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Egedi Boglárka

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K-Drama Fever on Netflix: Exploring the
Marketing Techniques Used to Promote
South Korean Dramas to International
Viewers

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2023

DECLARATION

I, the undersigned Egedi Boglárka, being fully aware of my legal liability hereby declare that the facts and data included in my thesis represent reality rather than fabrication, and what is written therein is the result of my own independent work.

I applied the data used in my thesis with due consideration for the legal protection of copyright.

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Budapest, 06 December 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Egedi Boglárka". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Candidate's signature

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1. Introduction

In 2021 Squid Game became the all-time most-watched Netflix show, leaving behind hundreds of Western productions. The fact that this show is a South Korean production is more startling; it was the first time a South Korean TV show had been the top chart leader and rapidly started attracting global audiences. (Kim, 2023). Parasite won four Academy Awards in 2020, making it one of the most popular films on Netflix. It is visible that in the 2020s, Korean productions have started to spread widely, winning the hearts of global audiences. As a leading global streaming platform, Netflix has played a pivotal role in disseminating South Korean series to international audiences. Its large subscriber base, which spans many countries and cultures, has made it an effective tool for internationalizing South Korean content.

A remarkable finding related to Netflix's Korean content over the past year has been made. Ted Sarandos (2022) the CO-CEO of Netflix, stated at a discussion held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Seoul in 2022 that 60% of Netflix subscribers have now watched at least one Korean production. Looking at the investment made, we can see that the outcome is not unexpected. Netflix intends to invest \$ 2.5 billion over the next four years to produce Korean series and films (Next Shark, 2023). The corporation revealed its largest lineup, with 34 upcoming Korean shows in 2023. (Netflix, 2023)

We may conclude from the data alone that the spread of Korean creative and cultural content, also known as Hallyu, has completely revolutionized the entertainment world. The rise in worldwide popularity of South Korean TV series, generally known as K-dramas, is a fascinating cultural and economic phenomenon. These Korean television series have transcended national borders during the last decade, drawing audiences far beyond the Korean Peninsula. As part of the greater Hallyu phenomenon, their enthusiastic worldwide fan base has drawn increased attention to the marketing methods used to engage and fascinate international audiences. Netflix's massive impact on watching patterns, paired with its vast marketing arsenal, gives it unique techniques that drive K-dramas' worldwide success.

My thesis will examine the economic and marketing factors contributing to the rising popularity of K-dramas on Netflix. Additionally, it will look at the success of the marketing techniques used by Netflix to promote these series internationally. Furthermore, I would like to assess Hungarian Netflix users' viewing habits to understand the mechanisms that drive people to

choose Korean content to watch. Since there is not too much data regarding Hungarian audiences, this thesis contains a survey of Hungarian Netflix users seeking data regarding K-dramas. The survey will gather information on the participants' demographics, previous exposure to K-dramas, and motivations for choosing this genre. Additionally, it will explore the impact of social media influence in the case of the worldwide popular series called Squid Game.

By analyzing this data, I will be able to identify patterns or preferences that may exist and provide valuable insights into Netflix's international marketing strategies. The findings from this research will contribute to a deeper understanding of the global appeal of K-dramas and provide insights into the specific preferences and motivations of Hungarian Netflix users, enabling them to tailor content recommendations and promotional efforts more effectively, ultimately increasing the global reach and viewership of Korean series. This research will also help identify any potential barriers or challenges that may exist in the adoption and popularity of K-dramas in Hungary, allowing for targeted strategies to be developed to promote this genre among Hungarian viewers further. It will give Netflix and content producers insights to help them develop future marketing plans.

2. Literature Review

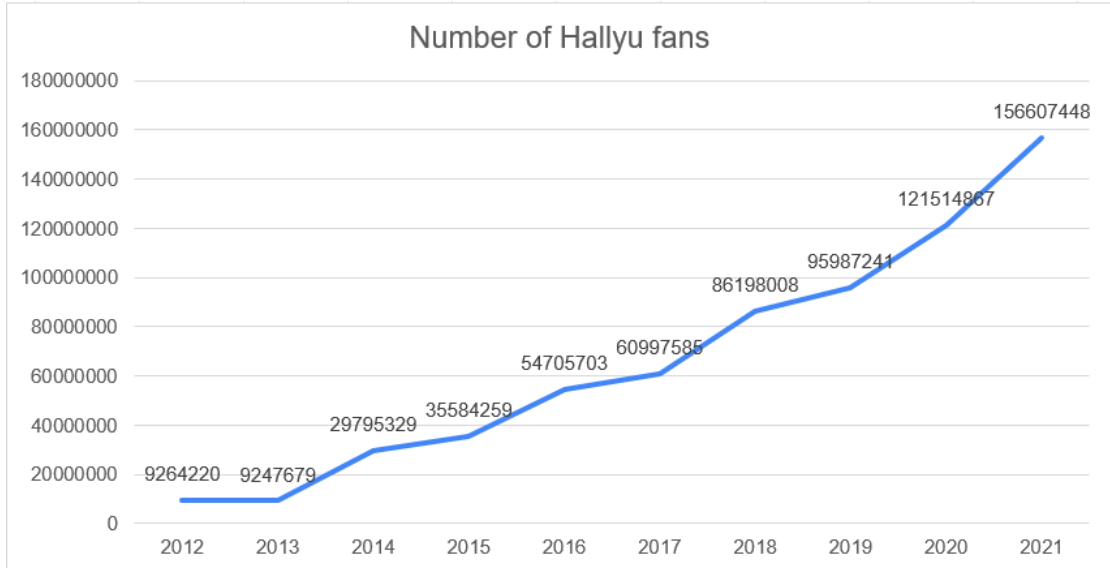
2.1 The Hallyu

The phenomenon known as the Hallyu, which means "Korean Wave" in English, is the term used to indicate South Korea's international spread of culture and products of the creative and cultural industries (Shim, 2008). It started in the late 1990s with the export of television dramas and has since extended to include Korean-pop music, cinema, webtoon, animation, digital games, e-sports, smartphones, fashion, cosmetics, food, and lifestyles. What distinguishes this phenomenon is not just the rapidity with which it has spread around the world, but also how the phenomenon contributed to South Korea's economic growth (Kim, 2022). Primarily, the focus was on Asian markets. Still, since 2012 it has gained increased global popularity, including on the American continent, the Middle East, East Asia, Europe, and most recently, Africa.

The Korean Wave can be divided into four phases. The first one is connected to the spread of K-dramas, which is a term to define television series that were produced in South Korea and are in the Korean language. The second phase is connected to K-pop, Korean pop music, which initially started with the success of the girl group Girl's Generation in Japan (Gajzágó, 2023). Then came the global phenomenon: Gangnam Style by Psy, which broke viewing records on YouTube in 2012. However, worldwide success can be linked to the boy group BTS since 2018. After the global recognition of K-pop songs, the interest in watching K-dramas skyrocketed. According to Cho M. (2017), Hallyu started with a Korean TV series and could have grown globally through K-pop, ensuring the spread of Korean creative and cultural content worldwide. The third phase is happening currently and involves the spread of Korean culture while the fourth one is predicted to bring the Korean style into the spotlight. (Gajzágó, 2023).

Hallyu has a rapidly growing fanbase as Figure 1 indicates. In 2012 the fanbase was 9.264.220 which skyrocketed up to 2021 reaching 156.607.448 fans, meaning a 70% increase. The first significant increase can be seen in 2018 which is the result of BTS's worldwide recognition since then the growth has been constantly increasing.

Figure 1: Growth in Hallyu fans between 2012-2021



Own editing based on the data of Korea Foundation <https://www.kf.or.kr/kfEng/main.do>

2.1.1. The impact of Hallyu on South Korea’s economy

Hallyu has significantly impacted and transformed South Korea’s economy. When the Korean Wave took off, significant and exponential growth in GDP could be seen as a result (Parc, 2021). As Kim (2023) stated, the Korean government has thoroughly reexamined its plans to export popular media culture since the 1997 IMF financial crisis thus becoming one of the country's main foreign resources for economic growth. Since 2013, the creative industry has become the government’s focus for improvement, highlighting the importance of K-pop, which can be identified as a soft power of the Korean economy (Min et al., 2018).

According to Jung (2022), Hallyu has become a valuable soft power for South Korea's economy. Soft power, as defined by Nye, is the following: “Power is the ability to affect others to get the outcomes one prefers, and that can be accomplished by coercion, payment, or attraction and persuasion. Soft power is the ability to obtain preferred outcomes by attraction rather than coercion or payment.” (2017, p.1.) On the other hand, hard power includes manufacturing, infrastructure, and technology sectors. Soft and hard power together can impact consumer behavior to achieve production goals (Nye and Kim, 2013).

Regarding economic effect, tourism and purchase decisions influenced by product placement in K-dramas are the two major revenue-generating aspects. Kim et al., (2007) claim that TV shows not only bring money to the shooting place but can also influence the visiting desire of people for the following years. According to Lee et al. (2018), choosing South Korea as a travel destination is strongly connected with the consumption of Korean popular culture. while a study

by Kim et al., (2007); and Lee & Bai, (2016) suggest that watching Korean content creates a positive picture of Korea among overseas customers, thus influencing purchasing decisions.

The growth rate of cultural exports helped by Hallyu increased by 19,2 % between 2016 and 2019 while the film export alone increased by 54,3% (Table 1). Since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, online streaming platforms have increased and will continue to rise in 2021. Before the pandemic, Hallyu's export income reached \$9,350 million in 2019, rising to \$10,175 million in 2020, according to KOFICE (2021) By 2018, Hallyu was bringing in more than 13 billion USD for South Korea, from which movies and series generated 8 billion USD (Oxford Economics). Cultural enterprises have recently gained recognition from the Korean government as potential engines for continued economic development (Parc, 2021). In 2021 the South Korean government spent over 6.9 billion USD on Hallyu-related products (Ministry of Economy and Finance, 2021).

Table 1: The export value of cultural content helped by Hallyu.

Export value of cultural content helped by Hallyu (in \$, millions)	Industries	2016	2017	2018	2019	Growth rate (2019)
	Broadcasting	366	323	345	368	6.6 %
	Music	401	465	520	533	2.5%
	Film	31	29	30	46	54.3%
	Game	1917	3465	3835	4716	23.0%
	Manhwa	11	12	22	25	13.9%
	Total	3119	4724	5356	6384	19.2%

Source: Own editing based on Parc, J. (2021). Measuring The Impact of Hallyu on Korea's Economy: Setting Off on the Wrong Foot. p.28.

2.1.2. Role of K-Dramas in the Hallyu

Movies were the initial forerunners of Hallyu. The term was first used presumably at a press conference of the series What is Love All About in 1997 (Shim, 2006). Winter Sonata, which initially aired in 2002, is one of the most popular K-dramas. Another popular drama is Jewel in the Palace, which premiered in 2003 and generated a revenue of \$40 million worldwide (Hua, 2005), It was also the first K-drama to air in Hungary.

Recently, Squid Game gained widespread notoriety after being Netflix's most-watched program of all time, smashing records with 111 million household views in the first four weeks of its launch in 2021 (Netflix, 2021). Furthermore, Squid Game is one of the most awarded K-dramas with its 25 nominations. In terms of movies, the success of Parasite in 2019 has increased Korea's awareness worldwide and captivated a large audience with its four Academy Awards. As a result, many producers joined Netflix, which helps with- production costs and promotion in 190 countries (Kim, 2022).

