King Abdulaziz University Students' Awareness of the Impacts of Netflix Drama on their Behaviors and Attitudes towards the Boycott Campaigns

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Abstract:

This study investigated the awareness of king Abdul-Aziz university students of the effects of watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors and the Saudi society. It also highlighted the motivational factors cited by the participants for binge- watching Netflix drama. In addition, it pinpointed how far they are impressed by the ideas presented by Netflix drama. Moreover, it shed light on how far Saudi university students support the boycott campaign of Netflix. The study sample comprised 229 Netflix users from King Abdulaziz University. To collect the target data, the researchers designed and administered an electronic questionnaire through the WhatsApp application. Results obtained from questionnaire revealed that watching Netflix drama had negative effects of on the participants' academic achievement as it had wasted a large amount of their time. They also showed that the motivations for watching Netflix were the participants' interest in high quality movie shows with no advertisements and entertainment. These results adduce the importance of enhancing university students' self-determination to empower them to gratify three basic psychological needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness) which enable them to choose the useful media shows and avoid the undesirable consequences of binge-watching.

Keywords: Netflix; binge-watching; students' awareness; attitudes; personal behaviors

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Introduction

Netflix is one of the outcomes of digital communication, which through drama, has been able to attract millions of subscribers all over the world, creating a relatively new behavior known as "binge-watching" that has gained wide popularity since 2013. It has eventually become one of the most popular internet media streaming service among young people to spend time (Starosta,2020), especially with the quarantine procedures, due to the Covid 19 virus, that was undergone by the world at the end of the first quarter of the year 2022 wherein the platform witnessed an unprecedented turnout of subscribers; about 16 million people created accounts in the first three months of 2020, which is nearly double the new signups created in the last months of 2019. After the pandemic had led people to stay in their homes, and prompted them to interact with Netflix drama shows and documentaries, the number of subscribers jumped between July and September 2020 to 195 million around the world. Therefore, Netflix has become one of the biggest beneficiaries of this pandemic and one of the most effective means to stave off boredom and shift the feelings of binge-watching from guilt to self-care (Horeck,2021).

Although the number of subscribers reached 214 million in the third quarter of 2021, including 70.5 million in Europe and the Middle East, the Netflix platform was subjected to several campaigns of boycott as it showed films dealing with topics contrary to the human instinct, such as the French movie "Mignon". The supporters of the boycott campaigns believed that such narrative films sexualize young girls who played starring roles. Therefore, more than 200,000 tweets were published on Twitter under the hashtag ##Cancel Netflix, which occupied the top of the network's tags in the world for some time. In addition, many of those supporters, especially in the Arab societies, claimed that Netflix has a plan to distort the values and moral systems

in the world, and that its content presents ideas contradicting human values. Thus, they stated that the problem does not lie in a movie with some criticism, but in the existence of more than one precedent proof for this distortion. For example, various films such as 365 Days, 13 Reasons Why, Cooking on High and other films caused a stir.

Moreover, Netflix was not only charged with presenting controversial films, but also injecting immoral scenes into every artistic work that has a high rate of viewership, by purchasing many popular films and series and reproducing them or producing new parts of them to add immoral scenes to them even if the scenes are not commensurate with the goal of the work. This proves that the goal of these scenes is to inculcate perverted ideas in the minds of young people of different cultures and religions and to call for rebellion against religious beliefs and all the forms of religious practices.

Accordingly, the Netflix platform has been accused of using drama shows such as films and series to spread immoral and deviant religious ideas through several psychological processes such as empathy and emotional arousal to influence the young viewer's mentality and infiltrate their minds so that they sympathize with the virtual characters in the films. Furthermore, some of those young viewers tend to adopt the characters' behaviors and imitate them as alternative models to those in the real world. Ultimately, this has undesirable consequences on the collective behaviors of the Arab and Muslim communities. What makes the matter even more dangerous is that the Netflix platform targets the youth, especially adolescent students, through its drama series, advertising shows, and other video streaming services.

Moreover, results of some studies (Samuel, 2017; Maxwell & Tefertille, 2018) indicated that university students are heavily involved in watching many episodes and favorite shows in one session.

Therefore, the term "binge-watching" has been associated with the emergence of the Netflix platform in 2013, which allows watching the episodes of the series without waiting for a long time (Maxwell & Tefertille, 2018: 287). In addition, Samuel, (2017) confirmed that viewers of digital drama look upon intense watching as a natural behavior and proposed the concept of "Fear of Missing Out" which means that the viewers fear feeling lonely if they do not watch what their peers are watching.

Despite the interest of many studies in the effects of watching unwanted content on viewers, especially young viewers and adolescents who are mainly affected by such content, no studies, to the researchers' knowledge, investigated the effects of watching Netflix on the behaviors of Arab youth, especially at the university level. Accordingly, this study sought to examine the extent to which a sample of Saudi university students were aware of the effects of watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors, compared to their awareness of the impacts of this viewing on Saudi society and their attitudes towards the boycott campaign.

Context of the problem

Youths are the most numerous age groups in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia as they play a major role in developing their society and achieving its goals and hopes. Since the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is the Qibla of Muslims everywhere, Saudi youths represent a segment of the Islamic world, who has imbued the correct Islamic faith, whether through formal education, local media, or other community institutions. Therefore, the current study was concerned with examining the awareness of King Abdul-Aziz university students of the effects of watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors, compared to their awareness of its influences on Saudi society and their attitudes towards

the boycott campaign. It also investigated the motivational factors cited by the participants for binge- watching Netflix shows and how far they were impressed by the ideas presented by the Netflix drama

Statement of the Problem

Since the youths are looked upon as the pillars of Arab societal development, it is important to keep keen eye on all the social media services affecting their perceptions, awareness, views and behaviors. However, there is a research gap concerning the awareness of the Arab university students of the effects of watching Netflix on their behaviors and societies. Therefore, this study attempted to investigate how far king Abdul-Aziz university students are engaged in watching the Netflix platform. It also examined their awareness of the effects of watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors, and the Saudi society. In addition, it highlighted how far those students were impressed by the ideas presented by the Netflix drama. Moreover, it shed light on how far Saudi university students support the boycott campaign of Netflix.

