

## PAPER DETAILS



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# The Boosting Effect of Covid-19 Breakthrough in Digital Broadcasting

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## ABSTRACT

Since the first trials of a series of inventions leading to the invention of television, the medium of communication has undergone continuous development and transformation and has taken its current form. Television continues to change today, with user needs and new effects in different communication technologies. In the light of these developments, digital broadcasting by experiencing convergence between the internet and television gave birth to concepts such as Web TV, IPTV, Mobile TV. Especially widespread internet-connected devices over The Top Television (OTT TV) have contributed to the emergence of broadcasting. The aim of this study is to discuss the historical development of television from past to digital broadcasting age and the growth of Netflix, as an example of worldwide popular OTT TV, especially during Covid-19. To this end, Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 12 people with four different sociocultural structures. Visualization opportunities were used to better understand the data and some of the remarks of the participants were included. Looking at the data obtained after the interview, it was observed that the Netflix subscription increased during the Covid-19 period and the time spent on the screen increased. In addition, it is understood that the media in question is preferred over conventional television for reasons such as freedom, quality and content diversity.

**Keywords:** Television, Covid-19, Digital Broadcasting, OTT TV, Netflix.

## Covid-19 Yayılımının Dijital Yayıncılıktaki Arttırıcı Etkisi

### ÖZ

Televizyonun icadına giden bir dizi buluşun ilk denemelerin yapıldığı günden beri mecra sürekli bir gelişim ve dönüşüm geçirerek günümüzdeki halini almıştır. Televizyon, kullanıcı ihtiyaçları ve farklı iletişim teknolojilerindeki yeni etkilerle, günümüzde de değişimini sürdürmektedir. Bu gelişmeler ışığında internet ile televizyon arasında yakınsama yaşanarak dijital yayıncılık; Web TV, IPTV ve Mobil TV gibi konseptler doğmasına imkân tanımıştır. Özellikle yaygınlaşan internet bağlantılı cihazlar Over The Top Television (OTT TV) yayıncılığının ortaya çıkmasına katkı sunmuştur. Bu çalışmada televizyonun tarihsel gelişiminden dijital yayıncılığa olan serüven ele alınarak dünyaca popüler olan OTT TV örneği Netflix'in, özellikle de Covid-19 sürecinde yaşamış olduğu büyümeye değinilmiştir. Konuyla alakalı olarak dört farklı sosyokültürel yapıya sahip 12 kişiyle yarı yapılandırılmış mülakat yapılmıştır. Verilerin daha iyi kavranabilmesi için görselleştirme imkanlarından yararlanılmış ve katılımcıların dikkat çeken bazı söylemlerine yer verilmiştir. Mülakat sonrasında elde edilen verilere bakıldığında, Netflix aboneliğinin Covid-19 döneminde arttığı ve ekran başında geçirilen sürenin uzadığı gözlemlenmiştir. Ayrıca söz konusu mecranın geleneksel televizyona nazaran özgürlük, kalite, içerik çeşitliliği gibi nedenlerden dolayı tercih edildiği anlaşılmaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Televizyon, Covid-19, Dijital Yayıncılık, OTT TV, Netflix.

### 1. Introduction

Television, which is considered one of the favorite inventions of our age, has been one of the greatest discoveries of the twentieth century, bringing images and sound to our homes through electromagnetic waves. It has gained popularity as it appeals to both our visual and auditory senses from the moment it is included in people's lives, and it has become the center of our lives with ongoing developments. In this study, the developments in the field of television broadcasting from the past to the present will be discussed and digital broadcasting, which is the convergence of the medium with the Internet, will be discussed. The first trials of television broadcasts in Europe coincide with the years 1925-1928. Korkut states that although the official broadcasts of television took place between 1932 and 1938, these trials were interrupted during the Second World War. At the end of the war, television broadcasts in Europe resumed at a faster pace (2013, p. 4). The invention and development of television has also been realized with the contribution of many people. However, some notable people, such as Nipkow, Baird, Fansworth,

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and Zworykin, who have pioneering personalities with engineer-inventor qualities, have managed to put their stamps on television history.

The initial stages of worldwide television broadcasts are television broadcasts in the Latin and Central American countries Mexico and Brazil in 1950. Japan from Asia began television broadcasting in 1952 after the Second World War. China began television broadcasting in 1958. In 1954, the first color television was invented and mass production began in 1960. As stated by Tumenjargal (2019) Commercial television broadcasting via satellites started in 1973 over Anik-1, the first commercial satellite launched (Tumenjargal, 2019, p. 53).

As of 21st century, new developments have been experienced every day and these developments include all areas of society. Technologies used in the field of communication have also benefited from these developments. With these developments, analog broadcasts have now been replaced by digital broadcasting technologies. Developments and changes in many fields, especially in communication, take place in line with the needs of society. Re-watch services have become a part of our lives with the cheapening and widespread use of the Internet, the acceleration of connections, the development of video broadcasting technologies and OTT TV technologies such as Youtube. The main worldwide example of OTT TV is Netflix. There are many studies related to the study of Netflix in the context of digital broadcasting. These researches are mostly shaped by the innovations brought about by this medium and the changes in viewer behavior. The increase in such research has accelerated with Netflix's original productions in Turkey.