2.2. Marketing Strategies in the Entertainment Industry

2.2.1. Definition of Marketing

The American Marketing Association (AMA, 2017) defines marketing as: “the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large”.

Kotler et al. defines marketing management as “the art and science of choosing target markets and building profitable relationships with them. This involves obtaining, retaining, and developing customers through creating delivering, and communicating superior customer value. Thus, marketing management involves managing demand, which in turn involves managing customer relationships.” (2005, p.13).

Nowadays, marketing strategies must be considerate of the consumer’s culture to be successful (Alden, Steenkamp, & Batra, 1999). As Terpstra & David define “Culture is a learned, shared, compelling, interrelated set of symbols whose meaning provides a set of orientations for members of a society” (1985, p.5.). Culture is an important component in global market penetration since it impacts every aspect of consumer behavior. Appadurai (1990) asserts that mass media is a key component in the creation of global culture and that it is a crucial channel for marketing distribution. Social media is one of the most powerful marketing types nowadays as it can reach a global audience more easily. It works through social interaction, using the Internet- and web-based solutions and applications, and it can help with the identification of market trends and customer needs (Constantinides, 2014).

2.2.2. Impact of Digital Platforms on Marketing

The rise of streaming services is broadening prospects for worldwide content distribution and opening new ways to learn about different cultures. According to Kim (2022), digital-era-born kids may have developed an open and cosmopolitan consumption behavior that can accept different languages and cultural practices without any difficulty. The growth of social media-oriented, individualistic generations has a diversified, outward-looking desire for transnational popular culture, actively removing themselves from earlier generations' local cultural customs (Kim, 2022). Korean companies purposefully chose digital and online platforms as strategic assets to spread cultural content. That way, it is easier to reach a wider range of people globally with an interest in Korean culture.

2.2.3. Role of OTT Services in the Spread of K-dramas

Over-the-top (OTT) services such as Netflix, HBO, Disney+, and numerous more streaming services provide content over the internet (Hallur et al., 2023). The most important impact of Korean productions crossing borders is the increased usage of global OTT platforms. Since the breakout of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the online streaming service has proliferated and has continued to increase in 2021 (KOFICE, 2021). In 2021, various Korean video content could become popular on worldwide OTT platforms for the first time. Netflix was the first streaming platform that entered South Korea in 2016, they had roughly 5 years to dominate the Korean market since other streaming services only entered in 2021. As stated by KOFICE (2021) Korean production businesses are enthusiastic about OTT platforms' investment of KRW 20 to 30 billion. However, Netflix's Korean productions are not owned by Korean companies and are not influenced by Korean regulations, so Netflix can change a lot in its production.

The international online K-drama viewing ratio rapidly grew between 2016 and 2021, revealing the ratio of international drama viewers rose from 47.4% in 2016 to 75.2% in 2021 (KOFICE, 2021). According to the poll created by KOFICE (2021), Netflix's market share among online platforms reached 68% in 2021, with 64.0% and 70.1% of users utilizing the streamer to view Korean content. As per KOFICE (2021), these K-dramas have started to surpass their geographical limitations and integrate into a novel mainstream culture that the global community is paying attention to. As a result, Korean producers have been trying to fortify their ties with US-centered global services concerning the video creation and distribution value chain.

2.3 Netflix as a Platform for K-Drama Broadcasting

A great illustration of the OTT market's expansion is Netflix, which began its operation in 2007—becoming the largest OTT service provider, with 213.56 million paying subscribers worldwide in 2021 and 223.09 million in 2022 (Statista, 2022). It became the first international firm to join the South Korean market when it started its service there in 2016 (Shin et al., 2016). As a recent update from Netflix stated, 60% of global Netflix users have now watched at least one Korean production.

Netflix has strategic investment plans in Korean content and aims to form more partnership plans with Korean producers (Davies, 2021). Their huge capital, marketing, and pricing model is preferable (Kim, 2020). Netflix is highly focused on local production since its goal is to target the local market by producing content relevant to each country's audience; they have a production base in approximately 45 countries (Fellow Shareholders, 2021), furthermore, they continuously expanding their original content, namely Netflix Originals (Kim, 2021).

Between 2015 to 2020, Netflix invested USD 700 million into the production of Korean content, creating more than 80 shows. (Nam et al., 2023), increasing partnerships with Korean producers, writers, and directors (Macdonald, 2021). As KOFICE states (2021) Netflix covers production costs and helps with marketing and dubbing as well.

Netflix's business model is based on a profitable paid subscription model that allows subscribed customers to watch unlimited amounts of content. Netflix has developed a recommendation system that uses algorithmic calculations effectively (Yuan, 2023), resulting in a valuable database becoming the company's most important asset. Netflix's biggest fear is losing subscribers who cannot find appealing content on the platform. Therefore, it is critical that customers can quickly discover their content of interest. Netflix invites viewers to evaluate shows and express their feelings as well to ensure future subscriber satisfaction.

2.3.1. Netflix on the Schmenner Matrix

Schmenner Matrix, also known as the service process matrix, classifies service processes based on the intensity of labor and customization (Réthi, 2022). It has four parts: Service Factory, Service Shop, Mass Service, and Professional Service. Since Netflix is a service provider it can be examined with the help of this matrix. (Figure 2)

Figure 2: Netflix on the Schmenner Matrix

		Extent of Interaction and Customization	
		Low	High
Extent of Labor Intensity	Low	Service Factory No	Service Shop Partially Yes
	High	Mass Service Partially Yes	Professional Service No

Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on lecture slides of Réthi from the Service Management and Marketing course, 2022.

Service Factory involves low labor intensity and low customization, services are usually standardized and produced in a high volume, and the customer needs are neglected. Netflix does not fall into this category since its service includes a high level of customization as users can choose from a wide variety of content.

Service Shop is characterized by high customization and low labor intensity, here services are tailored to the needs of customers, but cost-effectiveness is not popular. Netflix can be partially classified into this category from the point of view of high customization, however, low labor intensity is not suitable for Netflix since they continuously make efforts for better recommendations and customer experience.

Mass Service involves high labor intensity and low customization, meaning that the service falling in this category is provided to a large number of customers with low interaction, and the level of customization is limited. Netflix to some extent falls into this category with its standardized streaming service to a huge customer base and intense labor work in creating content and maintaining the platform.

Professional Service is characterized by high customization and high labor intensity, services here are highly personalized and require a high amount of labor. Netflix does not fall into this category because they do not provide individual, and customers do not have to cooperate with the service provider.

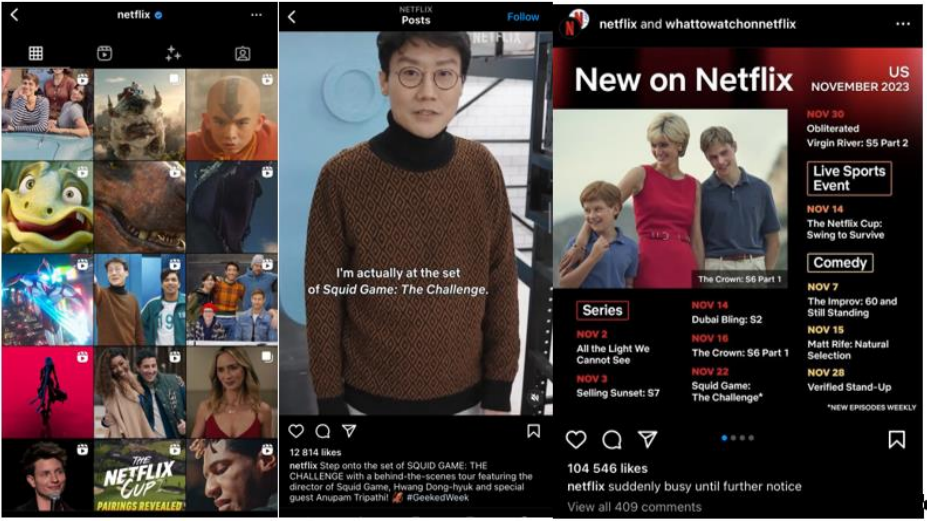
2.3.2. Marketing Techniques Used by Netflix

Examining Netflix’s marketing strategy, we can conclude that they use a mix of online and offline advertisements alongside a unique customer experience model, original content creation as well and email marketing. On their Instagram account, they strategically segmented markets based on countries. These country-specific profiles make promoting more effective for the local markets. Netflix US has the largest number of followers with 33,1 million followers, Netflix

Hungary also has its profile while they operate a special K-drama-focused profile called Netflix K-content.

To generate excitement among its audience, Netflix is well-known for producing viral material on social media, such as memes and videos that incorporate popular music, new releases, and future trailers. They come in a variety of media formats, such as pictures, reels, and short videos. (Figure 3)

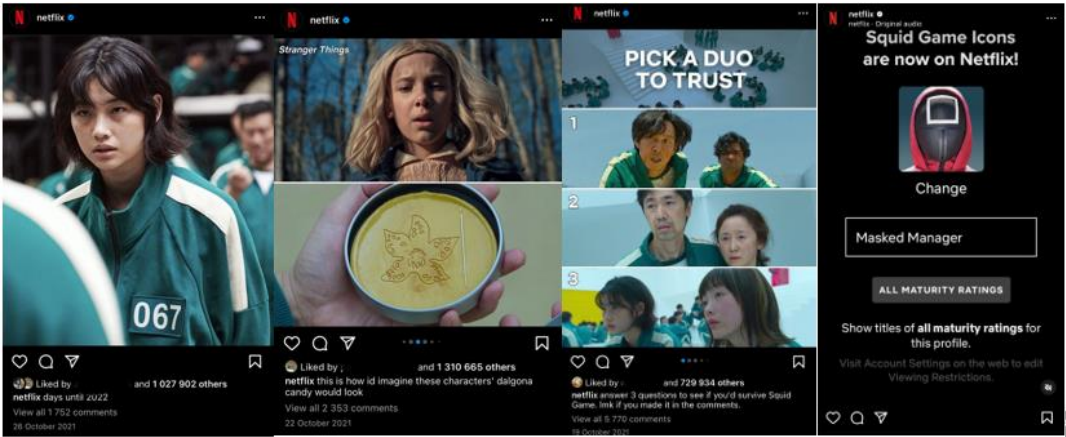
Figure 3: Content diversity on Netflix’s Instagram



Source: Instagram

A few of the content types that Netflix uses for audience engagement are interactive posts, polls, and debates. They always experiment with different types of content that create dialogues and interactions between followers. (Figure 4).

Figure 4: Audience engagement posts on Netflix’s Instagram



Source: Instagram

Celebrity involvement is a critical part of their success, they regularly interact with big names on their social media accounts, conduct interviews, and create an actor's character profile as well. They often retweet celebrity and followers' posts and comments which creates a feeling of being listened to. This powerful customer relationship management focuses on building strong connections and helps establish a loyal follower base. Netflix monitors social media platforms for brand mentions, to analyze their competitors, to know the latest trends, and to see their audience's interest. These insights can enable them to create more effective social media marketing campaigns.

