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**The Enforcement of Homosexuality on Netflix
Originals between 2019 and 2021:
Framing Theory Perspective**

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List of Acronyms

TV: Television

LGBTQ: Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer

CDA: Critical Discourse Analysis

GLAAD: Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation

IMDb: Internet Movie Database

DSM: Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders

DVD: Digital Versatile Disc

VOD: Video On-Demand

SVOD: Subscription Video On-Demand

SPSS: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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Abstract

This treatise aimed at unveiling the destructive ideology of Netflix originals vested in the enforcement of homosexuality through exploring the styles of homosexual characters to unravel the explicit and implicit messages conveyed through the associated social themes. To this end, the study theoretically, relied on Framing Theory to formulate of the research questions and to interpret the findings. Practically, however, a qualitative content analysis was conducted on a purposive sample composed of three original Netflix TV series that were successively released on 2019, 2020, and 2021 to extract the themes. In addition, quantification to the qualitative data was conducted relying on the univariate frequency distribution analysis available on SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 25) in order to explore the frequency of the extracted themes. Availing from the possibility of using Hope's (2008) framing model not only as a tool for analysis but also of interpretation, and projecting it on the data, we came up with significant conclusions. First, the findings revealed that in order to enforce homosexuality, Netflix portrays the homosexual characters as optimistic people who enjoy a happy natural life and engage in a long term passionate love relationships. Furthermore, it depicts them as brave hardworking individuals who stand in the face of struggles and oppressive norms, and look forward to inspire others and help them accepting who they truly are while being proud of themselves. The aim behind this is to promote a positive image of the characters and by extension to naturalize their actions in society.

Keywords: Netflix, Homosexuality, Themes, Frames, Framing theory.

Chapter One: Introduction

This chapter essentially exhibits the background of the study, yet it also highlights the problem of the research through presenting various research questions and introducing the main aim and significance of the work. Furthermore, this chapter spotlights the setting, methodology, and conceptual structure of this study.

Background of the Study

In recent decades, the debate over homosexuality witnessed a considerable popularity and has drawn much of the public attention in accordance with the technological advancements. Notably, a major turning point in the history of sexual orientation was remarkably established in the 1970s through the leading Gay Liberation movements by homosexual activists in the United States and all over Europe defending gay pride and homosexuals' rights in the western societies. In this regard, Cohen (2008) stated that before the gay liberation, youngsters' struggle with sexual orientation in the American community was faced by social obstacles that consider homosexual acts as a crime, a sin, and a psychological disorder. This triggered researchers, sociologists, and even politicians of that time to delve into the matter and closely investigate it.

Accordingly, a wide spread fever of obsession of homosexuality that is defined by Tamagne (2006, p. 04) as "a form of sexuality in which sexual attraction is directed toward a person of the same sex" while a male with homosexual orientation is referred to as gay yet a female is referred to as lesbian, raided European and American societies in the name of Queer Theory "Queer is by definition whatever is at odds with the normal... Queer theory looks at, and studies, and has a political critique of, anything that falls in to normative and deviant categories, particularly sexual activities and identities." (Mathew, 2012, pp. 26-27) that resulted in the emergence of queer cinema (homosexual themed cinema) at the same decade. Benschhoff & Griffin (2004) confirmed that across the 1960s and 1970s, Hollywood started to

alter its film production patterns to open the door for other mature topics to be on screen, and later on by the same era it agreed to permit the presentation of homosexuality on screen under the label of queer cinema.

The apparent but slow spread of gay liberation ideas throughout the 70s unexpectedly started earlier than that during the twentieth of the century "the Roaring Twenties in homosexual mythology, was the period just after the war conjures up a new freedom, the birth of homosexual movements" (Tamagne, 2006, p. 13). However, the homosexual dialogue was still considered vague and limited until the 2010s of the current century (the golden age of television) in which it epidemically expanded in parallel with the rapid progress of media technology and mainly television streaming platforms. GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation) (2014) reported that what helped in the increase of tolerance and approbation of LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) was the positive depiction of LGBTQ communities by media that established the former as a typical norm.