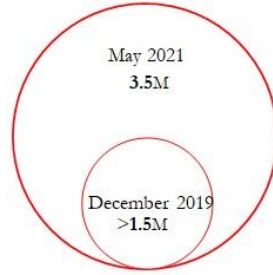
Covid-19 has emerged in Wuhan, China, affecting the whole world. The first case of Coronavirus worldwide occurred on 1 December 2019 in Wuhan, the capital of China's Hubei region. Although Turkey is one of the countries where Covid-19 has been visited the latest, the first case of Covid-19 in Turkey was announced to the public by Fahrettin Koca, Minister of Health of the Republic of Turkey, on March 15, 2020.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, Turkey, like many countries around the world, has imposed some restrictions in order to reduce the rate of the epidemic. New media applications that gained a place in every aspect of our lives before Covid-19 have further strengthened their position thanks to these restrictions. On the other hand, in March 2020, when the coronavirus began to spread well around the world, Netflix decided to reduce its streaming quality from high resolution to low resolution in order to reduce the increasing internet usage due to over-watching of Netflix during the lockdown. Netflix announced that they predicted that this application would reduce Netflix traffic on European internet networks by approximately 25 percent (TRT Haber, 2020). According to the latest figures announced, Netflix exceeding 209 million subscribers in 190 countries in 2021 (Netflix, 2021) explains the dramatic effect. The "data saving" application initiated by Netflix is important in that it reveals the negative effects of this situation on all internet users and that people have tended to prefer Netflix more than in the past.

As can be seen in Figure 1, there is an increase in the number of Netflix users/subscribers in May 2021 compared to December 2019. Considering that the company's operations in Turkey entered their fifth year in 2021, the number of users has more than doubled in the last year and a half (Munyar, 2021).

Since our lives were adversely affected by the Coronavirus outbreak, we started to engage in different activities, such as reading books, using social media, dealing with crafts, improving our food skills, watching television, etc. As can be seen in figure 1, the rapidly increasing trend over the past year and a half, including the epidemic process, indicates that we are more interested in Netflix than ever before, spending more time. In order to investigate the Covid-19 period of Netflix, which has become widespread, the relevant subjects detailed in the method section were interviewed in-depth and the research was shaped within the scope of the answers received.

In this framework, a total of 12 questions were asked to the participants, consisting of two separate categories, 'Before Covid-19' and 'After Covid-19'. On the other hand, as a result of the interviews conducted in the study, it was tried to read the trends in the media preferences of Netflix users through different participant profiles. In this way, it is aimed to reveal the context where the Netflix platform intersects with the effect of the Covid-19 epidemic on people's media preferences.



**Figure 1.** Number of Netflix Turkey Members

Source: (Munyar, 2021)(Sputnik, 2019)

## 2. The Birth and Development Adventure of Television

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the word television is derived from the Greek words 'tele' meaning 'far' and the Latin word 'visio' meaning 'see' and means to see from afar (Serim, 2007, p. 24).

Russian scientist Vladimir Zworykin has got together with Westinghouse in the United States to invent a camera tube that performs electronic scanning. This invention is of great importance in terms of television technology. In 1924, he successfully broadcast images through this image tube, which he called an iconoscope. As a matter of fact, in the following years, the iconoscope formed the basis of television broadcasting and led to the work to be done in this field (Kandemir, 2018, p. 14).

Nipkow's rotating disc was developed with tubes and hertz waves by the Jenkins from the USA and John Baird from Scotland in the 1920s, and thus the first trial broadcasts were made (Uyguç & Genç, 1998, p. 44). Baird was able to operate the assembly, which he initially positioned on a tea box and described as a 'televisor', consisting of a sewing needle, cut cardboard and a biscuit box. In this sense, Abramson (2000) notes that the success of Baird, who received the first television patent in history on June 25, 1925, became the focus of attention in a short time and he introduced his invention, which he defined as a televisior, to the British Royal Institute on January 26, 1928 (p. 3). In addition to this, Oskay (1971) remarks that Bell transmitted the first television broadcast by telephone between New York and Washington in 1927 and points out that this laboratory started the first closed-circuit trial broadcasts (p. 17).

The desired results could not be obtained from all these studies. In order to achieve the desired results, it was necessary to find a method that would scan the image electronically rather than mechanically. Experiments in the field of electronic scanning were made separately in 1907 by the Englishman Alan Swinton and the Russian Boris Rosing (Küçük, 2015, pp. 4–5).

The first regular television broadcast was made in 1936 by the television studio BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) established in London's Alexander Place. The second country to start television broadcasts is the USA. In this context, Akyol (2006) notes that the first television broadcast in America the first television broadcast in America was made by conveying the impressions of the world fair held in New York in 1939 (pp. 27–28). The Soviet Union was the third country to initiate television broadcasts. Its first regular broadcast was slow-moving in 1939, but it was given to nearly 100 receivers for about 30 minutes (Şeker, 2009, p. 19). In the mid-1940s, the proletariat in particular began to mainstream television, which the proletariat watched. By 1953, more than half of the United States did not have television broadcasts, but within four years, two-thirds of the country had watched television broadcasts (Orhan, 2018, p. 7). In addition to what is suggested by Orhan (2018), Jeanneney (2009) also states that other countries that started regular television broadcasts: the Netherlands in 1951, Belgium and Denmark in 1953, Italy in 1954, Austria and Luxembourg in 1955, Sweden and Spain in 1956, Portugal in 1957, Switzerland, Finland and Yugoslavia in 1958, and Norway in 1960 (pp. 265–266). It started broadcasting on color television on a limited basis in the United States of America in 1951, and then the Soviet Union and England participated in color television studies (Turam, 1994, pp. 90–91).