1. Promotion strategy

Netflix's promotion strategy is not carried out traditionally, they believe in audience engagement on social media where news can easily go viral. Netflix also bets heavily on offline advertising, which according to Correia et al. (2022) helps campaigns through discussions. However, Netflix's social media strategy is something more interesting and indicates that it does not replicate content on different platforms but instead creates personalized content for each (KOFICE, 2021). Their Instagram page is the most popular amongst followers but TikTok, Facebook, and YouTube also have a large following base.

2. Content innovation

Martinez-Sanchez et al., (2021) mention that rather than focusing on original programming, Netflix was primarily concerned with acquiring rights. However, when the number of films and TV episodes online decreased substantially, Netflix focused more on generating original works rather than purchasing high-priced licenses. This resulted in the so-called Netflix originals which are content created or distributed only by Netflix. In terms of content creation, the company creates unique content for each of its social media platforms, usually including quotes memes, and little games regarding shows. In terms of innovation, interactive experience is the best example used in the series Black Mirror, where viewers could simultaneously make choices regarding the story's progress.

3. Customer experience

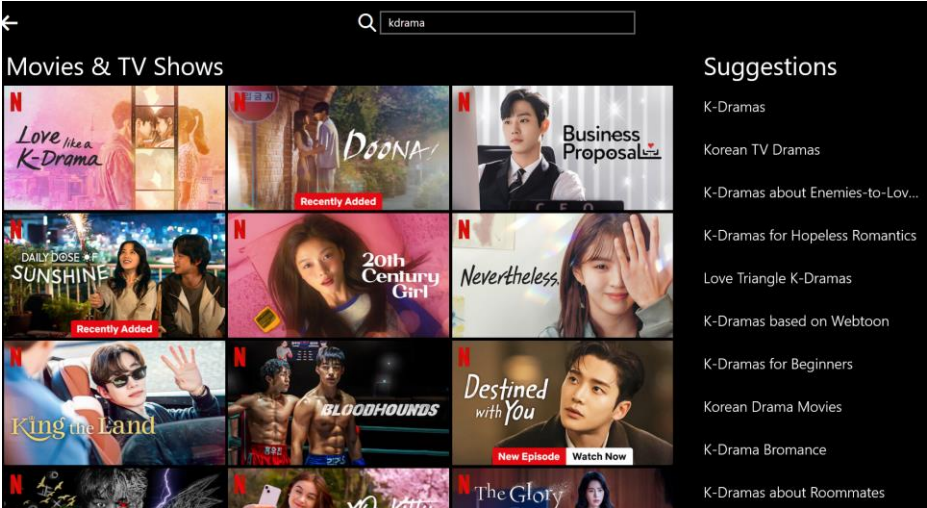
User experience is Netflix's most engaging tool, based on user behavior analysis they can provide personalized content and recommendations (Movidesk 2020), which is a competitive advantage for them (Hallur et al. 2023). According to Hallur et al. (2023), Netflix employs data analytics tools based on its business strategy to engage customers with intriguing content. This

allows for the creation of personalized, relevant, and location-based content depending on customer actions. Data streaming analytics gives insight into user content consumption including preferences across important characteristics such as favorite genres, typical time of watching daily as well and content type skipped (Hallur et al, 2023). These insights assist the provider in making critical decisions about content distribution, cross-selling, and upselling in domestic and foreign markets.

4. Algorithm

The built-in recommendation system automatically offers content to subscribers by comparing similar material to each other that a user has watched and produces new recommendations based on this analysis. As for K-drama suggestions, Netflix creates multiple search categories, that are helpful when choosing a new series to watch. (Figure 5)

Figure 5: K-drama suggestions categories by Netflix



Source: Netflix

2.3.3. Marketing of the K-drama: Squid Game

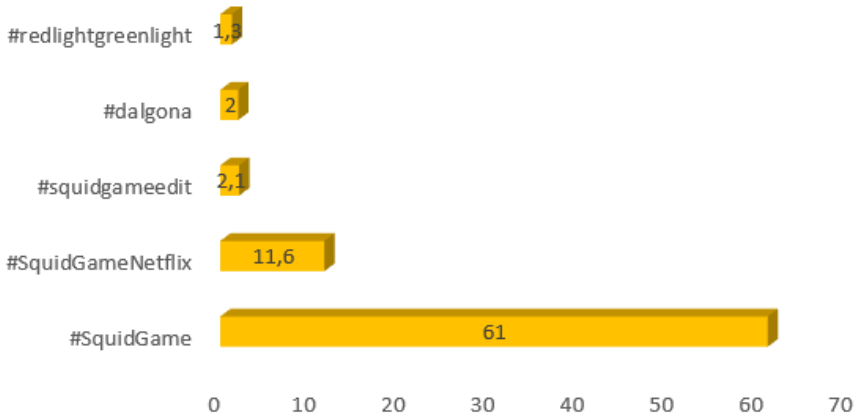
It’s worth having a look at the marketing strategies used for the promotion of Squid Game as it has become Netflix’s most-watched series. The K-drama Squid Game has gained immense popularity on the internet since its premiere in 2021. It broke the Top 10 list in 90 countries, making it Netflix's most successful release. As an integral part of the Korean Wave, the show rose to international fame. The market's response was massive, generating conversation and boosting sales of merchandise.

However, compared to Netflix's standard marketing techniques for promoting other content, Squid Game did not receive the same promotional expenditure (Correia et al., 2022). According to Correia et al. (2022) in comparison to the platform's greatest shows, Squid Game received

almost little advertising before its release, also lacking offline promotions worldwide (Correia et al., 2022). Financially speaking the budget was lower compared to other shows, meaning a total investment of about 21 million (Correia et al., 2022).

So how did Squid Game become this popular? As the point of view of Insight for Professionals (2021) expresses; casual dialogues were the most beneficial promoting tool, discussions and recommendations of the watchers encouraged others to join in the discussion and watch the series. Social media made global recognition for the series, and Instagram and TikTok specifically played the biggest role in the series’ success. After a few days of the premiere TikTok hashtags for Netflix reached 61 billion. (Figure 6). Netflix’s social media communication is creative and seeks to connect closely with the customer. Instagram followers are the largest community while on the other hand, TikTok users are the most active, they enthusiastically created memes and inside jokes for Squid Game that went viral after the premiere.

Figure 6: Most viewed hashtags related to Squid Game on TikTok on November 24, 2021 (Units in billions)



Source: Own editing based on Correia, C., Guimarães, B., & Teixeira, S. (2022). Viral marketing: How squid game became the most watched show on Netflix. Springer Series in Design and Innovation. p.574.

As for offline marketing events, the most successful were the following: In Seoul, a pop-up installation was made in a subway station that featured iconic elements of the show, by posting a picture of it, visitors could win themed merchandise (Jing Culture Commerce, 2021). In the Philippines, the iconic doll from the series was watching pedestrians while singing “Red Light, Green Light, 1–2–3” from the show (Nit, 2021). In the Netherlands, realistic games from the series were made, and visitors could try them out themselves. (Sport Skeeda, 2021). In the

United Kingdom, the famous doll figure was also installed in a shopping mall. (Manchester Evening News, 2021). (Figure 7)

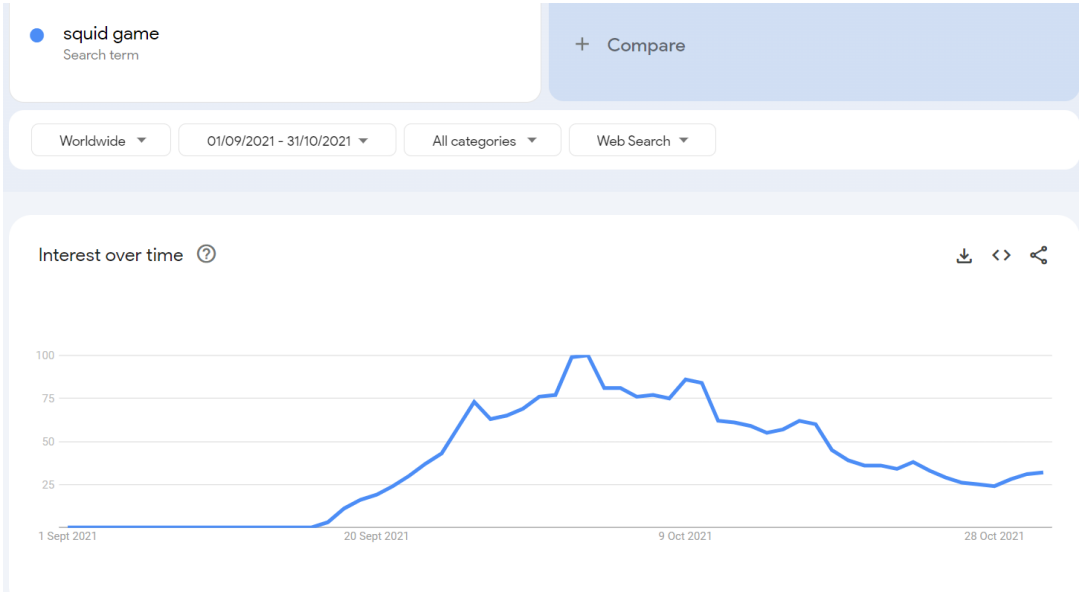
Figure 7: Squid Game offline marketing in the Philippines and the Netherlands



Source: <https://www.justjared.com/2021/10/18/squid-game-was-played-in-real-life-over-the-weekend-in-the-netherlands/> <https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/whats-on/parents-rant-over-inappropriate-pop-22091733>

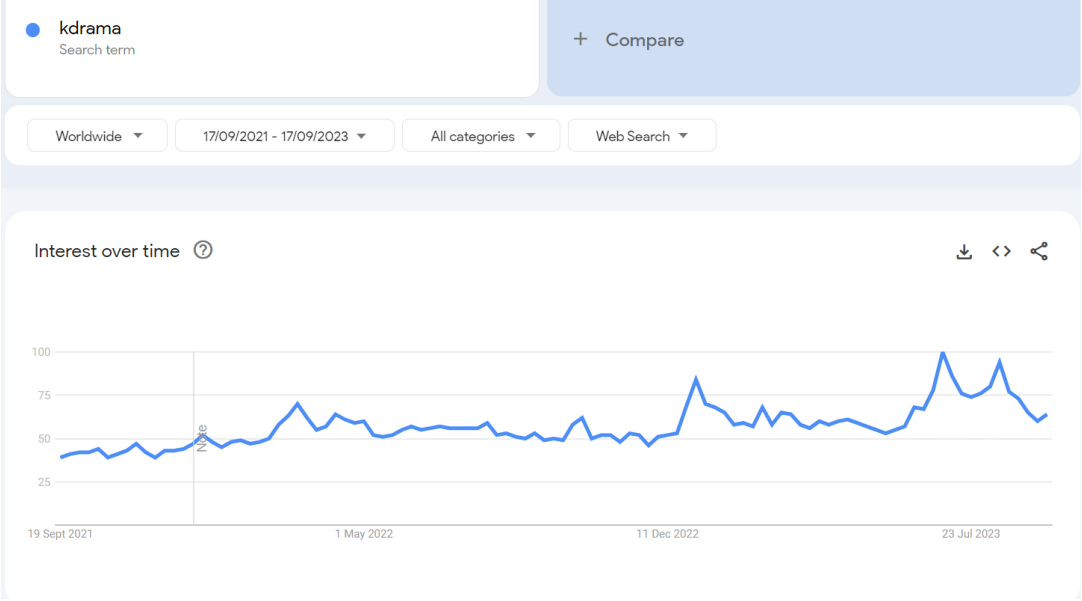
The series was overall viewed by 142 million households, generating an estimated \$900 million in value and 1.4 billion in profit for Netflix (Chantelle Marcelle, 2021). The effects of Squid Game are also worth mentioning. Based on an analysis of content popularity, Squid Game emerged as the most popular show globally, garnering greater attention in online forums than any other program. (Out Brain, 2022). According to Google Trends, Squid Game as a topic landed on top between September and October 2021. (Figure 8) It was further impacting the interest in K-dramas which has still growing pace since the premiere of Squid Game (Figure 9).