Purpose of the Study

The current study aimed to:

1. investigate how far Saudi university students are engaged in watching the Netflix platform.
2. identify the reasons cited by the Saudi university students for watching the Netflix drama.
3. pinpoint how far Saudi university students are aware of the impacts of Netflix drama on their personal behaviors and the Saudi society.
4. examine the extent to which Saudi youth are impressed by the ideas presented through the Netflix drama.

5. probing into the extent to which Saudi youth are aware of the effects of Netflix drama on the Saudi society.
6. shed light on how far Saudi university students support the boycott campaign of Netflix.

Delimitations of the Study

This study was limited to:

- the Netflix drama

-Saudi students at king Abdul-Aziz university.

Study Questions

1. What is the intensity of watching the Netflix platform among Saudi university students?
2. What are the reasons cited by Saudi university students for watching the Netflix platform?
3. How far are Saudi university students aware of the impact of watching the Netflix drama?
4. What is the Saudi university students' evaluation of the Netflix drama?
5. How far are Saudi university students aware of the effects of watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors, compared to the Saudi society?

6-How far do Saudi university students support the boycott campaign of Netflix?

Significance of the Study

Internationally, studies related to Netflix are few and most of them are concerned with Netflix's algorithms, marketing strategies and business models ignoring its effects on the perceptions, awareness, attitudes and

behaviors of young people. Locally, there have been much media related studies which are mostly social in nature, with very few focusing on the impacts of media on the Saudi youth. Therefore, this study filled in the gap by providing new insights into the effects of Netflix binge-watching on Saudi university students' awareness, attitudes and personal behaviors and their motivations for binge-watching.

Review of Literature

Netflix

Netflix was established and launched by Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph in California in 1997.It is seen as the most influential internet media streaming service in the world as it is characterized by three main features. First, unlike other media streaming services/ platforms, it provides its audience with ad-free viewing which retains them (Hashmi, 2020:10). Second, it offers successive episodes, which enable its audience to watch their favorite shows according to their schedule instead of waiting for a long time, compared with the other platforms. Third, it conducts regular audit of its content to update it monthly. This was supported by Mehta, et al., (2020: 236) who stated that Netflix is a service provider that provides access to infinite content including Video on demand (VOD), allowing viewers to select and watch/listen to their favorite content like TV shows and movies whenever they like, instead of waiting the scheduled broadcast time. The content of Netflix TV VOD systems is flown through various devices like computers, set-top boxes (i.e., Apple TV, Roku boxes, Android TV and Fire TV) and other devices, allowing the audience to view the content concurrently or download it to a device of their own (video recorders, computers, or mobile devices for later viewing.

Netflix Platforms

Various social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, LinkedIn, TikTok, and Pinterest serve Netflix. Nonetheless, only three platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram) are actively managed and used by Netflix for high following and like counts. For example, as revealed by Clampitt (2020:6) the Facebook page account of the United States includes 61 million likes / followers, while the Instagram page has 18.6 million followers and 2,068 posts. The United States Twitter page comprises 6.8 million followers and 30,300 tweets.

Netflix Content

Netflix provides diverse and rich content including posts that are either people, amusements, events, action or inspiration. According to Schmidt (2019:2), Netflix not only allows the content created by others but also finances original and exclusive content which has won major awards such as Primetime Emmy awards, Golden Globe awards, and an Academy Award. Thus, the Netflix content is mainly composed of media content collections licensed from other companies. Nevertheless, an increasing amount of that content is original and created especially for the Netflix company. Moreover, Netflix provides a geo-targeting content varying throughout the countries to meet the priorities of the target audience and the differences in licensing agreements in each country.

Netflix Features

An important feature of the Netflix service has been its easy content accessibility; it makes it easy for the audience to find their preferred content by providing various content categories that are easily browsed by them. Such content categories involve science fiction and TV or movie shows. The second feature of the Netflix service is its personalized recommendation engine/system. To ensure better

recommendation services, Netflix records the audience's viewing habits including what content they watch, what content they watch first, second ... etc., when they watch it, what content they binge-watch quickly, when and why they get bored and stop watching, as well as their clicks of the play and pause button. Accordingly, based on the audience's previous frequent viewing experiences and ratings of content, Netflix recommends other similar content for them to view and provides various content categories showing content similar to what they have already viewed. Thus, Netflix makes good use of the audience's viewing habits to offer personalized recommendations for artistic series. For instance, as stated by Schmidt (2019:3) , the header image of a TV show may be related to one of the viewer's favorite actors/ actresses in the series or depend on the romantic components of the series wherein the viewer likes that genre. A third feature is that Netflix allows users to have multiple profiles via one subscription, which enables them to view the content under their profiles and receive the recommendations provided to them.

Netflix Social Media Strategy

Netflix strategy adopts three social media strategies. These are (1) giving viewers what they want; Netflix empowers viewers to surpass the limits of time and place as it allows them to select what they want to watch at any time and place without restrictions (2) allowing viewers to share information openly, broadly and deliberately; Since Netflix has sought to make its content more interactive (i.e. , Netflix's shows like "Black Mirror"), Netflix encourages viewers' interaction on their social media page by sharing posts and comments freely, and (3) providing Netflix Originals; in comparison to other companies, Netflix Originals do very well in terms of viewers satisfaction (Clampitt, 2020:9).Moreover, compared to the originals of OTTs and Amazon's APV, Netflix original shows outperform the other originals as they are

considered the most popular programs of the past decade (Song,2021:72).

Netflix binge-watching

Binge-watching is seen by Sung et.al., (2018 :408) as the users' successive time devotion for watching multiple episodes of a TV series without interruptions; watching multiple episodes of TV shows each time. It is also defined by Merikivi et al. (2020: 6) as the 'consumption of more than one episode of the same video series content in a single sitting at one's own time and pace'. It has been increasingly popular among youth primarily due to the availability and accessibility of the internet content worldwide. Thus, it is the unlimited access to Netflix content that has given rise to the unprecedented behavior known as "binge-watching" which has flourished due to the COVID-19 pandemic when quarantine was imposed on individuals to stay home. During this period, users became so engaged and impressed that they indulge in the virtual reality of the Netflix shows even more than with the reality of their surrounding environment. The problem with "binge-watching" is that most binge-watchers are youth. For instance, Exelmans and Van (2017) concluded that four-fifths of college-aged participants were self-identified as binge viewers.