In fact, television streaming services that were launched as small media companies on the 2000s to innovate the sector of telecommunication went viral on the 2010s to write history through invading cinema industry and stealing viewers of traditional broadcast television in average households (The Artifice, 2020). Indeed these services as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon revolutionized the field of cinema, yet their streaming productions were very oriented towards certain social and political cases, among which was homosexuality; consequently, it became a juicy topic for research.

Correspondingly, the last few years, witnessed plenty of research by multiple novice scholars who were interested in discovering any common relationship between those steaming services and the continuous and intense spread of homosexuality in the world.

Evidently, they aimed at revealing any framing strategies and ideologically-guided plans used by visual media and specifically television streaming platforms to orient the audience's views.

Significantly, the aforementioned plenitude of studies was not only motivated by the apparent link between homosexuality and television, but also by the statistical data that proved evident that audience reflects what is being viewed on television and gets a new perception of reality and socio political issues; due to the ideological strategies utilized by visual media. "By virtue of providing differential levels of coverage to specific issues, the media are able to shape individuals' perceptions of the relative importance and salience of these issues" (Moy & Tewksbury & Rinke, 2016, p. 02). In other words, media has its own ways in covering important issues and giving them certain shapes when delivered to audience in order to place stress on particular prominent ideas and highlight them.

In spite of the diversity of the abovementioned studies that largely placed focus on the influence of media and its representation of LGBTQ characters on the gay identity, as well as the role of broadcast and streaming television in shaping and embodying homosexuality, their scope of examination was very broad. These studies regarded all television streaming platforms as one body to explore their ideological representation of LGBTQ issue and its resulting impact, instead of the micro examination of each of the most popular television streaming services known for queer content.

Admittedly, the hitherto enormous growth of Netflix television streaming service along its obvious intense inclusiveness to the queer theme in all of its content with the highest percentage among all other services (GLAAD, 2015 – 2022), as well as the unexplained increasing tolerance to homosexuality in Arab countries have inspired this study. Thereupon, being led by plenty of question marks regarding the role of Netflix in enforcing homosexuality, this research aims at unveiling the implicit and explicit language framing patterns utilized by the former to represent the issue.

Statement of the Problem

In parallel with the worldwide uprising attention towards Netflix streaming platform in recent decades, various accusations from Arab countries targeted the service "Gulf Arab states have launched a rare, coordinated campaign against streaming giant Netflix, calling on it to remove offensive material...that violates Islamic values" (Al Lawati, Abdelbary, and Ebrahim, 2022). The accusations mainly revolved around how Netflix is explicitly and implicitly enforcing the tolerance of homosexuality among its Arab audience including children, which stands against the ethical norms of such societies. On this point, GLAAD (2022) as a media monitoring organization that promotes homosexuality and portrays its representation on media platforms stated that Netflix has been counting the highest number of LGBTQ characters on its original shows every year since the launching of the GLAAD annual report on 2015. Thereof, it became a trending issue in multiple Arab communities that a large wave of acceptance to homosexuality is extensively spreading over owing to Netflix platform especially with the increasing interest in it "Netflix is projected by the study to rise to more than 5.4 million customers in Arab countries by 2027 from 3.5 million subs in 2021" (Vivarelli, 2022, para. 7). In this regard, Suliman (2019) reported that a survey study conducted by Princeton's university found that Algeria is the most tolerant country to homosexuality among Arab countries in 2019 with 26% of individuals showing acceptance to one being gay, followed by Morocco with 21% then Sudan 17% although these countries had zero records of acceptance to homosexuality in previous years.

Despite the noticeable relation between the growing tolerance of homosexuality in the Arab world and the rising interest of Netflix in the area, very few studies were conducted to investigate the issue matter. For this reason, this study attempts to examine and explore how Netflix represents and enforces homosexuality through its content shows.

Research Questions

Our research work is governed by an overall question which is ‘how does Netflix reinforce homosexuality?’ and which is a reconfiguration of four sub questions, ought to be answered through this study:

1. What are the types and styles of homosexual characters on Netflix?
2. What are the explicit messages conveyed by Netflix about homosexual characters and homosexuality?
3. What are the implicit messages conveyed by Netflix about homosexual characters and homosexuality?
4. What are the social themes (frames) used by Netflix to represent homosexuality?