Figure 8: Google search interest for the term Squid Game in its first two months of release (between 2021. September and October)



Source: [googletrends.com](https://www.google.com/trends)

Figure 9: Google search interest for the term K-drama from the premiere of Squid until this year (2021. September 17 and 2023. September 17.)



Source: googletrends.com

After the show, significant growth of interest could be seen in the language learning apps regarding the Korean language; in the UK, that was 76% growth (Chantelle Marcelle, 2021). Several brands like Pepsi, Domino, and many more used the series' popularity in their marketing advertisements (Correia et al., 2022). Sales of the Vans slip-on shoes increased by 97% growth (Chantelle Marcelle, 2021). The sales of Dalgona candy also skyrocketed. Even now, many entertainment service providers create themed games for the fans as well.

2.4. Preferences of Viewers

The combination of self-scheduling and Netflix's uninterrupted watching experience results in immersive viewing. The created programmed routes and the service provider's procedures direct users through content libraries toward material they would be interested in seeing. Viewers who find these pathways and recommendations useful or helpful are more likely to be enthusiastic about viewing streaming services (Lüders, 2022). Flayelle et al. (2020) propose 4 driving forces for a successful viewing experience: social (i.e., community of interest); emotional enhancement; enrichment of knowledge; and coping/escapism (i.e., avoiding real-life problems).

Themes in Korean films and dramas are more related to the perceptions of the Asian audience than topics in Western entertainment. Korean dramas are popular among Americans due to their originality and uniqueness. According to Chuang and Lee (2013), the enjoyment of dramas depends on the viewer's emotional connection to the characters and the results experienced by such characters' development. Korean dramas tend to depict the female character's point of view, indicating that women are likely to enjoy them more than men (Chuang & Lee, 2013). Open-mindedness has been characterized as a person's openness or unprejudiced attitude toward diverse cultures (Chuang & Lee). When it comes to Korean dramas, the more open one is to a variety of cultures, the more likely one is to like Korean dramas.

2.4.1. K-drama preferences

According to Hogarth (2013), the popularity of K-drama was due to the drama's exceptional quality, attractiveness, authenticity, and a combination of contemporary and traditional elements. Audience engagement is highly impacted by the audience's dedication to the playing actors and actresses and how well they engage with their played characters (Kim & Wang, 2012). According to Hogart (2013), several variables, such as the scene, the attractiveness of the actress, and the blend of tradition, romance, and expressive narrative, may impact the audience's inclination to watch Korean dramas.

Korean dramas are easily digestible since the episodes are usually 30-60 minutes long, containing 16-20 episodes which is the correct pacing for a well-rounded story. This way character development and the narrative of the plot can progress without any loose ends. Another point of view is the mind-enriching viewing experience; K-dramas may be both enjoyable and historically enlightening and typically depict the Joseon or Goryeo historical

period. As an example, the series *Crash Landing on You* gives viewers a glimpse of how things are in North Korea through innovative and surprising plotlines or narratives.

K-dramas have an unusual feature which is being both predictable and original at the same time. In the case of *Squid Game*, socioeconomic, gender, and race inequalities as well as the competition for money and reaching a higher level of status a common phenomenon but setting it in a brutal life-or-death situation makes it more captivating for the viewers (Aljazeera, 2023). K-dramas are usually mystery leads combined with startling twists and cliffhangers which generate continuous watching intentions. Their storytelling is full of emotions to engage the watcher, the ending is never predictable since K-dramas can have both happy and sad endings as well. K-dramas also present a variety of themes that may appeal to audiences both domestically and abroad. Usually, producers combine a mix of genres, romance, adventure, fantasy, horror and so much more making K-dramas unique for different audiences.

The location for shooting scenes is mesmerizing alongside the heart-catching soundtracks that match exactly with the scene's setting, together they make a perfect balance. In a way, viewers develop a tendency to visit the shooting locations. According to Adis et al. (2017), Korean celebrities also have an impact on K-drama-watching tendencies, as Hogarth (2013) stated, the allure of celebrities is a marketing tool that encourages viewers to watch Korean dramas. As Schulze (2013) stated, fans are forming communities to share their views, according to Chuang and Lee (2013), these communities have a pretty large societal effect, meaning that high personal exposure to K-dramas results in high watching intentions as well.

2.5. Hallyu in Hungary

2.5.1 Economic Relations between Hungary and South Korea

In the 1990s, a strategic economic alliance with South Korea was developed. Hungary was the first Eastern European country to establish diplomatic ties with South Korea, opening the country's embassy in Budapest in 1989 (Gajzágó, 2023). South Korea is Hungary's largest foreign direct investor regarding the strength of cooperation relations (Sass, Gubik, and Szunomár, 2019). By 2020, five South Korean firms' direct investments in Hungary will have generated more than 2,900 jobs, exceeding Germany's status as the top employer in the Hungarian labor market (Ráski, 2021). According to the 2018 Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) report, South Korea was Hungary's third-largest export partner and fifth-largest import partner.

2.5.2. Korean Culture in Hungary

Because of geographical distance and a lack of cultural intimacy, the spread of Hallyu in Europe has been slower than in Asia. However, these inequalities have been swiftly addressed with the recent introduction of streaming platform services (Gajzágó & Shim, 2023). Korean culture first gained popularity in Hungary in 2008, when the Hungarian public television station M1 broadcast the historical drama *Jewel in the Palace*, which received strong audience ratings in numerous countries. As Gajzágó and Shim (2023) stated, between 2008 and 2018, Hungarian television stations only aired eight K-dramas, some of which were repeated numerous times. Only the commercial Izaura TV has shown K-dramas in recent years; however, after Netflix's dominance, Hungarian national TV networks no longer carry Korean TV series in their programming.

The rise of K-pop culture in Hungary can be traced back to 2012 when Psy's "Gangnam Style" became extremely popular on Hungarian radio stations and social media platforms. (Gajzágó & Shim, 2023). Many K-pop concerts and fan-gathering events have since taken place in Budapest. The Korean Wave has had a significant impact on Hungary, with an increasing number of people becoming fans of K-pop music, consuming Korean content, and attending Korean-related events. (Gajzágó & Shim, 2023). The Korean Cultural Center's online site has over 20,000 followers and constantly increases visitor numbers with Hallyu-related events and workshops.

During and after the pandemic, the 'Hallyu market' has flourished, as seen by the emergence of internet businesses offering Korean beauty items and K-pop merchandise furthermore multiple language courses started operating by The Korean Sejong Institute in Budapest (Gajzágó, 2023). BTS songs, which have been trending globally, are now played not just on radio programs but also in shopping malls and are often utilized in Hungarian music talent programs as well (Gajzágó, 2023).

2.5.3. Characteristics of the Hungarian Audience

According to Gajzágó and Shim's (2023) research, Hungarians were drawn to Korean culture because it felt exotic, and Korean music and dramas were unlike those of European or American roots. They appreciate the rhythm and tone of the language, which is full of respect. As is usual, Hungarian fans initially encountered Korean culture through K-pop music, which led to an appreciation for K-dramas (Gajzágó & Shim, 2023). According to Gajzágó and Shim (2023), there is a considerable association between being a fan of K-culture in Hungary and being a fan of Japanese or Chinese cultural products, with more than 76% of fans stating that they were lovers of Japanese or Chinese cultural content before becoming Hallyu enthusiasts. Hungarians' purchasing power for Korean products is most common in fashion items, merchandise, beauty products, and tourist services (Gajzágó & Shim, 2023).

3. Research

Netflix has emerged as a global leader among digital streaming platforms, which has altered how people discover and interact with content. K-dramas have attracted a lot of interest within Netflix's collection of series. Content providers and consumers alike need to comprehend the many aspects that play a role in the promotion and viewing of Korean dramas. This thesis's main research goal is to gain insight into the marketing techniques used by Netflix to promote K-dramas to international viewers by measuring viewer behavior, preferences, and satisfaction in quantitative terms. Through the analysis of the audience, the aim is to find trends that shed light on the relationships that exist between viewer engagement, content promotion, and overall satisfaction with the content.

This study aims to investigate how audience interactions on social media affect the exposure and popularity of K-dramas. Evaluate how viewer recommendations and comments influence Netflix's promotion of K-dramas and how content localization plays an important role in the dissemination of K-dramas. This thesis is specifically focused on the Hungarian Netflix users' experience since this field has not been investigated too much so far. The survey aims to gather data on Hungarian Netflix users' awareness and engagement with K-dramas, their role in terms of recommendations as well as their opinions on the effectiveness of social media marketing in promoting these shows.

3.1 Research Methodology and Data Collection

To fully comprehend the core market and its customers, this article first examined the relevant literature about Hallyu with a special focus on K-Dramas. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of the marketing process, a literature review was conducted on Netflix's business model and marketing tools. To collect a large amount of data, which is reliable, a quantitative research method was used. The sampling method used was a simple random probability method to produce results that are representative of the whole population with minimized systematic bias. However, there might be limitations such as repetitively choosing a certain class of sample or ignoring further new information the population may have.

This thesis surveyed Hungarian Netflix users to learn more about their viewing habits, and exposure to K-dramas, and analyze the impact of Netflix's advertising strategy on them. An online questionnaire was made with the help of Google Forms and was sent out on Facebook to be filled out, K-drama Facebook groups helped the spread of the questionnaire. The survey

targeted people with a high exposure to K-dramas as well as people with no experience of such content. The questionnaire consisted of 27 questions, a mix of multiple-choice, scale, and open-ended questions as well. In two weeks, 564 answers were collected. The responses were analyzed by Excel's statistical tools using both descriptive and inferential statistics as well as correlation and Chi-square tests. This provided an exact and reliable data analysis for the research questions (Rn) and hypotheses (Hn) that were formulated in alignment with the literature review.

The research questions based on the literature review and the hypotheses formulated in alignment with the research questions are the following:

Netflix uses a built-in recommendation system that highly relies on viewer feedback and watching preferences analysis. Measuring the system and whether it is a useful tool for creating a unique customer experience is needed. As well as assessing how much subscribers help Netflix in the shaping of recommendation creation by giving feedback should be measured.

R1: What impact do viewer feedback and recommendations have on shaping the promotion of K-dramas on Netflix?

H1: Viewer feedback and recommendations play a pivotal role in shaping the promotion of K-dramas on Netflix, contributing to improved content discovery and viewer satisfaction.

Netflix combines online and offline marketing with content localization, personal recommendations, and social media interactions. The impact of these strategies on the Hungarian audience is still unmeasured.