Motivation Factors of Netflix binge-watching

Netflix is not only the main streaming platform leading young people to binge-watch its content but also the platform whose flexibility has augmented the binge-watching behavior among them by making their intervention unnecessary, compared to the other platforms. Various researchers (Panda & Pandey ,2017:527; Steiner, 2018:15; Kulak, 2020: 48; Subramanian et. al.,2020:7-8) identified the motivations for binge-watching as follows:

1.Information attainment

A great bulk of young Netflix viewers are motivated to binge-watch its content to share information with their peer groups to gain a high social status among them. Thus, for fear of lacking the common information and being unable to take part in the social interactions, which deprives them from being informed among peers, Netflix viewers are motivated to adopt binge watching behaviors.

2. Escaping from the real reality to virtual reality

Viewers undergoing stress, depression, anxiety, loneliness or other negative aspects of daily life are more inclined to escape from their stressful mood by binge-watching Netflix shows. They seek to distract from coping with reality and binge watch to change their mood. In this case, escape is looked upon as a negative motivation which leads viewers to avoid the negative aspects of daily life via binge-watching. For example, learners may prefer to escape the stressing realities of studying and examining various courses by indulging in binge watching. Kulak (2020: 48) states that viewers are motivated to binge-watch to escape from everydayness due to the problems leading to negative moods.

3.Companionship

Affected by the fear of facing loneliness, viewers may be motivated to binge watch the Netflix shows which enable them to relate to favorite virtual characters and take them as good models or companions for them. In this sense, binge-watching prevents viewers from the negative emotions of loneliness due to missing companions.

4.Entertainment

Young viewers are always motivated to attain the title of a "superfan" by binge-watching recent Netflix shows before their peers. The fear of

losing entertainment due to watching insufficient content leads viewers to binge-watch too many shows. Compared to TV, the Netflix streaming media players like tablets and smartphones make it easier for viewers to attain more entertainment and enjoyment.

5. Relaxation

Seeking relaxation or ameliorating their mood, viewers are motivated to watch a successive number of shows or episodes. Binge-watching resembles reading interesting books for relaxation after hard work. Thus, viewers tend to integrate themselves with the fictional episodes to experience better moods or conditions.

II. Related Studies

Related studies were grouped under three categories. These are:(1) studies concerned with motivations for binge-watching Netflix shows, (2) Studies investigating the Netflix users' perceptions, awareness and attitudes and (3) Studies interested in the influence binge-watching on the psychological well-being

1.Studies concerned with motivations for binge-watching Netflix shows

Panda and Pandey (2017) explored the motivations influencing college students' Netflix binge-watching and the subsequent gratifications. The first stage of collecting data about binge-watching included interviews and focused group discussions, while the second stage involved applying a questionnaire for answering the study questions. Findings revealed that escape from reality, social interaction, easy accessibility of TV content and advertising led the participants to allocate more time for binge-watching. It was also indicated that when the participants were negatively gratified after binge-watching, they decided to allocate more time for doing binge-watching favorite shows.

Susanno et. al., (2019) adopted the User and Gratification theory to examine the determinants of the intention to binge-watch Netflix episodes and programs. Results showed that the main determinants of binge-watching were attractive price, escape from reality and social influence. Moreover, results indicated that the Netflix viewers in Jakarta binge-watched its episodes and programs as it provided them with unlimited access to hundreds of episodes and programs wherein gratifications from TV and the Internet were implemented to provide viewers with online streaming media.

Steiner and Xu (2020) investigated viewers' motivations for binge-watching and how binge-watching experiences were changing the ways they grasp and interact with TV shows. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted to collect relevant descriptive data about the participants' reasons for binge-watching, ways of binge-watching, and their feelings about binge-watching. Results indicated that (1) the participants' main motivations for binge-watching were relaxation, improved viewing experience , cultural inclusion, sense of completion, and catching up, (2) the binge-watching habits of the participants were influenced by the availability and accessibility of streaming video technology; and (3) viewers had conflicting or mixed feelings about binge-watching behaviors.

Kulak (2020) probed into the Netflix binge-watching experience. For this purpose, the study highlighted the concept of binge-watching, the binge-watching model and the Netflix binge-watching, in addition to the motivations for binge-watching. Results revealed that binge-watching is mainly enhanced by the better quality content and the freedom offered by Netflix to its viewers to select what they want to watch without any time restrictions. This freedom reflected the flexible nature of Netflix content which increases the viewers autonomy, compared to the linear schedule of the traditional

TV shows. Results also showed that the Netflix content addressed the viewers emotions, which encouraged them to pay more attention and indulge in binge-watching. In addition, Netflix viewers binge-watched its advertisements which were seen by them as a good source of happiness.

Subramanian et. al., (2020) investigated the various motivation factors among youngsters for binge watching that was defined as viewing two or more episodes of a series successively. Through reviewing the target literature, the researchers found that there were four major motivation factors for binge-watching behaviors: information attainment, escape/ mood management, hobby/ companionship and entertainment.

2. Studies investigating the Netflix users' perceptions, awareness and attitudes

Mehta, et al., (2020) aimed at identifying the usage pattern and awareness of 182 Netflix youth viewers in India. While results showed no significant association between the participants' gender and frequency of viewing Netflix shows, they revealed a rank order relationship between the income level and the overall satisfaction of Netflix viewers whose usage pattern was influenced by factors like best quality videos, variety of shows and offline viewing options. The participants cited "high charges" as the main reason for non-usage.

Pauley (2021) examined the impact of Netflix entertainment shows on political attitudes and social perceptions within the context of contemporary media consumption patterns. In particular, the study examined the efficacy of narrative persuasion and the mediated intergroup contact in case of single exposure, the accumulated exposure to outgroup members, and binge-watching. Results revealed that, regardless of exposure amount, mediated intergroup contact had a much stronger impact on Netflix viewers than narrative persuasion. It was

also concluded that binge-watching episodic shows (i.e., watching multiple successive episodes in one session) resulted in various media effects on binge-watchers' political attitudes and social perceptions than watching the same episodic shows in the traditional weekly manner.