Assumptions of the Study

Due to the fact that this study is exploratory in nature and is built on a mixed method approach to content analysis, it is based on the following assumptions:

1. All television streaming platforms and services tend to represent social and political issues in certain forms that serve Netflix ideology.
2. Audience' perception gets affected and implicitly influenced by the television media content.
3. Netflix's ideology is to spread homosexuality.

Aims of the Study

Main Aim

The role of Netflix as a factor to the increasing acceptance to homosexuality in the Arab world has not been widely investigated. Through relying on the accuracy and advantages of content analysis as a method of analysis and the thoroughness of the framing theory as a framework, this study aims to gain an understanding of the forms and frames of representation of homosexuality on Netflix. Knowing that such representation influences the

audience's views and perception of homosexuality and orients them towards the acceptance of the phenomenon.

Objectives

- Exploring the stereotypical representation of homosexual characters on Netflix.
- Unveiling the explicit as well as the implicit messages communicated by Netflix regarding homosexuality.
- Examining the social themes and their nature which are used by Netflix in regards to homosexuality.

Research Significance

Addressing the forenamed aims and objectives of the study, the particular significance of this work lies in multiple dimensions. On one side, the scientific importance of this study is portrayed through being one of the very few studies that investigate homosexuality on Netflix. Offering new data about the ways Netflix represents homosexuality in its content, this work aims to reveal the purpose behind the use of such forms and frames. Furthermore, this work provides a fertile ground for future research about homosexuality in relation to Netflix and leading television streaming platforms, as it inspires researchers to notice and look deeper into the issue. On the flip side however, the applied significance of this work is expressed via the unveiling of the evident and the hidden messages (ideology) that are conveyed by Netflix to its audience regarding homosexuality. Moreover, it is illustrated by the study's thorough explanation of the link between the use of certain frames (forms) to represent particular issues as homosexuality on television, and the change of perception of audience to those issues. At last, socially speaking, this research can contribute to the preservation of morals in Arab "Muslim" societies and the prevention of sexual diversity in those by uncovering the implicit patterns of language frames used by Netflix to propagate homosexuality.

Setting of the Study

Physical Setting

Our purposive sample that consists of three different shows with a season from each produced by Netflix was chosen carefully based on the following:

1. Our personal knowledge of the selected sample.
2. The sample includes shows that are purely Netflix original, which confirms the accuracy of the upcoming findings.
3. The sample shows have received significant attention from viewers in the Arab world based on social media's data.
4. The shows represent multiple sexual groups and orientations with different ages.
5. These shows, as illustrated above, are highly rated on IMDb website (8.3/10 for Sex Education, 7.3/10 for AJ and the Queen, and 8.3/10 for Young Royals).

Chronological setting

We relied for this study on a purposive sample that consists of three seasons of three different Netflix original TV shows with a season per each show (25 episodes in total) that were released successively on 2019, 2020, then 2021.

- Sex Education (season one) (eight episodes) on 2019
- AJ and the Queen (season one) (ten episodes) on 2020
- Young Royals (season one) (six episodes) on 2021

The reasons behind the choice of such timing and dates of release of our sample are as follows:

1. Netflix reached its climaxed popularity in Arab countries in 2019 during the COVID lockdown with around 5 million Arab subscribers at the time and 9.81 million potential Arab subscribers by 2025 (Research and Markets, 2022).

2. Netflix TV shows are continuously and increasingly depicting the topic of homosexuality in recent years [121 LGBTQ characters on 2019 _ 183 characters on 2022] (GLAAD, 2019-2022) especially after 34 non-Arab countries permitted same-sex marriage (Fernandes, 2023) and 3 Arab countries legalized homosexual relations "Jordan, Iraq, & Bahrain" (Curtis et al, 2022) by 2023.
3. Selecting the closest timing to the study allows us to keep the findings explained in parallel with the increasing tolerance of homosexuality in the Arab world.

Applied Setting

This study will be applied through collecting qualitative data to be analyzed and coded using content analysis then a portion of it will be quantified using descriptive statistics. All findings, however, will be explained based on the framing theory as the main framework of the study.