The first television broadcast in Turkey was made by Istanbul Technical University in 1952 as a closed-circuit broadcast. At that time, there were 10 receiver in Istanbul, four of which were in ITU (Uyguç & Genç, 1998, p. 47). In April 1952, members of the press and guests invited to the television studio in the Taşkışla building witnessed the first television broadcast in the Republic of Turkey. Journalist Burhan

Felek made the first speech that day and became the first speaker and first journalist in the history of Turkish television (Korkut, 2018, p. 14). While the first broadcasts in question had a very limited audience, the number of receivers and program types increased after the regular broadcasting every 15 days between 17:00 and 18:00 (Kuyucu, 2012, p. 107).

In 1964, TRT was established as an institution with an autonomous public legal entity to broadcast radio and television programmes on behalf of the state. As part of the partnership with Germany, TRT requested technical support from Germany and brought in experts to train staff for television broadcasts. Closed-circuit television broadcasts of TRT that started as trial broadcasts in 1966, were made from the studio established with technical support from Germany (Orhan, 2018, p. 10). Turkey's first trial television broadcast started on January 31, 1968 with the opening speech of Mahmut Tali Tahminen at Mithat Pasha Studio in Ankara. Trial broadcasts, which started as three days a week and three hours at first, increased to four days a week after one year. Izmir television was founded in 1970 and Istanbul television in 1971 (TRT, n.d.). Turkish television, which increases its technical facilities and broadcast time every year, increased broadcasts to five days in 1972 and developed in terms of programming depending on external productions (Akyol, 2006, p. 29).

### 3. Digital Broadcasting

As a result of the technological and quality advantages of digital broadcasting compared to analog broadcasting systems, it has become even more popular and its usage areas have expanded and become widespread. Television has also come under the influence of digital broadcasting. Because of digital broadcasting, viewers can have better quality sound and images. This is one of the main factors in choosing such broadcast systems.

By applying interactive services in broadcasts along with digital broadcasting, the audience has become more active and free in front of television. With these services, viewers have the opportunity to access the content they want whenever they want, to make instant comments about the programs, to access all kinds of information on television, and to interact with other viewers by paying certain fees.

Examples of digital broadcasting include cable television broadcasting, television broadcasting via satellite, and television broadcasting via the Internet. Broadcasts made via the Internet are Web TV, IPTV, Mobile TV and the last one is OTT TV. However, only OTT TV was included in this study due to the research subject.

#### 3.1.1. OTT TV

Television services have diversified from free-to-air television to a subscription-based paid television structure. This system has emerged thanks to new information and communication technologies. OTT TV transmits video content, television and music broadcasts to users' online devices via the internet, regardless of the broadcast stream. With this system, all transactions that can be done over the internet have become possible to be done via television or smart mobile phones.

On the other hand, OTT TV's service has also transformed the hospitable television environment. Because it offers an interactive and content-oriented service compared to traditional broadcasting (LI Zhenhui & SUN Yifan, 2019, p. 165). With the concept of OTT TV, visual and audio content received over receivers such as cables, satellite dishes and set-top boxes, have become available with an internet connection (Urgelles, 2017, p. 21). The services of this platform can be accessed from anywhere, anytime and from any device with an internet connection. Although there is no single accepted definition of OTT TV broadcasting systems, there are different definitions with the same general framework.

OTT TV is not content with just providing television service to the television user. It is a type of broadly interactive television broadcasting, such as watching broadcasts, liking and commenting on videos, communicating via television and accessing social media applications via smart mobile devices.

OTT is a service or application provided over the Internet. This covers a wide range of services provided from the internet, including communication and messaging services (Skype, WhatsApp, Viber and Facebook Messenger) and audio, and visual streaming services (Spotify, Youtube, Netflix and Amazon Video). In fact, the entire service provided via the Internet can be widely seen as OTT services

(Explainers, 2017). OTT's services in general; search (Viber, Whatsapp, Tango, Facebook Messenger, etc.), instant messaging (SMS, MMS, Line, iMessage, etc.), cloud (Dropbox, iCloud, Google Drive, etc.) and television broadcasting (Youtube, Netflix, Hulu TV, Puhu TV, Blu TV, etc.).

For OTT TVs, it can be called applications consisting of interactive content and where control is largely in the user. Even if OTT TVs are often confused with IPTV, their formations and the way they use the internet work separately. IpTV can be watched after accessing the internet with a set-top box or a receiver located in a television, while OTT TVs can be viewed on any screen such as television, computer, tablet, smartphone. Netflix, Puhu TV, Blu TV, Amazon Prime Video and Exxen are some of the best-known examples of OTT TV in Turkey.