Rahman and Arif (2021) dived into various binge-watching habits of Netflix viewers during the pandemic of COVID-19. Specifically, they investigated the users' motivational factors, the media consumption and the negative traits associated with the Netflix binge-watching behaviors during the pandemic. The exploratory research design was employed to obtain data via an online semi-structured questionnaire. Convenience sampling was used to select the study sample comprising 105 Netflix binge-watchers during the pandemic. Results indicated that most of the participants used smartphones for binge-watching on Netflix. Results also revealed that a wide range of Netflix shows encouraged the participants to indulge in marathon viewing. They spent about 70 hrs. binge-watching per month on Netflix. Finally, the majority of the participants said that the most challenging aspect of being Netflix marathon viewers was "one more episode" syndrome

Seddeek and Othman (2021) analyzed the huge changes that teenagers undergo as they watch the Netflix content. They also highlighted the crucial role Netflix plays in influencing teenagers' perceptions of the social relationships, regarding gender, friends and families. The researchers conducted an in-depth interview with twenty-five parents and administered a questionnaire to one hundred and ten teenagers. The results revealed that teenagers were deeply affected by the Netflix content that had a significant influence not only on the way they think, but also on their cultural experiences, attitudes, habits and social experiences.

3. Studies interested in the influence binge-watching on Netflix viewers' psychological well-being

Granow et al., (2018) investigated the binge-watching positive and negative consequences on Netflix users' psychological well-being. The researchers stated that while binge-watching can enhance viewers' enjoyment, entertainment, recovery processes, and vitality via empowering their perceived autonomy, it can also cause goal conflicts and feelings of guilt, which may have negative effects on their well-being. Through an online survey, results showed that the participants (N = 499) perceived binge-watching as a recreational experience as they were able to avoid goal conflicts and feelings of guilt. Moreover, results revealed that the participants' well-being was positively influenced by binge watching-induced increases in the perceived autonomy. These results substantiate the vital importance of self-determination as a link between media consumption, enjoyment, and psychological well-being. Thus, binge-watching provided ample opportunities for self-determined media entertainment and enjoyment and enhanced well-being through empowering the participants' self-autonomy. However, the video-on-demand services offering the new potential of continuous watching increased the risks of goal conflicts between entertainment goals and other watching goals and obligations, causing feelings of guilt and decreasing the positive effects of entertaining media use on viewers' well-being.

Troles (2019) adopted experience sampling (ESM) method to investigate binge-watching in the viewers' natural environment to gain a deeper insight into the psychological consequences of binge-watching on their behaviors and daily activities. Through a mobile application, forty-five participants, including basically students, were asked to fill in daily questionnaires about their watching behaviors, daily activities and feelings after watching over a period of 15 days. Results revealed

that the participants used to watch video streaming content regularly with a daily mean of 89.48 minutes and an average of 2 episodic shows with 44 % of the 15 days exhibiting binging-patterns. It was also indicated that both the participants' psychological well-being and daily life activities were influenced by the video streaming content they used to watch. Moreover, strong positive correlations were founf between watching video streaming content and feeling happier and more relaxed after watching; the participants tended to feel happier and more relaxed after watching the video streaming content. However, results did not provide evidence that watching video streaming content had resulted in adverse health effects or an evident neglect of daily life duties.

Aghababian et. al., (2021) investigated relationship between COVID-related stress and binge-watching behaviors, and the potential variation in this relationship through body weight. The participants (n = 466) filled in an online survey about binge-watching behaviors during and before the COVID pandemic, COVID-related stress, and body weight. Results showed that binge-watching increased during the pandemic, with more increases among the participants who reported higher levels of COVID-related stress, especially those undergoing obesity, and accompanying effects on eating, and required interventions to minimize the obesogenic influence of binge-watching during the pandemic.

Raza et. al., (2021) probed into the association between binge-watching and the subsequent psychological effects. A sample of 1089 adult participants responded to an online questionnaire. Findings demonstrated that successive binge-watching was an antecedent of loneliness, stress, insomnia, anxiety as well as depression. In addition, findings revealed that screen time on binge-watching can increase the negative effects of binge-watching. Accordingly, findings revealed that binge-watching correlated with

psychological and mental health symptoms including loneliness, stress, insomnia, anxiety and depression.

Srinivasan et al., (2021) investigated effects of binge-watching on 391 medical college students from an urban area Kancheepuram in India. A semi-structured questionnaire and Pittsburg sleep quality index scale were used to collect data. Findings showed that 63.3% of the participants were binge-watcher. It was also found that most participants were unaware that they binge watch and this had some adverse consequences on their sleep habits and quality of daily life. To void cognitive arousal, the study recommended practices like meditation and relaxation techniques before sleeping.

Devaki et. al. (2022) sought to pinpoint the effects and consequences of binge-watching during the lockdown period and social distancing, due to COVID-19 pandemic, on 315 viewers who participated in the study from 8th July to 31st august 2021 via google forms. Specifically, the study examined the anthropometric, nutritional, dietary as well as the binge-watching factors such as psychological and behavioral influences using a questionnaire. The respondents' ages were between 18 to 50 years. The majority of them were students and working professionals from southern part of India i.e., from Karnataka state which included 4 districts such as Bangalore, Mysore, Hassan and Hubli. Results showed that most of the students binge-watched these online platforms which led them to stress, anxiety, depression and some behavioral changes resulting in isolation, lagging behind their academic and work performance. It was clearly seen that binge-watching also affected their food and dietary intake and in turn hada drastic effect on their health and life style.

Sigre-Leirós et. al., (2022) conducted a longitudinal study identify the changes in the viewing patterns of TV series during the first COVID-

19 social distancing and lockdown and find out whether binge-watching was really associated with changes in positive and negative viewing practices during this period. Therefore, the researchers scrutinized TV series viewing patterns and motivations, binge-watching habits, viewers' affective states and psychopathological symptoms through a 6-week longitudinal online survey at three time points in Belgium, France, and Switzerland. Results revealed significant increases in the participants' watching behaviors (e.g., higher rates of daily viewing and expansion of viewing patterns). In addition, results from the longitudinal scrutinization demonstrated that male gender and social motivations for viewing TV series predicted a decrease in negative effect levels. These results indicate that the watching patterns of TV series significantly increased due to the first COVID-19 lockdown. Viewing TV series for social motives came into being as a protective factor, while binge-watching acted as a maladaptive emotion regulation technique throughout that exceptional period.

