



Addicted to Entertainment. Netflix Consumption Experience of Young Peruvians

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Summary. Streaming services have changed the way films and TV shows are consumed. Different companies are constantly competing to attract and keep their subscribers, with Netflix being the leader in the Peruvian market. The present research aims to know the Netflix consumption experience of young Peruvians in order to understand the factors that determine their preference. For this study we follow the experiential marketing model proposed by Schmitt, who points out that the consumer experience of a company makes the difference with others when factors such as sensations, feelings, thoughts, actions and relationships generated in the customer are considered. The research has a qualitative approach and 20 interviews were conducted with young people between 25 and 30 years of age in Metropolitan Lima who maintain a Netflix subscription. The research found that Netflix provides a satisfactory consumption experience in all the factors considered in experiential marketing, being remarkable the feelings of happiness when finding the film or TV show they want to watch and the assured entertainment provided by the platform. In addition, they recognize that the unlimited streaming service is addictive, so they try to binge watch when they have enough free time.

Keywords: Brand experience, Consumer experience, Streaming, Netflix.

1. Introduction

The emergence of subscription streaming platforms has radically changed the way people consume films and TV shows, allowing the viewer to decide not only what to watch, but how, when and where [1]. Subscribers of companies such as Netflix, Amazon Prime, Hulu and Disney+ enjoy this flexibility and freedom because the service is offered through the Internet, allowing the use of different reception devices such as tablets, Smart TVs, computers and smartphones [2].

Netflix is the most used streaming service around the world [3] and is setting the standard in terms of catalog, features and continuous innovation strategy [4]. However, this leadership and scenario is not permanent or fixed because it is constantly evolving due to changes in consumer preferences and market strategies of other companies in the industry [5]. Companies in this sector are in constant competition in terms of price, exclusivity, content creation and user experience [6]. Some elements that characterize the business model of streaming platforms are a wide and varied catalog that includes premium content in its offer; an economic flat rate that allows unlimited access to the catalog; and a service focused on image quality, accessibility through multiple devices, search for related content and ease of navigation. For this reason, the existence of a

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single, successful business model is impossible; rather, there are models that are flexible or adaptable to the consumer and the context.

In this sense, Netflix's current model has allowed it to dominate the market because it has been able to adapt to the diversity of its users, no longer considering them as a homogeneous group, but as integral and individual viewers with different tastes [7]. Netflix manages to offer its users a permanent flow of personalized content due to the management of a huge amount of data on their consumption dynamics, which allows it to identify and predict the tastes of its subscribers [8]. This personalized service is generated through the development of algorithms within the platform [9]. Additionally, Netflix has benefited from the binge-watching phenomenon, characterized by uninterrupted and pressing consumption of all the episodes of a television serial until the last season [10], since video streaming is its only business [11]. That is why Netflix invests mainly in original productions as a differentiation and systematization strategy within its catalog [8].

In this context of ongoing competition among platforms that offer streaming on-demand video, considering the consumption experience of subscribers will allow them to set the guidelines for differentiation [12]. The consumption experience is the phase in which a person makes use of a brand's product or service. Schmitt suggests that brands should consider the sensations, emotions, actions and relationships generated in the consumption experience to achieve a memorable experience and connect meaningfully with their consumers [13].

The objective of this research is to learn about the consumption experience of Peruvian Netflix customers, in order to understand the characteristics of the experience that make Netflix the preferred platform of young people. In Peru, Netflix is the leader among streaming platforms, with a preference of 68%, followed by Amazon Prime (11%), Disney Plus (7%) and HBO Max (6%) [14]. The research will focus on the millennial generation, which groups those born between 1982 and 2000, since they are the most studied by marketing specialists due to their growing purchasing power [15], and their preference for brands that provide information or entertainment services that are interactive, personalized, simple and innovative [16]. This generation is characterized by being continuously connected and informed through electronic media [17], and they are more technologically savvy than their predecessors [18].

