COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING
SQUID GAME ON NETFLIX US TIKTOK

BY

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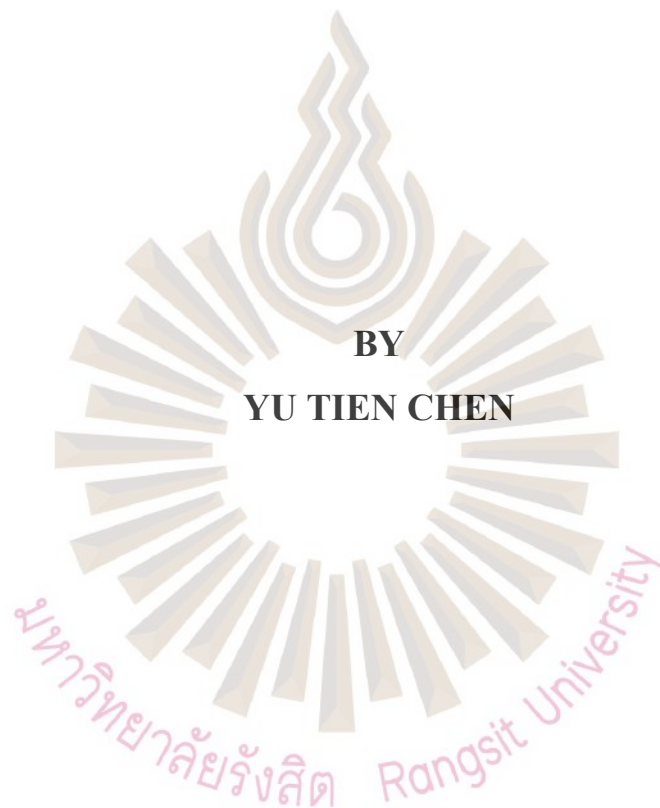ACADEMIC YEAR 2024**

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Abstract

In the evolving landscape of digital promotion, understanding platform-specific strategies is paramount. This study aimed to elucidate Netflix's promotional tactics for Squid Game on TikTok. Using a mixed-methods approach, the research combined quantitative data analysis of engagement metrics with qualitative content analysis. The scope of the study was confined to TikTok, focusing on top-engaging posts related to Squid Game to ascertain the nature, content type, and strategic underpinnings of the promotion.

The findings reveal a multifaceted content strategy rooted in humor, excitement, and emotional resonance, with short-form videos and memes emerging as predominant content types. Original sound integrations, strategic hashtag use, and a curated emotional spectrum were identified as core elements bolstering engagement. Based on these insights, recommendations include diversifying content formats, emphasizing user-generated content, and ensuring consistent posting cadence. Future research should consider a broader array of platforms and series to establish a comprehensive understanding of digital promotional paradigm.

(Total 119 pages)

Keywords: Netflix US, TikTok, Squid Game, Social Media Marketing, Content Marketing

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Significance of the Problem

Netflix, an American company founded in 1997, is one of the world's leading streaming service providers, with more than 232.5 million paid memberships in over 190 countries. Through the network, this business legitimately provides programming of a variety of kinds (documentaries, series, films, short films or miniseries). Members get unrestricted access to view at any time on any screen that is linked to the internet. With substantial global expansion, it is today regarded as an OTT (over-the-top) enterprise (Ruiz, 2017). It began by distributing content created by others, but as of 2013, it has also started to create and distribute its own content.

The entertainment industry has changed as a result of this top streaming service. Knowing its audiences' preferences and habits and giving each user what they want to see are the keys to success for a creative marketing plan that combines strategy and content (Leclercq & Teijeiro, 2019). This has been made possible in large part by the immense data produced by the enormous public, which has resulted in the isolation of more than 2,000 little communities or clusters of tastes (González-Chans, Membiela-Pollán, & Cuns, 2020). The architecture of its recommendation system is constructed using this technique (Neira, 2019). By anticipating customer needs and setting itself apart early on, Netflix has ensured customer satisfaction through its programming and a subscription model that makes it convenient and simple for customers to make payments.

Over twenty five years, Netflix's activities have drawn a fair share of rivals, but despite this, Netflix has emerged as the leading streaming service, in large part because to its superb social media strategy. They have different strategies for each social media platform, and there are devoted team members for each platform. Netflix hired fans of sci-fi or comedy, two of its primary target genres, who were also ardent TV and film watchers. They ranged in age and had backgrounds in marketing, journalism, public relations, and entertainment (Nikki, 2021). The team publishes on its Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, and TikTok accounts an average of three times every day. By sharing updates on new films and TV episodes and engaging with its audience with witty comebacks, Netflix is able to accomplish the same aim on social media that it does with its streaming video programming, which is pure enjoyment.

Table 1.1 Netflix's US-Related Social Media Accounts (as of April, 2023)

Social Media	Site	No. of Subscribers (millions)
Facebook	https://web.facebook.com/netflix/	87.08
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/netflix/	32.6
TikTok	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix	33.9
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/c/Netflix/featured	26.2
Twitter	https://twitter.com/netflix	21.7

Source: Statistics, 2023

Netflix's transnational reach is expanding; the highest percentages of subscribers are located in Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, followed by North America (Statistics, 2023). This suggests that their North American and European-wide communications strategies provide the greatest amount of data and can serve as an indicator of their overall marketing approach. Latest data shows that in the first quarter of 2023, Netflix had a total of 232.5 million subscribers, 77.37 million of which came from Europe, the Middle East, and Africa; 74.4 million of which came from the U.S. and Canada; 41.25 million of which came from Latin America; and

39.48 million of which came from Asia Pacific (Statista, 2023). In addition, members of Generation Z account for the largest share of Netflix subscribers, with 70% of the age bracket having a paid subscription (Morning Consult, 2020). This is an indication that Netflix continues to grow rapidly and has its largest consumer base in the U.S. and Europe. The growth in the number of users also reflects the growing strength of this media service provider, which also makes it an interesting and relevant research topic.
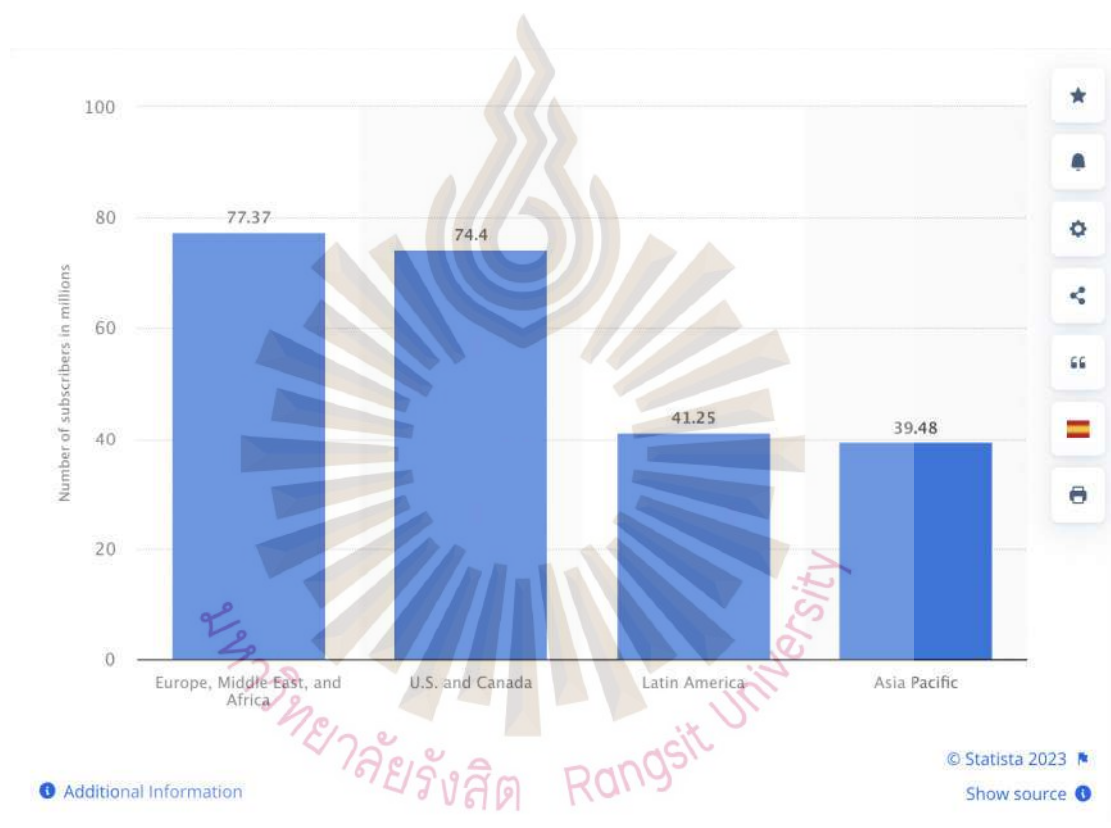
Figure 1.1 Shows Number of Netflix paying streaming subscribers worldwide as of
1st quarter 2023
Source: Statistics (Database), 2023

Squid Game, which is currently the most watched program in Netflix history, depicts the plight of 456 players who take part in a challenging game in which the winner would receive billions of dollars in cash and the losers will perish immediately. The Korean series was exclusively broadcast by OTT giant Netflix on September 17, 2022, and pulled in a staggering 1.65 billion hours of viewing in 28

days following its premiere. The series has the world buzzing, making it the first Korean drama to top Netflix's global most-viewed chart. In addition, Squid Game has been ranked as Netflix's #1 program in 94 countries (Including the US).

Figure 1.2 Shows The Top 10 most popular TV (Non-English)

Source: Netflix, 2023

Squid Game, a South Korean dystopian and bloody production, has attracted attention for many reasons. First of all, the public is moved by the story. Squid Game boasts outstanding acting and visuals, but the characters' understandable financial situations also contribute to its appeal. Personal debt is a significant issue in South Korea, and the story has a significant impact there as well given that roughly 75% of Americans die with an average debt of $62,000 (Brewington, 2021). The second reason is that the series gained a lot of mainstream media publicity. The strangeness of a Korean series becoming so popular, the apparent parallels to everyday life in countries like the U.S. and the U.K., and the shock factor provided fertile ground for media commentators. However, hidden behind the headlines of mainstream media were the social media 'back channels' (Sutton, Palen, & Shklovski, 2008), which

shaped a large number of these stories and drew attention to this series in the mainstream. Squid Game has attracted so many fans and is still going strong is related to its communication strategy and viral TikTok memes. It draws a lot of followers due to its numerous publicity channels, clear publicity material, and the "Red Light, Green Light," "Dalgona Candy," and "Costume Play" that have resulted from it (Siregar, Angin, & Mono, 2021). Viral challenges and memes spread over TikTok and the rest of the internet as a result of the overwhelmingly enthusiastic reception.

Social media is now a constant in both consumers' and businesses' communication strategies (Patrutiu-Baltes, 2016). In order to tell their narrative in a more captivating and dynamic way, brands are implementing storytelling strategies into their business communications with consumers, according to Patrutiu-Baltes' study. The author talks about how social media platforms give people a chance to visualize messages, which has higher success rates than using more conventional communication methods. The various benefits of this technique are also mentioned in Blagovesta Dimitrova's paper, including attracting and retaining both current and potential customers, building enduring relationships and brand communities, expanding into new markets, and maintaining ongoing user interaction (Dimitrova, 2019). According to the study, digital communication is an alluring and ostensibly very profitable communication strategy because of its ease of use and low cost.

It is obvious that utilizing social media effectively may promote the expansion of small enterprises. As of 2018, approximately 97 percent of Fortune 500 companies use at least one social media channel to advertise their activities and enhance effective stakeholder communication (Porteous, 2021). There were around 4.74 billion social media users worldwide as of October 2022. By 2023, there were more than 302.25 million social media users in the US (Ruby, 2023). Additionally, one of the social media platforms with the quickest growth in the US is TikTok, which is particularly well-liked by Generation Z. As of January 2023, the United States has by far the largest TikTok audience, with about 113 million members actively using the famous social video platform (Statista, 2023).

On August 7, 2019, Netflix's US TikTok account went live. At this time, there are 29 million followers. A force in the arts TikTok-friendly entertainment is available on Netflix. Netflix continues to produce enjoyable material in a variety of ways, including making fun of the moments we watch when binge-watching and even profiting from more "adult" humor (Laboriel, 2021). For Netflix's Squid Game, starring Lee Jung-jae, Park Hae-soo, and Ho Yeon Jung, the company enlisted the South Korean fantasy horror series' actors for a video playing dalgona candy on TikTok, aimed at the #squidgame community on the app. Videos with the #squidgame hashtag on TikTok have more than 81.6 billion views. That is fandom at its finest and demonstrates usage, engagement, and watching behaviors repeatedly. The necessity of TikTok, probably more than with any platform ever, is the necessity to show up as a fan first and as a marketer second (Spangler, 2022).

Despite the large body of academic literature on the usage of social media platforms for promotional purposes, little is known about Netflix's social media strategy and, in particular, the usage of TikTok for promoting. Therefore, the author will use Netflix US TikTok account as an example to examine the new marketing model of Squid Game TV series episode promotion via a short video format.

The US has the most Netflix subscribers and TikTok users. Squid Game was launched as a Korean drama, setting a record for the largest Netflix series launch, and its success was attributed to the popularity wave it generated on TikTok. For these reasons, this study focuses on how Netflix US uses TikTok to engage its audiences and promote Squid Game.

1.2 Research Objectives

The main research objectives of this paper are twofold. Firstly, the study aims to identify the types of content that were utilized in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote the hit series "Squid Game". This will involve a comprehensive analysis of various content formats such as trailers, teasers, behind-the-scenes footage, memes, and other promotional material, in order to determine

which ones generated the highest levels of engagement among TikTok users. Secondly, the research will investigate the content strategy used by Netflix US in the most successful promotional content. This will involve an examination of factors such as tone, style, messaging, and overall approach to marketing the series, in order to gain insights into how to create effective marketing campaigns for streaming services on social media platforms like TikTok. By achieving these objectives, the study will contribute to a deeper understanding of how streaming services can effectively engage with audiences on TikTok, and inform best practices for marketing content to this platform's user base.

1.2.1 To identify which types of content were used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game.

1.2.2 To study which content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game.

1.3 Research Questions

The expanding use of TikTok as a business tool and the increasing penetration of TikTok into consumers' social lives serve as the inspiration for this study, respectively. It's fascinating to look into the ways that television broadcasters or on-demand streaming platforms might sell their content (as taken into consideration its visual character) given the growing popularity of TikTok and its focus on visual content.

The potential of the social media platform merits research consideration due to the advantages it could provide in terms of financial gains and cost-effective marketing strategies, as well as due to its capacity to strengthen the bond between a brand and its audience. Due to the scope of its operations and its well-established usage of social media to promote its content, Netflix emerges as an intriguing subject.

Additionally, Martín-Quevedo, Fernández-Gómez, and Segado-Boj (2019), provide an engaging case to watch while learning important knowledge for the sector and the opportunities social networking sites possess due to its corporate identity and

amusing characteristics displayed across its Instagram channels. The ensuing primary research questions are as follows:

   RQ1: What types of content were used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?

   RQ2: What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?

   In terms of methodology, we conducted a quantitative analysis of 43 TikTok posts to filter out the top 10 most engaged posts, followed by a qualitative content analysis of the top 10 most engaged posts. The qualitative content analysis approach has been often used in similar studies, for example in the analysis of the role of social media in the promotion of Korean pop (Ahn, Oh, & Kim, 2013).

1.4 Research Framework

   The conceptual framework of this thesis focuses on understanding the communication strategy used by Netflix in promoting Squid Game, a popular Korean drama, on TikTok through social media marketing concepts and content marketing concepts. The study aims to investigate how Netflix used these strategies to create an excellent communication plan that resonated with its American audience and led to the success of Squid Game.

   Social media marketing concepts form the first component of the conceptual framework. This concept emphasizes the use of social media platforms to promote products and services to a specific target audience. The framework will explore how Netflix leveraged TikTok's features to reach a younger audience and create buzz around Squid Game. Additionally, the study will analyze the various social media marketing techniques employed by Netflix to create engagement, drive traffic, and increase awareness of the show among its target audience.

   The second component of the conceptual framework is content marketing concepts. This concept involves the creation and distribution of valuable content to

attract and retain a target audience. The framework will investigate how Netflix created a compelling story around Squid Game that captured the attention of its American audience. The study will also analyze how Netflix's content marketing strategy, such as its trailer, social media posts, and behind-the-scenes content, contributed to the success of Squid Game on TikTok. By exploring these concepts, the study aims to provide insights into how Netflix's communication strategy contributed to the show's success and what other organizations can learn from it. This study provided the conceptual framework indicated in Figure to address the research objectives (1.3).
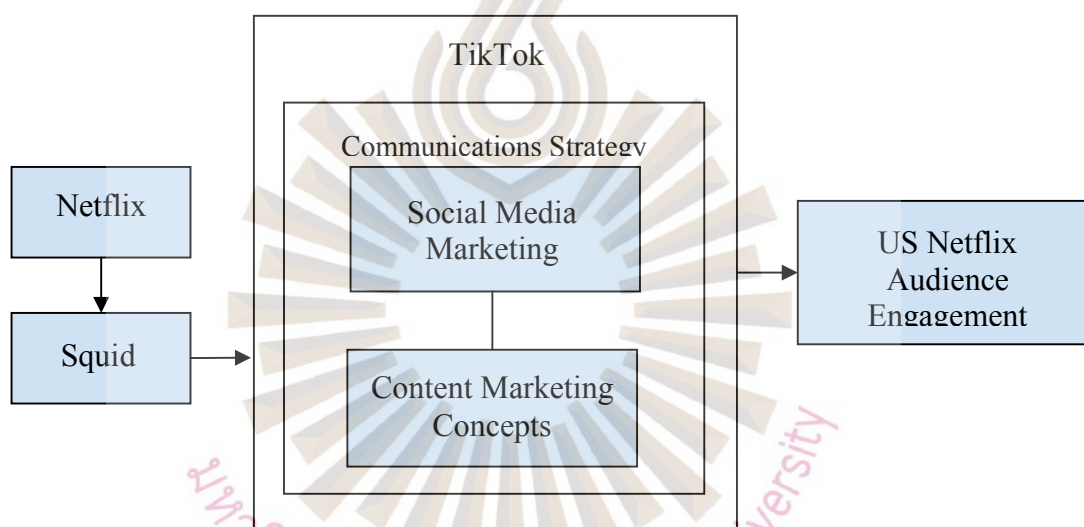
Figure 1.3 Conceptual Frameworks

1.5 Definition of Terms

Netflix US refers to the platform on which Netflix offers shows and movies to subscribers who are logged in in the United States. Squid Game made its premiere on the Netflix U.S. platform on September 17, 2021.

Squid Game refers to a South Korean television series that aired on Netflix in 2021. It is a dystopian thriller drama created by Hwang Dong-hyuk that became a global sensation. The show follows a group of financially struggling individuals who

participate in a secretive and deadly survival game with a chance to win a large cash prize.

TikTok refers to the Netflix US TikTok account (@netflix), which Netflix U.S. used to promote its original series Squid Game.

Type of Content refers to the specific format and style of the promotional materials that Netflix used to promote the Korean drama Squid Game on TikTok in the United States. This includes video clips, behind-the-scenes footage, memes, and other types of content that are tailored to appeal to the platform's younger user base.

Content Strategy refers to the plan Netflix developed to promote Squid Game on TikTok in the United States. This includes determining the target audience, selecting appropriate content formats, and defining metrics to measure the success of the promotional campaign.

Communication Strategy in the context of Netflix's promotion of Squid Game on TikTok in the United States refers to the approach taken to effectively communicate with the audience on the platform. This includes defining the tone and voice of the messaging, selecting appropriate channels for distribution, and ensuring consistency across all communication efforts.