R2: How do the marketing strategies used by Netflix influence the viewership of K-dramas on Netflix among the Hungarian audience?

H2: The effectiveness of marketing strategies correlates with the viewership of K-dramas on Netflix.

Netflix employs a combination of offline and online marketing, from which social media is an active channel for communicating with their followers and engaging them effectively, we should examine the Hungarian social media usage tendencies to get a better picture of its effectiveness.

R3: How does Netflix leverage social media platforms and online communities to engage viewers and promote K-dramas in Hungary?

H3: The effective utilization of social media for promoting K-dramas is positively associated with a greater likelihood of active participation within K-drama-related groups, leading to increased discussions, recommendations, and user-generated content among viewers.

Social media played an important role in the marketing of Squid Game as seen in the TikTok hashtags and Google Trends research globally, so we should investigate its success among the Hungarian audience.

R4: How have the social media marketing strategies employed for "Squid Game" contributed to its global success and how have they influenced viewer engagement in Hungary?

H4: The social media marketing techniques used for Squid Game, have played a pivotal role in its global success.

4. Research Results and Interpretations

This quantitative research was based on an online questionnaire to gather relevant data that can be examined through statistical calculations. The research included questions regarding the Hungarian audience's awareness of K-dramas, their behavior, preferences, and the influence of marketing techniques used by Netflix on them. The questionnaire featured 27 questions of which one was an open-ended question, including demographic questions as well. The participants who filled out the survey were random, both Netflix users and non-users provided answers as well as frequent K-drama watchers and ones who have never watched K-dramas.

Demographic questions were essential to see the overall characteristics of the sample, the distribution of age, gender, and living place was collected in one table offering a simple summary of the respondents. (Table 2)

Table 2: Demographic Analysis of the Survey Participants

Demography								
Gender			Age groups				Living place	
Female	539	95,57%	under 18	25	4,43%	Capital city	174	30,85%
Male	23	4,08%	18-24	115	20,39%	City	305	54,08%
Other	2	0,35%	25-34	106	18,79%	Village	85	15,07%
			35-44	104	18,44%			
			45-54	129	22,87%			
			55-64	61	10,82%			
			65 and above	24	4,26%			

Age group-Gender Distribution				
	Female	Male	Other	
under 18	23	2	0	4,43%
18-24	105	9	1	20,39%
25-34	102	4	0	18,79%
35-44	101	3	0	18,44%
45-54	124	4	1	22,87%
55-64	60	1	0	10,82%
65 and above	24	0	0	4,26%
Total	564			100%

Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

The high number of participants (564) shows that the topic was interesting to them, and they were willing to fill out the questionnaire. The difference between genders is however very distinct with 23 male respondents compared to the 539 female respondents. Another surprising finding can be seen in the age of the respondents, the highest participation rate can be seen in the 45-54 age group (22,87%) followed by the 18-24 age group (20,39%). This can prove that both the younger and middle-aged groups are open to this exotic cultural product, furthermore,

older age groups such as 55-64 (10,82%) and 65 and above (4,26%) are also active members of this community, proving that digital services are not limited to youngsters. The age distribution strengthens the fact that K-dramas can target a very wide range of viewers. The localization of the respondents based on their living place suggests that K-dramas are more popular among citizens (54,08%) compared to villagers (15,07%). However, a significant difference can be seen in the ratio of participants living in the capital city (30,85%) compared to people living in cities (54,08%). This finding proves the idea that K-dramas can be better localized to citizens since they are under a bigger influence of people recommending such content.

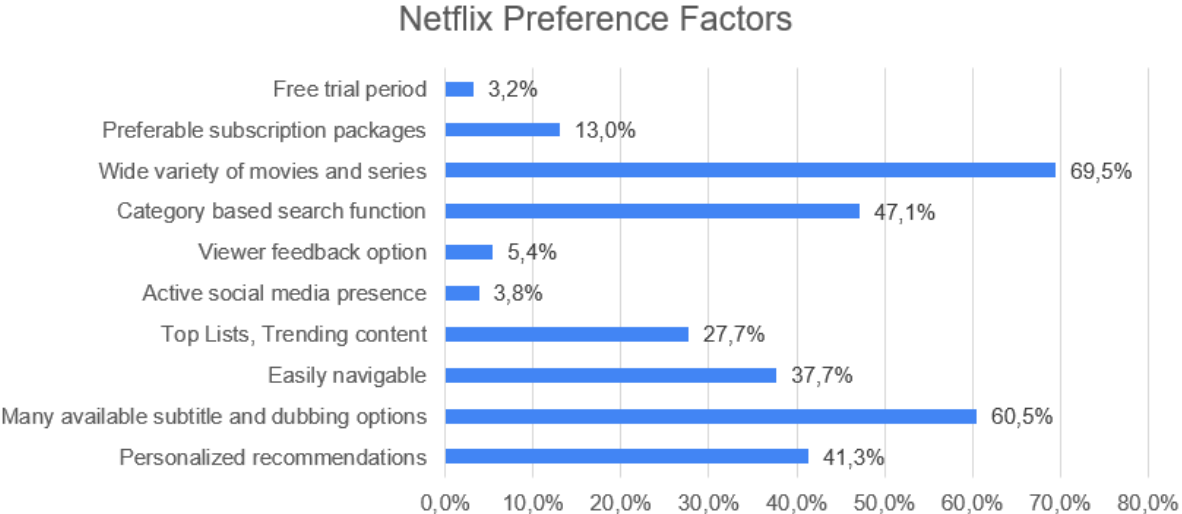
4.1. Netflix-Related Survey Question Results

Participants were asked about their relationship with Netflix. The vast majority of respondents are current Netflix users (84,75%), 4,08% used to be a Netflix subscriber in the past and only 11,17% of the respondents said that they have not used Netflix so far. This proves the fact that Netflix is currently very popular among the Hungarian audience. Respondents who were current or past Netflix users were asked a few more questions. The regularity of Netflix content watching was assessed. 42,51% of respondents are watching content daily, and the second largest group answered with a weekly regularity (39,32%). In comparison with the less frequent categories monthly basis was selected by 13,57%, while the rare and never categories are barely mentioned, reaching 4,39% and 0,2% only. This finding proves that Netflix could build up strong customer loyalty by entertaining its subscribers with an appealing content variety.

The survey contained a question about the main preference factors regarding Netflix. Participants were asked to select the reason why they prefer Netflix over other streaming services, the results are presented in Figure 10. The most selected reason was the wide variety of movies and series, chosen by 69,5% of the respondents. As was mentioned in the literature review as well, the content variety is one of Netflix's biggest assets. The second most selected answer is the available dubbing and subtitle options, with 60,5%. In the content localization strategy, these two components play a huge role as proven by the survey outcome. The category-based search function (47,1%) and personalized recommendation system (41,3%) are also very significant factors for the respondents suggesting that the Netflix algorithm is a key component and essential tool for earning customer satisfaction. Easy navigable surface was also selected by 37,7% suggesting that convenient user experience is important. Free trial periods and subscription packages are not considered that important for the respondents compared to other streaming services, even though some of Netflix's competitors do not offer a free trial period.

Monthly subscription packages are quite in the same price range, so perhaps that is the reason behind this outcome. The most surprising fact is the shallow social media presence option with only 3,8%, meaning that participants do not consider Netflix's social media presence as relevant compared to other services. Viewer feedback is only selected by 5,4%, resulting in the function itself is not a competitive advantage in the eyes of respondents, however, Netflix's algorithm is heavily dependent on that function. Other answers were collected as well, which the chart does not contain, however, it is worth mentioning that many respondents added to the list that Netflix is advertisement free which is a very crucial characteristic for the subscribers.

Figure 10: Participants' Preferences of Netflix



Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

As a next step, to find an answer for the first research question that is: (R1) What impact do viewer feedback and recommendations have on shaping the promotion of K-dramas on Netflix? Participants were asked whether they provided feedback to Netflix when they liked or disliked content since this is essential data for Netflix to be able to improve its recommendation system. Furthermore, participants were asked to indicate on a scale from 1-10 how much they are influenced by viewer feedback when choosing new content. The regularity of providing feedback was assessed alongside the importance of viewer feedback when choosing new content to watch, the results are presented in a contingency table (Table 3). Scale numbers from 1-5 are indicated as a low importance of viewer feedback when choosing new content to watch, while numbers from 6-10 are indicated as high importance of viewer feedback.

Table 3: Contingency table supporting H1.

	Frequency of giving viewer feedback to Netflix					Total
	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rare	Never	
Low Importance of Viewer Feedback when choosing a series to watch (scale from 1-5)	76	64	74	56	81	351
High Importance of Viewer feedback when choosing a series to watch (scale from 6-10)	28	26	36	28	32	150
Total	104	90	110	84	113	501

Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

Assessing the result of providing feedback to Netflix itself, we can conclude that the outcome is very surprising. The two most popular categories were never providing feedback (22,6% of the participants) and always providing feedback (20,8% of the participants) which is very contradictory. We can say that Netflix users either always provide feedback or never do such activity. Answers provided for the scale question resulted in 36,1% of participants answering with a 1 are not at all influenced by previous viewer feedback. The second largest group chose number 5 (13,2%) meaning that they avoided the precise answer to the question. The high importance of viewer feedback category resulted a 29,94% while the low importance category was chosen by 70,06%, meaning that the largest part of participants are not influenced by viewer feedback when choosing new content to watch.

To see how much feedback provided is associated with the importance of viewer feedback when choosing a series to watch, a hypothesis was set: (H1) Viewer feedback and recommendations play a pivotal role in shaping the promotion of K-dramas on Netflix, contributing to improved content discovery and viewer satisfaction.

To test the above-mentioned association both an Anova and a Chi-square test were used. The null hypothesis said that there is no association between the importance of viewer feedback when choosing a series and the viewer feedback providing frequency. In comparison, the alternative hypothesis suggested there is an association between these two. For the Anova test a P-value of 0,176 was calculated which means that we fail to reject the null hypothesis, there is no significant association between the regularity of providing feedback and the importance of feedback. This result suggested that I did not have enough evidence to prove the existence of the association, so I calculated with a Chi-square test as well. This provided the same result

with a P-value of 0,825 meaning that again we failed to reject to null hypothesis. The Chi-square value (1,508) suggests a relatively small difference between the feedback providing regularity and the importance of feedback.

The findings indicate that, based on the data, viewer feedback could not be a significant factor in determining how viewers find new material and how satisfied they are with K-dramas on Netflix. The lack of significance does not indicate that there is no association, since viewer behavior may be influenced by other factors that were not taken into consideration in this study.

4.2. K-Drama Related Survey Question Results

Participants’ exposure to K-dramas was assessed as the next step in the survey. (Table 4) Firstly, they were asked whether they had seen a K-drama before or not. Then who answered with a yes which was 97,5% of the respondents were questioned further. Those who answered with a no (2,5%) were asked whether they have seen the series Squid Game and surprisingly 3 out of the 14 answered with a yes, indicating that the series’ audience is unfortunately not conscious about watching South Korean productions.