The Study Theoretical Framework

The framework of the study was based on four main theories:

1.The Third Person Effect Theory

2. The Social Learning Theory

3. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

4. The Cultivation Theory

1. The Third Person Effect Theory

Created by the German sociologist Davison in 1983, the third-person effect theory proposed that individuals use mass media communications to bring about impacts on each other. Such individuals tend to overestimate the influence of mass media materials on the attitudes and behavior of others while they underestimate their effects on their

attitudes and behaviors; they believe that such mass media materials have greater effects on others' attitudes and behaviors than on themselves. Hence, they are motivated to take real actions to protect the others form the effects of the mass media materials. Thus, according to this theory, the power of the third person occurs when individuals believe that the mass media content has greater influences on other individuals than it does on themselves. The third-person effect theory is based on two main hypotheses: (1) the perceptual hypothesis and (2) behavioral hypothesis. The perceptual hypothesis indicates that individuals tend to exaggerate the impact of media on other's perceptions, attitudes and behaviors. The behavioral hypothesis proposes that thinking of other persons as being more impacted by the mass media content and more affected by the self will affect the actions taken by those who expect reactions from other persons. Accordingly, the theory posits that thinking about others makes individuals more inclined to support the concept of mass media censorship (Seddeek ,2021:29). The third-person effect theory is adopted as one of frameworks as it serves one of the main purposes of the current study which addressed the awareness of king Abdul-Aziz university students of the effects of watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors as well as the behaviors of the Saudi society.

2. The Social Learning Theory

Developed by Bandura (1977), the social learning theory supposed that human behaviors can be learned in a suitable social context via observation, modelling and imitation. This theory shed light on how individuals 'social behaviors are affected by observation, modelling and imitation. Thus, new behaviors are acquired through social interaction with other individuals in a social context wherein they observe, assimilate and imitate the behavior of others. Accordingly, the social learning theory emphasized the importance of human cognition

in acquiring new behaviors through individuals' mental abilities including information processing needed to assimilate and imitate the modelling influences. In addition, the social learning theory explains how individuals are motivated and how they can motivate others, how they behave, how they acquire new skills, and how they self-regulate their cognition as well as behaviors. Moreover, it addresses how individuals' personalities are reshaped through social interactions in which individuals can influence others and are influenced by others through observation (Koutroubas, et. al ,2022: 315).

The social learning theory was one of theoretical bases for the current study as it addressed how observation, modelling and imitation influence human behaviors. Also, this theory stresses that direct experiences (i.e., a real individual demonstrating or modelling the target behaviors) are not necessary for such observational learning to take place. Accordingly, it can occur through viewing and observing real or fictional characters in TV shows and all the video streaming series.

3. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT)

Katz et al (1974) defined the uses and gratifications theory as a framework illustrating the audience's psychological and social origins of needs, which stimulates certain expectations from the mass media or other streaming services, and lead the audience to adopt various patterns of media exposure to gratify their needs (Dyachkova ,2021:8). Thus, the UG theory (UGT) is an audience-centered theory that proposes that goal-oriented and active viewers resort to a certain media content to gratify their special cognitive and/or affective needs, wants, and/or interests. This theory was one of the pillars of the current study as it demonstrates why youth may binge-watch TV series to gratify their special cognitive, affective, needs, wants, and interests. In this sense, gratification means satisfying personal lacks, needs... etc. through

interaction with the media. For example, applying the UG framework to examine binge-watching motivations. Steiner and Xu (2018) found that viewers binge-watch not only to catch up on their shows, relax and achieve a sense of completion, but also for social inclusion (Steiner and Xu 2018:10).

4. The Cultivation Theory

The "Cultivation Theory" was created in 1960s by George Gerbner originated who emphasized the importance examining the long-term effects of media on individuals' beliefs. Thus, since binge-watching has augmented the amount of TV watching, the cultivation effects on binge-watchers can increase as well, changing their views of the surrounding world. This theory proposed that the effects of TV shows are different from those of other mass media due to their penetration and ease of accessibility in the society and their ability to influence the cultural environment of individuals at any place as well as the way they conceive the social reality over time. It also posits that the more time viewers spend indulging in and involved with the TV drama, the more they are inclined to hold social reality beliefs that are compatible with the fictional realities of the TV world. Thus, the time viewers spend in binge-watching the fictional series of dramatized entertainment and experiencing virtual reality of the media will influence their real-life experiences in addition to their social perceptions, awareness and beliefs (Munawar et. al.,2020:109). Accordingly, the cultivation theory was adopted in the current study to provide new insights into King Abdul-Aziz university students' awareness of the effects of binge-watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors and the Saudi society. In addition, the cultivation theory helped in identifying how far Saudi university students were impressed by the ideas presented by the Netflix drama.

Method

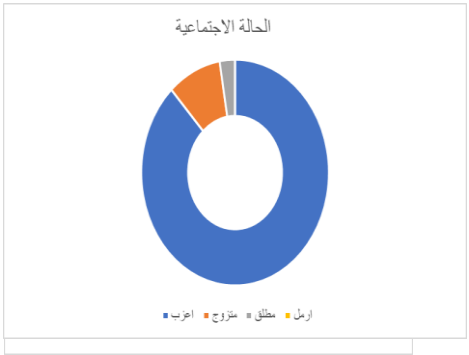
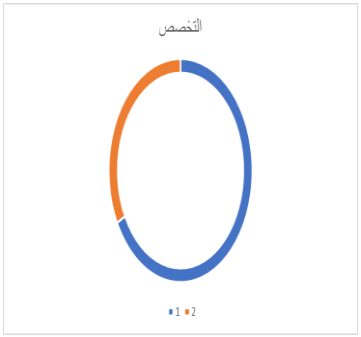
Design

This study belongs to the quantitative exploratory research designs that seek to investigate social phenomena through statistical methods. It focused on King Abdul-Aziz university students' awareness of the effects of binge-watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors and the Saudi society during the Corona pandemic and their attitudes towards boycott campaigns. The study period extended from 20/7/2019 to 30/8/2019 AH.

Participants

The study sample consisted of 229 social media users from king Abdul-Aziz university students who were over 18 years old. Table (1) shows the sample characteristics.

Table (1) The sample characteristics

Gender	Specialization	Social Status
		
Male, Female	1,2	Widowed, divorced, married, single

Instruments

1.An electronic questionnaire

An electronic questionnaire was designed and administered by the researchers via the WhatsApp application.

I. Questionnaire Validity

Two methods were adopted to measure the validity of the questionnaire as follows:

1- Face validity (arbitrators)

The questionnaire was submitted in its initial form to a group of jury members in the field of media (N= 5) and Psychology (N= 5) to validate its items (Appendix One). Based on the jury members' comments, items of questionable validity were revised or deleted. Also, other items were included.