1.6 Scope of Study

The main focus of this study is to examine the high-engagement TikTok posts related to the popular Korean drama "Squid Game", particularly those posted on the official TikTok account of US Netflix. The study aims to analyze the content type and communication strategy used by Netflix in their promotional campaign, to understand the factors contributing to the success of these posts. The unit of analysis for this study will be the top ten high-engagement posts specifically related to Squid Game by Netflix US on its TikTok account. The study's time frame is limited to the period between September 17, 2021, and October 31, 2022, to ensure the feasibility of

the research within the specified scope. Additionally, the study will randomly select a post from TikTok account using the hashtag #squidgame to confirm the impact of user-generated content on promoting Squid Game.

1.7 Advantages of Study

This study addresses a topic that has received little attention in the scientific community while simultaneously providing insight into one of the most well-known entertainment firms operating in the present digital era. Little is known about Netflix's TikTok communication strategy, as was previously mentioned. More specifically, its communication strategy for the South Korean thriller Squid Game in the United States.

There has been research on the relationship between TikTok usage by streaming providers on a regular basis and viewing duration in China. Previous studies have focused on the communication strategies and agendas of Chinese streaming services like iQIYI, WeTV, Youku, and LeTV that were achieved through an online presence on TikTok while taking the efficiency of viral marketing in terms of specific shows streaming on the on-demand service platform into consideration. The primary research areas were measuring engagement levels and precisely using TikTok in marketing activities. Although streaming services and TikTok have worked to create brand communities on the platform, little attention has been paid to how this social networking site's distinctive features contribute to the success of the streaming platform through the content it creates.

In order to better understand how TikTok might be utilized as a tool to showcase the series and draw audiences, this initiative seeks an answer to a question. The main goal of the study is to use quantitative analysis to find out the top ten posts with the highest participation in Netflix's promotion of Squid Games on TikTok in the American market and then use qualitative content analysis to analyze the type of content and content strategy of the top ten posts with the highest engagement, but it also takes into account how consumers react based on their likes and comments on

various topics. As a result, scholarly knowledge is gathered about a digital era innovator like Netflix and social media marketing applications, as well as about how users react to that phenomenon. To sum up, this study contributes to our understanding of social media marketing in general and the TikTok platform in particular. It also fills a knowledge gap by providing information on the Netflix US communication strategy on the platform, which is a relatively new area of study.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

To explore Netflix's communication strategy on TikTok in the US market for promoting Squid Game, the study is built upon theories that define the usage of social media as a marketing tool to connect with audiences. Particularly, this project is based on an analysis of consumer engagement in Tiktok. The literature on social media marketing (SMM), content marketing, TikTok, Netflix, and an analysis of the Netflix Korea original series Squid Game, as well as research papers and articles published between 2019 and 2022 that are pertinent to the research topics and fall within the purview of this review of the literature, make up the theoretical framework.

2.1 Concepts of Social Media Marketing (SMM)

Social media marketing refers to the use of social media to try to persuade customers that a company's goods and/or services are valuable. It entails marketing through several platforms, including blogs, online forums, and social networks. Through social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, TikTok, and many others, social media marketing aims to connect with potential clients and customers while also increasing visibility and traffic. Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, and other social networks have all but supplanted conventional physical marketing channels in the past ten years. Some of the important ideas in social media marketing include target audience, content marketing, social media channels, brand image, interaction, and analytics.

The establishment of a company's influence, reputation, and brand within communities of potential clients, readers, or supporters is accomplished through a

systematic and methodical process called social media marketing. Brands heavily utilize social media marketing to communicate with their customer base. Because of the high level of interactivity of this medium, customers have more power and influence over the content they want to read and the businesses they want to interact with (Assaad, 2011). This can assist brands in creating beneficial connections. Brands can increase consumer brand loyalty through social media marketing (Erdoğmuş & Çiçek, 2012). The most notable aspect of brand loyalty is the beneficial use of social media advertising. Businesses should put more effort into producing relevant material that is both amusing and fun, as well as maintaining their presence across all social media channels. Customers that are devoted to a certain brand often promote it on their own.

2.1.1 Definition of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is often defined as "using social media channels to advertise your business and its products" (Barefoot & Szabo, 2010, p.13) An approach that allows people to sell their websites, products, or services using online social networks in order to connect with and engage a much larger demographic that might not have been accessible through traditional advertising methods is a broader description (Weinberg, 2009). Above, we highlighted communication with a community. Hunt, (2009). underlines the similarity between social media marketing and community marketing.

Social media advertising campaigns, working with social media influencers, posting text, images, videos, or other multimedia content on social media platforms, and interacting with users through comments, direct messages, or other channels are just a few examples of the many different ways social media marketing can be done.

Social media marketing (SMM) is described on Techopedia. Many customer-driven businesses must have a social media presence since it creates the impression of a closer relationship between the buyer and the seller. Furthermore, because social media links are typically shared by reliable sources, initiatives that are promoted there

are thought to have greater resonance. Advertisers may achieve greater results if they target their message to extremely particular audiences using the extensive data made available by social media.

As a result, "social media marketing" (SMM) refers to strategies that use social networks and applications to promote specific items or raise brand awareness. Establishing a presence on the major social media platforms, creating shareable editorials and articles, and employing surveys and competitions to get client input all during the campaign are common components of social media marketing efforts.

2.1.1.1 Variety of Social Networks

(1) Facebook is the most widely used social networking site in the world. Facebook was founded in 2004 and is based on user-generated links, videos, images, and other content that its users can comment on, like, and share (Hopeapuro, 2014). A Facebook profile can be used for both personal and professional purposes. Facebook positions itself as a platform for businesses to interact with specific communities, attract customers, and establish a mobile gathering place for businesses and consumers (Facebook, 2023).

The use of Facebook for corporate marketing has several advantages. In contrast to traditional media platforms, Facebook allows users to target content at specific target populations. Businesses greatly benefit from Facebook marketing's reach and its ability to track, measure, and report results. Due to its vast user base, Facebook is continually being improved and promoted (Suomen digimarkkinointi, 2023).

(2) Instagram, a mobile social media network, is now owned by Facebook. Since Facebook purchased Instagram in 2012, its value has multiplied by 50. Since its debut in October 2010, there have already been more than 2.35 billion active monthly users (Wise, 2023). Users can be people, companies, labor unions, and even animals. By 2023, there will be over 200 million business profiles on Instagram (Wise, 2023).

Instagram distinguishes itself from Facebook by emphasizing photo and video sharing. It is best suited for branding, especially for

businesses whose target markets are younger. Due to Instagram's high degree of user engagement, its use for marketing purposes has increased dramatically over the past few years. Customers are eager to offer images and testimonials of goods they have used successfully (Kananen, 2018, pp. 397–402).

(3) YouTube is an international website for sharing videos. Users of YouTube can watch, share, and upload videos to the platform. The service's content is quite varied, and different videos may always be found on video blogs, ranging from music videos to advertisements to instructive videos. It costs nothing to sign up for an account and upload videos to YouTube. While it is possible to watch videos without registering, the service's features are limited compared to those available to registered users. Following Facebook, YouTube is the world's second-largest social network (Statista, 2023) YouTube is the most appropriate social media medium to employ if marketing content is primarily centered on videos(Kananen, 2018).

(4) Twitter is a microblogging platform that was established in 2006 in San Francisco, California, by Jack Dorsey, Evan Williams, Biz Stone, and Noah Glass (Carlson, 2011). Using the platform of the Twitter.com website or the Twitter application, Twitter can post public texts that are up to 280 characters long. Every "tweet" consists of a unique blog post, which may also include other media like images and web addresses. Businesses and industries that need to interact often should use Twitter. Additionally, it's great venue for interacting with fans (Lin, 2022).

(5) TikTok. An international version of Douyin, a short-form video hosting service owned by the Chinese business ByteDance, called TikTok, was released in 2016. Although TikTok's and Douyin's user interfaces are nearly identical, they do not share content. Users may produce, edit, and share content of various kinds in the form of short films thanks to extra features like filters, voiceovers, and music. With options like liking, commenting, and even sharing the video material on other platforms and mediums, users may interact with the content (Vaterlaus & Winter, 2021). The "For You" tab, another distinctive feature, allows the app to draw a bigger and more diversified audience than other platforms because material is curated and chosen there in accordance with one's indicated likes and interests (Ostrovsky & Chen, 2020). TikTok differs from Instagram or Facebook in that it places a lot of

emphasis on content from producers who users may not even be familiar with or follow (Weimann & Masri, 2023). Additionally, TikTok gives almost anyone the chance to create content, which appeals to younger audiences and puts it in competition with other social networking platforms (Weimann & Masri, 2023).

2.1.2 Social Media Marketing Tools

Social media marketing tools are programs or websites created to assist organizations and individuals in managing, automating, and maximizing their social media marketing activities. The production of content, scheduling and releasing it, analytics and reporting, audience engagement, and advertising are just a few of the social media marketing tasks that these tools can assist with.

Social media management systems, content development tools, listening and monitoring tools for social media, and advertising and promotion tools are some typical social media marketing tools.

Businesses and individuals can enhance their overall outcomes by streamlining their social media marketing activities, increasing efficiency, reaching a larger audience, and generating more engagement and conversions by employing social media marketing tools.

2.1.3 Social Media Marketing Strategy

The process of developing a strategy to use social media platforms to sell a brand, item, or service is known as social media marketing. To reach and interact with the target audience, it entails leveraging a variety of social media sites, including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Goal-setting, target audience identification, content preparation, platform selection, an engagement strategy, KPIs, and measurement are often included in a social media marketing strategy. Businesses may use social media to engage with their target audience and accomplish their marketing objectives by creating a thorough social media marketing plan.

Social media interactions entail a process that permits resource exchange between organizations and customers from the perspective of strategic marketing. For instance, Hollebeek, Srivastava, and Chen (2019), claim that during interactions with businesses, customers might invest operand (such as equipment) and operant (such as knowledge) resources. Gummesson and Mele (2010), make the important point that interactions take place not only between dyads but also between a number of actors within a network, highlighting the crucial role that network interaction plays in resource integration. Notably, relationships between customers are also crucial, particularly for higher levels of engagement behaviors (Fehrer, Woratschek, Germelmann, & Brodie, 2018).

As a result, social media connectivity and interactions (between a business and its customers, as well as between customers themselves) can be seen as strategic resources that can then be transformed into marketing capabilities (Hunt & Morgan, 1995). Consider social customer relationship management (CRM) capabilities, where a business develops the skill to leverage data from social media interactions to find and cultivate devoted clients (Trainor & Rapp, 2014). Marketers should intentionally create separate resources from social media based on existing organizational resources and skills as social media expands from a single communication channel to one for acquiring consumer and market insights.

In light of the previous justification, we define SMMS as an organization's integrated pattern of activities that convert social media connectedness (Networks) and interactions (Influences) into useful strategic means to achieve desired marketing outcomes. This is done through the implementation of deliberate engagement initiatives and a careful assessment of customers' motivations for brand-related social media use. This definition is concise because it highlights the distinctiveness of the social media phenomenon, takes into account the key marketing strategy tenets, and defines the range of SMMS-related activities in detail.

2.1.4 Technique of Social Media Marketing

The last 40 years have seen a significant shift in how people interact and conduct business. Private computers, the Internet, and e-commerce have all significantly changed how firms operate and advertise. Set your target audience. Select the appropriate platforms, construct a content strategy, use captivating images, make use of social media advertising, and interact with your Analyze and adjust are two examples of social media marketing strategies. We can anticipate that as social media technology spreads more quickly, it will continue to have an impact on businesses both today and in the future. As new technologies become accessible, businesses that learn to employ them receive more reimbursement. Companies that are heavily focused on technology, like Microsoft, eBay, Amazon, and Google, are some of the best-known examples. Last but not least, the approach is being impacted by the rapid expansion of the smart phone industry and mobile computing because it is making social media connectivity easier and causing it to grow even more quickly (Matheena & Riswan, 2018).

2.1.5 Advantages of Social Media Marketing

Utilizing social media marketing strategies enables businesses to reach out to customers in virtually every sociological sector. As the effects of globalization on industries reach their peak, businesses have discovered that utilizing social media marketing strategies is the key to success. The way some firms view advertising has changed as a result of social networking platforms like Facebook and Twitter. Some companies lead customers to their social media pages more frequently than they do to their own websites. Social media is not only the ideal approach to improving consumer loyalty, but it can also be utilized to boost sales, forge long-lasting bonds with clients, and develop powerful marketing strategies.

Social media marketing has become an essential tool for businesses to connect with their target audience and achieve a variety of marketing goals, including saving money and growing their audience (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013). Generally

speaking, the price of a social media platform is less than the price of other marketing platforms like in-person salesmen, middlemen, or distributors. Additionally, social media marketing enables businesses to connect with clients who might not otherwise be reachable due to the geographical and temporal restrictions of current distribution methods. Social media platforms provide three benefits that might help companies expand their reach and cut costs (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013).

First, with the development of technology, marketing firms may now employ automated systems and tools to use a variety of digital platforms to give clients a lot of information (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013). Some of these tools include chatbots, email automation software, social media management platforms, and data analytics software. The amount of information that may be offered is significantly more than in any other kind of communication, giving this a distinct edge over other means of contact. Additionally, and perhaps more crucially, the data can be presented in a way that makes it simple for customers to digest and comprehend.

Second, by tailoring information for each individual client, social media marketing organizations may create interactions that enable customers to create items and services that especially appeal to their demands (Nadaraja & Yazdanifard, 2013). One can use the Internet to, for instance, check in and assign seats online. Last but not least, businesses like Dell and Amazon.com have shown how social media platforms may facilitate business-to-consumer transactions that otherwise require face-to-face interaction (Sheth & Sharma, 2005; Watson, Pitt, Berthon, & Zinkhan, 2002).

In the case of Netflix, the company used social media marketing effectively to promote Squid Game, a Korean thriller series. Netflix's social media marketing strategy for Squid Game effectively leveraged the power of social media to generate buzz, engage with its audience, and drive viewership for the show.

2.2 Concepts of Content Marketing

Strategic marketing includes content marketing. It is concentrated on creating and providing timely, relevant information to your target audience. Customers can be attracted to and engaged with content marketing. Instead of concentrating on the business and its goods, it focuses on the clients and their requirements (Content Marketing Institute, 2020). Consumers today want to find content solutions for their needs rather than just be passive recipients of advertising (Kananen, 2018, p.11). Consumers are accustomed to traditional advertising's interruptions of the news stream and have learned to ignore them. Content marketing creates content that benefits consumers, which increases consumer trust in the brand (Haavisto-Kurki, 2018).

Users have a negative opinion about advertising based on their experience, so any advertising that doesn't look like an advertisement would be considered excellent content marketing. Such a definition is constrained and cannot account for the characteristics of content marketing in the social media age. Any marketing strategy's goal is to increase the likelihood that potential customers will accept the brand; therefore, content marketing's goal is to increase customer acceptance of the brand by producing high-quality content. Another myth regarding content marketing is the idea that anything that might attract people qualifies as successful content. In spite of the fact that each advertisement may require fascinating material, the content itself just serves to convey the brand's message. Without the goal of the advertiser, content marketing would not be referred to as such and would instead be seen as a story. Consequently, content marketing refers to marketing techniques that entail producing or sharing content in order to draw in both present and new clientele (Pulizzi & Barrett, 2009).

It is important to note that, in contrast to traditional marketing strategies, content marketing frequently involves consumers covertly. Accordingly, the author would define content marketing as a marketing strategy wherein the message that the advertiser wants to convey to potential customers has been planted into carefully crafted "content," and the audiences receive the message either unconsciously or

without realizing that such "content" is an advertisement. Content marketing has changed in social media; it now requires that the content have the power to elicit strong debate among target groups or even among large populations and so facilitate the transaction.

Content production is one of the most important components of digital marketing. It affects how well, for instance, Google or Facebook marketing functions and how many quality leads a firm receives. The proper target audience must be directed to the website, and the content package must convince the customer to behave in the way that the business desires, or else the entire marketing approach will be ineffective (Pulkka, 2023). In order to strengthen the bond between a brand and its audience, content marketing also functions as brand journalism. Marketing using high-quality content creates original information for consumers while bringing in highlights and compelling tales about the brand (Kartajaya, Kotler, & Setiawan, 2016). Social media and other digital channels are used by consumers more frequently, and pleasurable content spreads online unchecked.

Online content is becoming the most significant source of competition since it engages people (Puumalainen & Lindeman, 2020). There are several ways to provide entertaining and helpful material, including photos, videos, and info-graphics. Content marketing is possible on both free and paid media. Successful content marketing may help you stand out from the crowd, increase brand recognition, and gain a competitive edge. Through engaging dialogue, one can reach out to potential clients, keep in touch with existing ones, and engage target audiences (Kananen 2018, pp.10–11). To produce the best results, content must benefit the organization, the client, and search engines (Kananen, 2018, p. 7). The goal of effective content marketing is to develop services, and content should be viewed as a service that adds value for both the reader and the business. Both the service process itself and the customer experience are optimized by service design. The goal-oriented use of a content strategy is known as content marketing. It involves influencing a clearly defined consumer using the appropriate channels and content types in connection to the customer's purchase

process. Therefore, content marketing is not simply producing content but rather a properly thought-out, organized, and sustained endeavor (Keronen & Tanni, 2017).

2.2.1 Definition of Content Marketing

An expression of something through speech, writing, or the arts is referred to as "content." The creation and distribution of pertinent, worthwhile, and consistent "media," such as speeches, images, and written words, is known as content marketing. The goal of content marketing is to encourage profitable consumer action (Hammond, 2016).

Everything you view online is content, including written text, pictures, videos, podcasts, graphs, and social media updates. Content marketing is a long-term strategy in which the purpose of the content is to inform, amuse, entertain, and promote business rather than directly promote a product or service to potential customers. Brand awareness is raised, and clients are attracted by content marketing (Hammond, 2016).

Aj Agrawal, the CEO of Alumnify, defines content marketing as the process of developing pertinent material that benefits a target audience and then disseminating and promoting it to persuade your audience to act in response to a call to action (Hammond, 2016). The objective of utilizing your content is to boost sales. It's crucial to remember that an "inbound marketing strategy" makes use of links to increase traffic to your sales site and revenue.

2.2.2 Types of Content Marketing

A deliberate method for producing and disseminating valuable, pertinent, and consistent material is called content marketing. Its goal is to draw in and hold on to a particular audience in order to ultimately spur profitable customer action. There are many types of content marketing that include blog posts, info-graphics, videos, eBooks, case studies, checklists, testimonials and reviews, influencer marketing,

guides and how-tos, and memes. Kim, Spiller, and Hettche (2015). discovered that visual material is more successful in eliciting consumer responses than text-only content by observing that photo and video content attracted more consumer interactions than text-only content. In addition, social media content marketing is crucial in determining how customers react. Here are some essential types that are often used in content marketing:

2.2.2.1 Type of Content

(1) Blogs: Regular blog posting is a well-liked method of content marketing. Blogging can be used to demonstrate thought leadership, provide business news, advertise goods and services, and grow an audience. Blog material has been used by both bloggers and companies to develop and monetize devoted audiences. When combined with SEO-recommended practices, blogging has a significant influence (Optimizely, 2021). In addition to the time required to compose a blog article, blogging has a very minimal cost.

(2) Videos: Online content's future is moving toward video. Videos can be used to tell a story, showcase a product or service, or provide educational content. Videos can also be shared on social media or embedded on a website. Users choose it over alternative digital content kinds, and brands utilize it for cross-platform customer engagement—think of YouTube channels, social media posts and stories, videos included in blogs, client interviews, and more (Brenner, 2022).

(3) Short-form Videos: Short-form videos are those that typically last between 60 seconds and two minutes and twenty seconds (Von Der Osten, 2021). TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts are the three best video-sharing apps for short-form content. The best length for a video varies depending on the platform. The ideal length for a TikTok video is between 10 and 15 seconds (Sahni, 2023). Whereas the ideal Instagram Reels video length is 60 seconds (Von Der Osten, 2022). A YouTube Shorts video can be as long as 60 seconds; however, between 15 and 60 seconds is preferred (Steven, 2022).