OTT TV can be positioned somewhere between Internet TV and IPTV. OTT can be expressed as a combination of broadband and conventional television services, or as a controlled Internet TV service that increases in quality thanks to broadband. While a private network is required for IPTV services, an internet connection is sufficient for OTT TV. Broadcasts in OTT TV, unlike Internet TV, can be accessed using conventional television as in IPTV. OTT TV is a service offered to everyone who connects to the internet with broadband access, unlike IPTV, which needs a closed network. OTT TV is more cost-effective than IPTV (Sarı, 2012, p. 32). IPTV is provided through a dedicated network that the broadcast provider specially designs and develops for television broadcasting. OTT TV uses open internet where video quality is not guaranteed. While OTT TV can be watched on users' existing devices, IPTV broadcasting can be watched together via set-top boxes specifically designed by the service provider to provide IPTV service (Boynudelik, 2014). In IPTV, viewers can access the content determined by the content distributors to which they are subscribed. When the IPTV user wants to access the past broadcasts after a certain time, he has to upgrade his membership. Therefore, accessing the desired content is costly for the user. On OTT TV, however, no extra payment is required from users to access past broadcast content (Çaycı, 2013, p. 1654).

OTT TV service providers, which broadcast the contents of other sources until recently, have started to produce their own content in order to differentiate themselves from competition and traditional broadcasting. In this context, pastures such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, BluTV, Puhu TV and Exxen, which started broadcasting soon, are trying to create their own original content. On the other hand, based on the data obtained from OTT TV users, OTT TV content providers show a tendency towards special content that will appeal to users' tastes, which allows a personalized viewing practice to become widespread.

Binge-watching, which means watching all episodes of a show in the next, is a new way of watching Netflix. Users can watch all episodes of the series at once without having to wait for episodes of the series they decide to watch on air (Bağ, 2015, p. 52). The most effective competitive method of OTT TV operators, together with their high-quality and original content prepared for consumers, is related to the ability of viewers to watch the content on their own terms. The only thing necessary to access this type of content is an internet connection. OTT TV online creators use them to provide a better quality service, as it is possible for viewers to get their feedback quickly.

### 3.1.2. Netflix

Netflix was founded in California in 1997 by Reed Hastings and software executive Marc Randolph to offer online movie rentals. The company later launched netflix.com, its first DVD rental and sales site. Netflix's first original feature film was 'Beasts of No Nation' in 2015 and the first non-English original series was 'Club de Cuervos'. In 2016, Netflix launched in 130 more countries, serving its members in more than 190 countries in 21 different languages. Netflix won its first Oscar award in 2017 with the documentary 'The White Helmets'. Netflix won four Oscars in 2019 for the movie 'Roma' and the documentary 'Period End of Sentence'. He also released his first original animated feature film 'Klaus - The Magic Plan' and won his first major Emmy for interactive content. Netflix launched its 'Top 10' list in 2020, allowing members to see popular content for the first time. It was also the studio most nominated for Oscar and Emmy awards. The number of Netflix members exceeded 200 million in 2021 (Netflix, 2021).

In 2016, Netflix first signed an agreement with mobile service provider Vodafone as a domestic telecommunications partner in Turkey and announced a partnership with Turkish television manufacturer Vestel (Netflix, 2016).

Netflix has launched a new feature through which you can learn about the most preferred series and movies in Turkey. It is enough to click on the 'Movies' or 'Series' tab to see Netflix's 'Top 10' lists, and these lists are updated every day. On the other hand, Netflix announced last year that it will close inactive accounts so that they do not make payments for nothing (Ulukan, 2020).

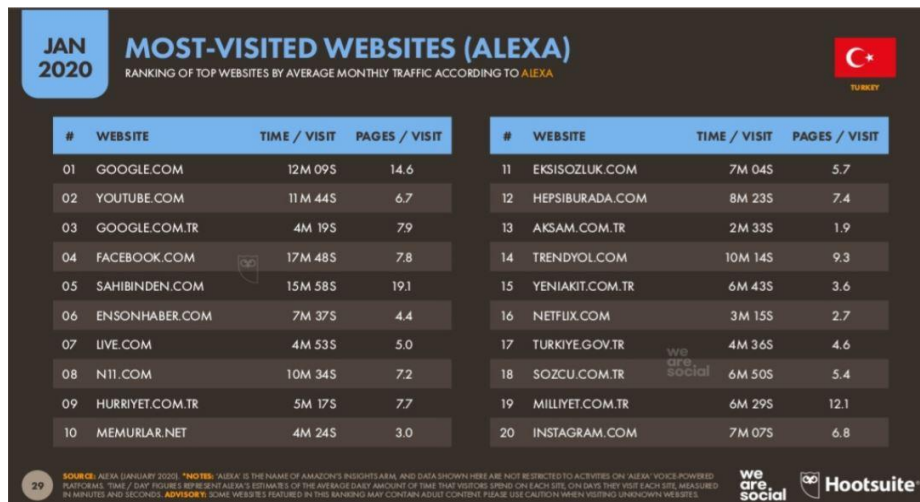


Figure 2. Most Visited Websites (Turkey)

Source: (Datareportal, 2020)

As shown in Figure 2, We Are Social was the only and most preferred example of OTT TV in 16th place among the most visited websites in Turkey according to the January 2020 Turkey report.