2. Experiential marketing

Schmitt proposes a marketing approach that moves away from the traditional one to a more experiential one [13]. To this end, he develops a strategic framework through five dimensions: sensations, feelings, thoughts, actions and relationships, which he calls "strategic experiential modules" (SEM). In addition, Pine & Gilmore consolidate the concept of Experience Economy by demonstrating that goods and services are not enough to generate competitiveness in organizations, and that it is necessary to consider both customer evaluations and their consumption experience [19]. Also, brand experience is not only given through brand identity and design (colors, shapes, etc.), but also through the environment in which the individual is located and the way in which it is

marketed (events, stores, online environment, etc.) [20]. Hultén points out the importance of the multisensory experience of the brand, involving the 5 senses (taste, smell, sight, hearing and touch) in the formation of the brand identity and image to generate a satisfactory and memorable experience for the consumer [21]. The sensory experience also adds value to the product and reinforces the differentiation of the company [22]. In this sense, brand experience ends up playing an important role as a mediator between visual perception and consumer responses that end up shaping what people believe about the company [23].

The brand experience is not only produced when seeking and receiving the product or service, but also when consumption occurs, i.e., the consumption experience is a phase of the brand experience [20]. Thus, Holbrook & Hirschman define the concept as a set of subjective responses of the individual through which products and services begin to be seen not for what they are, but for what they represent [24]. They also emphasize symbolic emotional meanings, aesthetic criteria and hedonic responses through the insertion of important experiential aspects of consumption such as fantasies, feelings and fun.

The outcome of the consumer experience is much more meaningful and unforgettable when the consumer is fully immersed in the experience created by the brand [25]. Additionally, even after the brand consumption experience has ended, there can be episodes of nostalgia where the consumer recalls the experience because of how memorable the experience ended up being, in other words, how people perceive the brand is how they will remember their experience with it in the future [12]. On the other hand, the consumer experience is defined as the relationship between the company, the consumer and their physical and virtual environment; on the part of the consumer, it is important to highlight the value they perceive, the objectives, the personality, the level of interaction and the effect of the anticipated experiences they have [26].

In online contexts, the brand experience is determined by the relationship between the user interface and the brand [27]. Consumers in the online environment are more demanding, so it is no longer enough to send them messages about the brand's products or services, but this should be part of the company's efforts to develop meaningful brand experiences due to the great impact that these end up generating in the consumer [28]. Additionally, the brand experience in electronic media could be divided into dimensions such as design, security, information and communication [29].

This paper is based on the study conducted by Schmitt on "Experiential Marketing", in which he defines a set of important factors to be considered for the creation of brand experiences [13]. For Schmitt, the current consumer does not consume products or services, but experiences through their perceptions; therefore, an adequate management of the brand strategy focused on the consumer experience is important to differentiate from the competition.

To achieve the key experience objectives that brands need, Schmitt mentions the use of Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs), through which experiences related to sensations, feelings, thoughts, actions and relationships can be developed [13]. In sensory

marketing, the experience is determined by the stimulation of the senses of taste, smell, touch, sight and hearing. It is used for the purpose of creating value for the brand, developing consumer interest and reinforcing differentiation. Emotional marketing aims to develop strong links between the brand and the consumer through the customer's innermost feelings and emotions. These feelings range from simple positive, negative or neutral moods to significantly strong emotions during consumption. As well as simple emotions (joy, sadness, anger, disgust and fear), and complex emotions (jealousy, nostalgia, anxiety, frustration and shame). Thought marketing alludes to intelligence with the objective of developing cognitive experiences that attract the consumer's attention and motivate him/her to solve problems. It seeks to appeal to convergent and divergent consumer thinking by making use of elements such as surprise, intrigue and provocation. This type of marketing is the one that generates the most paradigm shifts in consumers as it allows them to re-evaluate the company and its products. Marketing of actions seeks to impact people's lifestyles and interactions. It does this by showing different ways of doing things through the expansion of their physical experiences. The modification in lifestyles is mostly motivational, inspirational and spontaneous in nature. Relationship marketing refers to the connection an individual has with other social groups or broader more abstract groups such as a nation, culture or society. Although this marketing is made up of the previous ones, it goes beyond all of them by generating an improvement of the individual, a sense of belonging and a deeper relationship between the consumer and the brand.