Short-form videos generally have innovative and amusing elements like music, filters, and special effects and are made to be seen quickly and

simply. Short-form films offer content creators and marketers a fresh way to showcase their work, share expertise, and convey messages.

With younger generations progressively favoring short-form videos over all other forms of media now available, short-form video content is already a great way to connect with millennials and other generations. They provide a quick, convenient way to share information and establish interesting, aesthetically pleasing connections with people.

(4) Social Media: Share and advertise material on social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Uploading blog posts, making social media posts, or even sharing videos are all examples of this. In the content strategy, social media can be used for two distinct purposes (Brenner, 2023). Create fresh material first by writing posts and tales. The second strategy is to spread content from other sources by posting it on social media websites. Nearly two-thirds of American adults use social media, and 90% of users make purchases from brands they follow. This means that social media content is effective because it easily fits into natural buyer behavior.

(5) User-Generated Content: User-generated content (UGC) is any form of content that is produced and shared by people as opposed to being created by a professional or official source. Examples of this type of content include text, photographs, videos, audio recordings, and other types of digital media. UGC can be produced by one person or a group of users and shared on a number of online communities, blogs, forums, wikis, and social networking sites.

User-created playlists on music streaming services, social media posts and comments, online reviews and ratings of goods and services, blog posts and comments, photos and videos shared on social media and video sharing sites like YouTube, and fan fiction and other creative works shared on online communities are examples of user-generated content.

UGC can be a potent marketing technique since it enables businesses to capitalize on the passion and participation of their clients and supporters to help market their name and goods. UGC also poses significant concerns regarding issues of ownership, responsibility, and copyright for the content that is shared online.

(6) Meme: Memes are a type of cultural expression that circulates from person to person within a culture, frequently over the internet. They may take the form of hilarious, ironic, or satirical pictures, movies, statements, or ideas. Pop culture allusions, political or social criticism, or realistic real-life situations that people can relate to and find humorous frequently appear in memes.

Memes can be used by brands and businesses for content marketing. Online culture develops at the speed of light, and all it takes to gain followers and start a conversation is one humorous meme. Memes are typically shared by businesses on social media, but increasingly, they are also appearing on blogs (De Los Reyes, 2023). In general, memes are a common aspect of online culture and a strong tool for marketing.

2.2.3 Content Strategy

The process of organizing, creating, and managing the material that a company produces and publishes is known as content strategy. It entails determining the content's objectives, the audience it is intended for, and the distribution methods. A thoughtful content strategy can aid firms in establishing their brand, gaining the audience's trust, and raising content engagement. Key elements of a content strategy include content goals, target audiences, content formats, content channels, a content calendar, and metrics.

The majority of businesses operate in cutthroat industries, so there are times when several firms are vying for the same clients. This is what necessitates a content strategy. Businesses can show themselves better, or at least differently from their competitors, by using content. Businesses must first demonstrate why they are worth buying from before they can demonstrate why they are worth paying attention to (McGill, 2019).

There are many different types of content that give businesses the chance to draw in their target audiences. News, blogs, podcasts, blogs, and so forth There are numerous options for publishing these contents in various channels, just as there are

numerous forms available. Websites and social media platforms, including Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube, are the most popular channels (McGill, 2019). It's time to consider how to manage content development and dissemination after choosing the appropriate content types and the platforms where you want to post them. Knowing who is producing what and when it will be published is an essential component of content strategy (McGill, 2019). In summary, a content strategy is a plan that guides the creation and distribution of content. It helps to ensure that the content is relevant, valuable, and effective at achieving the organization's goals.

Content plays a big role in our daily lives, especially when it comes to entertainment, from Netflix to YouTube (Hammond, 2022). Since streaming services' clients are there, it makes sense that they would use it for marketing. The "3 H's" are often discussed in content marketing circles and aid businesses in creating a strong content strategy, whether they are large or small. In an effort to support Youtubers, Google developed the 3H strategy, which encourages viewers to watch hero content (Walker, 2021). It's a great method of marketing, and it works in a variety of contexts, including the service sector, nonprofit organizations, governmental agencies, and internet retailers all of which employ the 3H technique. To engage the audience, the 3H method employs three separate categories of content: hygiene, hub, and hero. Giving away free material is the central tenet of the strategy, which aims to increase trust and brand loyalty (Walker, 2021).

2.1.1.1 3H Content Strategies

(1) Hero: Hero's primary goal is to attract more new visitors to the website (Hammond, 2018). Hero content is big, attention-grabbing content that is designed to generate buzz and attract a large audience. Hero content is usually a one-time event or campaign, like a product launch or a special event. It's the type of content that goes viral and gets shared widely on social media. Hero content is often expensive to produce, but the payoff can be huge if it's successful.

(2) Hub: Hub's main goal is to encourage past visitors to visit the business' website again (Hammond, 2022). Hub content is designed to be more engaging and compelling than hygiene content. It's content that your audience is

interested in, but it goes beyond the basics. Hub content might be in the form of a series or a regular feature, and it's meant to build a deeper connection with your audience. Hub content is shared through your social media channels and other marketing efforts.

(3) Hygiene: The main objective of cleanliness is to increase traffic to your website and your visibility in search results (Hammond, 2018). This type of content is the foundation of your content strategy, and it's what your audience expects to find. Hygiene content includes day-to-day, evergreen content that meets the basic needs of your audience. It's the content that answers their questions, provides solutions to their problems, and satisfies their basic informational needs. Hygiene content is often optimized for search engines and is meant to attract new visitors to your website.

2.2.4 Emotional Engagement

The viral spread of the marketing message is one of the success indicators of content marketing. If a lot of people click on and share a company's article or video, it is deemed successful. It was discovered that two factors determined the success of an article (Wylie, 2014). First and foremost, it concerns how uplifting the message is. Compared to a negative message, a good one has a larger chance of going viral. The second element of successful content marketing is the level of emotion that the message evokes. Customers are more likely to respond to content when the emotion is more intense. For instance, people are more likely to share items that make them laugh than ones that depress or disappoint them.

The success of content marketing depends on evoking strong emotions. New data, movies, photos, and other media are continually being found and shared by people. Digital content on social media platforms travels swiftly among the general public, assuming that all content originates in the same way. Consumers' overall and persistent level of emotions in relation to their engagement focus is referred to as "emotional engagement" (Calder, Isaac, & Malthouse, 2013). The two components of the emotional/affective dimension are zeal and delight (Dessart, Veloutsou, &

Morgan-Thomas, 2016). A broad level of positive brand-related affect (Hollebeek, Glynn, & Brodie, 2014), "zealous reaction," and feelings can be found in the emotional component of engagement (Vivek, Beatty, Dalela, & Morgan, 2014). It is more clearly envisioned and carried out through measurements of fervor and enjoyment, both of which are acknowledged as having enduring kinds of impacts connected to a particular emphasis (Schaufeli, Salanova, González-Romá, & Bakker, 2002). The framework's clarity and operational accuracy are enhanced by these conceptual and analytical enhancements. Enjoyment is the state of being brought on by interactions with the engagement partner (Dessart et al., 2016). based on its capacity to satisfy users' demands for entertainment, escapism, hedonistic pleasure, and emotional release (McQuail, 1983). A person's extreme level of elation and interest in a topic of engagement, such as a brand, is referred to as their "enthusiasm" (Vivek, 2009). Enthusiasm has been identified in a number of studies as a favorable affective state in both the domains of consumer and workplace engagement.

Netflix's use of social media to promote Squid Game is a great example of how content marketing can be used to create buzz around a product or service. By creating engaging content, encouraging user-generated content, creating interactive experiences, and collaborating with influencers, Netflix was able to generate a lot of excitement around Squid Game and ultimately drive customer action.

2.3 TikTok

2.3.1 History of TikTok

In the past few years, TikTok, a short-video app with video material between 15 and 180 seconds long, has become incredibly well-known worldwide. The sole focus of TikTok is providing consumers with entertainment through short videos (Cuesta-Valiño, Gutiérrez-Rodríguez, & Durán-Álamo, 2022). China started to create an application called Musical.ly in 2014 with a emphasis on musical enhancements. One year later, ByteDance, the company that owned musically, would take over the app and develop its core into what is now known as TikTok. The younger Musical.ly

users were thus immediately switched over to the new platform in order to familiarize themselves with it and produce usage statistics that would be useful for the future development of TikTok (Zeng, 2021).

Developers at ByteDance noticed that TikTok had a very identical platform layout and knew that they would need to do something unique to sustain the growing popularity of what had once been "Musical.ly" among the users they had inherited and those who would ultimately register accounts. Its producers would no longer be restricted to using only music that has already been recorded; instead, they may "include songs, lyrics from a movie or television show, a political or cultural moment, or an original sound made by the user" (Zulli, D. & Zulli, D.J., 2022, p.2). Users would also be able to add subtitles, hashtags, change their voices, apply filters, and add text to the videos, with the exception of screen space and video duration. The success of a TikTok creator's work has also moved away from the creator's general popularity and now usually revolves around a single post's original concept. Because TikTok's ideological ethos pushes creators' generated material to be projected into the For You Page of observers, users frequently seek specific uploads to obtain a certain amount of "engagements" through shares, views, and comments (Abidin, 2021).

A user can move between content on the "For You Page," which is the default page that opens on the app, where users are offered an unlimited scroll of videos in a top-down carousel format based on a proprietary algorithmic recommender system (Vizcaíno-Verdú & Abidin, 2022). This consists of identifying and focusing on one's own connections, also known as "alters," and the relationships among users (Burgette, Rankine, Culyba, Chu, & Carley, 2021). Although the For You Page would follow the pre-existing strategy to keep you on the application for as long as possible, the "Following" page would allow these users to see content and producers' content they have approved of (Zeng, 2021). In order to enter the For You page, a user would be asked to participate in generating analogous video concepts that swiftly draw viewers' interest in comparison to others who have attracted a lot of attention. Therefore, the likelihood that an average user's video will be discovered increases when similar

noises and pictures are used and linked to a previously popular video for viewers to interact with (Zulli, D. & Zulli, D.J., 2022).

2.3.2 TikTok Culture: Algorithms and Communities

Companies frequently employ algorithmic formulas with additional features to make the information seem personalized to each user in order to keep users engaged and active on their platforms. A user feed's post order is decided using an artificial intelligence system that shows viewers the information they are most likely to find interesting, not randomly or chronologically. Because of this, not every user who follows a user will see his or her posts (Haenlein et al., 2020, p.23).

The creators might feel that less time would be spent using the application if they were to display to users content that they "did not enjoy" based on the content they engage with or do not. On TikTok, however, algorithms can be created based on a user's favorite creators, the theme that the producers' work adheres to, the videos the user is rewatching or sharing, and the types of engagements they are using, such as likes. From the standpoint of the creator, algorithms can have a big impact on who sees their material and what content they ultimately produce. Black box measure? In the article "How to Study People's Algorithm Skills", academics make reference to the possibility that algorithms may influence both the information that users encounter and the content that they go on to produce. The authors continue by asserting that we know very little about whether or not more diverse groups are familiar with the concept of algorithms, how these groups may view and feel about algorithms, and if they are aware of how algorithms may influence their behavior and how that behavior may influence an algorithm to meet specific needs (Hargittai, Gruber, Djukaric, Fuchs, & Brombach, 2020).

While algorithms appear to assist content producers and their respective participants in viewing content that the algorithm deems "relevant," both sides are also aware of the content and communities they are overlooking. All of those have the potential to alter a user's preferences and the algorithm for them.

As was already noted, algorithms can introduce users to large communities that appreciate shared interests. TikTok has created some well-known groups, like Beauty, where people discuss cosmetic techniques and their passion for all things cosmetic. The hashtag, which has 140.9 billion views and counting, is one of the biggest product categories on TikTok, partly due to how TikTok brings a combination of entertainment and discovery to users in this category. The growth of TikTok's business relies heavily on beauty. Last year, the platform and Shopify collaborated to introduce TikTok Shopping, with Kylie Cosmetics serving as the first brand. Walmart, a major retailer, also joined the TikTok beauty game with its first livestream event for the genre (Feger, 2022). With 448.7 million views, "RecipeTok" is a platform where users may exchange meals, recipes, and cooking tutorials. The launch of ghost kitchens, which would have allowed restaurants to include well-known TikTok recipes on their menus, was announced by TikTok last year, but it doesn't appear that has happened yet. Additionally, TikTok and Instacart collaborated to allow their artists to include shoppable recipes in their videos (Feger, 2022). Analyst of Insider Intelligence Sky Canaves said, "If Gen Z is passionate about something, there's going to be a TikTok community for it." (Feger, 2022). In addition, a genre called "#thrifttok: the home of secondhand fashion," which has received 6.4 billion views, has emerged recently. With Gen Z, used clothing is very popular. They enjoy finding trendy '90s or Y2K clothing at a fantastic price. A few well-known ThriftTok designers have even built physical stores with carefully chosen items that match their aesthetic.

All of the mentioned communities are spaces for mutual conversations to happen amongst users, all of which can be accessed by clicking on the hashtag associated with the community. Creators associated with a community or communities might be persuaded to create content that would benefit their fellow community members and, in the same breath, be hesitant to create anything that might benefit a different community or theme.

2.3.3 Types of TikTok Accounts

Users on TikTok have the option of having either a personal account or a business account (TikTok Help Center, 2022). Businesses and brands can leverage TikTok's marketing capabilities to create a unified marketing plan by creating business accounts, which are open profiles (TikTok Help Center, 2022). There are numerous advantages to having a TikTok business account. First, companies should engage with customers in lighthearted ways. For instance, businesses can offer unique material that viewers of TikTok can engage with. Businesses are also looking for additional tools with a business focus. A business account enables access to modern business tools (example: the Business Creative Hub). This kind of account is perfect for brands and companies who want to stand out on the platform and develop a comprehensive marketing plan (West, 2022).

On TikTok, most users use personal accounts. The majority of public figures, content creators, and common TikTok users should choose this type of account (TikTok Help Center, 2022). Users have the freedom to use personal accounts to access TikTok in various ways. Personal accounts have a number of advantages. Watching and engaging with other people's material comes first. Users can watch videos on their For You stream, look for new stuff to watch using the search feature, follow other users, and utilize their favorite hashtags to find information that interests them (TikTok Help Center, 2022). Second, create original material for other people to appreciate. Advanced creative capabilities are also accessible to users with personal accounts. These tools assist users in discovering more about the material they provide and the preferences of their audience. This can assist users in creating a community (TikTok Help Center, 2022). Even with what is seen as a personal account, influencers can work with businesses, obtain verification, and amass huge followings (West, 2022).

2.3.4 Viral Trends Dominating TikTok

Tiktok's content is incredibly diverse, ranging from humorous material to more serious material, from black and white to colorful, and from simple to complex. It's common to develop original stuff. Following trends is Forbes' top recommendation when deciding what kind of content to produce from a commercial viewpoint (Bringé, 2021). A reactive strategy such as following trends makes it much simpler for marketers to create content. Companies fail on social media without a strategy (Barker, M., Barker, D., Bormann, & Neher, 2013). It is simpler for firms to enter the world of Tiktok marketing thanks to these pre-made trends on Tiktok. Instead of being proactive, marketing can be reactive.

An example of a Tiktok trend might be a video in which a user or group of users attempted to imitate a dance made popular by a prominent Tiktok star or a user-created video that became extremely viral. Users simply embed their own versions of the video in the hopes that it will gain wide distribution.

Netflix's use of TikTok to promote Squid Game was a highly effective marketing strategy that leveraged the platform's strengths to generate buzz and interest in the show. By tapping into TikTok's engaged and enthusiastic user base, Netflix was able to create a highly successful promotional campaign that helped drive views and engagement for the show.

2.4 Streaming Services

2.4.1 History of Streaming Services

Since the emergence of television in the 1950s, when viewers could watch their favorite programs but only on specified days and times, the manner in which video material has been offered and consumed has changed significantly (Petronyte, 2020). Later developments and improvements in the sector gave rise to the VCR in the 1980s and the DVD in the early 2000s, both of which enabled video playback

whenever the consumer chose (Strangelove, 2015). With the advent of YouTube, the sector underwent additional improvement as consumers shifted from television displays to computer monitors, breaking their dependence on a single platform for the consumption of video content. This period was later referred to by academics as the "post-television era" (McCabe & Akass, 2009; Strangelove, 2015).

With the launch of the Netflix streaming service in 2007, the post-television era took a significant step forward. This service radically changed how television is defined and gave rise to the subscription video on demand (SVOD) sector (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018). The subscription video on demand (SVOD) business, which provides a huge variety of video media in the form of movies and TV episodes, is described as an "all you can eat buffet" in Strangelove (2015). The online video streaming industry has quickly grown over the years with the "cord-cutting" phenomenon and is increasingly replacing traditional TV. In 2023, the market for video-on-demand is expected to generate US$63.38 billion in revenue (Statista, 2023)

Established in 1997 as a DVD rental service, Netflix has grown to become the industry leader, with 232.5 million paid subscribers this year as of the first quarter of 2023 (Statista, 2023). Over 77 million of Netflix's total global members are based in the EMEA region (Europe, the Middle East, and Africa), making up the majority of its subscriber base (Statista, 2023). The Walt Disney Company swiftly launched its own streaming service with Disney Plus in 2019, which reached 161.8 million paid customers within four years after its introduction after observing its popularity soar and deciding that streaming was the future (Statista, 2023). Netflix and Disney Plus are two streaming services that have firmly established themselves in American culture. Currently, Netflix holds 39% of the US streaming market, while Disney Plus holds 17% (Chan, 2022). But Walt Disney's total number of direct-to-consumer subscribers, which includes Disney+, Hulu, and ESPN+, came to about 236 million, outnumbering Netflix, its main rival in terms of membership numbers (Moon, 2022). The subscription video on demand sector also includes these significant companies in addition to Netflix and Disney Plus: Amazon Prime Video, Apple TV+, Hulu, Paramount+, HBO Max, Peacock, and Discovery+ (Adalian, 2022).

The streaming service has many advantages, including being more appealing than what most cable networks have to offer in terms of the convenience of having one's material available for streaming on any device. Furthermore, anyone can watch HD content anytime and wherever they want for a nominal monthly cost. The number of users subscribing to subscription services keeps rising as home entertainment becomes the new standard. Only 13% of U.S. customers used three or more services in 2016. In 2022, this substantially alters Three or more streaming services are subscribed to by 67% of customers (Statista, 2022).

2.4.2 Netflix

In the streaming sector, Netflix is recognized as the pioneer. The firm started off as a movie rental service in August 1997. The business gave you a DVD via mail, negating the need for you to visit a video store, which set it apart from other video rental businesses. Based on its subsequent breakthrough success in the world of entertainment streaming, Netflix has since become a household name. In the first quarter of 2023, Netflix reported 74.4 million paying streaming customers in the United States and Canada (Statista, 2023). Netflix's income statement for the year 2021 discloses that it brought in $29.7 billion in sales, giving some financial background for the company. Operating income for the company as a whole is $6.195 billion, with a 21% operating margin. Total revenue less the cost of goods sold, selling and administrative costs, research and development, depreciation, and other operational costs is referred to as operating income. In other words, it is their entire revenue less their operational expenses, which leaves them with the profit from conducting business as usual. The revenue of Netflix has also been increasing gradually, going from $6.8 billion in 2015 to $29.7 billion in 2021, and so on until 2022 (Netflix, 2022). These numbers unequivocally demonstrate that Netflix is still benefiting from being the pioneer in this field and has grown in popularity by continuing to innovate and produce new material for consumers, just as they did when they switched from shipping out DVDs to offering streaming services. Since it began streaming in 2007, Netflix has had exponential growth thanks to the technology,

comfort, and data-driven platform it developed, all of which contribute to its long-term success.