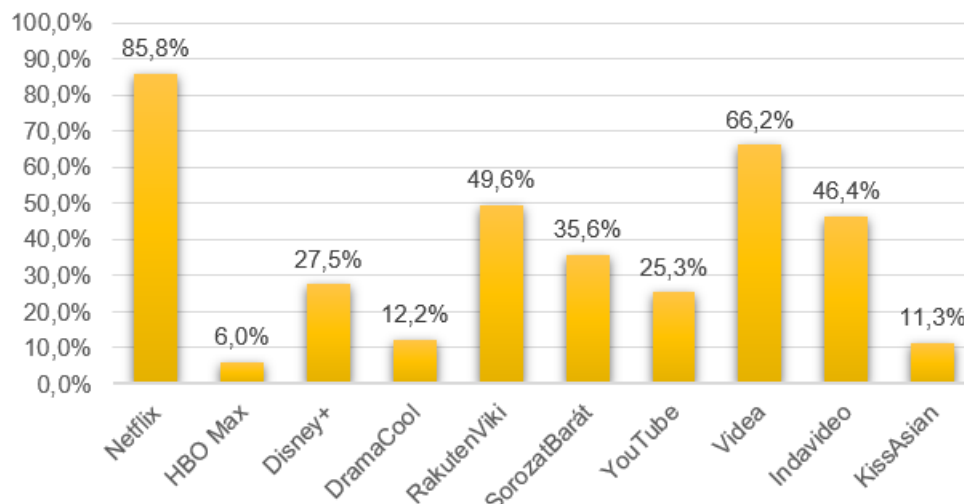
Table 4: Assessing table of K-drama-watching related questions

Has ever watched K-drama		K-drama watching regularity		K-drama consumption in the past year	
Yes	97,5%	Daily	54,8%	0 series	1,6%
No	2,5%	Weekly	27,3%	1-5 series	13,3%
		Monthly	10,7%	6-10 series	16,8%
		Rare	6,7%	11-15 series	14,0%
		Never	0,5%	16-20 series	13,1%
				20+ series	41,2%

Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

K-drama viewers were asked about the regularity of K-drama watching and their consumption in the past year. The vast majority is watching such content daily (54,8%) and saw more than 20 series in the past year (41,2%). This finding indicates the eagerness of the K-drama fandom. Weekly watching regularity is taking the second place with 27,3% other categories do not show much difference. The ratio of respondents who never watch K-dramas is relatively low (0,5%). Series consumption rate indicates a not significant difference between 1-20 series. The 1,6% answering with 0 series shows a lack of interest in the past year’s K-drama variety.

Figure 11: Distribution of the most used platforms for K-drama watching



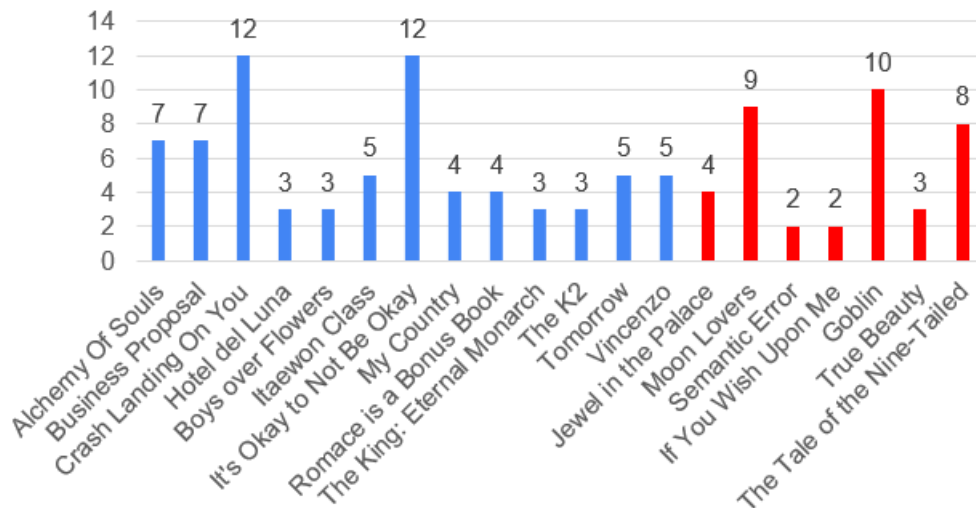
Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

The platforms where participants follow K-dramas were surveyed better to understand the distribution of the most liked streaming platforms. (Figure 11) It is no surprise that Netflix came in first place with 85,8% of the respondents choosing it. Competitors of Netflix such as HBO Max (6%) and Disney+ (27,5%) who also offer K-dramas to watch, were chosen significantly low. In comparison free service providers are very popular among the Hungarian audience, and many of these platforms have self-volunteering subtitle makers. Videa is taking the second leading position with 66,2%, followed by Rakuten Viki (49,6%) and Indavideo (46,4%). These findings prove that Netflix has the best variety of K-dramas since participants chose this platform in the first place, however, the presence of free online streaming service providers is a huge competitor for Netflix, even though they are full of advertisements and are usually low-quality.

An open-ended question was asked about writing one K-drama title that is the favorite of the participant. Those who follow a lot of K-dramas found it very hard to write only one, both Hungarian, English, and even Korean titles were present in the answers, indicating that these are the main languages in which participants know the title of the series they watch. For easier assessing reasons each of the answers was translated into the English title. A total of 308 answers were collected for this optional question, featuring 87 titles. The main goal of this question was to see the ratio of the most liked K-dramas available on Netflix. A surprising 77% of most liked titles are available on Netflix, while only 23% are not available. This finding proves that Netflix is very considerate about offering the most popular series and is effectively creating its own Netflix Original K-dramas. The most liked K-dramas were assessed based on

the number of people writing them which can be seen in Figure 12. Available and non-available series are presented in different colors for clearance reasons, blue means it is available, and red means it is not available on Netflix.

Figure 12: Participants' most-liked K-dramas



Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

Participants chose the series *Crash Landing on You* and *It's Okay to Not Be Okay* the most. All the series mentioned were part of Top Lists on Netflix. On the other hand, out of the not available on Netflix series *Goblin* and *Moon Lovers* were chosen the most. There are current discussions about season 2 of *Moon Lovers* possibly being available on Netflix. For *The Tale of the Nine-Tailed* Netflix has set a remind me when available button already. *True Beauty* is only available in a few regions on Netflix. It can be seen that Netflix has high intentions to be able to stream the most popular series but difficulties in cooperation with South Korean production companies arise.

Survey participants were asked about their preferences on how they like to watch a K-drama. This is an important factor related to content localization since dubbing and subtitling is an effective marketing tool. A surprising 93,8% answered that enjoy K-dramas in their original Korean language and put a Hungarian subtitle. Since most of the K-dramas are not dubbed into Hungarian, the subtitle availability is a great substitute. Only 12,4% answered with Hungarian dubbing which implies a further question whether the availability of dubbing is a key factor when watching a K-drama. Other English options were not that popular which means that for the Hungarian audience content localization is essential, so Netflix should keep providing subtitles for their K-dramas and make more dubbed versions as well.

Table 5: Influencing factors to watch a K-drama.

	Mean	St.Dev.
Recommended by a friend/family member	4,08	2,12
Cultural interest	5,22	1,89
Interesting story line	6,05	1,53
Captivating music and scenes	5,30	1,89
Emotionality	5,45	1,79
Actor/Actress's performance	5,71	1,72
Historical background	4,71	1,97
Hungarian dubbing is available	1,65	1,48
Language learning possibility	4,18	2,29
One of my favourite celebrity is playing a role	5,50	1,92

Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

The results of a scale question regarding influencing factors to watch a K-drama are assessed in Table 5. The scale range was between 1-7, participants were asked to indicate their influence level on the categories. The main of each value and their related standard deviation are presented in the table. The most important one came out as the interesting storyline with an average score of 6,05. The least important is the Hungarian dubbing option with a score of 1,65, this provides an answer to our previous question about whether dubbing is a key factor in watching a K-drama, and the result is a clear no. The most dispersed results concerning the mean are in the case of family/friend recommendation and language learning possibility, meaning that answers provided for these two have an average difference of 2,12 and 2,29 scores from the mean. It is worth mentioning that the presence of the actor or actress and their performance are high influencing factors, which further strengthens the idea presented in the literature review that these celebrities are a big help in the promotion of K-dramas. The same goes for the emotionality, captivating music, and scenes which were also part of the literature review and can confirm their importance in the Hungarian audience.

4.3. Marketing-Related Survey Question Results

Firstly, to get into the topic of marketing participants were asked whether they had seen advertisements made for K-dramas. A high 72,4% answered that they have seen such advertisements on social media platforms. 48,2% of the participants answered that they see advertisements on the platform of Netflix in the form of trailers and recommendations. Street advertisements are not a popular way of marketing in Hungary in the case of Netflix so only a relatively 4% have seen advertisements in this form. 12,2% indicated that they have never seen any form of advertisement made by Netflix.

The most popular social media platforms where participants follow Netflix-related content were Facebook (57,3%), Instagram (37,1%), YouTube (32,7%), and TikTok (30,9%). 23,6% indicated that they did not follow such content on social media. A few calculations were made to see which age group uses each social media platform the most. In the case of the Facebook age group, 45-54 is the most active, followed by the 34-44 age participants. The younger generation, age group 18-24 rules the platform of Instagram and TikTok as well. Those who did not follow Netflix content on social media platforms were the 25-34 and 45-54 age participants. These findings suggest that Netflix should keep its focus on social media in terms of marketing. Regarding the Hungarian audience, Facebook content should target middle-aged people while Instagram and TikTok content should be made for young adults. Also, recommendations and trailers on the platform of Netflix should keep going on, as it came out as the second largest place for advertisement.

Participants were asked to rate on a scale from 1-8 the perceived influence of marketing techniques used by Netflix. This leads me to the second research question (R2): How do the marketing strategies used by Netflix influence the viewership of K-dramas on Netflix among the Hungarian audience? Social media, advertisements, Netflix's personalized recommendations, and Netflix's original influence scores were assessed to be able to test H2: The effectiveness of marketing strategies correlates with the viewership of K-dramas on Netflix. Advertisements and Netflix recommendations were analyzed with a hypothesis test but Netflix Originals, social media, and the importance of critics' reviews were only measured with an average score based on the answers. Out of 8 Netflix Originals got a 3,1 which indicates that for the viewers it is not that important that content is exclusively produced by Netflix. Critic's review is not considered a marketing technique however, I would like to know how important is for K-drama watchers, an average of 3,4 was calculated meaning that is not a relevant

influencing factor to watch a K-drama. Social media influence was assessed in the case of Squid Game in H4.

Netflix’s personalized recommendations and advertisements were tested separately with a point biserial correlation to assess the relationship between the binary variable, regularity of watching K-dramas (often and not often), and between the continuous variable, the perceived importance of advertisements or personalized recommendations (the scale scores for each). The regularity of watching K-dramas was separated into two categories, rare and sometimes answers were the not-so-often category (binary value of 0) while weekly and daily watching regularity was the often category indicated with a binary value of 1. The related scores given for each category were measured separately. (Table 6)

Table 6: Illustration of the measures regarding H2.