On the other hand, for the development of the aforementioned types of experience, it is important to make use of tactical tools that Schmitt calls Experience Providers (ProEx), among which are communications, product presence, brand co-management, visual identity, special environments, websites and other electronic media. For this study we made use of the experience provider in electronic media due to the potential it has to generate experiences today, specifically in the Netflix streaming platform.

According to Schmitt, the combination of the aforementioned elements can develop hybrid (individual) and holistic (collective) experiences [13]. On the one hand, hybrid experiences revolve around the four main Strategic Experiential Modules (sensations, feelings, thoughts and actions), while on the other hand holistic experiences mostly fluctuate between relationship and action marketing, in addition to having a collectivist nature by fostering the relationship with other people in their direct environment, which in turn generates an experiential circle where the experience expands into a more holistic consumer experience. In addition, the use of experiential marketing can be beneficial in the event that the brand seeks to recover after a fall, differentiate its products or services from the competition, create identity and image for the company, develop innovations or generate customer consumption of the product or service [22].

3. Methodology

This study uses the interpretive paradigm, which is based on the need to understand the world from the perspective of its participants using language [30]. In addition, it follows a qualitative approach, since it seeks to explore and understand what a given social or human issue means to the participants. Likewise, the research design is

phenomenological since it seeks to study the Netflix consumption experience from the perspective of young Peruvian millennials. Creswell describes this research design as the essence of the objective and subjective experiences of the individual [31]. The study involved the participation of 20 informants, 10 men and 10 women between 25 and 30 years old, who live in Metropolitan Lima and maintain a minimum subscription of 6 months to Netflix. The data collection technique used was the interview, which is characterized by not having a defined structure, being flexible and having questions that are as similar as possible to an everyday life situation [32]. The instrument consisted of a guide of questions formulated from the categories chosen for this research: the experience of consumption around sensations, feelings, thoughts, actions and relationships. The questions seek to explore areas such as the visual and auditory experience when entering the platform, feelings of identification and nostalgia, opinions about the platform's genre labels, behaviors when consuming videos on the platform, and the impacts on the relationship they have with others because of their use of Netflix. The interview guide was validated by an expert in Digital Marketing of the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences (UPC), as well as by the application of a pilot interview with a person belonging to the selected target group. The final guide had 29 questions and the interviews lasted an average of 45 minutes. All interviews were transcribed and open coding was used to identify the predominant themes in each category. The research followed the principles and norms established in the Code of Ethics in Scientific Research of the Peruvian University of Applied Sciences.

4. Results and discussion

The findings are presented below and have been organized according to each category of study.

4.1. Sensations

Regarding the consumption experience of the informants, based on their sensations, it stands out that the photographs and videos used on the platform are the main elements that attract their attention, which is consistent with Ramos & Ortega who point out that the millennial generation has a very strong predisposition towards audiovisual content, specifically videos and photographs [33], rather than textual content [34]. In addition, the vast majority of interviewees agree that the visual-auditory sensory experience generated by the platform is memorable as they immediately associate the logo and the characteristic sound ("tudum") with Netflix. On the other hand, they consider that the visual sensory experience is satisfactory since they point out that the platform is visually very pleasant, and some even mention that the platform's black background helps the eyes to rest more and to concentrate on the content offered by the platform.

"... the first thing I hear when I enter the platform is the particular sound of Netflix, the "tudum" which is very recognizable. [...] You associate the brand with that sound, so when you go anywhere and hear the "tudum" you already know that someone is watching Netflix." (E05)

4.2. Feelings

Netflix consumers express a solid trust in the entertainment service that this platform provides them, as they express the security of knowing that they will always find something to watch on it, whether it is new content or content that they enjoy watching repeatedly. The trust in the platform is also evident in their evaluation of the content recommendations it offers them, because although they recognize that it is not infallible, they consider that most of the time it does get their tastes right. These findings support what has been pointed out by Kwon, Park & Son, who mention that Netflix users continue to subscribe to the platform because of the trust generated by its ability to know their preferences, which is manifested in the perceived diagnosis and perceived serendipity [35]. Perceived diagnosis refers to the subscriber's assessment of the platform's usefulness in effectively finding and evaluating video content that matches their preferences, and perceived serendipity refers to the platform's usefulness in discovering interesting video content that goes beyond original expectations that often may not match the subscriber's search criteria.