The ability to differentiate one's content in a highly competitive market is what distinguishes services, and this is why Netflix Originals are receiving more and more funding. Netflix spent 85% of its $8 billion content investment in 2018 on original content (Spangler, 2018). A record 802 hours of original programming were released by Netflix at the end of 2019, up 3% over the previous year (Spangler, 2020). The streaming king invested about $17 billion into streaming shows and movies in 2020, 2021, 2022, and now 2023 (Maglio, 2023). The money is aimed at producing worldwide hit shows. "'Squid Game' is a rare success story, and 'Wednesday' looks like one of those too," Chief Content Officer and co-CEO Ted Sarandos remarked. In terms of expected spending on original content in 2023, Netflix will only fall short of Disney ($30 billion; cinemas, TV, and streaming) and Warner Bros. Discovery ($20 billion; theaters, TV, and streaming)(Maglio, 2023).

Netflix, although an American business, wants to draw customers from around the world (Jenner, 2023). In order to increase its appeal on a global scale, Netflix uses "regionalization" by producing "non-English language in-house productions" in addition to its programming inventory that is shared across regions (Jenner, 2023). Netflix therefore uses a "conglomerated niche" strategy to cater to the tastes of a culturally diverse audience, pursuing mass customization by creating different content for various regional client segments (Lotz, 2017). Netflix's active licensing of content for international distribution and subsequent dissemination of content to viewers globally is another indication of how globalized the media is (Jenner, 2023).

According to a Bloomberg report citing leaked internal data, Netflix paid $21.4 million for "Squid Game," which was released in September 2021, will deliver a whopping $891 million in "impact value (Spangler, 2021). " The popularity of shows like "Squid Game," "Glory," and "Physics: 100" has led many to believe that Korean-produced storylines "represent a global cultural trend." (Bae & Toh, 2023).

Consequently, Netflix is increasing its bet on South Korea and has plans to spend $2.5 billion there over the next four years to increase the production of K-dramas, films, and reality shows (Bae, & Toh, 2023). The venture is twofold the sum that Netflix has declared so distant within the fast-growing showcase since arriving in 2016.

Netflix is the home of amazing original programming and is reputed for its strong meme marketing. They create funny and immediately relatable social media marketing memes. They departed from traditional branding and used meme marketing to introduce memes as a way to interact with their audience (Bhargava, 2022). A stronghold of aesthetics Netflix offers the kind of entertainment that succeeds on TikTok. Netflix continues to produce enjoyable material in a variety of ways, including making fun of the moments we watch when binge-watching and even profiting from more "adult" humor (Laboriel, 2021) Netflix is a business that benefits from TikTok revenue generation by offering promotional TikToks, featuring talent on well-known shows, and even giving behind-the-scenes material (34.1 million followers and 741.8 million likes) Mainly relying on brand-new releases and age-appropriate streaming media.

2.4.3 Streaming Subscriptions in the US

There are currently more users subscribed to video streaming services than there are in the USA (331.9 million), including Netflix (232.5 million), Amazon Prime (200 million), Disney+ (157.8 million), HBO Max (96.1 million), and Hulu (48.2 million). The pandemic and stay-at-home measures, the launch of new studio-backed subscription services, and increasing rates of service stacking all contributed to the market reaching this milestone.

With consumers increasingly turning to SVoD services, pay TV penetration in the USA fell below 60% for the first time in 2020, from over 80% at the start of 2015 (Holleran, 2021). As of 2022, 83% of Americans have at least one streaming subscription (GITNUX, 2023). About 61% of young Americans primarily watch television through streaming services (GITNUX, 2023).

2.4.4 Netflix Subscribers

Netflix is widely perceived as being "globally" available because it has customers in more than 190 countries except for Mainland China, Syria, North Korea, and Russia. Netflix has 77.37 million paying subscribers in UCAN (United States and Canada), 74.4 million in EMEA (Europe, Middle East, and Africa), 41.25 million in LATAM (Latin America), and 39.48 million in APAC (Asia Pacific) by the first quarter of 2023. Netflix is a niche service in most countries, according to data analytics company subscription estimates (Fewer than a quarter of households subscribe to it) (Lotz, Eklund, & Soroka, 2022). However, in Australia, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Canada, where almost half of homes subscribe, it is debatably a mass market product (Lotz et al., 2022).

The use of social media to promote Squid Game was a good case for the streaming service as it provided a large audience, user-generated content, and engagement opportunities, and was cost-effective.

2.5 Squid Game

2.5.1 Introduction

Squid Game, the South Korean survival dramatization made by Hwang Dong-hyuk, solely debuted on Netflix on September 17, 2021. In the first 28 days after its premiere, the program gathered 1.65 billion watch hours, making it the service's most watched program to date by November of the same year (Spangler, 2021). The narrative centers on 456 indebted "volunteers" who "choose" to engage in youthful pastimes. The 456 players, including bankrupt businessmen, gangsters, and a North Korean defector, are all in dire financial straits as convicts and put their lives in danger by participating in a series of hazardous kiddie games in an effort to win a reward worth $45.6 billion. Player 456 is Seong Gi-hun (Lee Jung-jae), a divorced father and debt-ridden gambler who resides with his ailing mother. He awakens in a hidden island complex where six death games, including "red light, green light," dalgona, tug-

of-war, marbles, a bridge game, and the "squid game," are played after being abducted. The front man controls the games to amuse the VIPs, who are the covert rich sponsors and wear golden masks.

The work Squid Game is notable in that it highlights socioeconomic inequity and poverty while showcasing Korea's technology and aesthetic competence (Huang, 2022). With regard to South Korea's place in the world and what it took to transform it from a Third World country with extreme poverty to one of the most developed economies, Squid Game shows a larger care. Strangely, the show is about globalization, but it has skillfully hidden its critical message to appeal to a broad audience. It has revealed the dire financial circumstances many Koreans are facing. There are few secure jobs and pricey real estate. Inequality has become a significant issue in Korean culture due to the intense competitiveness that exists there.

2.5.2 Squid Games Achievements

Squid Game ranked number one in 94 countries, including the UK and the US, and attracted more than 142 million member households and 1.65 billion viewing hours during its first four weeks from launch (Kemp, 2022). In less than a month, it rose to become Netflix's most watched series ever and the most watched non-English language show. The chief content officer of Netflix, Ted Sarandos, has referred to Squid Game as the network's most popular show to date (Solsman, 2021). Due to its overwhelming popularity, the show received a second season renewal in June 2022, which will premiere in late 2023 or early 2024. The Squid Game-inspired reality competition series that Netflix is developing will include 456 contestants vying for a large cash prize.

Children's games, vivid and exaggerated audiovisual modeling, and the human essence of the disadvantaged characters in terrible circumstances caused the show to not only heat up quickly in America but also spread quickly from country to country, and eventually the audience covered the entire world. Netflix's stock price has increased by 7.35 percent since its IPO on September 17, 2021, and its market worth

has increased by around 18 billion US dollars. (Hong & Yang, 2022). "Squid Game" propels Netflix's growth. In the third quarter of 2021, their subscriber base increased by 4.4 million, helped in part by the dystopian smash show "Squid Game" (Pallotta, 2021).

It continues to be discussed on international social media platforms. The Dalgona Candy game and a huge killer doll with laser eyes from the show have also caused a frenzy on TikTok, enticing many viewers to copy and participate. The Squid Game has expanded into a global phenomenon across numerous nations and areas. Actress HoYeon Jung's followers on Instagram, a global social media platform, hit 20 million after her Netflix debut.

Squid Game, a Korean drama series, has been successfully exported to the rest of the world and has amassed a satisfying amount of views and conversation. A definite point of reference for the output of Asian cultural works is provided by the play's communication approach.

2.5.3 Analysis of Squid Game's Success Factors

The show's success can be attributed to a combination of factors, including its unique concept, relatable characters, buzz and word-of-mouth, cultural relevance, high production value, accessibility, and timely release.

Squid Game is a fantastic game show and a breathtakingly well-made thriller. The Squid Game is both a work of art and an experimental drama that resembles a psychological test. A violent allegory of capitalism is represented by the golden piggy bank, which is filled with bills as the game advances. Its excellent production values, including its stunning graphics, soundtrack, and set design, enhance the plot. In other words, it is a work of art with the ability to captivate readers for an extended period of time through the strength of its narrative (Ahn, Jung, & Oh, 2022).

The characters in Squid Game are relatable and multidimensional, and the background reflects real-life society. There is a very high level of consensus. The drama's characters can draw parallels to our everyday lives. It also mentioned the fear of dying. As a result of the news of COVID-19's confirmation and death, even young people had the opportunity to experience firsthand their own mortality fear (Ahn et al., 2022). Not only that, with commentary on socioeconomic difficulties, governmental corruption, and the wealth disparity, the show meaningfully portrays South Korean or capitalist culture and society.

Since the emergence of social media, word-of-mouth marketing has changed from the promotion or glorification of a product supplied by a friend or family member to that given by strangers on the internet. The initial consumers of this show will make edits, dress in costumes, write think pieces, or create any other form of content, and it will reach a global audience (Goblot, 2022). This kind of traction could allow for mass consumption and the creation of global "trends." Undoubtedly, TikTok is one of the most notable platforms that helped Squid Game succeed. Since the start of the show, fans have been creating videos to reveal "secret" information, narrative twists, and their own ideas and perspectives, as well as to make jokes, edits, or even criticize specific elements (Goblot, 2022). Through the app, this never-ending stream of content builds upon itself. In their associations with the program, a variety of trends have emerged. For instance, although not included on the official soundtrack, K-pop artist Lisa's song "Money" may be heard in the background of fancams and videos of Squid Game. Only on TikTok, the hashtag "Squid Game" has received over 79.1 billion views. The show still has a number of other clear-cut viral elements (Goblot, 2022). HoYeon Jung, a Sae-Byeok actor, rose to prominence quickly, thanks in part to her acting and outward appearance. The number of followers on her Instagram account increased from a few hundred thousand to several million, and it now has 22.24 million. Additionally, there was a sudden fad in making Dalgona candy, and viewers started looking for instructions on how to do it themselves.

Netflix offers the show, which is available there. It can also be accessed by non-Korean speakers because it is available in several languages. It is worthy of

attention that Netflix's video recommendation algorithm uses an "ensemble system," an integrated system that compensates for the shortcomings of collaborative filtering and content-based filtering (Ahn et al., 2022). In addition, if people who watched the same video had similar patterns of behavior, they used "collaborative filtering" to group them into the same profiling group. The criteria for dividing pattern groups on Netflix are the content genre, whether or not the opening is skipped, the rewatch rate, the device used, the data environment, whether or not there is a rating, whether or not to stop in the middle, the day and time of viewing, the stop while playing, reverting, fast-forwarding, and so on. Because the Squid Game functioned utilizing an algorithm utilized with AI machine learning, the data acquired from platform users and the tag data linked with the film must have had an influence on its performance.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic also helped Squid Game gain a devoted audience by releasing it when many people were staying at home.

2.5.4 Audience Analysis

Squid Game does not have an age or gender restriction and does not divide its audience, and it appeals to a large audience rather than a tiny circle of culture, as can be seen from the ratings on various rating websites like IMDB and Rotten Tomatoes (Hong & Yang, 2022). Fast-food-style information consumption has become the only option for the audience in today's society, where fragmented visual perception has become the way that modern people live (Wang, 2020). This is due to the fast-paced nature of social life, which has changed the audience's viewing mode from complete "gazing" to an economical and time-saving "glance". As a result, the audience's comprehension is hindered by the extensive game rules, intricate character connections, and extended storyline. When they are interrupted while viewing, the audience cannot continue. This makes it possible for the short video format to soon dominate the market. Squid Game takes on the format of a unit drama, which in some ways inhibits and simplifies the subject. Each unit conveys a tale without needing a lot of background information or significant outcomes. With this strategy, the production team does not have to take the big worldview component into account when

choreographing and shooting, and viewers are also given the opportunity to learn more about the show's content (Hong & Yang, 2022).

Squid Game became successful for a variety of reasons, including the acting, the intriguing plot, and the portrayal of "actual" society at the time, particularly in capitalist nations like America and Korea that place great importance on status and wealth. In addition, the program was dubbed in 12 languages and had subtitles in 31 languages, and it was successful in drawing in a sizable audience and retaining their attention (O'Donoghue, 2021). The program engages the audience in a variety of ways. One of the main factors that may have contributed to the success of the series was the way in which viewers were able to relate to it from their own point of view. Squid Game rose to fame thanks to social media trends and word-of-mouth advertising (Jadhav, 2022).

The promotion of Squid Game on TikTok can be attributed to its unique premise and gripping storyline, the platform's large and diverse user base, the show's themes and characters resonating with many young people, and the active promotion by the show's creators on social media.

2.6 Related Research

2.6.1 Netflix's Socila Media Marketing

A study that examines Netflix's Instagram marketing tactics in the US has been conducted. In order to better understand the kinds of material that Netflix publishes and the brand identity that it displays, Dimitrova (2019), looked at how Netflix used the Instagram platform on their US account. The information was derived from an in-depth review of 170 Instagram posts that were obtained from the Netflix US account. Dimitrova (2019), discovered that Netflix uses its distinct amusing brand voice, a depiction of a positive and Assaadlight attitude, and the expression of witty ideas and emotions to combine the visualization platform's ability to display its brand identity and create a brand community. The research by Dimitrova clearly

demonstrates that Netflix streaming shows are the primary focus of the advertised content, but Netflix Original cast members also receive significant attention. The fact that Netflix uses its social media platform to develop its own brand engagement, brand community building, and brand loyalty furthers and adds to the concept of Netflix's social media marketing.

Research has been done that looks at how Netflix uses Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community. Scerbinina (2019), studied the cross-cultural comparison of communication between Netflix in the US and Netflix in India. The data were collected via qualitative content analysis of a total of 1,145 tweets posted by Netflix and by its online brand community, analyzing both textual and visual data in the messages. Through directed content analysis, combining deductive and inductive category creation, three themes were distinguished. Scerbinina (2019), found that Netflix focused on three thematic areas in its Twitter communication to implement relationship marketing towards its online brand community: "All about Netflix," "Community Relations," and "The World Around Us." This evidence is consistent with other studies that show Netflix primarily promotes its content on its social media platform. Scerbinina's findings clearly show that Netflix employs a localization strategy when promoting content and initiating conversations in the United States and India by referencing topics relevant to specific cultural contexts. This continues to build on and add to the idea of Netflix's social media marketing in that it uses social media to create its own community to try and communicate with users through its localization strategy.

The use of social media as promotional tools for audiovisual content has been studied in depth. The Instagram marketing tactics of two pay-per-view platforms (HBO and Netflix) in two markets (the USA and Spain) were examined by Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019), The information was gathered from 731 messages written between May and November 2017 on the Spanish and US accounts of HBO and Netflix. It was based on their formal characteristics, intentions, and emotional and cognitive components. The way HBO and Netflix use their Instagram profiles in the

two markets (Spain and the USA) has significant disparities, according to Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019), The research by Martín-Quevedo et al. reveals that while the US accounts both promoted program content and largely supplied information, the Spanish accounts mostly gave information. Links to social media, especially accounts belonging to celebrities, were more commonly included in posts from US accounts. While US accounts prioritized non-diegetic and off-set photos, Spanish accounts tended to rely more on diegetic visuals. Netflix used humor more frequently than HBO and placed a bigger emphasis on famous people. Higher involvement was found to be associated with humor and a positive tone. This reinforces the notion that Netflix employs various communication strategies to engage viewers in various nations.

2.6.2 Using Social Media for Promoting Streaming Content

The manner in which Netflix in Spain advertises the fourth season of Money Heist on Twitter has been studied. Cristófol Rodríguez,Meliveo Nogués, and Cristòfol (2020) investigated the particular situation of the lockdown in Spain and its timing relative to the premiere of Money Heist's fourth season. In-depth interviews and content analysis were used to get the data. Transmedia storytelling has developed into a potent communication tactic with the release of the fourth season of the series, according to Cristófol Rodríguez et al. (2020). The results of Cristófol Rodríguez et al. unequivocally show that transmedia storytelling is the new aesthetic connected to media convergence. It refers to the creation of new worlds and their merger. This adds to the growing body of evidence supporting the notion that streaming services advertise their streaming material on social media.

The promotion of streaming content on social media by Chinese streaming firms has also been studied in depth. Xiaoqian (2021), researched the streaming media that was pushed on Weibo. The streaming contents that were chosen as study samples in this paper had high Weibo popularity and a Douban score of 7 or higher. Streaming content from "official Weibo" is the research subject. The official Weibo for streaming contents dominates the Weibo marketing of streaming contents, according to Xiaoqian (2021). The results of Xiaoqian's study demonstrate that the three primary strategies

for official Weibo marketing of streaming contents are content release, topic setting, and event holding. This supports the idea that social media marketing is a low-cost, highly effective strategy for promoting streaming content.

2.6.3 TikTok for Marketing

Tiktok has been examined in research as a marketing tool. Football fans enjoy watching various forms of content on Tiktok, according to Reunanen (2022). Mixed approaches were employed during the investigation. Interviews were conducted with the professional Tiktok admin of the Finnish men's national team as well as five app users that follow football teams. Reunanen (2022). discovered some intriguing information regarding the activity patterns of both Tiktok users and admins when using the app and creating content. According to Reunanen's research, match video was the most interesting type of information. Meme-related content came in second, and behind-the-scenes content came in third. This supports and builds upon the idea that creating a successful TikTok marketing strategy helps generate publicity.

A study has been conducted to examine the prospects that TikTok offers brands. By contrasting it to their marketing communication on Facebook, Forslund and Friman (2022). looked at Ryanair's marketing communication on TikTok. An abductive qualitative content analysis was used as the research's approach. The information was gathered using posts and remarks sampled from Ryanair's Facebook and TikTok sites on social media. According to Forslund and Friman (2022), the two social media platforms have different content types, tones, and goals. Additionally, this analysis revealed that brand donations were moderate but nonetheless higher than those made by Facebook. The results of Forslund and Friman's study demonstrate that TikTok was the platform where the posts were viewed as informal and were instead made to amuse the viewers in a contemporary way. As TikTok becomes one of the most widely used social media platforms, this will only strengthen and support the notion that it is beneficial for marketing.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

This chapter presents the research design used to answer the research questions and achieve the objectives of the study. The methodology adopts a mixed methods approach, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative content analysis, in order to gain comprehensive insights into the types of content and content strategies used by Netflix US to promote Squid Game on TikTok. The primary objective is to identify the TikTok posts by Netflix US promoting Squid Game that had the highest engagement rates, the type of content used in these high-engagement posts, and the content strategy used in these high-engagement posts.

3.1 Research Design

The main focus of this study is to analyze Netflix's content strategy for promoting Squid Game on TikTok for the U.S. market. To achieve this goal, the researchers have chosen quantitative analysis and content analysis as the research methodologies. The rationale for using these methodologies is explained, and the research design and its justification are examined in this section.

The study aims to answer two primary research questions: "What types of content were used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?" and "What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?" To address these research questions, the researchers have chosen to use both a quantitative and a qualitative approach, most notably by applying qualitative content analysis (Content Analysis, 2023).

To address the first research question, "What types of content were used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?" a mixed-methods research approach was employed. Quantitative Analysis was utilized to collect data on engagement metrics, including likes, comments, shares, and views, for a sample of posts promoting Squid Game by Netflix US on TikTok. Based on the collected metrics, the top 10 most engaged posts were identified using a formula to select the highest performing content. Subsequently, a Qualitative Content Analysis was conducted to delve into the selected top 10 posts from Netflix US's TikTok account. This qualitative analysis aimed to identify content themes and patterns, such as storytelling techniques, the use of humor, visual elements, and emotional appeal, contributing to the posts' engaging nature. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the content that resonated most with the TikTok audience and the underlying communication strategies employed.

For the second research question, "What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?" a similar mixed-methods research approach was adopted. Quantitative Analysis was utilized to collect quantitative data on various content-related metrics, including use of popular music/sounds, and hashtags, among others. This quantitative data provided insights into the specific content strategy elements employed by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game. Additionally, Qualitative Content Analysis was used to examine the selected top 10 most engaged posts for recurring patterns in content strategy, such as creative storytelling methods and communication tactics. The integration of both quantitative and qualitative data analysis facilitated a comprehensive understanding of the content strategy used by Netflix US, shedding light on the factors contributing to the success of their promotional efforts on TikTok.