Methodology

In accordance with our research aims and as an attempt to answer the research questions, the researchers will rely on the framework methods provided by Goffman, Dombos, and Minsky in their framing models as a part of framing theory. The purpose behind that is to unveil the explicit and the implicit forms (frames) utilized by Netflix to represent homosexuality (two categories only that are gay and lesbian) in its shows, which influences the audience's perception of the subject matter. This study counts on a qualitative content analysis to (number) scenes in a sum of 24 episodes of three different Netflix original TV shows with a season from each show, in order to extract the different themes (frames) that are used to refer to homosexuality/homosexual characters. Additionally, a quantitative description of the frequency of the themes obtained will be conducted with the help of descriptive statistics in an effort to recognize patterns and frequencies of such themes to finally explain all the findings relying on the framing theory. Evidently, this research counts

on the framing theory as a model of interpretation and not any other owing to the fact that it lays open the clear and the hinted audiovisual language patterns of representation on media, that takes the form of frames with multiple levels to present a particular phenomenon. Such frames and patterns of representation get manipulated by Netflix to deliver particular intended messages regarding homosexuality; therefore, influences the audience's perception of it, which is also the concern of framing theory that looks into the aftermath of framing. Thus, this study will be chiefly concerned a mixed method content analysis of a purposive sample from Netflix.

Structure of the Research

This dissertation is composed of five main chapters with specific divisions to each. Accordingly, the first chapter that is the introductory section of the dissertation is concerned with presenting the purpose, context, and scope of study. The following chapter, nonetheless, is purely theoretical that it includes all the bits of conceptual literature related to homosexuality, Netflix, and framing theory with a brief history for their development as well as the confusing expressions that might be linked to these. Additionally, it comprises a summary of prior studies accompanied by analysis, description, evaluation, and a critique.

Moreover, our third chapter deals with the research design and methodology and the conditions for data collection and analysis. Not to mention as well that it includes a detailed description of data collection tools, sample, variables, and variability/reliability measurement. More practically however, the fourth chapter of ours will be discussing the findings of the study with the results of each question being discussed separately. At last, the fifth chapter will include discussion of the findings with explanations based on the framework, limitations of the study, recommendations for further research, and a conclusion to the whole research.

Conclusion

This chapter gave a background to our study through discussing its three main corner stones that are homosexuality, Netflix, and propaganda. Additionally, the chapter also emphasized the research problem that is concerned with the growing tolerance to homosexuality in the Arab world and the role of Netflix in promoting that. Furthermore, a compilation of research questions, objectives, significance, setting, and, methodology was mentioned by the chapter to conclude it with the structural organization of the study components.

Chapter Two: Theoretical Literature and Prior Studies

Introduction

This current chapter constitutes of six major sections. The first four sections provide theoretical backgrounds of media framing, homosexuality, content analysis, and television streaming platforms. Furthermore, within those, brief summaries of the prior studies conducted over the same topic of this study are separately added to be evaluated by the last section of the chapter. The fifth section, nonetheless, is purely theoretical that it provides a synopsis of each of the sample TV shows selected for this study. At last, the final section includes an assessment of the prior studies, an evaluation and critique to those, and finally an elaboration of the significance of the current study and the gap it succeeded to cover unlike the others.

Section One: Media Framing

Definitions and Background

In the light of the heavy attention that was given to language in use in the 50s of the past century through the works of Nigel Fairclough and Ruth Wodak in linguistic Pragmatics and Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), various sociologists and linguistics showed a clear interest in the language of media and in particular the media framing. The most prominent of which were Ervin Goffman (1974), Gregory Bateson (1972) and even computer expert and cognitive scientist Marvin Minsky (1975).

Bateson (1972) explaining the human verbal communication described it as an operational system that functions at various stages of abstraction based on which there are two different abstract dimensions of discourse language, that are the explicit and the implicit messages. In relation to the definition of verbal communication by Bateson, framing as an expression relating to and used mostly by media was defined by Pan & Kosicki (1993) as the use of a special context to present a particular phenomenon in order to give the elements of

the issue being presented a "greater allocation of an individual's cognitive resources" (p. 57). In other words, when media highlights a certain phenomenon placing it in a particular intended context, it puts audience in the position of the assessor who would subconsciously evaluate the issue presented based on the context provided and not the reality coordinates.