2- The internal consistency

The internal consistency of the questionnaire items was computed by correlating the score for each item with the total scores for each dimension. Table (2) demonstrates the items internal consistency.

Table (2) Internal Consistency of the Questionnaire Items

N	Drugs		Gambling		Violence		Liquor		Love	
Items	Consist.	Sig.	Consist.	Sig.	Consist.	Sig	Consist.	Sig	Consist.	Sig
1	. 885**	.000	.815**	.000	.658 **	.000	.865 **	.000	.894**	.000
2	.881 **	.000	.842 **	.000	.454 *	.003	.856 **	.000	.907 **	.000
3	.528**	000	**627.	.000	.726 **	.000	*.439	.005	.351 *	.026
4	620**.	000	.584 **	.000	.490 **	.001	.682 **	.000	882**.	.000
5	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	836**.	.000
6	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	.673**	.000

N	Drugs		Gambling		Violence		Liquor		Love	
Items	Consist.	Sig.	Consist.	Sig.	Consist.	Sig	Consist.	Sig	Consist.	Sig
1	**908.	000	893.**	000	.511**	000	**760.	.000	.615**	.000
2	818.**	000	929.**	000	.645**	000	**782.	.000	.747**	.000
3	**492.	000	987.**	000	.898**	000	.460**	003	.674**	.000
4	539.**	000	**701.	000	**763.	000	.414**	008	.627**	.000
5	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	.723**	.000
6	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	.759**	.000

Results in table (2) show that the internal consistency of the questionnaire items is acceptable.

II. Reliability

To ensure the stability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha correlation coefficient was used as shown in table (3):

Table (3) Reliability of the Questionnaire

Cronbach Correlation	Dimensions	Items	Axes		Dimensions	Items	Cronbach Correlation
.691	Drugs	4	Personal	Society	Drugs	4	631.
.655	Gambling	4			Gambling	4	819.
.455	Violence	4			Violence	4	664.
.684	Liquor	4			Liquor	4	555.
.856	Love	6			Love	6	782.

Results in table (3) demonstrate that the reliability of the questionnaire items is acceptable.

Results

The first four dimensions of the questionnaire provided answers to the first question: What is the intensity of watching the Netflix platform among the study sample? as shown in tables (4),(5) and (6):

Table (4) The intensity of watching the Netflix drama among Saudi youth

Intensity		No.	%	Means	S.D.
Subscription Period	less than one year	72	31.4	2.0655	.89349
	1-3 years	82	35.8		
	3-5	63	27.5		
	5 years or more	12	5.2		
Subscription Type	less than 3 months	15	6.6	2.5240	1.33298
	3-6 months	40	17.5		
	9-6	81	35.4		
	annual	93	40.6		
Number of days	3-1	93	40.6	1.8996	.83951
	4-6	66	28.8		
	daily	70	30.6		
Number of hours	less than an hour	36	15.7	2.3624	.93405
	1-3 hours	104	45.4		
	3-6 hours	66	28.8		
	6-9 hours	16	7.0		
	9 hours or more	7	3.1		
		229	100	Total	

esults in table (4) indicate that 35.8% of the study sample subscribed to Netflix from "1-3 years," followed by those who subscribed "less than a year" at 31.4%. They also reveal that the subscription rate increased in recent years due to the outbreak of the Corona virus in the world. This was confirmed by the study of Rahman, et.al., (2021) which revealed that 40.6% of the Netflix users' subscription was annual. These results are important as they are issued by people who follow the Netflix platform throughout the whole year whereas the second category of users follows from 6 to 9 months with a rate of 35.4%. It is also clear that 45.4% of the sample watch Netflix "from 1-3 hours," followed by "3-6 hours," with a rate of 28.8%. Accordingly, applying the binge-watching criterion (i.e., heavy watching is 70 hours) set by Rahman et al(2021), it becomes evident that the vast majority of the study sample watched Netflix Bingley.

Table (5) The Times of Intensity of watching the Netflix drama among Saudi youth

Status	F	%	Means	S.D.	The relative weight
Never	9	3.9	3.7729	1.09262	75.458
Rarely	15	6.6			
Sometimes	69	30.1			
Often	62	27.1			
Always	74	32.3			
Total	229	100			

Results in table (4) show that the time of viewing increased about 32.3% with the relative weight reached 75.45%. This means that the participants allocated more time for watching Netflix on vacations. These increases in watching intensity may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic when quarantine was imposed on individuals to stay home. These results are consistent with the conclusion of kazi (2020) that the high viewing rates for the Netflix platform among the participants were during the pandemic.

Table No. (6) Favorite Watching Times

Watching times	No.	%
From 2 - 6 am	48	20.96
From 6 - 11 AM	17	7.42
From 11 am - 3 pm	13	5.67
From 3 to 6 pm	17	7.42
From 6 to 10 pm	31	13.53
From 10 pm - 2 am	98	42.79
According to circumstances	138	60.26
Total	**229**	**100**

Results in table (6) reveal that 60.26% of the participants watched Netflix shows according to their circumstances and 42.79% of them viewed Netflix from 10-2 in the morning. Such results indicate that 60.26% of the participants watched Netflix on a random basis. They also show that watching Netflix drama had negative effects of on the participants' academic achievement since 42.79% of them used to view Netflix from 10-2 in the morning and 20.96% of them from '2 am – 6 am". These results agree to some extent with the findings of the study of Tana et. al., (2020) which revealed that peaks in primetime for viewing media services were visible during night-time. They also agree with the study of Straubhaar et. al. (2019), which indicated that the participants preferred watching at the end of the day.

Results in table (7) provide answers to the second question of the study:" What are the reasons cited by Saudi university students for watching the Netflix platform?"