By employing a mixed-methods research design, the study aimed to provide valuable insights into the communication strategies utilized by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game. The quantitative analysis of engagement metrics allowed for the identification of the most engaging content, while the qualitative content analysis

revealed the content themes and patterns that resonated with the TikTok audience. Furthermore, the quantitative data on content strategy metrics complemented the qualitative analysis, offering a deeper understanding of the underlying content strategy employed by Netflix US. This comprehensive approach enables a holistic examination of the communication strategies used for successful content promotion on TikTok, providing valuable knowledge for social media marketing and content promotion in the entertainment industry.

3.1.1 Quantitative Analysis

To address the first research question, "What types of content were used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?" quantitative research was utilized to acquire data on engagement metrics for a sample of Netflix US postings promoting Squid Game on TikTok. The engagement metrics included likes, comments, shares, and views, serving as key indicators of audience response and post-engagement. By quantitatively analyzing these metrics for the selected sample, the top 10 most engaged posts were identified based on a predetermined formula. This quantitative approach allowed for a systematic and objective evaluation of the posts' performance in terms of engagement, enabling the selection of the most impactful content for further analysis.

For the second research question, "What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?" Quantitative analysis was employed in conjunction with other metrics related to content strategy. These additional metrics encompassed various aspects of content creation and promotion, such as the usage of popular music and sounds and the inclusion of hashtags, among others. Quantitative data on these content-related metrics was collected to gain insights into the specific content strategy elements employed by Netflix US. The integration of this quantitative data with the previously analyzed engagement metrics provided a comprehensive view of the content strategy used to achieve high levels of audience engagement on TikTok.

Since Skalski, Neuendorf, and Cajigas (2017), concluded that stable categories of content must be established in order to conduct a quantitative analysis of the impact of that content on engagement metrics, quantitative methods are necessary to advance the research.The use of quantitative analysis in both research questions ensures the rigor and objectivity of the study by relying on empirical data. The quantitative examination of engagement metrics and content-related factors allows for a data-driven understanding of the communication strategies used by Netflix US to effectively promote Squid Game on TikTok. By leveraging this methodological approach, the research aims to provide valuable and actionable insights into the successful communication strategies entertainment companies employ when navigating social media platforms for content promotion.

3.1.2 Qualitative Content Analysis

To address the first research question, "What types of content were used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?", Qualitative Content Analysis was employed to gain deeper insights into the content themes and patterns utilized in the top ten most engaged posts from Netflix US's TikTok account. Through this qualitative approach, the selected posts were thoroughly examined and analyzed for various elements, including storytelling techniques, the use of humor, visual elements, emotional appeal, and other communication strategies employed. By delving into the qualitative aspects of the content, this analysis aimed to reveal the underlying reasons behind the posts' effectiveness in engaging the TikTok audience and shed light on the content themes that resonated most with viewers.

For the second research question, "What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?", Qualitative Content Analysis was utilized to identify recurring patterns in how Netflix US structured its content and creatively approached storytelling. This analysis went beyond quantitative data and focused on the qualitative aspects of the posts, allowing for a deeper understanding of the content strategy employed. The qualitative examination explored how the content was designed, the narrative style used, and the

tactics employed to captivate the TikTok audience. By examining these qualitative aspects, the study aimed to uncover the content strategy's underlying principles and provide valuable insights into the elements that contributed to the high engagement levels observed in the most successful promotional posts.

The use of Qualitative Content Analysis in both research questions adds a qualitative dimension to the research design, complementing the quantitative analysis of engagement metrics and other content-related metrics. By adopting this methodological approach, the study seeks to present a comprehensive understanding of the communication strategies utilized by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game. The qualitative insights gained from this analysis will contribute to a more nuanced interpretation of the content themes, storytelling methods, and creative strategies employed, enhancing the overall significance and implications of the research findings for social media marketing and content promotion in the entertainment industry.

3.1.3 Integration of Quantitative Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis

The research design seamlessly integrated Quantitative Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis to provide a comprehensive and in-depth investigation into the communication strategies used by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game.

To address the first research question, Quantitative Analysis was employed to collect data on engagement metrics (likes, comments, shares, views) for a sample of posts promoting Squid Game. The top 10 most engaged posts were then selected based on the quantitative data, representing the content that garnered the highest levels of audience engagement. These top-performing posts served as the focal point for the subsequent Qualitative Content Analysis, which involved a meticulous examination of content themes and patterns. Through the qualitative analysis, elements such as storytelling techniques, humor, visual elements, and emotional appeal were identified,

providing a deeper understanding of the factors that contributed to the engagement success of these posts.

For the second research question, Quantitative Analysis was utilized to collect quantitative data on various metrics related to content strategy, including usage of popular music/sounds, and hashtags, among others. These quantitative data offered insights into the specific content strategy elements employed by Netflix US. Concurrently, Qualitative Content Analysis was conducted to explore recurring patterns in how Netflix US structured its content and creatively approached storytelling. This qualitative examination delved into the narrative style, communication tactics, and other qualitative aspects of the posts, complementing the quantitative data and providing a holistic view of the content strategy employed.

The integration of both Quantitative Analysis and Qualitative Content Analysis in this research design ensured a robust and multi-dimensional exploration of the communication strategies used to promote Squid Game on TikTok. The quantitative data provided a solid foundation for identifying the most engaging content and content strategy metrics, while the qualitative analysis offered valuable insights into the underlying reasons for the success of the promotional efforts.

3.2 Population and Samples

This section is dedicated to the population and sampling methodology used in analyzing TikTok posts, as well as the collection of supplementary information on engagement. Moreover, it provides a rationale for selecting this particular dataset and explains its significance in the context of the study.

3.2.1 Population

The researcher embarked on a comprehensive data collection process to accumulate posts made by Netflix US in order to promote the original Korean drama Squid Game on Netflix US's official TikTok account. Spanning a period from

September 17th, 2021, to October 28th, 2022, this meticulous effort resulted in the identification and documentation of a total of 43 posts. The researcher employed a combination of manual and automated data collection techniques to ensure accuracy and inclusiveness.

To initiate the data collection process, the researcher established a systematic approach. This involved regular visits to Netflix US's TikTok account to observe, record, and analyze each promotional post related to Squid Game. The researcher noted crucial information such as posting dates, video content, captions, engagement metrics, and any associated trends or patterns. In order to supplement the manual collection, the researcher also utilized automated tools to extract relevant data efficiently, ensuring that no posts were overlooked during the analysis period.

Furthermore, the researcher employed rigorous quality control measures to guarantee the accuracy and reliability of the collected data. This included cross-referencing posts across different timeframes and platforms to verify consistency. In cases where specific posts were deemed crucial to the analysis, the researcher reached out to official sources or utilized supplementary information available through media coverage and press releases. By combining both manual efforts and automated assistance, the researcher successfully curated a comprehensive dataset that offers valuable insights into Netflix US's promotional strategies for the hit Korean drama Squid Game on their TikTok account during the specified timeframe.

3.2.2 Samples

For this study, the selected samples were obtained using purposive sampling, focusing on the top ten most engaging posts promoting the original Korean drama Squid Game shared by Netflix on its US TikTok account. The unit of analysis comprised these highly engaging posts, which aimed to shed light on the content and strategies employed for effective promotion. To maintain feasibility and adhere to the study's time frame and scope, the sample size was confined to the ten most engaged posts out of a total of 43 posts promoting the original Korean drama Squid Game that

were posted on Netflix's US TikTok account from September 17, 2021, to October 28, 2022.

The selection of the data was based on purposive sampling (Flick, 2007), which enabled the targeted selection of posts that directly related to the promotion of Squid Game. This approach was suitable for this research due to its specific focus on posts published subsequent to the release of Squid Game on Netflix.

The chosen start date, September 17, 2021, was strategically selected to capture Netflix's deliberate efforts in disseminating Squid Game after its debut. The study encompassed a comprehensive examination of Netflix's online activities during this period, aiming to draw inferences concerning the impact of coding items on engagement levels.

The dataset subjected to analysis encompassed the visual components of TikTok posts, including videos, short-form videos, and memes. Additionally, the textual descriptions accompanying these posts, as well as the posting date and time, were incorporated into the analysis. To facilitate a comprehensive assessment of engagement and interaction patterns associated with various content types, the study incorporated metrics such as the number of likes, comments, and shares for each post. The time span of data collection, from September 17, 2021, to October 28, 2022, served to capture user responsiveness to posted content and gain insights into the factors driving engagement on the TikTok platform.

3.3 Operationalization

The terms "engagement," "type of content shared on TikTok," "overall emotion sent through the post," and "extra elements included in the message" have been operationalized in order to address the primary study issues. In this part, the categories created during the dataset analysis are described along with how they relate to the theoretical framework.

3.3.1 Operationalization of "Engagement"

By examining the number of likes and comments each post has received, engagement is evaluated. The significance of the "like" button and like count has previously been linked to the popularity of movies on Facebook (Ding, Cheng, Duan, & Jin, 2017). Previous studies have demonstrated its significance and influence on audiences and box office receipts (Ding et al., 2017). That gives grounds for supposing that TikTok and other social media platforms, like them, are also affected by this issue.

The engagement rate is a measure used to assess the level of engagement brought about by original content or a brand campaign. In other words, the engagement rate is the amount of interaction that a user's material generates with their followers. Total engagement (the sum of likes and comments) is determined by dividing the number of followers by 100. Instead of only looking at absolute indicators like likes, shares, and comments, the engagement rate offers a more realistic reflection of content performance.

3.3.2 Operationalization of "Type of Content"

To identify the type of content that Netflix US publishes on TikTok for promoting Squid Game, the units of analysis were assessed from two perspectives: (a) the type of posts Netflix publishes on TikTok, that is, "videos," "short-form videos," or "memes", and (b) the type of material content used in these posts.

In this section, we delve into the operationalization of the variable "Type of Content," a pivotal aspect of my study's data analysis framework. To achieve a comprehensive understanding of the diverse content present in my dataset, we employed a meticulous manual coding process. This process involved the assignment of specific labels to different categories of content, enabling us to effectively analyze and interpret the content's nature and purpose.

The manual code utilized for data categorization encompassed nine distinct categories: series segment, compilation, trailer, interview, behind-the-scenes, unreleased scenes, discussion videos, promo videos, and cosplay videos. Each of these categories represents a unique facet of content that contributes to the overall content landscape under examination. This granular classification system allowed us to capture the multifaceted dimensions of content creation within our dataset.

To initiate the manual coding process, a team of experienced coders was assembled, each equipped with a comprehensive understanding of the content types prevalent in our dataset. Raw data, comprising a diverse array of videos from various sources, was systematically organized for analysis. Coders meticulously reviewed each video, scrutinizing its content, context, and purpose to accurately assign the appropriate manual code.

The categorization process involved a multi-step approach. Coders initially conducted a preliminary viewing of each video to grasp its overarching theme and content. Following this, videos were viewed more closely, enabling coders to identify specific attributes that aligned with the predefined manual code categories. For instance, videos featuring highlights from a TV series were classified as "Series Segment," while videos offering insights into the production process were labeled Behind the Scenes."

Coders engaged in rigorous discussions to address any ambiguities or uncertainties during the categorization process. This iterative dialogue fostered a consensus-driven approach, ensuring the reliability and validity of the manual coding procedure. Furthermore, to enhance inter coder reliability, a subset of videos was independently coded by multiple coders, and the level of agreement was assessed using established metrics.

Upon completion of the manual coding process, the categorized data was organized into a structured database, facilitating subsequent quantitative and qualitative analyses. This systematic approach to operationalizing the "Type of

Content" variable offers a robust foundation for our study's findings and insights. By deciphering the diverse content landscape through this manual coding framework, we can unravel nuanced patterns and trends that contribute to a deeper comprehension of content creation and consumption in our digital age. With regard to the types of material posted by Netflix on TikTok, the different categories are presented and described in Table 3.1

Table 3.1 Style of content: videos, short-form video and memes

Code	Description
Series Segment	Footage that is barely 30 seconds long, from Squid Game. Such images typically portray a particular scene from a production, highlighting a crucial or emotionally charged moment.
Compilation	A selection of unrelated video materials. This code provides footage that blends standout scenes from various Squid Game episodes with clips from other shows or scenes that center on a single character and his role in the narrative.
Trailer	To advertise films and television programs, official videos are produced. They contain details about the premiere day as well as significant production moments.
Interview	Interviews with actors and other production team members.
Behind the Scenes	The term "behind-the-scenes footage" describes a variety of details from the filming and production process of a movie or documentary that are not seen in the main movie, such as NG mirrors, chats, crew comments, etc.
Unreleased Scene	Unreleased sequences are unfinished sections of a film or television show that are cut out of the finished product.
Discussion Video	Behind the scenes, actors, producers, and other members of the production crew talk and express their ideas on Squid Game. Compared to the "interview," it has a more informal feel.
Promo Videos	Video materials with Squid Game characters that promote Squid Game. Additionally, a Squid Game promoting message is being conveyed through these Netflix advertising videos.

Table 3.1 Style of content: videos, short-form video and memes (continued).

Code	Description
Cosplay Videos	Real people wearing Squid Game characters' costumes to do role-playing.

3.3.3 Operationalization of "Overall Emotion"

Entertainment is a crucial component of an effective SNS advertisement that heightens the persuasiveness of the disseminated message, as demonstrated in Lee and Hong's study. They counter that by embracing a variety of feelings, such as fun, emotional appeal is an integrative term that embraces entertainment (Lee & Hong, 2016, p.364). As a result, amusing (or fun) captions are categorized as emotions under the category "humor." Overall, their research lends support to the creation of the category "Overall Emotion (Caption)" given the importance of emotional appeal in promotional language and its impact on consumers.

The ability to tell people about product alternatives so they may make the best decisions is what is meant by the "neutral" code of the informativeness factor (Lee & Hong, 2016; Rotzoll, Haefner, & Sandage, 1996). This aspect is focused on rational appeal as opposed to emotional appeal, and it resonates with assisting users in making an informed decision. According to research, informative posts on social media platforms help create a favorable perception of a particular business by giving consumers the knowledge they need to make an informed purchase decision that is connected to a feeling of gratitude for the support (Lee & Hong, 2016).

The term "excitement" describes captions that express passion about particular facts. When new information about various shows or the cast of a particular show is revealed, there is frequently an air of "excitement" that is usually focused on the professional side of things. Contrarily, "positivity" focuses on interpersonal interactions as well as people's inner selves, private lives, and overall outlooks on life. This code emphasizes embracing emotions, supporting others, and loving oneself. It is

typically approached through content regarding the relationships and love interests between actors appearing in Netflix shows.

The code "provoking" may indicate the presence of a specific call to action, directing readers to respond to an inquiry, express their opinion, and so on. It does not necessarily refer to a provocative mood. These calls to action have an impact on the engagement rates that posts reach (Stephen, Sciandra, & Inman, 2015). According to research, people are more inclined to respond to queries and voice their opinions and preferences when they are asked, but competition-like activities are met with lower levels of involvement (Stephen et al., 2015). The proposed scenario of asking questions and encouraging people to express their own experiences and beliefs is discernible in the Netflix situation. This would suggest that Netflix's marketing approach is effective since the corporation understands its target markets and takes their preferences into account when deciding how to communicate with them.

Posts with the "inspiration" tag exhibit positive ideas about society and a fascination with the diversity of people, and they frequently provide solutions for changing the dynamics of society. With that in mind, the captions aim to arouse viewers' emotions, thoughts, and actions on the subjects at hand.

The term "nostalgia" refers to a mood that expresses a nostalgic fondness for things like finished television series. A show's premiere date and a reference to the production's opening words are two frequent ways to identify the code in the dataset. The captions of posts in this study were categorized as "anticipation" when they contained information about upcoming premieres and expressed a desire to watch the program.

3.3.4 Operationalization of "Additional Elements"

One of the most distinguishing features of online communication is the emoji (Goldsborough, 2015, p. 9). Emojis are tiny images that can be any combination of different things people, animals, etc. (Goldsborough, 2015). Emojis could be

incorporated into the idea of emotional marketing because they are used to express distinct emotions or enhance the manner in which a particular message can be communicated (Goldsborough, 2015). Since, based on the theoretical framework, there are grounds to believe that Netflix is implementing such strategies, the presence of emojis seems important in the evaluation of whether the content Netflix uses relies on strategies revolving around the emotional states and aspirations of consumers (Dimitrova, 2019). Emojis appear to be significant in determining if the content Netflix employs relies on techniques revolving around the emotional states and desires of customers because there is reason to suspect, based on the theoretical framework, that Netflix is using such strategies.

The hashtag is another point worth mentioning. The usage of hashtags can increase customer involvement by more than 50% after growth (Fuaddah, Nurhaeni, & Rahmanto, 2022). As a marketing or promotional communication tool, hashtags are being used by marketers more and more (Fuaddah et al., 2022). It is anticipated that the usage of hashtags in the videos would increase interest in further TikTok accounts (Fuaddah et al., 2022). Numerous reputable businesses, such as Guess, effectively run hashtag campaigns on the TikTok platform (TikTok for Business Case Study, 2022) The increasing use of hashtags in influencer marketing serves as additional evidence of their benefits. For these reasons, the quantity of postings with hashtags seems pertinent for this study and will help determine how well Netflix is executing its strategy on TikTok.

3.3.5 Operationalization of "Original Sound"

Another dimension of paramount significance is the operationalization of "original sound." Netflix's video content frequently boasts distinctive original audio components, each contributing to the distinctiveness of the viewing experience. This attribute extends to the TikTok account managed by Netflix United States, where innovative techniques are employed to infuse videos with unique auditory elements. Examples include the incorporation of robotic voices, excerpts of music from TV dramas, and snippets of dialogue from television shows into select videos. To further

amplify user engagement, TikTok empowers users with robust editing tools, fostering a culture of content creation that often involves imitation and mimicry.

Intriguingly, TikTok's "Original Sound" feature facilitates a process where users can detach the soundtrack from an existing video and seamlessly integrate it into their own visual creations. This creative approach enables users to mimic or parody the actions depicted in the original video by employing the same soundtrack (Ramati & Abeliovich, 2022). Alternatively, users can invent novel actions that harmonize with the audio, thus generating a unique blend of audio-visual expression. This concept bears similarities to the "Duet" functionality, where reaction videos are juxtaposed with the original content, while the "Stitch" option permits the editing of videos that merge both the source material and the reaction content (Ramati & Abeliovich, 2022).

Moreover, TikTok provides a medley of editing tools that empower content creators to manipulate videos through filters, layers, text additions, and animations (Ramati & Abeliovich, 2022). These versatile tools not only serve to augment the aesthetic quality of videos but also underscore the platform's ethos of promoting user interaction and artistic creativity (Ramati & Abeliovich, 2022). As social media networks like TikTok extend their influence across global audiences, the multifaceted identity they offer becomes increasingly important (McDonald & Smith-Rowsey, 2018). The fusion of diverse elements, such as specialized marketing and creative engagement, plays a pivotal role in nurturing user-generated content ecosystems and reinforcing connections within the digital social fabric.

By meticulously dissecting the array of post categories and assessing the prevalent emotional undertones as represented by the "Overall emotion" metric, the researcher has been able to derive conclusive insights into the specific content elements that formed the crux of Netflix US's captivating TikTok campaign to promote Squid Game. This thorough analysis successfully addresses the core inquiry regarding the diverse content types that contributed to heightened engagement levels. Moreover, the exploration delved deeper by considering nuanced components such as

tags and emojis, as well as the innovative application of "Original Sound." These supplementary elements have shed light on the intricate contours of the content strategy employed by Netflix US within their TikTok promotions for Squid Game, effectively answering the second research question concerning the strategic framework that propelled engagement.

3.4 Research Instruments

The research instruments utilized for this study encompassed a comprehensive quantitative approach, drawing from the tools of data collection, analysis, and categorization to address the primary research questions. The researcher aimed to explore the types of content employed by Netflix US on TikTok to effectively promote the Korean drama Squid Game, as well as the underlying content strategy that contributed to high levels of engagement. The research process involved meticulous data recording, manipulation, and categorization.