Moreover, Entman (1993) labelling the notion of framing described it as a combination of two notions that are choice and prominence. He elaborated that the process of framing includes the foregrounding of a particular phenomenon via selecting certain aspects of it to be highlighted in communication, and the implicit control of the definitions, judgements, and remedies given to it by audience. Significantly, those highlighted aspects become very noticeable and memorable by audience since the increased use of foregrounding makes it more possible for audience to meaningfully and subconsciously process an issue and store it in the memory (Fiske & Taylor, 1991). For that reason, the foregrounding as a main element of framing in media can be achieved by multiple ways as repetition, cultural association, and/or unique representation (Entman, 1993).

By the same token, a frame as a separate notion had multiple definitions by scholars. Minsky (1975) described a frame as a "data-structure for representing stereotyped situation" (p. 211). Similarly, Reese, Gandy, and Grant (2001) defined frames to be "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (p. 11). More simply, Gamson & Modigliani (1987) define it being a "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning" (p. 143). Such definitions formed the base ground for the emergence of framing theory in the world of media and in relation to language sciences.

Framing Theory

Due to the fact that media framing received an enormous popularity since the late 1970s since it was used as a rhetorical instrument to scheme the scope of communicative

situations and control them, Erving Goffman in 1974 coined the name "framing theory" to describe the study of how rhetorical devices as frames used by media can intentionally and implicitly alter the value of a chosen phenomenon or issue for the audience. Within the framing theory, Goffman introduced the notion of frame analysis as a theoretical framework used to decode frames and reveal the messages intended to deliver by media both explicitly and implicitly. Frame analysis framework received a great attention from language researchers as well as media and communication students especially after it proved beneficial in the explanation of findings of various studies like that conducted by Hamden Dima to investigate Homosexuality on Netflix.

Hamden's study on 2021 that is so similar to our current study, relies on a mixed method to content analysis with the help of descriptive statistics to analyze certain Netflix TV shows in order to explore the forms of representation used by the latter to represent homosexuality. The study findings suggested that Netflix promotes a positive image of homosexual characters relying on various individual and social frames, which affects the audience' views. Despite the fact that the study counted on the Framing Theory framework to explain its findings that were extracted from an purposive sample composed of a total of 61 episodes of three different TV series from 2017 to 2020 (The Elite, Anne with an E, Tiny Pretty Things), it lacked the deep theoretical basis. In other words, the explanation of findings and the interpretation of frames was not based on an inclusive well-structured model/framework of frame analysis, rather relied on a surface shallow interpretation with continuous reference to the basics of the theory (by Goffman) without further elaboration.

Goffman (1974) uniquely defined framing analysis stating that it is the description of the process of "deconstructing the individual's organization of experience." (p. 11).

Noticeably, Goffman's aim was to

Try to isolate some of the basic frameworks of understanding available in our society for making sense of events and to analyze the special vulnerabilities to which these frames of reference are subject.... I assume the definitions of a situation are built up in accordance with principles of organization which govern events — at least social ones — and our as subjective involvement in them; frame is the word I use to refer to such of these basic elements as I am able to identify. (Goffman, 1974, pp. 10-11)

More elaborately, Goffman's goal through the introduction of frame analysis framework was to be able to identify and understand the patterns of representation used by media regarding particular social issues, in order to disclose the messages embedded within them.

A very deep insight into frame analysis as a theoretical framework allowed multiple scholars as Entman (1993) and Gonos (1977) to link it to Agenda-Setting theory, for the former shares many of the basic features of the latter. They are both concerned with how different issues and phenomena are depicted by media with multiple selected levels of prominence, and how that depiction impacts the audience's perception and evaluation of such issues.

Furthermore, plenty of other scholars attempted to deliver diverse definitions to frame analysis from various perspectives and in multiple fields of study. Hope (2010) within the field of sociopolitics interpreted framing analysis to be a theoretical framework that is essentially concerned with how particular social and political issues are defined and problematized, and the impact that such framing has on the understanding of the issue. However, Hackett (1984) with more in-depth insights into ideology, media, and news suggests framing analysis as an effective theoretical approach to the study of ideology, for it has the ability to get beneath the skin of media coverage of events and reveal the concealed intentions. By the same token, according to Hackett, "ideology" as a concept and a practice exceeds bias for the reason that it maintains the conceptual structure based on which events

and issues get presented by media. On a different level, Schön (1995) made a combination of framing framework and policy to come up with policy frame analysis since he argued that traditional approaches to policy analysis can neither account for political controversies, nor help in their resolution. He claimed that in order to understand political situations and controversies, audience ought to interpret the policy frames which are conceptual structures of belief and perception that underlie policy positions in a political discourse (Schön, 1995).