Netflix reached over three million members in Turkey in 2021, and when we take family account included in it into consideration, this number is estimated to approach almost ten million. On the other hand, the 20 countries that watch the most original and licensed Turkish productions offered by Netflix are: USA, Argentina, Australia, United Kingdom, Brazil, France, India, Spain, Italy, Canada, Colombia, Mexico, Poland, Saudi Arabia and Chile. (Bamboo 2020). After Hakan Guardian (2018) in Turkey, Netflix introduced *Atiye* (2019) and then *Another* (2020), *Love 101* (2020) and *50m2* (2021) to its broadcasters and subscribers. Netflix has released its first original Turkish film with *One Ticket to Tomorrow* (2020).

#### 4. Material and Methods

Data collection was carried out by semi-structured interview method. In terms of the similar characteristics of the research object (Netflix medium and its users), the number of participants is limited to a limited number of individually detailed inferences.

In terms of possible differences, the selection of participants is stratified by considering socio-cultural conditions: academicians, public personnel, private sector employees and unemployed; three from each group, a total of 12 people were determined as participants.

Data were collected from the participants via semi-structured interview forms over the internet. The collected data were analyzed in detail and digitized. In this way, the common discourse and tendencies in the answers of the participants could be expressed effectively through visualization.

Ethical approval for this study was obtained from Erciyes University, Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee, on 26.10.2021 with number 402.

#### 5. Results

As demonstrated in Table 1, five males and seven females aged between 28 to 32 are selected randomly as the participants of this study. Demographic distribution of participants: Five men, seven females; age

ranges from 28 to 32. The educational status of the participants is evenly distributed, six of them are still in education and the other six are graduates. Each interview participant is given a different code. If deemed necessary in this section, only the codes of the relevant participants will be mentioned and referred to (Table 1).

**Table 1.** General Information About the Interview Participants

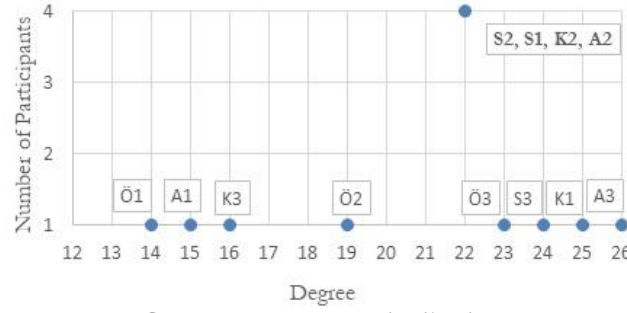
#	Gender	Age	Education Status	Job Status	Code
1	Male	31	Student	Academic Staff	A1
2	Female	32	Graduate	Academic Staff	A2
3	Male	32	Student	Academic Staff	A3
4	Male	32	Graduate	State agency	K1
5	Female	31	Graduate	State agency	K2
6	Male	28	Graduate	State agency	K3
7	Male	28	Student	Private sector	S1
8	Female	31	Graduate	Private sector	S2
9	Female	28	Graduate	Private sector	S3
10	Female	30	Student	Unemployed	O1
11	Female	32	Student	Unemployed	O2
12	Female	29	Student	Unemployed	O3

**Table 2.** Summary of findings.

#	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q9
A1	During the Pandemic	-	Content quality	Associate Plan	+	Several days in a week	Movies	Smart TV
A2	After the Pandemic	+	Content diversity	Standard Plan	+	Every day	TV Shows Movies	Smart TV
A3	Before the Pandemic	+	Spare Time	Basic Plan	+	Every day	TV Shows Movies	Laptop
K1	During the Pandemic	+	Ad-free	Basic Plan	+	Several days in a week	TV Shows Movies	Laptop
K2	During the Pandemic	+	Content diversity	Basic Plan	+	Several days in a week	TV Shows Movies	Laptop
K3	During the Pandemic	+	Spare time	Standard Plan	+	Several days in a week	Movies	Phone
S1	During the Pandemic	+	Not to be bored	Basic Plan	+	Several days in a week	Documentary Film	Phone
S2	During the Pandemic	+	Quality time	Basic Plan	+	Every day	TV Shows Movies	Smart TV
S3	During the Pandemic	+	Content quality	Basic Plan	-	Several days in a week	TV Shows Movies	Laptop
Ö1	Before the Pandemic	-	Content diversity	Family Plan	-	Several days in a week	TV Shows	Phone
Ö2	Before the Pandemic	+	Content diversity	Standard Plan	-	Several days in a week	TV Shows Movies	Smart TV
Ö3	During the Pandemic	+	Content diversity Spare time	Standard Plan	+	Several days in a week	TV Shows Movies	Laptop

The answers of the participants are summarized in Table 2. In the table, “+” and “-” are used to summarize whether the participants agree with the “effect” statement in the question as an answer. Rather than presenting the raw data in tabular form, visualizing the pattern contained in the answers was preferred (Figure 3). In the continuation of the study, as can be observed in the responses in Figure 3, the basic tendencies and expectations of the users are similar.