To answer the first research question regarding the types of content used in engaging promotions, the researcher gathered engagement metrics for each TikTok post promoting Squid Game on Netflix US's account. Microsoft Excel was employed to systematically record the number of likes, comments, shares, and views garnered by each post. These metrics provided a quantitative basis for evaluating engagement. The TikTok Engagement Rate was then calculated, enabling the researcher to objectively assess the popularity of each content type based on user interactions. Utilizing a codebook as a reference, the researcher classified the content into various categories such as trailers, behind-the-scenes footage, challenges, memes, user-generated content, and more. This systematic categorization facilitated the identification of the most effective content types that resonated with TikTok's audience.

Additionally, the researcher extended the analysis to encompass the emotional appeal of the content through the classification of "Overall Emotion (Caption)." This entailed categorizing the captions of the posts based on emotions evoked, including humor, neutrality, excitement, positivity, provocation, inspiration,

nostalgia, and anticipation. By examining the interplay between content type and emotional appeal, the researcher aimed to uncover nuances in engagement patterns that could contribute to the success of the promotional campaign.

For the second research question concerning the content strategy employed by Netflix US, the researcher employed a word file to meticulously document various elements of the promotion. This involved recording the participation rate, release date, release text, video link, and additional elements (such as emojis and hashtags) associated with the top ten most engaging posts. Furthermore, the use of the original sound in these posts was also documented. This meticulous recording aimed to provide a comprehensive view of the content strategy employed by Netflix US, offering insights into the specific elements that contributed to the engagement of the audience on TikTok.

In summary, the researcher employed a rigorous quantitative methodology involving Microsoft Excel for data collection and analysis, a codebook for content categorization, and word files for detailed documentation. By combining these instruments, the study aimed to provide a nuanced understanding of both the content types and strategies that drove engagement in Netflix US's promotional campaign for Squid Game on TikTok US.

3.5 Data Collection

In this study, the data collection process involved gathering posts published on the Netflix US TikTok account and compiling them into a .doc file. The file included screenshots of the videos and their descriptions as published on the platform as shown below. All posts were videos, and screenshots of the videos were included in the .doc file. In addition to this, the videos themselves were separately downloaded through the TikTok app to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the content.
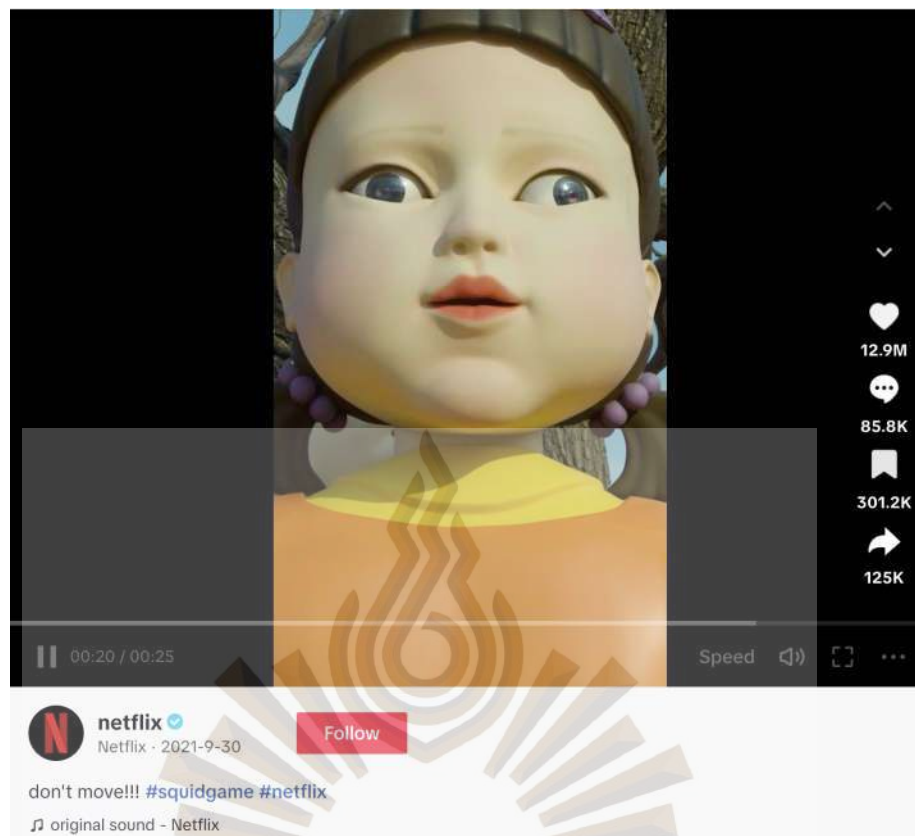
Figure 3.1 Screenshot of Netflix US posting on TikTok to promote Squid Game

Source: Netflix TikTok (@netflix), 2021

To analyze the data, the number of likes, comments, and shares of each post were recorded to gain insights into the responsiveness to different types of content. All of the data used in this research paper were directly sourced from the Netflix US TikTok profile. The data acquisition process involved manual entry of information obtained from the official TikTok account of Netflix US, which can be found at @netflix. The data collection period spans from September 2021 to November 2022, ensuring a broad and varied set of data for analysis.

The data collected includes the video and its corresponding textual content, additional elements, and the date of posting, all of which are promotional messages for the Korean drama The Squid Game. Given the need to evaluate engagement metrics across different content categories, a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches was employed. This approach allowed for a thorough and comprehensive

understanding of the complex phenomena observed in the data, taking into account the diverse formats and characteristics of the collected content. Overall, the data collection and analysis methods used in this study provided valuable insights into the effectiveness of TikTok posts in promoting the Squid Game on Netflix US.

3.6 Data Analysis

In this section, the processes within data analysis are thoroughly described. The research methodology's application is described.

3.6.1 Quantitative Analysis: Calculating Engagement Rate

Quantitative Analysis, intricately woven into our Research Methodology, played a pivotal role in dissecting the effectiveness of Netflix US's TikTok campaign promoting the Korean TV series Squid Game. Employing the engagement rate formula endorsed by TikTok's online advertising guide (The Online Advertising Guide, 2023), we endeavored to quantify the resonance of the content and answer the first research question: What types of content were used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?

The engagement rate formula, a beacon guiding our quantitative exploration, takes the form of a concise yet insightful equation: Engagement Rate = (Likes + Comments + Shares) ÷ Followers * 100%. This formula harmonizes the numerator, encompassing the cumulative sum of likes, comments, and shares garnered by a specific post, with the denominator, representing Netflix US's TikTok follower count. By expressing the result as a percentage, the formula presents an easily interpretable metric that quantifies the extent of user engagement in relation to the follower base.

TikTok Engagement Formula

$$\text{TikTok Engagement rate} = \left(\frac{\text{Likes} + \text{Comments} + \text{Shares}}{\text{Total Followers}} \right) \times 100 \qquad (3\text{-}1)$$

To fathom this formula, we refer to TikTok's online advertising guide, where it's recognized as the Follower Engagement Rate. This rate provides a standardized gauge of audience interaction intensity, transcending raw numbers and revealing the degree of engagement within the context of the follower count. The formula essentially quantifies the effectiveness of content in prompting reactions and interactions from the TikTok audience.

The engagement rate formula delves deep into the relationship between content and engagement. By quantifying the engagement rate, we extract insights into the efficacy of content types in engaging audiences. This quantitative analysis acts as a window into the content dynamics of Netflix US's TikTok campaign. The calculated engagement rate not only answers the first research question but also provides a tangible measure of the types of content that resonated most effectively with the audience, thereby illuminating the strategies underpinning the most engaging content shared by Netflix US to promote Squid Game on TikTok.

3.6.2 Quantitative Analysis

Within the realm of research methodology, Quantitative Analysis emerges as a pivotal tool to unveil numerical insights and trends within datasets. This systematic approach is harnessed to extract quantitative patterns, correlations, and statistical significance, offering a quantitative lens to comprehend complex phenomena. When delving into data analysis, researchers often turn to Quantitative Analysis to derive insights from numerical metrics and generate evidence-based conclusions.

To address the second research question – What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game? - the researcher harnessed the power of Quantitative Analysis within their research methodology. This approach involved exploring additional indicators related to the content strategy of the top ten most engaged posts on Netflix US's TikTok account.

Quantitative Analysis extended the scope beyond mere engagement metrics to encompass other relevant indicators. Metrics such as utilization of popular music/sounds, and the strategic incorporation of hashtags were examined within this analysis. By evaluating these quantitative aspects, the researcher aimed to identify patterns and trends that characterized the content strategy adopted by Netflix US in promoting Squid Game.

By deciphering these quantitative patterns, the researcher aimed to reveal insights that collectively addressed the second research question. This involved interpreting the numerical data to uncover trends and tendencies that elucidated the content strategy employed by Netflix US. The quantitative analysis was a complementary approach to the qualitative exploration of content strategy tactics, offering a holistic view of the strategy's multifaceted components.

In conclusion, quantitative analysis played a pivotal role within the research methodology, guiding the analysis of indicators related to the content strategy of the top ten most engaged posts shared by Netflix US on TikTok. This approach allowed the researcher to identify and interpret quantitative patterns within metrics such as music and sound usage and hashtag incorporation. By integrating these findings with the qualitative content analysis, the research aimed to offer a comprehensive understanding of the content strategy that effectively engaged the audience and contributed to the success of the promotional campaign for Squid Game.

3.6.3 Qualitative Content Analysis

In the realm of research methodology, Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) emerges as a powerful tool to decipher and comprehend the intricate layers within textual, visual, or audio data. It is a systematic approach employed to identify themes, patterns, and underlying meanings hidden within the content. When conducting data analysis, researchers often turn to QCA to explore the richness of qualitative data and extract meaningful insights that transcend surface-level observations.

In the context of the first research question – What types of content were used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok? – the researcher harnessed the prowess of Qualitative Content Analysis within their research methodology. The goal was to deeply analyze the content of the top ten posts that garnered the highest engagement levels on Netflix US's TikTok account. These posts represented the cream of the crop in terms of audience interaction, encompassing factors such as likes, comments, shares, and views.

The qualitative analysis delved into various dimensions of these engaging posts, investigating themes and patterns that shaped their effectiveness. Core content elements, such as storytelling techniques, use of humor, incorporation of visual elements, and the application of emotional appeals, were meticulously examined. Storytelling techniques were explored to understand how narratives were weaved into the content, captivating audiences by establishing emotional connections and fostering curiosity. Humor's role was scrutinized to determine its influence on relatability and entertainment.

Visual elements were dissected to uncover their impact on capturing attention and conveying messages effectively. Emotional appeals present in the content were probed to reveal how they resonated with viewers, prompting a heightened sense of engagement. By analyzing these content dimensions, the researcher aimed to unveil the strategies that resonated with the audience and contributed to elevated engagement levels.

By investigating the content in this manner, the researcher aimed to identify commonalities in content types, tone, and messaging across the top engaging posts. Consistencies in content types, such as teasers, challenges, behind-the-scenes snippets, user-generated content, or any other formats, were sought out. The tone of the content, whether suspenseful, humorous, emotional, or a blend of these, was scrutinized to discern how it impacted audience engagement.

Moreover, the analysis focused on uncovering recurrent messaging themes that consistently emerged across the engaging posts. Patterns in how themes of competition, survival, intrigue, or relatability were portrayed were studied to discern the messages that struck a chord with the audience. By conducting this comprehensive analysis, the researcher aimed to provide a holistic response to the research question, shedding light on the content types that effectively engaged viewers and contributed to the success of Netflix US's TikTok promotion for Squid Game.

In conclusion, Qualitative Content Analysis emerged as a potent methodology for data analysis, aiding the researcher in analyzing themes and patterns within the top ten most engaging posts shared by Netflix US on TikTok. This approach allowed the researcher to identify commonalities in content types, tone, and messaging, thereby offering valuable insights into the content strategies that successfully captivated the audience and fueled engagement.

In addressing the second research question – What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?- the researcher employed Qualitative Content Analysis as an integral aspect of their research methodology. The objective was to conduct a detailed exploration of the content within the top ten posts, characterized by their exceptional engagement levels on Netflix US's TikTok account.

The qualitative analysis journeyed into the essence of these highly engaging posts, with a particular focus on the underlying content strategies and tactics. Through this lens, the research aimed to unravel recurring patterns that defined how Netflix US crafted its content. The analysis extended to the creative storytelling methods employed, delving into how narratives were structured and presented to captivate the audience. By closely examining these strategies, the researcher sought to uncover the distinct tactics that contributed to the success of the content.

The Qualitative Content Analysis process involved the identification of thematic threads that wove through the content. This encompassed understanding how

Netflix US used call-to-action (CTA) techniques, harnessed creative storytelling approaches, and leveraged innovative methods to establish a strong connection with the audience. These explorations aimed to shed light on the thought processes behind the content creation and the strategies that ignited audience engagement.

The researcher's objective was to generate insights that collectively answered the second research question by offering an in-depth understanding of the content strategy employed. This involved piecing together findings from the qualitative analysis to outline the overall approach to content creation, encompassing both the structural aspects and the communicative techniques.

In conclusion, Qualitative Content Analysis was a pivotal component of the research methodology, guiding the analysis of underlying content strategies and tactics within the top ten most engaged posts shared by Netflix US on TikTok. This approach allowed the researcher to discern recurring patterns in creative storytelling methods and construction of content, ultimately offering valuable insights into the content strategy that effectively captivated the audience and fueled engagement.

3.7 Ethical Consideration

The ethical dimensions of this study are notably unproblematic, given the non-sensitive and non-invasive nature of the subject matter under investigation. The study's focus revolves around a comprehensive analysis of various facets within a social phenomenon, which inherently avoids any potential harm to individuals or sensitive issues. Moreover, the study's ethical stance is fortified by its exclusive reliance on secondary data sources.

In line with ethical standards, stringent measures were upheld to safeguard users' privacy throughout the data collection process. The investigation's scope centered solely on publicly available data – specifically, Netflix US' published posts and corresponding engagement metrics from TikTok users. Crucially, the study deliberately omitted any inclusion of personal identifiers, such as nicknames, age,

gender, nationality, or any other individual-specific information. This resolute commitment to data anonymity and privacy ensured the preservation of user confidentiality and further fortified the ethical integrity of the study.

It is paramount to underline that the utilization of secondary data sources inherently minimizes ethical concerns. As a result, this study navigates the ethical landscape with care and conscientiousness, upholding the principles of research integrity and respecting the rights and privacy of both content creators and viewers.

Chapter 4

Research Results

In this chapter, we delve into the outcomes derived from both the quantitative analysis and qualitative content examination, contextualizing them within the overarching theoretical framework. The dataset at hand includes the 10 most engaged TikTok posts, out of 43, that Netflix US circulated between 17 September 2021 and 28 October 2022. This encompassing dataset encompasses a comprehensive portrayal of the coding framework employed, along with the specific codes that were extrapolated from the dataset.

The coding framework, an integral component of our analysis, is structured around five distinct categories, each serving a distinct purpose:

1) Type of Post: This category offers insight into the various types of TikTok posts propagated by Netflix US.

2) Overall Emotion (Caption): Directing attention to the emotional tenor conveyed through each post's caption, this category discerns the sentiment or feeling it imparts.

3) Additional Elements: This category pertains to the presence of emojis or hashtags within the posts.

4) Original Sound: Referring to audio content that has been authored by Netflix US on TikTok, this category encapsulates auditory components.

Leveraging the data analysis procedure outlined in section 3.6, the amassed information was subsequently integrated into Excel. The objective of this integration was to facilitate the calculation of code occurrence frequencies, the exploration of correlations among codes, and the execution of further computations utilizing the

supplementary data that was concurrently acquired. Consequential to these calculations, the ensuing table succinctly presents a summation of the derived computations, encapsulating the outcomes of our research. This chapter is devoted to an in-depth exploration of each segment, encompassing comprehensive discussions that shed light on the nuanced findings and their implications.

Table 4.1 Analysis of Top Ten High-Engagement TikTok US Posts for Netflix's Squid Game Promotion (as of May 13, 2023)

Category	Sub-Category	N	Percentage (%)
Type of Content	Short-form Video	6	60
	Meme	4	40
	Total	10	100
Sub-Categories of Type of Post	Series Segment	4	40
	Compilation	3	30
	Trailer	1	10
	Interview	1	10
	Behind the Scenes	1	10
	Unreleased Scene	0	0
	Discussion Video	0	0
	Promo Videos	0	0
	Cosplay Videos	0	0
	Total	10	100
Overall Emotion (Caption)	Humor	4	40
	Neutral	0	0
	Provoking	0	0
	Excitement	3	30
	Positivity	1	10
	Inspiration	0	0
	Nostalgia	1	10
	Anticipation	1	10
	Total	10	100

Table 4.1 Analysis of Top Ten High-Engagement TikTok US Posts for Netflix's Squid Game Promotion (as of May 13, 2023) (continued).

Category	Sub-Category	N	Percentage (%)
Additional Elements	Posts with Emojis	1	10
	Posts without Emojis	9	90
	Total	10	100
	Posts with Hashtag	10	100
	Posts without Hashtag	0	0
	Total	10	100
Original Sound	Posts with Original Sound	10	100
	Posts without Original Sound	0	0
	Total	10	100

Based on the analysis of Netflix's promotional posts on TikTok for the Korean drama Squid Game, it is evident that different content types and presentation formats significantly influence audience engagement. The majority of the posts are short-form videos, constituting 60% of the top-performing content, while memes make up the remaining 40%. Within the realm of short-form videos and memes, various sub-categories prevail, including series segments and compilations, which dominate the posts by 40% and 30%, respectively. Trailers (10%), interviews (10%), and behind-the-scenes (10%) content also made appearances but were less prevalent. This variety in content type and format likely caters to a diverse user base on TikTok, ensuring the broad appeal of the promotional posts. TikTok's platform logics force aspiring internet celebrities to actively seek out, learn about, participate in and engage with whatever is 'going viral' in order to remain visible to others on the app (Abidin, 2021).

The overall emotion conveyed in the captions of these top-performing posts primarily revolved around humor and excitement, contributing to 40% and 30% of the content, respectively. This prevalence of positive and exhilarating emotions may have played a pivotal role in drawing audiences and sustaining engagement levels. Only a

minority of the posts conveyed positivity (10%), nostalgia (10%), or anticipation (10%). Additionally, posts were observed to leverage elements such as emojis and hashtags to possibly augment visibility and interaction, with 100% of the analyzed posts containing hashtags and original sound, illustrating the importance of these elements in maximizing engagement on the TikTok platform.

4.1 Engagement Analysis

This section delves into a detailed engagement analysis to assess the effectiveness of Netflix US's promotion of "Squid Game" on TikTok. Utilizing the TikTok Engagement Rate, a metric calculated by (Number of Likes + Number of Comments + Number of Shares) / (Total Tracking Number of Netflix US TikTok) * 100, the analysis provides a holistic view of audience interaction with each promotional post.

The engagement rate formula was applied to 43 promotional posts for "Squid Game," allowing for an insightful examination of audience interactions across various content types. This method effectively measures the impact of each post by capturing audience attention through likes, comments, and shares, contextualized within the broader TikTok activity of Netflix US.

The data from the analysis was compiled into Table 4.2, which ranks the top ten TikTok posts by Netflix US promoting "Squid Game" as of May 13, 2023. This table is instrumental in summarizing the highest levels of engagement and highlighting the content elements that were most effective in capturing the audience's attention on TikTok.