Remarkably and equally important to mention, after receiving a noticeable attention from researchers, framing analysis in recent decades turned into a practical research method with defined types, stages, and techniques of application, which gets mainly utilized by students of mass media and communication to dig deep into the construction of news frames in a systematic manner. Nevertheless, framing analysis is still mostly preserving its theoretical utility through being used in discourse analysis and language-related researches as a theoretical framework that accurately interprets and explains the use of particular frames by media.

Framing Analysis Scope

According to Arthur W. Page Center (2022), framing analysis theory can be established on two levels, the macro level and the micro level. Macro analysis is the broad examination and interpretation that focuses on the surface context through which the content, especially news, is represented. Such analysis is mainly applied to written media news reports in order to uncover the highlighting of a certain phenomenon or issue. Correspondingly, it typically looks into the text length, the headings, the imagery used, the font, the hyperlinks, and page position (Arthur W. Page Center, 2022).

Micro frame analysis however, is a detailed interpretation of media framing in general whether to audio-visual or textual content. Its main focus is to follow a particular suitable theoretical framework in order to explore, explain, and have a sense of the micro dynamics

used by media to frame specific phenomena. Accordingly, it looks into the language properties and terminology used, the stories, the styles, the social cases, the type of content, the prioritized characters, the overall tone, the implicit messages and much more (Arthur W. Page Center, 2022).

Frame Division and Categorization

Goffman's Division. Throughout decades, various scholars that belong to the fields of media studies and pragmatic linguistics attempted to give a division and a categorization to frames that are mainly employed by media to cover certain issues. The most significant contribution was achieved by Goffman through his notion "primary frameworks" that represented the surface level of framing and the most obvious and basic one. Goffman (1974) elaborated "we tend to perceive events in terms of primary frameworks, and the type of framework we employ provides a way of describing the event to which it is applied" (p. 24). These primary frameworks that form the basis for our basic understanding of frames surrounding a particular issue do outline a division of two subcategories that are 'natural primary frameworks' and 'social primary frameworks'. On one hand, natural primary frameworks are defined as the purely physical, biological, and uncontrollable nor governed features of individuals on media as for instance the biological features. These criteria are not designed nor controlled by humans in real life rather by nature. On the other hand, however, social primary frameworks incorporate the social status, social roles, social connections, and societal circumstances and happenings of individuals on media. Remarkably, these primary frameworks both natural and social get manipulated in use by media when characterizing particular individuals on its content in order to send ideological implicit messages about a specific phenomenon being spotlighted (Goffman, 1974).

Minsky's Division. Apart from that, surprisingly, a major contribution to framing comes from Minsky, a media and artificial intelligence expert, who was significantly

interested in the human thinking and ideology. Minsky (1975) declared that frames take a hierarchical form, which he described as "frame systems" because they get distributed on three different but associated levels. The highest level of framing according to Minsky (1975) includes the most general and basic Information about the targeted phenomenon, represented by "thematic superframes". Furthermore, the level below thematic superframes consists of "top-level frames" that provide extra surface level information about the phenomenon. At last, comes "subframes" that portray the tiniest details about the phenomenon being highlighted (Minsky, 1975, pp. 223-236). Important to mention, Minsky's division of frames was very flexible that it did not restrict each level of frames to specific criteria, rather ordered them based on the amount of details they might depict and that is relative to each scholar.

For more elaboration, Minsky (1975) adds that the thematic superframes are very general, broad, and obvious yet have no default form as it is the case for top-levels frames that are fixed and represent things that are necessarily true about the phenomenon. The subframes, nevertheless, represent the detailed situations of individuals, for instance, along their unique conditions and that would represent the issue being framed in a clear manner; knowing that simple conditions would just describe the individual(s) and the situation, yet the more complex conditions can describe and specify the relations among them individuals or parts involved in the situation.

