarding their quality and the content that they offer. Moreover, future research could consider the intermediate level of education in their evaluation of how viewers perceive 'quality television' on streaming platforms. Due to time constraints, this study was not able to include this level of education. Therefore, to better understand the implications of the results, it could be interesting for future studies to incorporate the intermediate level of education in their analysis.

Overall, this study provides a better understanding of how Dutch Netflix viewers experience 'quality television' on Netflix and contributes to existing literature on this area. It supports the idea of emerging cultural capital and shows its importance in the evaluation of how different groups in society perceive 'quality television' on streaming platforms. Although streaming platforms are relatively new, these platforms have become increasingly popular and widely used over the years. These platforms have focused on attracting niche audiences and creating taste communities that have greatly changed the television industry (Krolo et al., 2020; Lotz, 2018). Furthermore, streaming services have allowed for television content that 'suits all tastes' which has enabled television to be no longer automatically considered 'lowbrow' culture (Castellano and Meimaridis, 2021; Wayne, 2017). With this change, the rise of the 'cultural omnivore' has emerged and supports the reconsideration of Bourdieu's original distinction of cultural capital (Prieur & Savage, 2013; Warde et al., 2007). This study enriches these theories, builds on them, and fills a gap in prior research. It provides detailed insights that may be necessary and useful for the television industry. The in-depth interviews about viewers' perspectives on 'quality television' and 'quality streaming services' might have valuable insights for creatives working in these industries to make accurate decisions.

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## Appendices

### Appendix A. An Overview of the Anonymous Respondents

<b>Pseudonym</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Highest achieved level of education</b>	<b>Number of times he/she watches Netflix a week</b>
Albert Respondent 1	41	Male	Intermediate Vocational Education (MBO)	Approximately 2 to 3 times a week
Bernard Respondent 2	28	Male	University	Approximately 4 to 5 times a week
Cindy Respondent 3	25	Female	University	Approximately 3 to 4 times a week
Ellie Respondent 4	50	Female	Intermediate Vocational Education (MBO)	Approximately 3 to 4 times a week
Giselle Respondent 5	63	Female	No education	Approximately 4 to 5 times a week
Frank Respondent 6	59	Male	No education	Approximately once (but when he watches with his wife it pushes to 2 or 3 times a week)
Inez Respondent 7	78	Female	University	Approximately 4 times a week
Julia Respondent 8	38	Female	Higher Vocational Education (HBO)	Approximately 4 times a week
Hailey Respondent 9	39	Female	University	Approximately 4 times a week unless she watches a series on Netflix (in that case she watches more than 2 times a week)
Koen Respondent 10	25	Male	Pre-vocational secondary education (VMBO)	Approximately 3 to 4 times a week
Dianne Respondent 11	59	Female	Higher Vocational Education (HBO)	Approximately 2 to 3 times a week

Lio Respondent 12	22	Male	Intermediate Vocational Education (MBO)	Almost every day
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## **Appendix B. Interview Guide (Dutch)**

### Inleiding:

Goedemorgen/middag/avond. Bedankt voor uw deelname aan dit interview. Mijn naam is Sanne Verhoef en ik studeer Media & Creatieve Industries aan de Erasmus Universiteit Rotterdam. De televisiewereld spreekt mij erg aan en hoe deze zich in de loop van de tijd heeft ontwikkeld. Vooral met betrekking tot streamingplatforms en het nieuwe streamingtijdperk. Deze platforms hebben een nieuwe manier van televisiekijken geïnitieerd, wat gedeeltelijk de reden is waarom ik contact met u heb opgenomen. Om mijn master Media & Creatieve Industries af te ronden, schrijf ik een masterscriptie waarbij ik onderzoek doe naar kwaliteitstelevisie op Netflix. Ik zou graag een aantal vragen willen stellen? Dit interview zal voor onderzoeksdoeleinden worden opgenomen. Heeft u daar bezwaar tegen? Zou u dan het consent form willen tekenen? Voor we beginnen, mag ik u tutoyeren? Dan gaan we nu beginnen.