	Importance of Recommendation			Importance of Advertisement		
	Average score	Standard deviation	Correlation	Average score	Standard deviation	Correlation
Regularity of watching K-dramas						
Often (weekly, daily)	3,59	2,26	-0,11	3,8	2,23	-0,07
Not often (sometimes, rare)	4,25	2,14		4,21	2,11	

Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

In the case of Netflix recommendation, the null hypothesis was the following: There is no significant correlation between the regularity of watching K-dramas on Netflix and the perceived influence of Netflix recommendations. The alternative hypothesis suggested that there is a significant correlation between the regularity of watching K-dramas on Netflix and the perceived influence of Netflix recommendations. The calculations resulted in a -0,113-correlation coefficient, indicating a weak negative relationship between the regularity of watching K-dramas and the perceived influence of Netflix’s recommendations. Meaning that as the regularity of watching K-dramas increases the perceived influence of recommendations tends to decrease slightly. With a t-test a relatively small p-value was calculated, falling below the given significance level meaning that we reject the null hypothesis. This suggests a statistically significant correlation between the regularity of watching K-dramas on Netflix and the perceived influence of recommendations.

In the case of advertisements, a null hypothesis suggests no significant correlation between the regularity of watching K-dramas on Netflix and the perceived influence of advertisements, and an alternative hypothesis suggests a significant correlation between the regularity of watching K-dramas on Netflix and the perceived influence of advertisements were set. The calculations

resulted in a $-0,07$ -correlation coefficient, indicating a weak negative relationship between the regularity of watching K-dramas and the perceived influence of advertisements. Meaning that as the regularity increases, the perceived influence of advertisements also tends to decrease slightly. Calculating with a t-test I got a relatively small p-value falling below the given significance level meaning that we reject the null hypothesis. This suggests a statistically significant correlation between the regularity of watching K-dramas on Netflix and the perceived influence of advertisements.

Both correlations are relatively close to zero, indicating a weak relationship. In statistical terms, the correlations are not strong. Limitations could involve individual differences as some may be influenced more by recommendations or advertisements regardless of their viewing regularity.

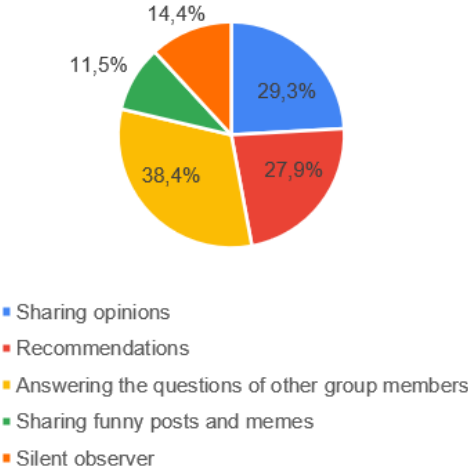
As a next part social media activity of the participants was assessed to be able to answer R3: How does Netflix leverage social media platforms and online communities to engage viewers and promote K-dramas in Hungary? Participants were first asked whether they shared posts, funny jokes, and memes related to K-dramas. The vast majority answered with a no (44,5%) followed by those who rarely share such content (27,1%). 18,4% said they share such content sometimes and only 10% are actively doing this activity. This result indicated that the Hungarian audience does not have a big influence on social media sharing. Secondly, participants were asked whether they were part of any K-drama-related group on Facebook. My research showed that Facebook groups are the largest community for K-drama-related content in the case of Hungary. A surprising 77,6% answered that they are part of such a group while only 22,4% are those who are not taking part in this community.

To measure if there is a relationship between being part of K-drama related group and sharing K-drama-related content on social media a hypothesis was set (H3): The effective utilization of social media for promoting K-dramas is positively associated with a greater likelihood of active participation within K-drama related groups, leading to increased discussions, recommendations, and user-generated content among viewers. The null hypothesis suggests that there is no significant difference in the regularity of recommending and sharing K-drama content on social media between participants who are members of K-drama-related groups on Facebook and those who are not. The alternative suggests that participants who are members of K-drama-related groups on Facebook are likelier to recommend and share K-drama content regularly on social media than those who are not.

A Chi-square test was conducted based on a contingency table where being part of a Facebook group (yes, no) and regularity of sharing K-drama-related content (never; and sometimes category included all the other categories when participants answered that they share content) were measured. A p-value of 0.0013 was calculated which is less than the significance level of 0.05, therefore, we reject the null hypothesis, which means that there is a significant association between being a member of a K-drama-related group on Facebook and the regularity of recommending and sharing K-drama content on social media.

Between those who are part of the K-drama community on Facebook, the usual activities were collected. (Figure 13) The option of answering the questions of other group members was the most popular with 38,4% of participants choosing it. This suggests a significant interest in active engagement and interaction within the community. Sharing opinions (29,3%) and recommending (27,9%) were the second most popular activities highlighting that members not only seek information but also actively express their thoughts and preferences. This suggests a dynamic and engaged community where members are willing to share their viewpoints and recommendations. Funny posts and meme sharing were only chosen by 11,5%. This might imply that the community is less focused on entertainment-related content. Silent observers are also part of the community (14,4%). Meaning that these members prefer to stay in the background, reading posts and comments without actively engaging in conversations. It could be because of a lack of confidence in expressing opinions, or simply a personal preference for taking a passive role in the community. Overall, these findings suggest that the K-drama community on Facebook is characterized by active participation, information-sharing, and mutual support.

Figure 13: Distribution of the K-drama-related Facebook group activities



Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

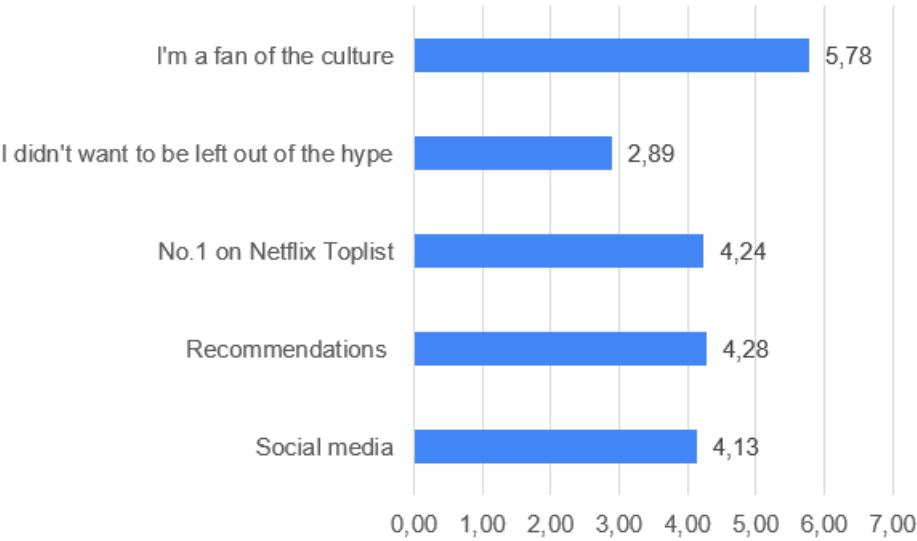
4.4. Squid Game-Related Survey Question Results

As the literature review conducted Squid Game had a huge impact on the notoriety of K-dramas worldwide by landing as Netflix's most-watched series. That is why I dedicate a chapter to analyzing the series' success with the Hungarian audience.

Out of the 564 survey participants 65,1% had seen the series. For 15% it was the first K-drama that they ever watched. They rated the series an overall 7,95 out of 10, which indicates a very satisfying viewer experience. They were asked where they had heard about Squid Game, a strong 265 participants chose Netflix recommendation while social media got an overall 310 votes, and friends and family recommendations were chosen by 132 participants. A question was raised to further prove the increased attention on K-dramas after the premiere of Squid Game. Participants were asked to rank on a scale from 1-10 to indicate how much they got interested in watching other K-dramas after watching Squid Game. An overall 6,4 score was calculated which implies a strong connection.

A scale question was raised regarding a couple of influencing factors to watch Squid Game. Participants had to indicate from 1-8, how much were they influenced by each factor to watch the series. Average scores were calculated for each category (Figure 14). The highest score can be observed for being a fan of the culture (5,78), since the majority of participants are regular K-drama followers, they are led by their curiosity and not by other influencing factors. The hype regarding the series is not negligible, therefore being left out of the hype could be a possible factor to watch it, however, only a 2,89 score was given for this category, meaning that it is not a pushing factor for the Hungarian audience. An almost equal score can be seen in the case of being part of the Netflix Toplist (4,24), recommendations by acquaintances (4,28), and social media (4,13). This suggests that these factors are important but do not influence the intention to watch Squid Game.

Figure 14: Average scores are given for the perceived influence of watching Squid Game



Source: Own editing with the help of Excel based on questionnaire data

Based on the literature review social media played the biggest role in the promotion of Squid Game, to further test it in the Hungarian audience a research question (R4) was raised: How have the social media marketing strategies employed for "Squid Game" contributed to its global success and how have they influenced viewer engagement in Hungary? Furthermore, H4 was also set: The social media marketing techniques used for Squid Game, have played a pivotal role in its global success.

To test the hypothesis a Chi-square test was used between whether Squid Game was the first K-drama seen and between the scale result of social media influence on watching the series. The null hypothesis suggests that there is no association between whether Squid Game was the first K-drama a person has seen and the scale result of social media influence. On the other hand, the alternative hypothesis says that there is an association between whether Squid Game was the first K-drama a person has seen and the scale result of social media influence.

The p-value of 0.0029 was calculated which, is less than 0.05 meaning that I have enough evidence to reject the null hypothesis. Resulting that there is a significant association between whether Squid Game was the first K-drama seen and the scale result of social media influence. This further proves what was stated in the literature review, the impact of social media for first-time K-drama watchers is very impactful and could lead to the international success of the series.

5. Discussion

This chapter is dedicated to an overview of my research goals along with the interpretation of my research results. The findings will be compared with the literature review for a deeper understanding of the topic. The main purpose of this thesis is to explore the marketing techniques that Netflix uses to promote K-dramas internationally. In my literature review, I explored these techniques and throughout the research, I examined their success among the Hungarian audience. By focusing on the Hungarian audience, I aimed to provide insights into the effectiveness of Netflix's marketing strategies specifically in this market. These insights provided a whole picture of Netflix's marketing strategy.

In the literature review, the main marketing techniques used by Netflix were collected, these included algorithm-created personal recommendations for a great user experience, content localization with dubbing and subtitling for each market, diverse social media activity on each platform, and original, innovative content creation. In alignment with these strategies, my research questions were formulated, involving the impact of personal recommendation on the promotion of K-dramas, increased viewer engagement as a result of marketing strategies, the role of online communities in social media marketing, and finally the importance of social media in case of the promotion of Squid Game.

1.

Results for Netflix usage proved that Netflix is currently very popular among the Hungarian audience for K-drama watching. Content variety was highlighted as an entertaining tool for the audience, by using this Netflix could create a strong and loyal customer base in Hungary. Personal recommendations created by the Netflix algorithm were further strengthened as an effective marketing tool for earning customer satisfaction. Viewer feedback giving option was however not so popular withing Hungarian users, which can cause difficulties for the algorithm to work efficiently.

To see how much feedback provided is associated with the importance of viewer feedback when choosing a series to watch, a hypothesis was tested. The findings indicate that, based on the data, viewer feedback could not be a significant factor in determining how viewers find new material and how satisfied they are with K-dramas on Netflix. The lack of significance does not indicate that there is no association, since viewer behavior may be influenced by other factors that were not taken into consideration during this hypothesis.

2.