Table (7) Reasons for watching Netflix

Reasons	No.	%
High tech. production	94	41.04
Entertainment	181	79.04
Intense love and romance scenes	30	13.10
My friends watching	21	9.17
Introducing new ideas	52	22.71
Watching different societies with different cultures	88	38.43
urging me to think about the issues at hand	46	20.08
Expanding my understanding and making me aware of the problems around me	33	14.41
Having no ads	160	69.87
high quality	163	71.18

Reasons	No.	%
Platform recording of the scene I stopped at	94	41.05
Full download of the Movies	109	47.60
shortening unimportant parts	101	44.10
100	229	Total

Table (7) indicates that the participants' main reasons for watching Netflix drama were entertainment (79.04%), high quality episodes (71.18%) and no advertisements intervening episodes (69.87%). This means that the participants were looking for entertainment with high quality and without advertisements. These results agree with the findings of Kula's study (2020) which revealed that binge-watching was mainly enhanced by the Netflix better quality content. They are also congruent with the results of the study of Straubhaar et. al., (2019) which identified entertainment as one of the main reasons for binge-watching.

Results in tables (8) and (9) provide answers to the third question of the study:" How far are Saudi university students aware of the impact of watching the Netflix drama?"

Table (8) The Participants' Awareness of the Impact of Watching the Netflix Drama

Items	No.	%
Promoting abnormal ideas	**176**	**76.85**
Exaggerating the sexual hints in the content of every series.	**170**	**74.23**
Attacking Islam through drama	**111**	**48.47**
Affecting my academic focus	**32**	**13.97**
Presenting ideas against the traditions of the Muslim community	**98**	**42.79**
Regretting the forbidden content	**63**	**27.51**

Items	No.	%
Wasting my time	**93**	**40.61**
Total	**229**	100

Results in table (8) show that the sample identified several disadvantages of watching Netflix drama, the most important of which are "promoting abnormal ideas" (76.85%), attacking Islam through drama (74.23%) and "wasting my time" (40.61%). These results indicate that the participates are aware of some negative aspects of watching Netflix drama. Unlike the findings of the study of Straubhaar et. al., (2019) which indicated that binge-watching did not lead to increased feelings of guilt, the participants refuted the promoting abnormal ideas, attacking Islam through drama and wasting time. As expected, perhaps the reason for their refutation stems from the fact that they adhere to the Islamic values of the Saudi society. It is noticeable that the negative aspects of watching Netflix drama identified in this study are different from those raised by previous studies such as Goncalves' (2020) which revealed a weak and significant relationship between binge-watching and low self-regulation on eating behavior as well as between binge-watching and an unhealthy diet.

Table No. (9) Viewing preferences among the participants

Content Preferences	No.	%	Means	S.D
Arabic	**11**	**0 4.8**	**2.9913**	**.55402**
Dubbed	**3**	**1.31**		
Foreign translated	**192**	**83.84**		
Foreign without translation	**23**	**10.04**		
Total	**229**	**100**		

The data in table (9) reveal that the participants preferred the translated foreign content (83.8%), followed by the foreign without translation

(10.04%). These results reveal their interest in the foreign content, even among those who are not fluent in the foreign language. This reflects the effects of Netflix drama on the Arab identity, due to the difference in cultures. These results are confirmed by the conclusions of Sheharyar (2020) that TV drama had strong effects on the social and cultural values of the Pakistani people.

Results in tables (10), (11) and (12) provide answers to the fourth question of the study:" What is the Saudi university students' evaluation of the Netflix drama?"

Table (10)Evaluating the ideas presented by the Netflix platform

Evaluation of ideas	No.	%	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Excellent	34	14.8	2.5459	.92899	63.64
Good	93	28.8			
Acceptable	66	40.6			
Poor	36	15.7			
Total	229	100			

esults in table (10) indicate that of the participants evaluation the ideas presented by Netflix ranged between excellent (14.8 %), good (28.8%) and acceptable (40.6%). These results confirm of the participants' satisfaction with the ideas presented in Netflix drama. However, these results contradict results in table (8) wherein 76.85% of the participants identified "promoting abnormal ideas" as one of main disadvantages of watching Netflix drama. Thus, according to the third-person effect theory, this contradiction in the participants' evaluation of the ideas presented in Netflix drama may be attributed to the fact that they underestimate the effects of the Netflix drama on themselves as they believe that its content has greater influences on other individuals than it does on themselves.

Table (11) Evaluation of the prevalence of the scenes of undesirable behaviors

Content	Very high		High		Proportional Weight		Poor		Very poor		Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
	f	%	F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%			
Drugs	**84**	**36.7**	**74**	**32.3**	**55**	**24**	**15**	**6.6**	**1**	**4.**	3.9825	.95497	**79.65**
Liquor	142	62	46	20.1	31	13.5	0	0	10	4.4	4.3974	.88069	**87.95**
Sex	132	57.6	64	27.9	23	10	8	3.5	2	9.	4.3799	.86842	87.60
Violence	72	31.4	84	36.7	53	23.1	0	0	20	8.7	3.9083	.94376	**78.17**
disregarding religion	65	28.4	47	20.5	69	30.1	35	15.3	13	5.7	3.5066	1.2125	**70.13**

The results of the previous table show that the participants looked upon alcohol and sex as the most prevalent deviant scenes in Netflix drama (87.95% and 87.60%), followed by drugs (79.65%), violence (78.17%) and disregarding religion (78.17%). These results agree with the conclusion of Barker et. al., (2019) that audio-visual tobacco and alcohol content is common in VOD original programmers and represents a further source of exposure to imagery causing smoking uptake and alcohol use in young people. They are also congruent with the findings of the study conducted by Darwish, Abu Ain (2020), which revealed that 75% of the taboo words fall under 'major themes' (scatological (31%), religious/supernatural (20%), sexual activity (12%), sex organ (9%) and mother (3%)) and 25% fall under 'minor themes' (prostitution (16%) and animals (9%)) in Ljung's (2011) thematic divisions.

Table (12) Evaluation of the unethical content in Netflix drama

Evaluation	No.	%	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Yes (always)	73	**31.9**	**3.5109**	**1.33315**	**70.218**
Yes (often)	52	**22.7**			
Neutral (sometimes)	43	**18.8**			
I don "t think so (rarely)	41	**17.9**			
I don't think at all (never)	20	**8.7**			
Total	**229**	**100**			

The results show that 54.6% of the participants believe that Netflix deliberately presents content that contradicts the Islamic and Arab values, while 26.6% stated that it does not. These results indicate that 54.6% of the participants believe in the idea of the scheme to promote certain ideas contradicting the Arab and Islamic values. These results are consistent with the findings of the study Asma ea.al., (2021) which confirmed that the Netflix film 'Behind Her Eyes' contained many elements that are incompatible with the religion and culture of Malaysia.