**Graphic 1.** Degree Distribution

It is confirmed that the common expressions (59) in the answers created 247 links. When the degree distribution is examined, the distribution of the answers given by the users to the 12 questions varies. In the graph of the degree distribution (Graph 1), it is seen that the detail in the answers increased after three participants. In connection with Chart 1, the partnership detail in the answers can be followed on Figure 2. The point where the distribution is highest is formed by four participants. When the participant codes are examined, it is likely to say that the members of three different groups share the said diversity. When the distribution of the participants and the group codes are considered together in the rest of the table, the limited economic and demographic parameters of the study did not reveal a significant effect on the distribution.

In Figure 3, the interview answers are visualized to reflect the relationship with the users. Since the answers may belong to more than one pattern, they are mainly positioned under the answer they are included in. Each arm separated around the participants represents a question. The least represented feature in the answers given is shaped in the innermost part and the most preferred in the outermost side and in increasing size. The "selective audience" feature, which is used in many places, is at the center of the visualization in terms of forming the large common cluster.

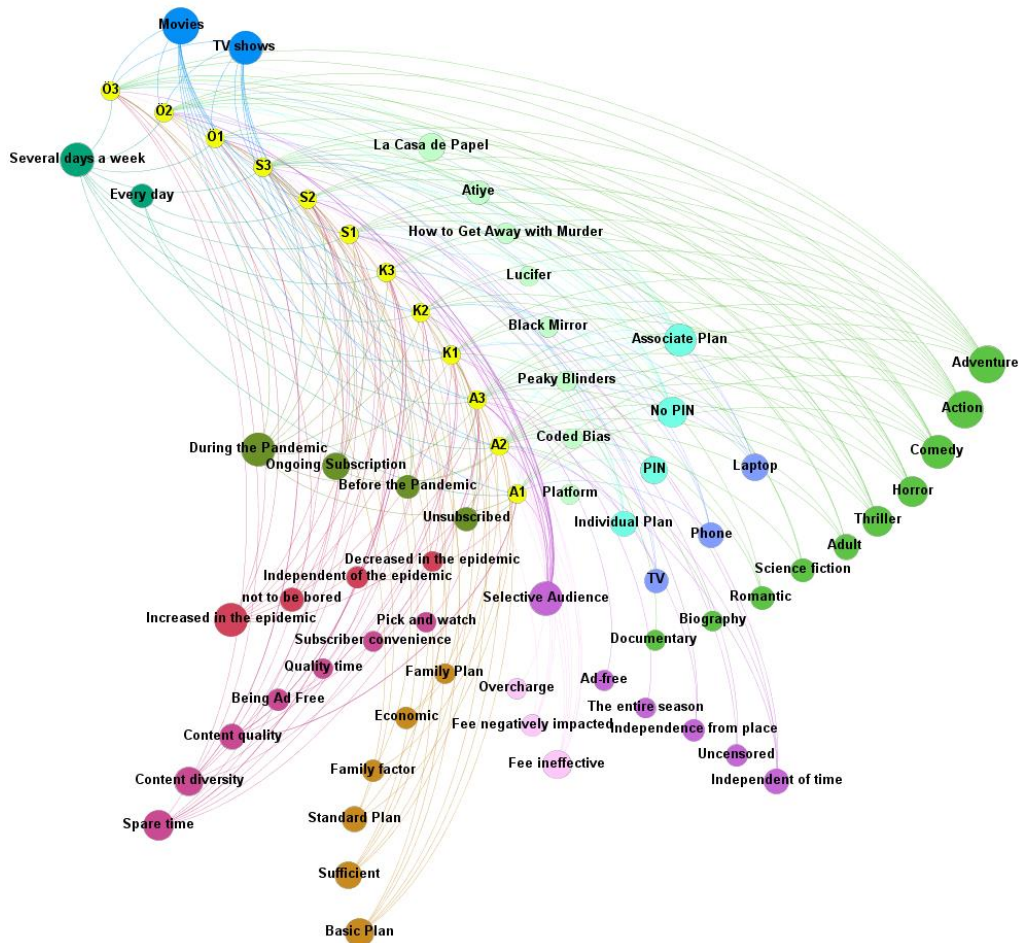


Figure 1. Visualization of the patterns in the answers of the interview participants.

**Did you subscribe to Netflix before or during the Covid-19 period and is your subscription still active?**

As can be seen in Figure 3, while 10 participants subscribed to the digital broadcasting platform Netflix during the Covid-19 period, only two of the participants stated that they subscribed to the channel in question before Covid-19. Furthermore, as can be understood from Figure 3, people have been spending most of their time at home with Covid-19. Especially since the time we spend at home has increased with the restrictions that have become a part of our lives with the pandemic, and the number of subscribers of Netflix, which is more innovative than traditional television, has increased.

Concordantly, one of the participants (K2) said, "During covid-19, I became a member because I noticed that my time at home increased after doing my daily work and hobbies when flexible working hours started in the public and also during periods of curfews." Another participant, S2 stated "We subscribed during covid-19 and got used to Netflix because we don't want to watch women's murders and fake news on traditional television channels," referring to the different aspects of the reason for subscribing to Netflix. One of the interview participants who subscribed to Netflix before Covid-19 said, "I subscribed before Covid-19 because there was no platform in the country that broadcasts qualifiedly and gives the viewer the right to choose," stressing that Netflix content is even more qualified and interactive.