"I tend to trust Netflix's algorithm when they give me recommendations, they almost always get it right. When I don't know what to watch, I go by the Top 10 they offer." (E18)

"... the platform will always recommend movies or series according to what you watch. I consider that it is good since it saves you time looking for the genre that you really like." (E04)

Other positive feelings associated with the use of Netflix are related to the content of its catalog. In this sense, they mention feeling curious to know everything contained in the catalog; happiness when they find content they did not expect; and nostalgia when they find content they watched as children. However, they also express feeling anxious about having so many choices of movies and series and not knowing which one to choose to watch. Negative feelings include sadness, when they remove a content they liked from the catalog; fear, when looking for a content and realizing that it is no longer available; and annoyance, when Netflix produces too many seasons of a successful series, because they consider that this lengthening ends up spoiling the show. Knowing users' feelings is important because in Peru, although 67% of users subscribe to a streaming platform for access to new series and movies, 51% subscribe to watch their favorite series and 31% to watch old seasons of popular series [36]. In addition, there is a high predisposition to cancel their subscription due to price increases (55%), elimination of their favorite programs (44%) and perceived outdated content (37%) [36].

"... when I'm navigating Netflix interface I feel fear because of the fact that the platform has previously removed some movies that to me were important and classic Netflix movies. [...] ... then I live with that fear, sadness or anger that the platform would do that. On the other hand, there is also a feeling of happiness when they are going to release some series or movie that I like." (E10)

On the other hand, consumers feel in control of the emotions generated by the content they select to watch on Netflix, since they precisely choose content based on the emotion they are looking for. For example, if they are looking to feel fear, they choose

content from the horror genre, if they are looking to feel joy, they choose content from the comedy genre, etc.

4.3. Thoughts

In terms of thoughts, it highlights the acquired knowledge consumers have about how to navigate the platform to find what they might watch. Before entering the platform, consumers already know what the layout of items on the Netflix homepage will look like, allowing them to go directly to what they are looking for. In addition, consumers are aware that the platform's algorithm learns their tastes, so they recognize that the content Netflix presents to them in each section is personalized and selected according to their preferences. Respondents stated that they select what to watch by choosing some content recommended to them by Netflix on the home page, unless they enter the platform with the intention of watching something specific. To make this selection, consumers review the posters of the movies or series presented to them and, only if it has caught their attention, they enter to watch the trailer to learn more about what it is about. In this sense, consumers are fully aware of the large volume of content that Netflix has to offer, so it will not be possible for them to watch everything and not everything will be to their liking, which is why they accept the platform's recommendations.

Consumers enter Netflix because they want to have a good time watching a movie or series. Most of the interviewees mentioned that they enjoy watching the same content several times, and that they even enter Netflix with the intention of watching something they have already seen. Additionally, they recognize that the platform is addictive, as it is an endless source of content to watch, so they try to log in when they have time to watch something. Most of the interviewees agree that Sundays are the best day to access Netflix because they have more free time. Finally, consumers show a solid knowledge of Netflix's business model, as they elaborate an explanation based on costs and profits to explain why some content is added or removed, as well as why a series produced by Netflix is extended or cancelled according to its success.

4.4. Actions

Interviewees mention that their Netflix membership has changed the way they consume movies or series. Before Netflix, consumers would go to movie theaters or watch what was available on TV, which meant sticking to a time and place to watch the desired content. Since signing up for Netflix, consumers took control over what they watched, when they watched it, where and with whom. This has been the most significant change for them and the one they appreciate the most, as they have at their disposal a wide catalog of audiovisual content that can be consumed without limitations, except for the limitation of time.