### Openingsvragen:

- Kunt u een korte introductie van uzelf geven? Hoe oud ben je? Waar woon je? Kun je iets vertellen over je dagelijkse routine? Hoe ziet een gewone dag in je leven eruit?

### Algemene vragen over Netflix-gedrag:

- Hoe ben je in aanraking gekomen met Netflix?
- Hoe heeft je kijkgedrag zich in de loop van de tijd ontwikkeld?
  - o Follow-up: hoe vaak kijk jij Netflix?
  - o Follow-up: op welke factoren besluit je Netflix te kijken?
- Zou je me kunnen vertellen waarom je een Netflix-account hebt genomen?
- Kun je beschrijven op welke manier je Netflix kijkt?
  - o Follow-up: ben je alleen? Met vrienden/familie? Hoe lang kijk je?
- Wat drijft je om iets op Netflix te gaan kijken? (Specifieke stemming/stimulans?)

### Algemene vragen over Netflix (het platform)

- Wat zijn voor jou de voordelen zijn van het gebruik van Netflix als platform?
  - o En de nadelen van het gebruik van Netflix?
  - o Frustreren die prikkels je?
- Als je andere platformen gebruikt, wat zijn dan de belangrijkste verschillen tussen die platformen en Netflix?
- Wat zou voor jou een reden zijn om je abonnement bij Netflix op te zeggen?
- Op een schaal van 1 tot 10, hoe zou u uw algehele tevredenheid over het platform omschrijven?

- Leg uit, waarom geen 10?
- Stel je voor dat Netflix je zou bellen en je zou vragen om een tip en een top over hun platform te geven, wat zou je antwoorden?

#### Vragen over Netflix content:

- Wat kijk je meestal op Netflix en waarom?
  - Follow-up: is dat ook je favoriete genre?
  - In welke mate houd je van bingewatchen? Zo ja, wat bingewatched u dan?
- Hoe zou je je favoriete show/film/documentaire omschrijven?
- Kun je me vertellen naar welk genre je het meest kijkt en waarom?
  - In welke mate sluit je bepaalde genres uit?
- Hoe bepaal je wat je op Netflix gaat kijken?
- Als je zou worden gevraagd om Netflix een cijfer van 1 tot 10 te geven op basis van de inhoud die ze op hun platform aanbieden, hoe zou u Netflix dan beoordelen?
- Stel je voor dat je vriend wat advies nodig heeft over wat te kijken op Netflix. Wat zou je zeggen?
- Stel je voor dat je thuiskomt van je werk, en je voelt je lui en wilt ontspannen. Je besluit Netflix aan te zetten. Wat zou je kijken en waarom? Verschilt dat nog van tijdens de weekenden?
- Hoeveel waarde hecht je aan de programma's die beschikbaar zijn op Netflix in vergelijking met andere vormen van televisie?
  - Kwailteit boven kwantiteit? Door enorme aanbod?

#### Vragen over content anders dan op Netflix.

- Hoe vaak per week kijk je lineaire televisie?
- Hoe vaak per week kijk je televisie op een ander streamingplatform (naast Netflix)?
- Als je naar iets anders kijkt dan Netflix, is er dan een verschil tussen dat en het kijken naar iets op Netflix?
- *Als de respondent 'ja' heeft geantwoord op de eerste vraag van deze sectie:* als u zou worden gevraagd om andere lineaire televisie-inhoud dan de inhoud op Netflix te rangschikken van 1 tot 10, hoe zou u dan rangschikken?
- *Als de respondent 'ja' heeft geantwoord op de tweede vraag van deze sectie:* als u zou worden gevraagd om de inhoud van andere streamingplatforms (dus exclusief Netflix) te rangschikken van 1 tot 10, hoe zou u dan scoren?
- Kunt u uw voorkeur beschrijven bij het kijken naar lineaire, Netflix- of andere televisie-inhoud en waarom?

Specifieke vragen over kwaliteit:

- Kunt u beschrijven wat u goede televisie vindt?
- Kunt u een voorbeeld geven van slechte televisie? En wat maakt het slecht?
- Wat maakt dat een programma, een film, een documentaire etc. van hoge kwaliteit is?
- Ligt uw voorkeur bij het kijken naar hoge kwaliteit of lage kwaliteit? Waarom?