As for K-drama viewing habits and the unique behavior of the Hungarian audience, the following were found. As a result of the survey participants the vast majority are eager K-drama watchers so their preferences could be analyzed precisely. Even the sample size of 564 submitted survey forms proves that this community is highly active and helpful in providing useful information. Those who submitted the forms and had not seen any K-drama before were quite low, but because of random sampling, their responses helped me to make assumptions about the whole population. Unfortunately, my findings concluded that some participants are not conscious about watching K-dramas, since they indicated that they had never seen such content before but had seen Squid Game and they did not know that it is a Korean production.

I examined which platforms are the most used to watch K-dramas and Netflix landed in the first place leaving behind their competitors such as HBO Max, and Disney+. However, it is worth mentioning that free websites where people can download K-dramas were chosen the second most, which means that in Hungary these free websites are the biggest threat to Netflix.

Participants' favorite K-dramas were assessed as well, showing that two-thirds can be accessed through Netflix further proving that Netflix's content variety is prominent. Out of that one-third, some are not available to watch in Hungary but are part of Netflix's repertoire. This led me to a further investigation of content localization.

Unfortunately, there are many K-dramas not available to watch with Hungarian settings. Hungarian subtitles came out as an essential content localization tool since the vast majority prefer to watch a K-drama with subtitles. Hungarian dubbing is still limited in the case of Korean productions, but according to my findings, Hungarian viewers do not see that as a problem since the vast majority prefer to watch these shows in their original Korean language.

In the literature review, the presence of the actor or actress and their performance, emotionality, captivating music, scenes, and unique storyline were mentioned as key components in K-dramas. My findings further strengthen this idea since the Hungarian audience confirmed their importance as well.

3.

Findings related to the effectiveness of marketing techniques were examined through two various ways. First, I assessed the distribution of advertisement forms, social media landed first place followed by recommendations. Street advertisements are not a popular way of marketing in Hungary in the case of Netflix.

The most popular social media platforms where participants follow Netflix-related content are Facebook and Instagram. Based on my observations Facebook content is relevant for middle-aged people while Instagram and TikTok content are for young adults.

Two separate hypotheses were tested regarding the correlation between the effectiveness of marketing strategies and viewership of K-dramas on Netflix. One in case of recommendations and one in advertisements. Both correlations were relatively close to zero, indicating a weak relationship between the regularity of watching K-dramas and the perceived influence of Netflix's recommendations and advertisements. This means that as the regularity of watching K-dramas increases the perceived influence of recommendations and advertisements tends to decrease slightly. This result indicated that the Hungarian audience is not heavily influenced by social media sharing. Individual differences could occur as some may be influenced more by recommendations or advertisements regardless of their viewing regularity. This finding is a new addition to the literature review, where the results implied that recommendation and advertisement have a big role in the promotion of K-dramas, however, their impact does not increase the regularity of consumption of this content.

The other hypothesis tested the significance of online communities in the promotion of K-dramas. The literature review revealed that K-drama communities have a strong role in making discussions and sharing K-drama-related content. In my research, Facebook communities were examined since they are the most active and largest group in Hungary. Two-thirds of the participants are taking part in K-drama groups on Facebook. The hypothesis test showed a significant association between being a member of a K-drama-related group on Facebook and the regularity of recommending and sharing K-drama content on social media. This can further strengthen the idea presented in the literature review.

Findings related to the most popular activities in these groups were the following. There is a significant interest in active engagement and interaction within the community, members not only seek information but also actively express their thoughts and preferences. This suggests a dynamic and engaged community where members are willing to share their viewpoints and

recommendations and help each other. Meme and funny post-sharing were a rarely done activity implying that the community is less focused on entertainment-related content. These findings suggest that the K-drama community on Facebook is characterized by active participation, information-sharing, and mutual support.

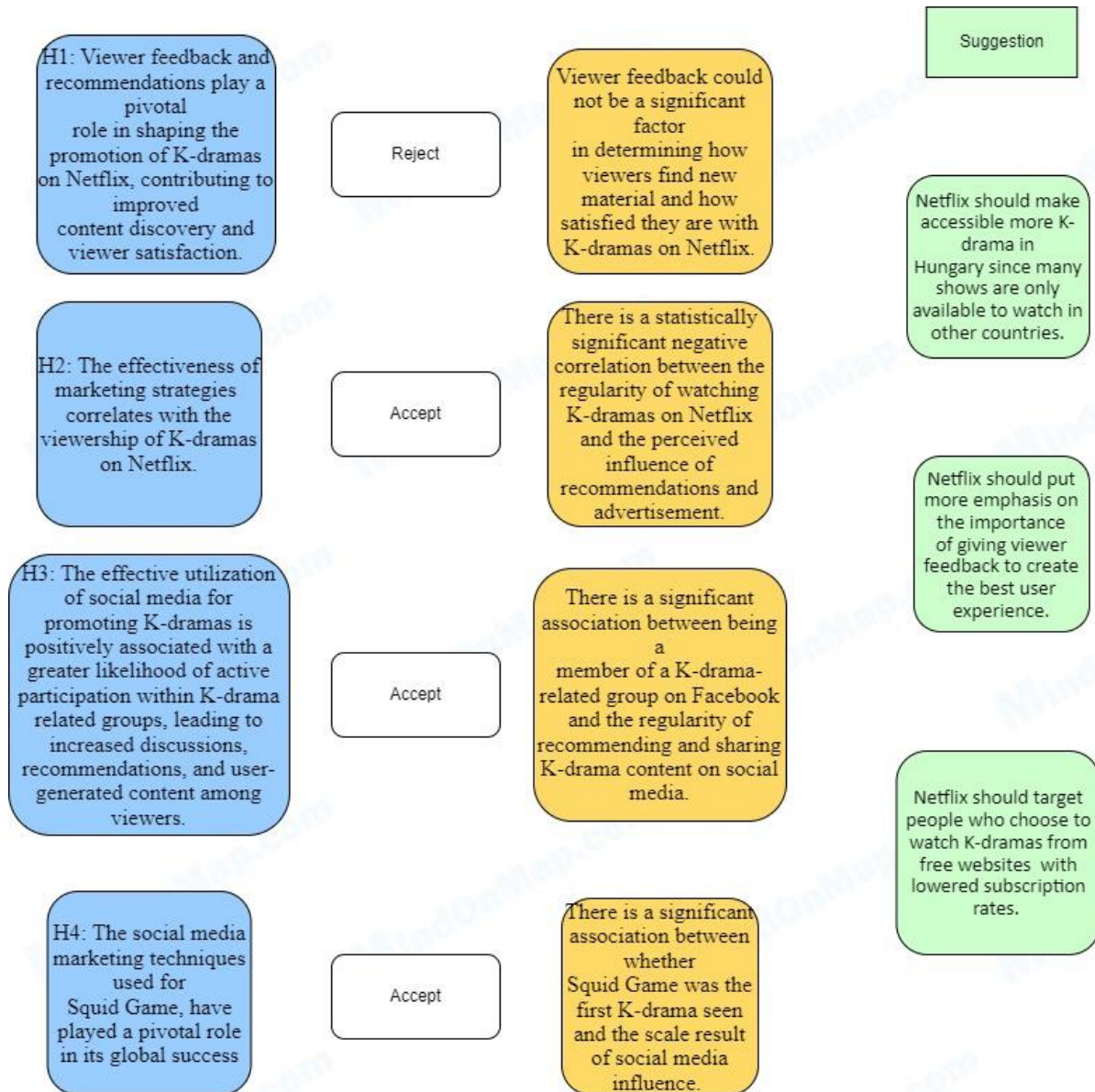
4.

As the literature review conducted Squid Game had a huge influence on the worldwide image of K-dramas, and social media, was the key component of the series' success. As the Google Trends analysis presented the interest in K-dramas rapidly started growing after the premiere of Squid Game. This was tested in the case of the Hungarian audience. Survey participants 65,1% had seen the series. They heard about it through social media in the first place, and then in second place as a recommendation by Netflix as a Toplist series.

A test was conducted between whether Squid Game was the first K-drama seen and between social media influence on watching the series. As a result, there is a significant association that further proves what was stated in the literature review, the impact of social media for first-time K-drama watchers is very impactful and could lead to the international success of the series.

A few influencing factors to watch the series were measured, where being a fan of the culture got the most votes. Since the majority of participants are regular K-drama followers, they are led by their curiosity about the culture and not by other influencing factors. The hype regarding the series is not negligible, therefore being left out of the hype could be a possible factor to examine, however, it was not a pushing factor for the Hungarian audience according to my findings.

Figure 15: Illustration of the findings



Source: Own editing with the help of Mind on Map <https://www.mindonmap.com/>

6. Conclusion

K-dramas, as part of the famous Korean Wave, are rapidly increasing their follower base among international viewers, and their strong presence is not negligible anymore in Hungary. Netflix, as the leading streaming provider, plays a huge role in the dissemination of K-dramas worldwide. Since Squid Game became Netflix's most-watched series ever, bigger audiences worldwide got to know about the existence of K-dramas and an increased interest can be seen in such content. This surge in interest has led to a wider variety of K-dramas being made available on Netflix. As a result, more viewers in Hungary are discovering the captivating storylines, unique cultural aspects, and talented actors that make K-dramas so popular.

My thesis explored the marketing techniques that were used by Netflix to reach huge international success and additionally delved into the role of social media in the case of Squid Game in spreading awareness about K-dramas. I could get a comprehensive insight into the effectiveness of marketing strategies through the examination of Hungarian Netflix users. Their behavior and preferences could shed light on the perceived image of K-dramas. This research provided valuable insights into how streaming providers can effectively promote and disseminate foreign content to a global audience, ultimately leading to international success.

Further suggestions for future marketing strategies for Hungary were made upon the results of my research. Most importantly Netflix should make accessible more K-drama in Hungary since many shows are only available to watch in other countries. This results in a loss of subscribers as they will download these series from free websites. To avoid losing a loyal customer base accessing more K-dramas would be a great solution.

Furthermore, as my research conducted, Hungarian viewers are not motivated enough to give viewer feedback to Netflix by pressing the like or dislike button. Since this feedback would serve as important data for the recommendation algorithm a solution is needed. These feedback-giving options are not so visible on the platform, which is understandable since Netflix does not want to interrupt the user experience. However, they should put more emphasis on the importance of this feedback to create the best user experience. Something short but appealing should prompt up after finishing watching content to encourage the viewer to share their opinion.

Lastly, in connection with free websites offering K-dramas to watch, Netflix should target this significant group with lowered subscription rates. In this way, they are not losing customers because of free content providers. These lowered subscription fee packages could include short

advertisements so the revenue would not be lost. But since Netflix's biggest advantage lies in the advertisement-free watching experience, the advertisements should not be annoying to the customer. For a significantly low-priced subscription package, more Hungarian users could strengthen the community of Netflix.

This thesis would not be complete without acknowledging its limitations. The results might not apply to other countries with different viewing patterns, cultural preferences, and market dynamics. Hungary has a varied population thus missing out on segments that could react differently to Netflix's promotional strategies could be a limitation as well. The study did not examine the financial aspects that can influence Hungarian viewers, such as their income that can be spent on subscriptions, this could be a potential future research topic. As new technological advancements may emerge it would affect the relevance of the findings over time as well.

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