"... now you don't have to watch TV, you don't have to go to the movies because you can watch your series or movies from home, from the car, from your bed and it's a total change from having to wait in front of the TV watching commercials." (E01)

Respondents report having a number of practices for selecting what to watch when they log on to Netflix. There are planned consumers, who have taken the time to select what they are interested in watching and have added it to "My List". These consumers watch the content on their list and pick up the movies or series they may have left halfway through. Other consumers come in with a decision to watch something specific, and go straight to that content. Finally, there are consumers who don't know what to watch and take their cues from Netflix recommendations. These consumers follow a series of steps in order to decide what to watch. First, they look at the posters of each content to select the one that catches their attention, either because of the actors or what they interpret from the image. If it catches their attention, they watch the trailer, which is what ends up giving them enough information to encourage them to watch it. Others decide to watch what appears on the most watched list in Peru, because they are curious to know what it is about and why so many people are watching it.

Several interviewees stated that they had binge watched a series because they were too curious to know what was going to happen. The possibility of consuming several episodes of a series is another of the practices that Netflix allows them to do, which differs from the experience of watching a series on television, which is broadcast once a week at a fixed time. This finding coincides with what was mentioned by Petersen, who points out that users recognize above all the advantages, rather than the disadvantages of binge watching [37]. The advantage is that they can know how the series ends. The disadvantage is that they may not fulfill their obligations because they are still hooked on the series.

"I have done binge watching because I am always left wondering what will happen in the next chapters, I like that the platform has this option." (E08)

"It happened to me with the drama series "Merlin", I said to myself 'one more episode and I'll sleep' and I ended up watching the sun rise. It was worth it because it was a myriad of emotions, a whole roller coaster that would not have been the same if I watched the episodes on different days. It's a wonderful option." (E18)

Netflix also replaced the search for audiovisual content on the Internet. Most interviewees mentioned that before Netflix they searched for movies or series they were interested in on the Internet, but that they did not always find them or the quality of the content was not good. Since they have Netflix, very few continue to search the Internet for content, as they recognize that there is plenty to watch on Netflix and that the image quality is very good. One practice that has become established among consumers is to seek recommendations from friends and social networks. Both sources of information, along with the platform's personalized recommendations, are the main ways consumers find out about new content or content worth watching based on their tastes.

4.5. Relationship with others

Netflix is a conversation generator between friends and strangers. Chatting about a series or asking for content recommendations has become a way for consumers to socialize. Some interviewees mentioned watching the most watched movies or series in

order to chat about them with friends and be able to have a position on whether it is good or bad. In addition, Netflix brings friends or couples together to watch content together. The interviewees said that as a group they decide what to watch and what they are going to prepare to eat and drink for when they are watching the video. They consider it a good plan because no one has to spend a lot of money to have a good time together. In addition, watching it as a group allows them to talk about what they have seen and exchange ideas.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The finding of this study concludes that the Netflix consumption experience of young people in Lima is satisfactory considering all the dimensions of the experience proposed by Schmitt. Young people associate the brand with its logo and the use of images to show them what is available on the platform, as well as recognize Netflix's characteristic sound wherever they hear it. Entering the platform transports them to a state of relaxation that prepares them for entertainment. Depending on their mood, they choose the content they want to watch. The platform gives them control over their entertainment, as users decide what to watch, where, when and with whom. Netflix consumption has no limits, the user is the one who decides how long to stay connected to the platform. Binge watching is a practice that all users said they do or have done at some point, recognizing how addictive the service is. Netflix is an inexhaustible source of entertainment, which can be enjoyed alone or in company and which transcends the duration of the series or movie, since the content generates topics of conversation and debate among users.

In future research, it is suggested to delve into the anxiety that the offer of great amount of available content produces in users, prioritizing the strategies developed by users to counteract this feeling and how feelings of anxiety may be affecting their experience with the brand. On the other hand, it is suggested to conduct research with users of Netflix and other streaming platforms in order to delve into the specific consumption experience of Netflix.

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