Important to realize, Minsky believes that media discourse requires the use of multiple frames that are connected into frame systems, through which frames can range from the most simple and visual to the more abstract and hinted while representing the highlighted phenomenon. "A discourse assembles a network of instantiated frames and subframes" (Minsky, 1975, p. 237). Henceforth, the dissection of such frame systems permits the researcher to divulge the embedded messages and trace their interrelatedness to discover and reveal the ideology behind them.

Dombos' Division. Similarly, Dombos, Krizsan, Verloo, & Zentai (2009) declared that there are three different forms (modules) of frames that do fall into a system but function in parallel with each other rather than acting hierarchically. The most meticulous module of those represents "issue frames" that are abstract constructions and elements of meaning that do not take a clear textual statement form but are told through a story or a reasoning. These chunks of meaning (frames in the form of stories) that can be both implicit and explicit tend to work on problematizing the undesired social facts and norms related to the phenomenon being highlighted, and providing implicit solutions to those (altering the norms). Dombos et al (2009) stated that "issue frames have an inherent normative aspect: by identifying certain social facts as problematic and proposing changes towards a more desirable state of the world" (p. 5). To put it differently, when highlighting a particular phenomenon, media tends to put characters in touching story frames to gain sympathy and love of the audience towards the characters and the represented phenomenon. At the same time, these story frames problematize the social norms that fight and stand against the phenomenon, and attempt to suggest solutions to alter them.

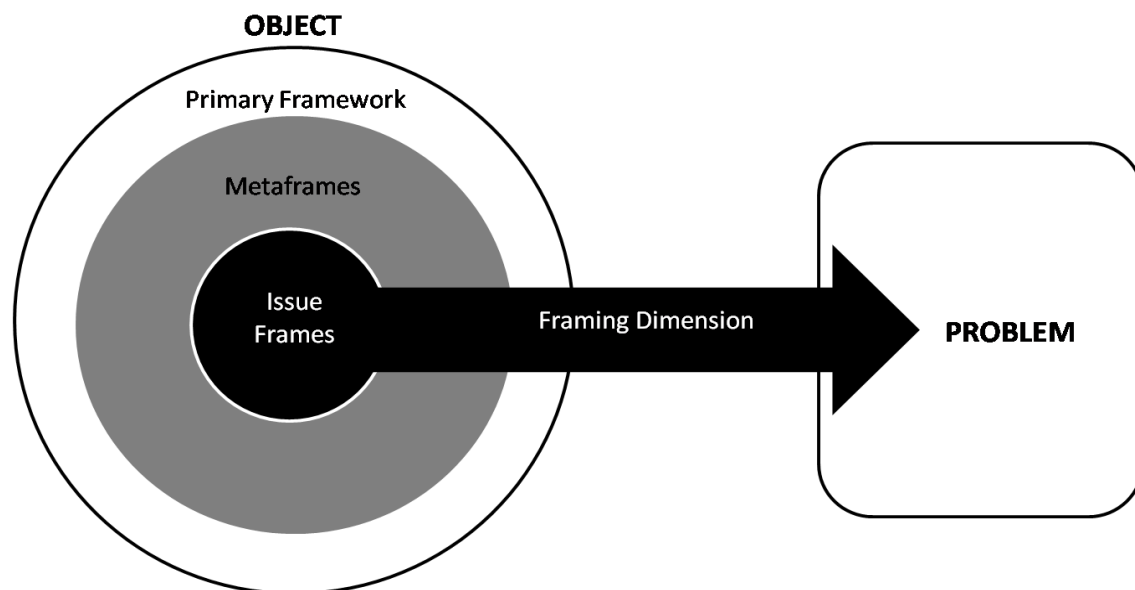
The following module according to Dombos et al (2009) comprises "document frames" that are quite noticeable and close to the surface level expression. A document frame is represented by media through the portrayal of the ways each individual who represents the phenomenon separately deals with it in society. To put it another way, when media attempts to foreground a particular phenomenon, it represents it through individuals then explicitly illustrates how those individuals deal with the phenomenon in hand in the light of their personal touching stories and the antagonistic norms that stand against them. The reason behind this is to reflect for instance the positive attitudes as acceptance, admission, pride, satisfaction, content, and revelation; or negative attitudes as denial, refusal, shame, and secrecy by such individuals, which absolutely inspires and impacts the audience. From