Slotvraag:

- Is er nog iets dat je wilt bespreken wat nog niet aan bod is gekomen?

**Appendix C. An Overview of the Most Significant Findings Regarding the Assessment of ‘Good’ and ‘Bad Television’ of People With High Cultural Capital Versus Low Cultural Capital.**

Please view table on next page.

<p><u>Technical characteristics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Setting</li> <li>- Good filming style</li> <li>- Good acting skills</li> <li>- Sound/music</li> </ul> <p><u>Genre/type of content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Easy to watch</li> <li>- Documentaries</li> <li>- Romcom</li> <li>- Tension/crime</li> <li>- Internationally oriented</li> <li>- Realistic</li> <li>- Movie classics</li> </ul> <p><u>Demands:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Original/innovative</li> <li>- Trending/recommended for you feature</li> <li>- Genre diversity</li> <li>- No ads</li> </ul> <p><u>Needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Thought-provoking/challenging/informing</li> <li>- Relaxation/getting mind off things</li> </ul> <p><u>Most used descriptive judgments to describe 'good television':</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'If it draws my attention'</li> <li>- 'If it captivates me'</li> <li>- 'Just easy to watch, light-weighted'</li> <li>- 'If it gets my mind off things'</li> <li>- 'When it serves your needs'</li> <li>- 'That depends on my mood'</li> <li>- 'When I can lose myself in watching something'</li> </ul>	HIGH/GOOD	<p><u>Technical characteristics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Poor script</li> <li>- Poor acting</li> <li>- Native language (Dutch)</li> <li>- Repetitive/predictable</li> <li>- Incredible/impossible</li> <li>- Slow</li> </ul> <p><u>Genre/type of content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Horror</li> <li>- Vulgar &amp; offensive</li> <li>- Linear TV → commercial such as game shows and reality TV</li> <li>- (Dutch) romantic comedies</li> <li>- Sci-fi</li> </ul> <p><u>Demands:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Unethical</li> <li>- Limited innovation</li> </ul> <p><u>Most used descriptive judgments to describe 'bad television':</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'If it doesn't suit my needs'</li> <li>- 'If it doesn't get me, doesn't get my attention'</li> <li>- 'Just trashy television'</li> </ul>	HIGH/BAD
<p><u>Technical characteristics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Good acting skills</li> <li>- Good ending</li> <li>- Interesting characters</li> </ul> <p><u>Genre/type of content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Romantic (comedies)</li> <li>- True stories</li> <li>- Drama</li> <li>- Vulgar &amp; offensive</li> <li>- Dutch</li> <li>- Action</li> <li>- Internationally oriented</li> <li>- Tension/crime</li> <li>- Reality TV</li> <li>- Nostalgic</li> </ul> <p><u>Demands:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extensive choice of content</li> <li>- New/original content</li> </ul> <p><u>Needs:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Entertainment</li> <li>- Relaxation</li> <li>- Escapism</li> </ul> <p><u>Most used descriptive judgments to describe 'good television':</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'I don't care about the quality; I just want it to be fun to watch'</li> <li>- 'If I like it, I think it is good'</li> <li>- 'When you can't stop watching'</li> <li>- 'Whatever I feel like watching'</li> <li>- 'An engaging storyline'</li> </ul>	LOW/GOOD	<p><u>Technical characteristics:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low budget</li> <li>- Incredible/impossible to happen</li> </ul> <p><u>Genre/type of content:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Familiar content/already watched content</li> <li>- Scary</li> <li>- Weighty</li> <li>- Comedy</li> </ul> <p><u>Most used descriptive judgments to describe 'bad television':</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 'I don't know, because if it's bad I don't watch it'</li> <li>- 'It doesn't get me, doesn't get my attention'</li> <li>- 'Anything I don't like'</li> <li>- 'Anything I don't feel like watching' (because of the bad mood afterwards)</li> <li>- 'Anything I don't feel like watching (because I am not interested in it).</li> <li>- 'Just cable TV, there is nothing to watch there'</li> </ul>	LOW/BAD