**Do you think the Covid-19 process has an impact on your Netflix usage rate, or do you think your Netflix usage rate is independent of the pandemic?**

While 10 participants thought that Covid-19 was effective in consuming Netflix content, only two of them stated that the epidemic was not effective.

In this regard, K2 said "I think it is completely proportional to the pandemic. Because while starting a series before the pandemic process was an activity that should be devoted especially time for me, it took me a few days to finish all the seasons of the series that I started during the Covid-19 period." During the pandemic and home confinement, people watched Netflix content to avoid getting bored. Due to Covid-19, television series had suspended filming of new episodes, but the audience was more advantageous as Netflix released the series seasonally."

**What is your main reason for subscribing to Netflix?**

Their answer to this question is usually that Netflix is a means to get rid of the boredom of the quarantine days of the pandemic, as well as the fact that it is possible to a wide content, suitable for all styles, ad-free, creative, popular and quality content. This being the case, one of the participants (A3) expressed his opinions on the question as follows "I can find a lot of content that appeals to my taste. I can watch any content I want whenever I want. There's no limit to time, space or vehicles. With the pandemic, I can easily determine my increased leisure time according to my own viewing habits."

**Netflix; Which of the basic, standard and special subscriptions do you use and why do you prefer this subscription?**

As can be seen in Figure 3, while six of the participants prefer Netflix's basic membership package, five participants prefer a standard package and only one participant prefer special package. In addition to the fact that the basic package, which is the cheapest of the membership packages, is lower than the other packages, the second factor that is the most preferred is the access to unlimited content.

In this sense, S1 said, "The basic package meets my expectations. I can watch as many TV shows and movies as I want." T1 said, "We use the standard package as a family. Because we all have different styles." In fact, the user expressed the conditions of the segment where the numbers often correspond to more than one person.

**To what extent does Netflix's subscription fee affect your subscription behavior?**

While 70% of the participants report that Netflix subscription fees highly affect their subscription behavior, 30% argue that these fees do not seriously affect their subscription behavior.

Regarding the subject, S1 said, "Of course, it is highly influential. Because everyone's budget is different and their savings are also different. We signed up with two people to be eligible, but when the raise came, we unsubscribed." K3 said, "The wages are very high in Turkish conditions." says it is. In addition, A2 said "The fees are a bit higher compared to its competitors in Turkey." He draws attention to the lower subscription fees of Netflix's competitors such as BluTV, GAIN and Exxen in Turkey.

**How often do you use Netflix?**

Of the 12 participants interviewed, 9 used Netflix every day, while 3 said they used it several days a week. Based on this data, it can be said that digital streaming platforms (Netflix) are among the important routines in the media consumption habits of the participants.

**What type of content do you prefer to watch on Netflix?**

As illustrated in Figure 3, participants prefer Netflix equally to watch TV shows and movies. It is assumed that the platform's infrastructure, which makes it easier to keep track of content, plays a positive role.

**Which category of TV series and movies do you prefer to watch on Netflix?**

In this question, where participants were able to answer multiple times, it was observed that content types with similar weights were consumed a lot among the participants.

As shown in Figure 3, participants placed these genre first by declaring that they preferred to watch content mostly about action (11) and adventure (11). The participants (9) ranked the comedy as in the second place; adult (4) content and romantic (3) content were the least preferred content.

**Which screen do you prefer to watch Netflix from? Smart Television, Smartphone, Tablet, Laptop.**

While the participants mostly prefer laptops (5), smartphones/tablets (4) come second; Considering the variety of media contents and user expectations in the medium, it has been revealed that time-independent content consumption is important for users (Ö2, S2, A2) who stated that they access content from television (3).

**Do you share your Netflix account with others? If your answer is yes, do you use PIN code from special profile and security settings?**

While seven of the participants took individual security measures such as private profile and PIN code, five stated that they did not take such measures.

In this regard, S2 said, "We use Netflix together with my wife. But we don't use PIN code in our profile, I don't think it's necessary." He stated why he did not need individual security measures. On the other hand, A3 said, "We sometimes use my Netflix account jointly with my friends. That's why I use a private profile and PIN code." he explained the reasons for using security settings.

**Which of the original productions of Netflix is your favorite movie or series?**

Since the participants in this question have the opportunity to refer to more than one TV series and film, the productions mentioned are as follows, in alphabetical order: Atiye, Azizler, Beastars, Bir Başkadır, Black Mirror, Coded Bias, Elite, How to Get Away With Murder, La Casa de Papel, Lucifer, Lupine, Peaky Blinders, Platform, Have You Ever Seen a Firefly, The Last Czars.