Table 4.2 Engagement Rankings of Top Ten TikTok Posts by Netflix US Promoting
Squid Game (as of May 13, 2023)

Rank	Date	Number of Likes	Number of Comments	Number of Shares	Engagement Rate (%)
1	2021-9-30	12.9M	86.5K	124.9K	38.41
2	2021-9-28	3.9M	144.3K	165.9K	12.36
3	2022-6-12	3.1M	89.6K	118.8K	9.70
4	2021-10-1	3.2M	24.8K	20.8K	9.51
5	2021-10-29	1.1M	6997	11.8K	3.28
6	2021-10-5	987.8K	11.9K	7486	2.95
7	2021-10-5	620.4K	3562	4277	1.84
8	2021-9-29	554K	5461	7202	1.66
9	2021-10-1	370.6K	5518	2727	1.11
10	2022-9-17	292K	5975	2101	0.88

K=Thousand, M=Million

Further, a statistical analysis of the engagement metrics was performed, resulting in Table 4.3. This table provides a comprehensive overview of the mean, standard deviation, maximum, and minimum for likes, comments, shares, and engagement rates, offering a complete view of the data's distribution.

Table 4.3 Statistical Analysis of Engagement Metrics

Metric	Mean	Standard Deviation	Maximum	Minimum
Number of Likes	2,702,480	3,822,974	12,900,000	292,000
Number of Comments	29,593.875	36,655.95	89,600	5,461
Number of Shares	44,367.8	59,212.66	144,300	2,101
Engagement Rate (%)	8.17	11.415	38.41	0.88

In analyzing the top ten most engaged posts, substantial variations in participation rates were observed. The leading post from September 30, 2021, marked

an engagement rate of 38.41%, significantly outperforming other posts. This high rate suggests a spike in interest and engagement at that time. However, subsequent posts showed a noticeable decline in engagement, with the second and third most engaged posts achieving 12.36% and 9.70%, respectively. The diminishing engagement rates, particularly beyond the fourth-ranked post, highlight the ephemeral nature of user interaction on social media. The initial posts, aligning with the release period of "Squid Game," attracted significant engagement, likely driven by the novelty and initial buzz around the show. However, this interest gradually waned over time, as evidenced by the tenth-ranked post on September 17, 2022, which secured only a 0.88% rate. This trend underscores the importance of timely, engaging, and innovative promotional strategies in sustaining and maximizing audience interest on dynamic platforms like TikTok.

4.2 Type of Content

The analysis of the top ten most-watched TikTok posts promoting Squid Game on Netflix US's account has provided significant insights into the role of content type in driving engagement and resonating with the audience. The diversity observed within these posts underscores the importance of understanding the nuances of content types and their impact on audience interaction. The revelations presented in this section serve a dual purpose: firstly, they provide insights into addressing the first research question, "What types of content were utilized in the most captivating content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game?" and secondly, the creation of Netflix US's TikTok platform communication techniques.

Table 4.4 Analysis of Post Type and Sub-categories in Top 10 Engaged Netflix
TikTok US Posts Promoting Squid Game (as of May 13, 2023)

Rank	Date	Type of Content		Engagement Rate (%)
		Type of Post	Type of Post's sub-categories	
1	2021-9-30	Short-form Video	Series Segment	38.41
2	2021-9-28	Meme	Compilation	12.36
3	2022-6-12	Type of Post	Type of Post's sub-categories	9.70
5	2021-10-29	Short-form Video	Interview	3.28
6	2021-10-5	Meme	Series Segment	2.95
7	2021-10-5	Meme	Compilation	1.84
8	2021-9-29	Meme	Series Segment	1.66
9	2021-10-1	Short-form Video	Behind the Scenes	1.11
10	2022-9-17	Short-form Video	Compilation	0.88

The examination of Netflix's TikTok US posts promoting Squid Game
unveils a meticulous array of content varieties and subcategories, each playing a
pivotal role in maximizing user engagement, especially since TikTok is the most
popular go-to platform for short-form content (Von Der Osten, 2022). A significant
proportion, 60%, of the top engaged posts are short-form videos, aligning impeccably
with the essence of TikTok and representing the preferred content type among its user
base. The platform currently allows for up to three minutes in video length, providing
ample opportunity for brands like Netflix to effectively reach and impact their
prospective customers (Von Der Osten, 2022). Within the realm of these short-form
videos, diverse arrays of sub-categories emerge, including series segments, trailers,
interviews, and behind-the-scenes glimpses. This variety illustrates Netflix's
calculated and strategic approach to utilizing different facets of Squid Game to
captivate audiences, catering to a spectrum of viewer preferences and interests, and
thereby optimizing engagement levels on this burgeoning platform.

Meme (40%) posts also played a significant role, particularly in the compilation and series segment sub-categories, reflecting the value of humor and relatability in engaging the audience. This diversity in content and format not only showcases the multifaceted promotional strategies employed by Netflix but also highlights the potential of each content type to resonate with different segments of the audience. The strategic interweaving of content types and sub-categories emphasizes the significance of understanding audience preferences and the platform's dynamics to create impactful and engaging promotional content, contributing to the viral success of Squid Game on the TikTok platform. Notably, advertising effectiveness is stirred by emotional appeal (Lee & Hong, 2016), and memes inherently encapsulate emotions tied to amusement, rendering them exceptionally captivating. Drawing parallels to Richard Dawkins' insights in "The Selfish Gene," wherein he bridged Darwinian concepts with cultural dynamics, "it is similar in action to a gene by replicating itself and evolving, but resides in the "mind" and replicates itself through interpersonal communication and artifacts, evolving in the process" (Williams, 2000, p. 272). This framework elucidates the proliferation of memes in the marketing landscape, especially when coupled with the internet's unparalleled ability to rapidly propagate ideas.In the realm of marketing, the strategic employment of memes by Netflix aligns harmoniously with the concept of viral propagation facilitated by the internet. The substantial engagement rates associated with this content type can thus be rationalized. Figure 4.1 provides a tangible instance of a meme in action. This particular meme interweaves content from the Squid Game series with the Netflix original Sex Education.This strategic convergence not only showcases Netflix's adeptness at incorporating current trends into their communication strategy but also underscores their commitment to staying relevant within the ever-evolving landscape of cultural references and audience preferences.
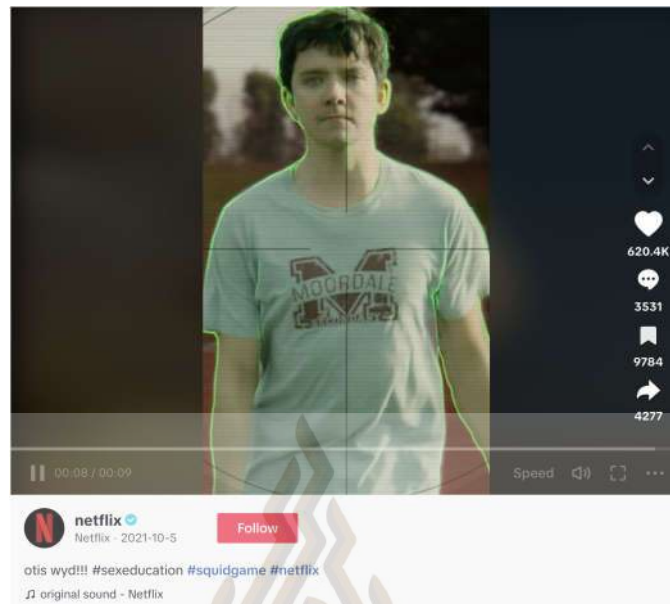
Figure 4.1 Netflix's meme to promote Squid Game

Source:Netflix TikTok (@netflix), 2021

In conclusion, the highest engagement is recorded for a short-form video of a series segment, followed by a meme of a compilation. This indicates that the audience prefers content that provides a glimpse into the series or summarizes key moments, as well as humorous or relatable content presented in the form of memes.

4.3 Overall Emotion (Caption)

To effectively guide a brand towards achieving desired online consumer behavior, such as sharing and interacting with content to foster word-of-mouth effects and brand support, a keen understanding of audience engagement preferences is essential (Lee & Hong, 2016). Empirical research on the constituents impacting the efficacy of social media marketing underscores the significance of certain elements, including emotional appeal, informativeness, and creativity (Lee & Hong, 2016). The integration of emotional appeals is highlighted as pivotal for converting social media platforms into effective advertising tools, with emotion defined as a person's affective state or feeling (Lee & Hong, 2016, p. 364). This study further delves into the role of

emotion in content engagement, aligning with the inquiry of the second question: "What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid Game? It is consistent with earlier studies by Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019), which highlight Netflix's jovial and upbeat brand voice as a means of evoking strong feelings in their audience in their postings.

Table 4.5 Analysis of Overall Emotion in Top 10 Engaged Netflix TikTok US Posts Promoting Squid Game (as of May 13, 2023)

Rank	Date	Caption	Overall Emotion	Engagement Rate (%)
1	2021-9-30	don't move!!! #squidgame #netflix	Excitement	38.41
2	2021-9-28	who else watched it for the plot? #squidgame	Humor	12.36
3	2022-6-12	On your marks.Get set.Greenlight.Squid Game continues,only on Netflix.#SquidGameS2	Anticipation	9.70
4	2021-10-1	my boyyyy aliiiii #squidgame #netflix	Positivity	9.51
5	2021-10-29	#SquidGame #Netflix	Excitement	3.28
6	2021-10-5	sae-byeok candy ❤❤ ❤ #squidgame #netflix	Humor	2.95
7	2021-10-5	otis wyd!!! #sexeducation #squidgame #netflix	Humor	1.84
8	2021-9-29	decisions, decisions... #squidgame #netflix	Humor	1.66

Table 4.5 Analysis of Overall Emotion in Top 10 Engaged Netflix TikTok US Posts
Promoting Squid Game (as of May 13, 2023) (continued)

Rank	Date	Caption	Overall Emotion	Engagement Rate (%)
9	2021-10-1	HoYeon Jung becoming Sae-Byeok #squidgame #fromthemakeupchair #netflix	Excitement	1.11
10	2022-9-17	◯△▫ happy 1st birthday ◯△▫ #squidgame #netflix	Nostalgia	0.88

The analysis of the emotional tones conveyed in the captions of the top 10 most engaged TikTok posts promoting Squid Game by Netflix US highlights the integral role of emotional resonance in enhancing user engagement and underscores Netflix's adept social media strategy, which encapsulates the ethos "Humor is everything(Gogolan, 2023)." The data elucidates that "humor," constituting 40% of the posts, is the prevailing emotional tone, featuring prominently in the 2nd, 6th, 7th, and 8th most engaged posts. This reflects a deliberate and strategic inclination by Netflix US to employ humor as a key tool to captivate audiences, foster relatability, and enhance viewer connection.

Netflix's approach is encapsulated by its commitment to engaging fans and tuning into their preferences, a strategy manifested by the creation of content that is not only original but also breathtakingly entertaining (Gogolan, 2023). There is no disputing the magnetism of entertaining posts, and in contrast to mundane, uninspiring content, the Netflix team crafts content that is rich in humor and originality, aspects that are pivotal in attracting and sustaining viewer attention (Gogolan, 2023). For instance, Figure 4.2 depicts an instance of Netflix's humor-infused subtitles humorously referencing "Dalgona," the second game in Squid Game, where participants must meticulously carve out the snack's outline without breaking it,

showcasing Netflix's proficiency in blending humor with content to amplify its appeal and relatability.
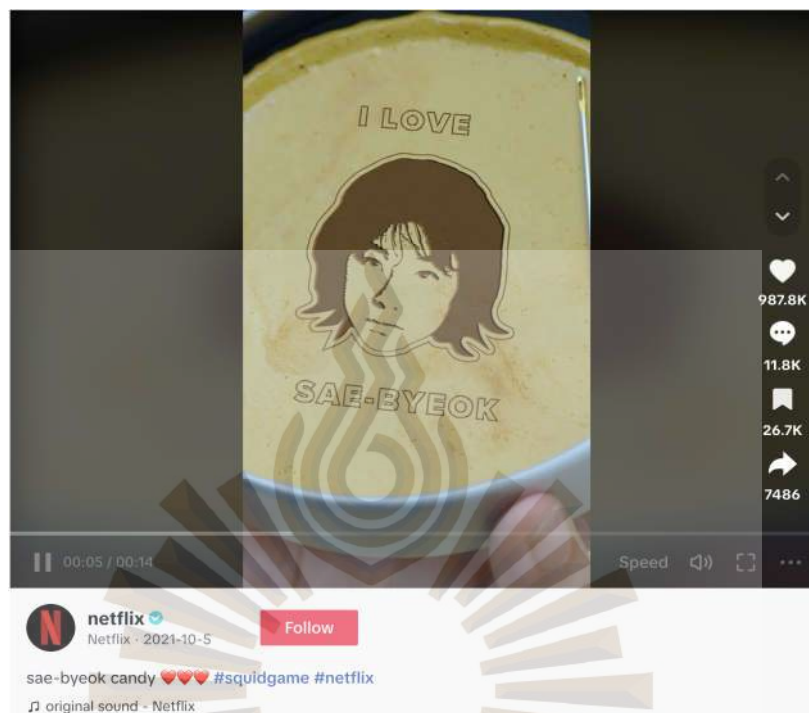

Figure 4.2 Netflix humorous post promoting a Squid Game on TikTok US
Source:Netflix TikTok (@netflix), 2021

In addition, 'excitement' is another significant emotional tone as a general emotion, as seen in the 1st, 5th, and 9th positions. The presence of excitement underscores the ability of Squid Game to evoke adrenaline and enthusiasm among the audience. This emotional resonance aligns well with the intense and suspenseful nature of the show, and its prevalence in the captions reflects Netflix's astute understanding of the emotions that resonate most effectively with their target audience. In general, the codes that emerged are on the positive spectrum of emotions, which indicates the confirmation of the findings from the studies conducted by Martín-Quevedo et al. (2019), and Lee and Hong (2016). It can be concluded that the squid game image promoted by Netflix on the Tik US platform can indeed be defined by positivity, humor, and lightheartedness.

Furthermore, the assimilation of diverse emotions such as "anticipation (10%)," "positivity (10%)," and "nostalgia (10%)" within the top 10 rankings illuminates the extensive spectrum of emotional reactions that can be incited by meticulously curated social media content. This aligns with the observations of Bacik et al. (2018), underscoring the pivotal role of emotional elements in sculpting consumer interactions and behaviors with brands on digital platforms. Netflix's multifaceted and nuanced emotional strategy exemplifies a profound understanding and adept implementation of these emotional elements, accentuating their refined approach to resonate with a broad spectrum of the audience by catering to varying emotional inclinations and experiences. This strategy not only validates the efficacy of synchronizing content with diverse emotional resonances but also accentuates the potential of such synchronizations in cultivating deeper and more impactful engagement. Netflix's mastery in leveraging a diverse array of emotions enables the forging of individual connections and the creation of enduring relationships with the audience, fostering the development of a vibrant and engaged online community. This meticulous alignment of emotional tones with content, ensuring the message's coherence and resonance within the contextual landscape of the brand's digital footprint, reaffirms the indispensability of integrating pertinent emotional resonances with brand communications, corroborating the findings of Bacik, Fedorko, Nastisin, and Gavurova (2018).

4.4 Additional Elements

This section delves into the incorporation of additional elements, specifically emojis and memes, within Netflix US's communication strategy on TikTok. Upon initial data exploration, it became evident that these expressive elements were recurrently integrated into the post captions. To comprehensively capture this phenomenon, a category named "Additional Elements" was established to encapsulate these features. The insights unveiled in this section serve a dual purpose: first, they contribute to addressing the second research question – "What content strategy was used in the most engaging content shared by Netflix US on TikTok to promote Squid

Game?" – and second, they aid in delineating the communication strategies employed by Netflix US on the TikTok platform.

The recognition of the significance of these additional elements aligns with their characterization as integral components of online culture, exerting an influence on consumer engagement (Stephen et al., 2015). Moreover, substantiating this notion, the research conducted by Gómez and Quevedo (2018), underscores the triumph of Netflix's social media strategy on platforms like Twitter, which effectively leverages elements such as hashtags and emojis, as discussed in the theoretical framework. This finding implies that despite variations across platforms, a consistent strategy encompassing these elements could yield favorable outcomes for the brand. Fernández Gómez and Martín Quevedo (2018), also shed light on the propensity of such elements to stimulate user engagement and sharing behavior, evidenced by an increase in content retweets from Netflix. Recognizing Netflix's prowess in social media marketing, this research directs its focus towards understanding the content employed, with particular emphasis on the frequency of utilizing these aforementioned elements.

Table 4.6 Analysis of Additional Elements in Top 10 Engaged Netflix TikTok US
 Posts Promoting Squid Game (as of May 13, 2023)

Rank	Date	Additional Elements	Engagement Rate (%)
1	2021-9-30	#squidgame #netflix	38.41
2	2021-9-28	#squidgame #netflix	12.36
3	2022-6-12	#SquidGameS2	9.70
4	2021-10-1	#squidgame #netflix	9.51
5	2021-10-29	#SquidGame #Netflix	3.28
6	2021-10-5	❤□❤□❤□ #squidgame #netflix	2.95
7	2021-10-5	#sexeducation #squidgame #netflix	1.84
8	2021-9-29	#squidgame #netflix	1.66
9	2021-10-1	#squidgame #fromthemakeupchair #netflix	1.11
10	2022-9-17	#squidgame #netflix	0.88

The examination of additional components within the top 10 most-engaged TikTok posts for Squid Game by Netflix US reveals a well-calibrated and intentional utilization of hashtags as strategic instruments to amplify content visibility and engagement. One salient observation is the prevailing presence of the hashtag duo "#squidgame" and "#netflix" spanning across various posts in the top 10 rankings. This persistent usage of brand-aligned tags acts as a cohesive thread, interlinking the content to the series and the streaming giant, thus streamlining brand identification and accentuating the promotional essence of the posts. Netflix's taggers and juicers, who are integral to content categorization and recommendation system architecture (Neira, 2019), meticulously assign tags to tether content to recognizable and relatable anchors, enhancing the content's accessibility and resonance with a diverse viewer base. This adherence to strategic hashtagging dovetails with Netflix's overarching promotional philosophy, which prioritizes the creation of snackable content—content that is succinct, user-friendly, and conducive to sharing and interaction, such as easily consumable and shareable videos, photos, and memes (Lorena, 2018). This approach underscores Netflix's proficiency in crafting promotional content that transcends mere advertising, fostering conversations and interactions among the audience without triggering aversion, thereby contributing to the prolific discourse surrounding their offerings (González-Chans et al., 2020).

Additionally, the presences of other hashtags like "#SquidGameS2," "#sexeducation," and "#fromthemakeupchair" in the top 10 positions highlights the potential impact of strategically chosen and contextually relevant hashtags on audience engagement. The inclusion of these tags suggests strategic alignment with related content or promotional efforts. For instance, the utilization of #SquidGameS2 could imply the anticipation of a second season, potentially generating interest and discussions among fans. Figure 4.3 shows the hashtags teasing Squid Game, season 2. Meanwhile, the incorporation of the #sexeducation tag might reflect cross-promotion with another popular Netflix series. The use of #fromthemakeupchair suggests a behind-the-scenes approach, providing insights into the production process that could resonate with audiences interested in the show's creative aspects. Collectively, the inclusion of these specific tags showcases Netflix US's intent to diversify its content

promotion strategy by tapping into relevant trends, related content, and behind-the-scenes insights, all of which contribute to the enhancement of engagement levels and the creation of a more interactive and dynamic community on the platform.
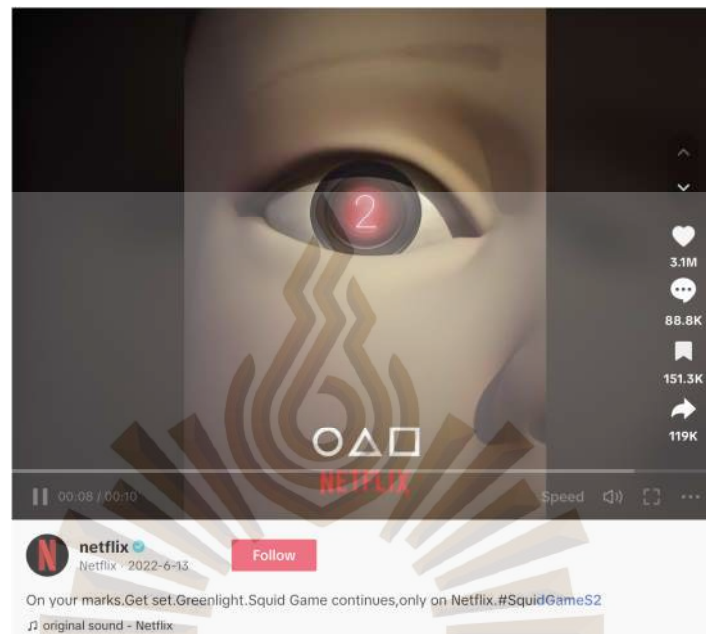

Figure 4.3 Netflix uses a hashtag to promote Squid Game season 2 on TikTok US

Source: Netflix TikTok (@netflix), 2022

The strategic incorporation of emojis in the top engaged posts is also noteworthy, underscoring the nuanced and multifaceted approach influencers adopt for persuasive and communicative purposes on social media platforms (Ge & Gretzel, 2018). While emojis are present in only one post, exemplified by the triple heart emojis, their inclusion significantly elevates the content's visual and emotional appeal. Emojis, with their concise and universal expressiveness, serve as effective conduits for conveying emotions, bridging linguistic and cultural communication barriers, and invoking universally resonant sentiments. In this particular context, the selected heart emojis radiate feelings of love and passion, harmoniously aligning with the content's engaging essence and enhancing the overall emotional resonance and visual appeal of the post. The judicious use of emojis in this manner accentuates the emotional nuances

of the content, fostering a deeper connection and eliciting more robust engagement from the audience.