Results in tables (13) ,(14),(15),(16),(17)and (18), provide answers to the fifth question of the study:" How far are Saudi university students aware of the effects of watching Netflix drama on their personal behaviors, compared to the Saudi society?".

Table (13)Evaluation of the effect of watching "drugs" scenes in the Netflix drama on the participants' personal behavior and society

Behavior	Personal behavior			Society		
	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Curiosity	1.7249	1.28019	34.489	2.8210	1.29720	56.42
Enthusiasm	1.7162	1.30879	34.324	2.8472	1.27329	56.944
Aversion	4.0044	1.29945	80.088	3.3537	1.17792	67.074
Sympathy	2.8908	1.52216	57.816	3.0349	1.15417	60.698

It is clear from the results in table (13) that the sample's evaluation of the effect of drug scenes on the Netflix platform on their personal behavior is less than their evaluation of its impact on society. But, their evaluation of the degree of their aversion of drug use is higher than their evaluation of the aversion of the society. These results agree with the findings of the study of Ahmed (2021) which confirmed that US drama binge-watchers were more aware of the negative effects of US drama on others than on themselves.

Table (14) Evaluation of gambling behavior

Behavior	Personal behavior		Society		
	S.D.	Proportional Weight	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Curiosity	1.5511	45.676	3.0175	1.31444	60.35
Enthusiasm	1.31924	35.022	1.27645	2.8952	57.904
Aversion	1.50327	69.868	3.2707	1.14940	65.414
Sympathy	1.4188	40.088	2.7729	1.15126	55.458

Results in table (14) show that the participants perceived the negative influences of watching gambling behaviors in Netflix drama more for others in the Saudi society than for themselves, in terms of arousing curiosity for the practice of gambling behavior, enthusiasm for it, or sympathy with the gamblers. Concerning gambling aversion, the participants confirmed that they are more averse to gambling behavior than society, which supports the validity of the cognitive hypothesis of the third person theory.

Table No. (15) Evaluation of the effects of 'alcohol' scenes in Netflix drama on personal behavior and society

Behavior	Personal behavior					
	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Curiosity	2.2009	1.3520	44.018	3.0480	1.33849	60.96

Behavior	Personal behavior					
	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Enthusiasm	2.0742	1.26654	41.484	3.0000	1.27389	60
Aversion	3.812	1.23708	76.24	3.2838	1.12887	65.676
Sympathy	2.611	1.33838	52.22	2.9127	1.18146	58.254

Results in the previous table (15) confirm that the participants perceived the negative influences of watching 'alcohol' scenes in Netflix drama more for others in the Saudi society than for themselves. Concerning aversion of 'alcohol' scenes, the participants confirmed that they were more averse to 'alcohol' scenes than society, which supports the validity of the perceptual hypothesis of the third person theory. These results are supported by the conclusion of Alfayad et. al., (2021) that alcohol content is likely to promote consumption among young people and occurs frequently in original films shown by video-on-demand (VOD) services in the UK.

Table (16) Evaluation of the impact of the "love" scenes in the Netflix drama on personal behavior and society

Behavior	Personal behavior			Society		
	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Curiosity	2.4978	1.38800	49.956	3.4541	1.18242	69.082
Imitation	2.6594	1.38828	53.188	3.4672	1.20490	69.344
Contrition	3.6157	1.1436	72.314	3.5109	1.13791	70.218
Pleasure	2.8996	1.26472	57.992	3.4934	1.13021	69.868
Masturbate	2.1397	1.25923	42.794	3.5808	1.16181	71.616
Realization of the relationship	2.9607	1.27501	59.214	3.5983	1.16423	71.966

Results in the previous table (16) reveal that there is a discrepancy between the participants' awareness of the extent of influences love scenes in Netflix drams and their awareness of the impacts of these scenes on the society. It is clear that the participants overestimated the influence of love scenes on the society than on themselves as revealed by their responses to the negative items of the questionnaire such as 'masturbation', 'realizing the relationship between a man and a woman', 'the desire to imitate these scenes', or 'curiosity to see more'. However, they stated that their estimation of feeling of remorse for watching love scenes exceeded their estimation how others felt about them.

Table (17) Evaluation of the effect of watching "violence" in the Netflix drama on personal behavior and society

Behavior	Personal behavior			Society		
	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Stimulating violence	1.8122	1.30271	36.244	3.0873	1.23234	61.746
Unbelievable	3.4891	1.44371	69.782	3.1223	1.10139	62.446
Aversion	3.6943	1.24711	73.886	3.1179	1.04675	62.358
Funny	2.9738	1.41707	59.476	3.3450	1.24560	59.476
Educative	3.4629	1.40009	69.258	3.3930	1.09350	67.860

Results in table (17) confirm that the participants' evaluation the effect of watching violence scenes on themselves is lower than their evaluation of their impact on society. However, the participants' evaluation of their aversion to these scenes is higher than their evaluation of society's aversion to it. These results verify the perceptual hypothesis of the third person effect theory proposing that individuals tend to exaggerate the impact of media on other's perceptions, attitudes

and behaviors while they underestimate their effects on their perceptions, attitudes and behaviors.

Table (18) Types of the preferred Netflix drama

Types	No.	%
Police	124	54.148
Romantic	134	58.515
Social	130	56.768
Historical	75	32.75
Comic	154	67.249
Psychological	65	28.384
Total	229	100

Results in the previous table (18) indicate that the participants' preference for comedy content occupied first rank (67.24%), followed by the romantic content (58.51%) , then the social content (56.76%). These results are consistent with the conclusion of Sung et.al., (2018) that the main goal of watching Netflix was entertainment.

Results in table (19) provide answers to the sixth question of the study:" How far do Saudi university students support the boycott campaign of Netflix?".

Table (19) The participants' support of the Netflix boycott campaign

Support	No.	%	Means	S.D.	Proportional Weight
Yes (always)	34	14.8	2.8253	1.26181	56.506
Yes (often)	25	10.9			
Neutral (sometimes)	75	32.8			
I don "t think so (rarely)	57	24.9			
I don't think at all (never)	38	16.6			
Total	229	100			

Although the participants' responses in table (12) confirm that Netflix dram deliberately presents immoral content that contradicts the Islamic and Arab values, only 59% of them (with proportional weight 56.5) supported the idea of boycotting Netflix platform. Such results may indicate a kind of addiction or repercussions of binge-watching Netflix drama.

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