In accordance with this, S2 said, "La Casa de Papel because it is unpredictable and exciting." while A1 said "Coded Bias. It is important because it is a documentary that reveals how data-based systems, including Netflix, will affect our lives." it means you are. On the other hand, another user gave more detailed explanations and said that S3 "Lucifer: He handled belief in a different way. La Casa de Papel: It's a very good action thriller series and every second is full of it. How to Get Away with Murder: It's full of constant obscurity and I watched it because I like to predict the next scene. Another is that it handles daily psychological problems very well and the treatment is done on its own or by the expert and does not work, it is full of events that are different from the outside but have very different meanings in them." To make a general and summary commentary on the contents, it can be said that it is of better quality than traditional television and appeals to everyone's tastes.

**What do you think are the main differences between Netflix and traditional television?**

In this question, the participants had the opportunity to address more than one point. The main distinctions that users mentioned in favour of Netflix are as follows:

- Having a more free and innovative aspect.
- Series episodes are short in duration.
- Availability of content suitable for each mode.
- Content-rich and global.
- Control belongs to the viewer.
- Ad-free streaming.
- Uncensored content.
- Technical quality level.
- Thematic contents.
- Creativity factor.
- Time and place independent access.

In connection with the abovementioned differences expressed by the participants, some remarkable citations from them can be summarized as below:

K1 "Not waiting a week for each episode to watch a certain series."

K2 "When using Netflix only for the series and movies I follow, traditional television creates a noise at home and prevents selectivity even if it is not watched."

S2 "Netflix is a freer platform. You choose what I want to watch. I can choose according to my time and mood. In this way, I get rid of the exhausting news and poor quality programs on television channels."

A2 "I watch the content I want on Netflix. So I'm the boss."

O3 "Freedom is the only difference and it contains everything. Since the content freedom is uncensored, the events are conveyed to the audience better and more clearly. The main thing that makes traditional television incomplete or boring compared to the digital platform is that it is not free."

## 6. Conclusion and Discussion

Thanks to the developments that led to the spread of the Internet and the introduction of digital broadcasting into our lives, viewers can position themselves more actively against the media content and the medium. Among the global content available in digital media, the viewer can choose the one that suits him/her, change it if he/she doesn't like it, pause it and continue from wherever he/she wants. Unlike terrestrial broadcasting, diversification of content rather than wholesale impact on digital broadcasting platforms required broadcasting platforms to center the individual in order to retain users. In this way, platforms that better understand and analyze user qualities have produced micro-contents, enabling the medium to move forward as a strong alternative to other mediums.

In 2020, the worldwide Covid-19 pandemic also affected Turkey. As a matter of fact, some measures have been taken to stop or slow down the course of the epidemic. For this reason, people have started to spend more time at home than before and their free time has increased. Conventional use of television was also affected by this outbreak and had to take a break from shooting many programs and series. Television replays of already consumed content have become less and less interesting for the audience during the pandemic, and the share of television in the screen time of individuals in media consumption has gradually decreased, leaving its place to other alternatives, especially Netflix. The fact that the participants met Netflix mainly during the Covid-19 period indicates that the search for alternatives is getting stronger.

The boredom caused by increased leisure time with Covid-19 is one of the main reasons for subscribing to Netflix. Due to Netflix's pricing policy, participants prefer the "Basic" package, which is most suitable for the price of the media. On the other hand, as stated in answer 7, the vast majority of users use the relevant media every day. This suggests that digital broadcasting is a serious alternative to television.

Digital streaming platforms are a system that produces content by focusing on individuals, so it also includes some security settings. These are the custom profile and PIN code. Within the scope of the research, it was found that more than one user tends to use these measures in the subscription model where they can create profiles. In this respect, the medium provides an option of privacy beyond the possibilities of conventional media.

The findings of our research are also in line with the results of a study conducted in India on OTT platforms and the enhancing effect of Covid-19 using a survey method. In this study, Nijhawan & Dahiya (2020) found that while more than 87% of 80 participants think that their screen time has increased after COVID, the rate of those who prefer Netflix as an OTT platform is 62.7%. This study also displays a similarity with our research in terms of the emphasis on Netflix's being ad-free and the effect of costs on participants' behavior. Nijhawan & Dahiya (2020) also revealed that the ability to select content (54.1%) and watch independently of time (41%) were the two main reasons for choosing OTT TV (Nijhawan & Dahiya, 2020). Another study bearing similarity with our research was conducted in North America during the COVID-19 quarantine period on stress and screen addiction and it was found that 60% of the participants preferred platforms like Netflix (Pahayahay & Khalili-Mahani, 2020, p. 15).

On the other hand, there are other productions that have become world-renowned, as well as the productions specific to Turkey. The main reasons for choosing Netflix are; It is possible to mention the main reasons as being more free, interactive and the user's ability to interfere with the media flow, as well as the fact that the content is higher quality and ad-free than traditional television.

Digital broadcasting, which has entered our lives with technological developments and the spread of the internet, reinforces its prevalence with an effect independent of technology due to Covid-19. Future paradigm breaks and rapid developments in social life (just like in the epidemic period) will create new effects independent of technology. In the future, it can be assumed that we have entered a period in which the technology-intensive period in the invention and development of television (as a tool) will slow down and technology-independent effects will determine the future of the medium.

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Yazarların çalışmadaki katkı oranları %33/%33/%34 şeklindedir.

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#### Çıkar Çatışması Beyanı / Conflict of Interest

Çalışmada herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile çıkar çatışması bulunmamaktadır.

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person in the study.

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