4.5 Original Sound

The examination of original sound elements within the top 10 most-watched TikTok posts from Netflix US, promoting Squid Game, reveals a strategic orchestration of auditory elements to enhance engagement and emotional resonance. The integration of original sound goes beyond mere accompaniment, shaping a multi-sensory experience that complements the visual content and amplifies viewers' connection to the Squid Game universe.The revelations presented in this section fulfill a twofold objective. Firstly, they offer valuable insights into answering the second research question: "What content strategy did Netflix US employ in its most engaging TikTok content to promote Squid Game?" Secondly, these findings play a key role in outlining the strategies used by Netflix US to communicate on TikTok.

Table 4.7 Analysis of Original Sound in Top 10 Engaged Netflix TikTok US Posts
　　　　　Promoting Squid Game (as of May 13, 2023)

Rank	Date	Original Sound - Netflix	Engagement Rate (%)
1	2021-9-30	Song for "Red Light Green Light"	38.41
2	2021-9-28	Song for "Red Light Green Light"	12.36
3	2022-6-12	Song for "Red Light Green Light"	9.70
4	2021-10-1	Music for "Fly me to the moon"	9.51
5	2021-10-29	Free composition song by Jeong Ho-Yeon, et al.	3.28
6	2021-10-5	Game description for "Dalgona"	2.95
7	2021-10-5	Song for "Red Light Green Light"	1.84
8	2021-9-29	Cheers from the cast	1.66
9	2021-10-1	Joseph Capalbo's song "IYKYK"	1.11
10	2022-9-17	Announcing the first year with robotic	0.88

The analytical delve into Netflix's promotional posts on TikTok US for Squid Game reveals a meticulous integration of original sound, underscoring its paramount importance in bolstering viewer engagement and underscoring the emotional nuances of the content, in line with TikTok's focus on sound-based, short-form video content as highlighted by Haenlein et al. (2020). This integration of sound is not just pivotal, but ubiquitous across the analyzed posts, highlighting its indispensability in Netflix's content strategy on a platform where sound is integral to user interaction and content discovery. Notably, the recurrence of the distinctive "Red Light, Green Light" game soundtrack serves as an auditory leitmotif, resonating excitement and tension among the audience and anchoring them to the depicted narratives.

Moreover, Netflix's varied and innovative use of original sound, ranging from iconic music pieces like "Fly Me to the Moon" to authentic reactions from the cast, epitomizes their inventive approach to enhancing viewer engagement. This assortment of sounds not only enriches the auditory experience but also emphasizes authenticity and emotional synergy with the series' themes. Furthermore, Netflix demonstrates adaptive utilization of sound in varying contexts, aligning auditory elements meticulously with different communicative objectives, such as integrating robotic voices for game descriptions and announcements. This harmonious and strategic alignment of sound with visual and emotive components accentuates Netflix's proficiency in immersing audiences into the thematic essence of Squid Game, demonstrating a nuanced understanding of the platform's capabilities to evoke emotions and solidify viewer-content interaction. In a platform where users can search and interact with specific sound pieces, as emphasized by Haenlein et al. (2020), Netflix leverages this feature to create immersive and emotionally resonant promotional content, fostering a deeper and more meaningful connection with the audience.

Chapter 5

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the dynamically evolving landscape of social media marketing, the strategies and content types adopted by major platforms can offer profound insights into effective promotional methods. Chapter 5 delves deeply into the innovative approach Netflix US took on TikTok for the promotion of the sensation Squid Game. We will begin by summarizing the key conclusions drawn from our analysis of the types of content and overarching strategies employed. This will be followed by a detailed discussion that breaks down the nuances of these tactics and their implications. Lastly, based on our findings and discussions, we will offer tailored recommendations that could potentially guide future promotional endeavors on platforms like TikTok.

5.1 Conclusion

In an era where digital content reigns supreme, the choices made by entertainment giants in their promotional endeavors are reflective of broader industry trends and innovative marketing approaches. Within this context, Netflix US's campaign for Squid Game on TikTok offers a fascinating study. In this conclusion, we will succinctly encapsulate the distinctive types of content used by Netflix US and outline the overarching content strategy that was employed on TikTok to bolster the show's immense global popularity.

5.1.1 Types of Content Netflix US Uses on TikTok to Promote Squid Game

In the quest to unveil the paradigms of efficacious social media promotion within the extensive sphere of digital marketing theory, the focused examination of

Netflix's promotional endeavor for Squid Game on TikTok US provides insightful revelations. The pivotal essence of a successful promotional strategy resides predominantly in the meticulous orchestration of content types, fine-tuned to resonate with the idiosyncrasies of the intended audience. In this light, Netflix's promotional strategy becomes a fascinating case study. The meticulous quantitative analysis, delineated on engagement metrics such as likes, comments, shares, and views, laid the groundwork for discerning patterns and preferences among the most engaged posts, offering a rich tapestry of insights.

Delving into the top 10 engaged posts, we discern a conspicuous inclination towards "short-form video" and "meme" content types, commanding 60% and 40% of the content repertoire respectively. This predilection elucidates the imperatives of aligning content strategy with the distinctive consumption patterns inherent to the platform's user base, corroborating the assertions posited by Scolere, Pruchniewska, and Duffy (2018), and attesting to the users' penchant for succinct, immersive, and often humorous content as expounded by Brennan (2020).

This exploration reinforces the fundamentals of content and social media marketing theory, emphasizing the requisite of a balanced and diversified content portfolio, intertwining informative and entertaining facets to captivate transient attention in the dynamic digital milieu (Quesenberry, 2020). The eclectic sub-categories, ranging from "Series Segment" and "Compilation" to "Trailer," "Interview," and "Behind the Scenes," are a testament to Netflix's cognizant and diversified approach, with each sub-category catering to a specific facet of viewer interest and curiosity, fostering deeper engagement and enhancing the overall viewer experience.

In essence, the exploration and ensuing insights into Netflix's promotional strategy for Squid Game on TikTok US epitomize the synergistic amalgamation of content and social media marketing principles. The eclectic content mosaic, characterized by a myriad of content types and sub-categories, is meticulously curated to engender sustained engagement, curiosity, and delight, embodying the zenith of

strategic content orchestration in the contemporary digital landscape. The nuanced and multifaceted approach underscores the power and potential of strategically aligned and expertly executed content strategies in forging connections, sparking conversations, and elevating brand narratives in the competitive and ever-evolving digital domain.

5.1.2 Content Strategy Netflix US Uses on TikTok to Promote Squid Game

Previous discussions illuminate the meticulous content strategy Netflix US employed on TikTok, anchored in qualitative content analysis, revealing a series of orchestrated efforts aimed at optimizing emotional responses and enhancing content visibility. By infusing 40% humor and 30% excitement within content captions, Netflix manifests a sophisticated understanding of the lively nature of TikTok's user base. This alignment with TikTok's dynamic essence not only maximizes engagement but also catalyzes curiosity and the propensity to share, thus amplifying the narrative surrounding Squid Game.

The incorporation of varied emotional elements, such as positivity, nostalgia, and anticipation, each constituting 10%, exemplifies the depth of Netflix's strategic diversification. This broad emotional canvas not only reaches out to a spectrum of audience sentiments but also stands in harmony with the core tenets of content marketing theory, enriching narrative storytelling and crafting resonant experiences for viewers.

In the realm of content discoverability, the universal (100%) integration of pertinent hashtags within Netflix's posts is a strategic triumph, echoing the insights of Knapp and Baum (2015), regarding the pivotal role of hashtags in content exploration on platforms like TikTok. This strategic hashtag utilization extends the content's outreach, engaging both existing followers and prospective audiences, thus playing a vital role in the triumph of the promotional endeavor.

The inclusion of emojis in a mere 10% of posts nevertheless holds significant weight in Netflix's comprehensive strategy, reflecting insights by Oya and Yakin (2019). on the essence of emojis in humanizing brand narratives and resonating with a younger, digitally savvy demographic. This nuanced addition elevates content appeal, bolstering engagement and enhancing the bond between viewers and the Squid Game narrative.

Further, Netflix's universal incorporation of original sounds in every post (100%) is a nuanced approach in sync with modern content marketing paradigms, meticulously intertwining auditory and visual elements to augment the viewer's multisensory experience and craft immersive narratives, thereby ensuring more effective audience captivation.

In conclusion, Netflix's promotional blueprint for Squid Game on TikTok is a refined concoction of insights from both social media and content marketing spheres. By employing nuanced emotional alignment, strategic optimization of discoverability, and refined audio-visual integration, they've forged a promotional narrative that is not just engaging but deeply resonant with the dynamic users of TikTok. This approach showcases the potency of a robust, theoretically informed strategy in the vibrant and evolving world of digital marketing.

5.2 Discussion

While our conclusions offered a snapshot of Netflix US's approach on TikTok for Squid Game, the broader implications and intricacies of these choices warrant a deeper exploration. In this discussion, we will unpack the various content types employed by Netflix and delve into the strategic thinking behind them. By analyzing both the specific content and the overarching strategy, we aim to understand the layers of decision-making and the potential impact these choices had on the show's promotional success.

5.2.1 Types of Content Netflix US Uses on TikTok to Promote Squid Game

In the realm of the ever-evolving social media marketing landscape, the meticulous alignment of content forms with user preferences on specific platforms is imperative. This is exemplified by Netflix's discerning content choices in promoting Squid Game on TikTok, a platform renowned for its specialization in the creation and dissemination of brief videos, gaining immense popularity (Xu, Yan, & Zhang, 2019). Characterized by its rapid consumption of content, TikTok necessitates succinct, captivating content, positioning "short-form video" and "meme" as optimal mediums to encapsulate Squid Game's essence. Short-form videos are inherently aligned with TikTok's fleeting browsing behavior, facilitating succinct yet riveting storytelling, embodying the platform's inclination towards conciseness and immediacy. Conversely, memes, synonymous with humor and universal appeal, act as socially shareable entities, augmenting the content's propensity to go viral.

In deploying "Short-form Video," Netflix integrates varied sub-categories like "Series Segment" and "Compilation," reflecting a nuanced grasp of content marketing nuances. This diversified approach underpins a holistic content strategy, sustaining audience amusement and engagement. "Series Segment" provides intriguing previews of the show's realm, beckoning users to delve deeper into the full narrative. Meanwhile, "Compilation" amalgamates memorable series snippets, delivering a consolidated view of Squid Game's seminal moments. This varied content approach underscores the diversification inherent in content marketing, where an eclectic mix not only maintains audience interest but also enhances engagement by catering to a spectrum of content predilections. Through engaging, entertaining short videos on TikTok, creators enable contextualization of content and memetic language practice (Zulli, D. & Zulli, D.J., 2022), bridging diverse demographics and communities with shared interests (Sidorenko-Bautista, Herranz-de-la-Casa, & Cantero-de-Julián, 2020).

Netflix's utilization of memes exemplifies the insights of social media marketing theory, emphasizing the significance of relatability and shareability in

content creation. Memes serve as a digital cultural currency; their inherent humor and universal appeal create a communal bond and shared digital discourse among users. Netflix's integration of memes (Sophia & Anilkumar, 2023), taps into this communal digital lexicon, enhancing accessibility, elevating shareability, and broadening the content's reach and influence.

The diversified content approach by Netflix aligns with the principles of content marketing theory, focusing on delivering multifaceted value through varied content types and formats, enhancing user experience, and optimizing engagement and content sharing, solidifying Squid Game's promotional success on TikTok.

To conclude, Netflix's strategic selection of "short-form video" and "meme" as primary content types for Squid Game's TikTok promotion exemplifies a sophisticated alignment with platform-specific user behaviors and preferences. By employing a diverse content approach and optimizing each category, Netflix assures continual viewer engagement and augmented promotional resonance on TikTok, illustrating an in-depth comprehension of the interrelation between platform features, content diversity, and user interaction dynamics.

5.2.2 Content Strategy Netflix US Uses on TikTok to Promote Squid Game

Within the multifaceted scope of social media marketing theory, the role of emotional engagement stands out as a pivotal factor in user interaction. Netflix, in promoting Squid Game on TikTok, has manifested a deep understanding of this aspect, utilizing a range of emotional catalysts to captivate its diverse audience base. By strategically wielding humor and excitement, Netflix ensures the creation of content that is not merely remembered but ardently shared, transforming passive viewers into active proponents of content propagation. These emotions serve as dynamic facilitators of interaction, broadening the reach and influence of the content. Furthermore, the incorporation of varied emotions like positivity, nostalgia, and

anticipation crafts a versatile emotional environment, resonating with a broad spectrum of viewers and deepening the audience's connection with the content.

Aligning with content marketing theory, which accentuates the importance of relatability and value-driven content, the integration of diverse emotional elements enables the development of a richer, more immersive user experience. This method guarantees the content's sustained consumption, valuation, and sharing, thereby extending its impact and longevity. The multifarious emotional appeal caters to TikTok's eclectic user demographic, elevating the content's universal resonance and fostering a profound emotional bond between Squid Game and its audience.

Netflix's implementation of pertinent hashtags and emojis is a testament to its adherence to social media marketing principles focusing on content visibility and universal appeal. Hashtags optimize content discoverability, facilitating its reach to broader audiences, while emojis act as universal connectors, offering a relatable medium of expression that enhances content approachability. TikTok's platform enables the fusion of various embodied memetic materials through co-hashtags, editing functionalities, and searchable sounds, activating unique "affective affordances". According to Ge and Gretzel (2018). the sophisticated and strategic use of emojis by social media influencers serves multiple expressive and persuasive objectives, establishing a multifaceted interaction landscape, enhancing content accessibility and engagement.

The deliberate inclusion of original sounds in every post reflects Netflix's comprehension of TikTok's emphasis on auditory experiences. This attention to auditory elements aligns seamlessly with the tenets of both social media and content marketing theories, contributing to a richer, more encompassing user experience and elevating the overall narrative appeal by adding a distinct layer to the storytelling.

5.3 Recommendations

This study's focus on a single platform (TikTok) and series (Squid Game) may limit the generalizability of its findings. While providing in-depth insights into specific user interactions on TikTok, this approach might overlook the diversity in behaviors and preferences across different social media platforms and content types.

The research primarily relied on publicly available data, which, though extensive, falls short of capturing the entirety of Netflix's promotional strategies. Internal strategic documents and proprietary engagement metrics, which are not publicly accessible, could offer more nuanced insights, underscoring the need for a broader data scope in future studies.

The rapidly changing landscape of social media trends and user preferences highlights the need for adaptable and responsive promotional strategies. This dynamic nature imposes limitations on the study's long-term relevance, emphasizing the necessity for ongoing research and strategy recalibration.

Given these limitations, future research should strive for a more comprehensive analysis encompassing multiple social media platforms. This would help in understanding how different platforms require distinct promotional approaches. Additionally, a deeper dive into user-generated content and audience interactions could offer valuable insights into audience engagement patterns, emotional responses, and behavioral dynamics. A longitudinal study approach would also be beneficial in tracking the evolution of content strategies and their adaptability to the digital environment.

For the promotion of "Squid Game Season 2", these insights suggest a need for a multifaceted and flexible promotional strategy that can adapt to different platforms and audience behaviors. Understanding the nuances of each platform and leveraging user-generated content could be key in creating a more engaging and successful promotional campaign.

This research, with its comprehensive analysis and acknowledgment of limitations, sheds light on potential areas for further exploration in digital promotional strategies. Embracing a diverse research approach and continuously refining methodologies will enable a richer understanding of these strategies and their impact in the dynamic world of social media, proving invaluable for future promotional efforts like those for "Squid Game Season 2"

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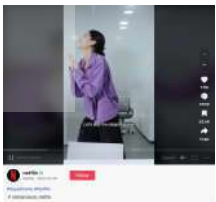
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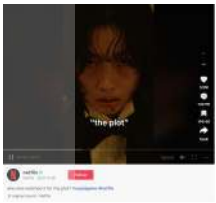
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Appendix

Category Subcategories Codes Decision Rule and Example

Category	Subcategories	Codes	Decision Rule	Example
Type of Post	Short-form Video/Meme	Series Segment	A 30-second Squid Game clip highlights an intense scene.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7013192 947449482501
		Compilation	A montage mixing Squid Game scenes with other show clips.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7012760 687072021765
		Trailer	Official videos promote films and shows, highlighting premieres and key scenes.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7108384 151979527467
Type of Post	Short-form Video/Meme	Interview	Interviews with actors and production crew.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7024106 222437616901
		Behind the Scenes	Behind-the-scenes footage reveals unseen movie	

Category	Subcategories	Codes	Decision Rule	Example
			production details.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7013797 834793225477
		Unreleased Scene	Unreleased sequences are cut scenes from films or shows.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7146370 655427218734
Type of Post	Short-form Video/Meme	Discussion Video	Behind-the-scenes chats on Squid Game are informal compared to interviews.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7016621 985543343366
		Promo Videos	Promotional videos featuring Squid Game characters advertise the show on Netflix.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7019350 446426836230
		Cosplay Videos	People role-playing in Squid Game character costumes.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7016552 268224908550

Category	Subcategories	Codes	Decision Rule	Example
Overall Emotion (Caption)	Short-form Video/Meme	Humor	Humorous remarks filled with jokes, sarcasm, and witty references.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7015515821443271942
		Neutral	Mainly informative and intended to describe.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7014478608894889221
		Provoking	Provocative content prompting interaction using questions and stimulating remarks.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7015882674933992709
Overall Emotion (Caption)	Short-form Video/Meme	Excitement	Expressing excitement through intriguing tales and facts about the series/cast.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7018912665720376582
		Positivity	Complements content highlighting cast friendships,	

Category	Subcategories	Codes	Decision Rule	Example
			support, self-love, awareness, and a positive life outlook.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7018172350155787526
		Inspiration	Encouraging audiences to engage with socially relevant, human-interest topics.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7018575428067609862
Overall Emotion (Caption)	Short-form Video/Meme	Nostalgia	Nostalgic content about concluded series, detailing launch dates and opening lines.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7143962117941529902
		Anticipation	The excitement expressed when unveiling series premieres.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7109157048926965035
Additional Elements		Emojis	Digital image shared to emphasize a concept or convey emotion.	https://www.tiktok.com/@netflix/video/7159419325391326510

Category	Subcategories	Codes	Decision Rule	Example
Additional Elements	Short-form Video/Meme	Hashtags	A word following the "#" sign, often used on social media to tag topics.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7014118 023380421893
Original Sound			Unique audio track defining a video's identity.	https://www.tiktok.com/ @netflix/video/7015623 178898672902

Biography

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