Dombos' (2009) point of view "a single issue frame is used in a document frame coherently, but more often they are linked to one or more issue frames, and can articulate fragmented or hybrid versions of those" (p. 6). By way of explanation, issue frames can be used by and associated to document frames since the latter represent the pitiful stories of characters and the problematized norms that stand against the phenomenon, and the former portrays how the individual deals with that situation and that phenomenon in the light of those surroundings.

Finally, "metaframes" are the most general module of framing. According to Dombos et al (2009) "*metaframes* are overarching frames of a higher level of generality that can be operationalized as the normative aspects of issue frames" (p. 6). A metaframe gets illustrated through the use of well manipulated norm-based frames that tend to surround the specific highlighted phenomenon in order to show and reflect an exaggerated reality of the norms that stand against it. This exaggeration typically serves to portray the harshness and severeness of those opposing norms. Important to mention that this reflection of the opposing norms and the exaggeration of them gets utilized by issue frames later on in the problematization, and gets also used by document frames in portraying the attitudes of individuals. Thus, it is apparent that the three modules of frames explained by Dombos function as an organized system with components working in parallel and in accordance with each other.

Framing Analysis Theoretical Framework

Inspired by the works of Goffman (1974) and Dombos (2009), Hope (2010) came up with an inclusive framing analysis theoretical framework (Micro analysis) that permits the detailed interpretation of the frames that are established and applied by media to represent certain phenomena. The framework includes an object that is the topic or the phenomenon that will be conceptualized and problematized as well as a combination of three interconnected layers of frames. These layers begin with the most general primary frameworks, to the more narrowed metaframes, down to the most detailed issue frames.

Figure 1*The Framing Model*

Primary frameworks in this model and that are inspired by Goffman's work (1974) represent the surface level of framing and the most general explicit one with natural frameworks and social frameworks that were explained earlier in this chapter.

Metaframes, however, inspired by Dombos (2009) are quite less general than primary frameworks yet very inclusive that they represent the normative aspects of the issue being highlighted through the use of conventional norm-based frames by media to reflect the undesired normative behavior in relation to the foregrounded phenomenon (Hope, 2010), and even if it was not truly the case in reality, it is used to alter the perception of audience.

According to Hope (2010) issue frames are the "core of the framing process" (p. 05). These frames as previously explained within this chapter are story-based implicit constructions of meaning that problematize social norms related to the highlighted phenomenon and provide implicit solutions to those. To put it another way, issue frames typically tend to serve the phenomenon and defend it. Through getting advantage of a made-up background story to seek audience's compassion, issue frames attempt to immoralize the supposedly opposing social facts to the phenomenon, and problematize them to create

alternative norms. To demonstrate the aforementioned, Dombos (2009) described issue frames to "provide a relatively coherent story/reasoning in which issue specific prognostic elements responds to issue specific diagnosis elements" (p. 9).

No less important to mention that issue frames has the most powerful effect on audience among all frames. Woong Rhee (1997) claimed that issue frames "are translated into different propositional systems and assembled in the interpreter's working memory" (p. 31). For that reason, the framing interpretation process starts by the examination of the broadest layer of frames that is primary frameworks, then it moves to the less general metaframes, to conclude by issue frames which are the most detailed, specific, and significant. By all means, the combination of those layers of frames that results in the overall framing of a particular phenomenon moving from general to specific is labeled as the "Framing dimension" (Hope, 2010).

Markedly, the interpretation and explanation of the frames established by media to cover a certain phenomenon relying on the above-mentioned model, brings to light whether the frames utilized are promoting a positive image or a negative one of the spotlighted phenomenon (Hope, 2010) (Levin et al., 1998).

Framing .VS. Agenda Setting

Faming theory and agenda setting have been confused by several parts despite the fact that one is an expansion of the other. McCombs (1995) argued that agenda setting theory has various dimensions, and the second of which is framing. Reese et al (2001) indicated the slight difference between the two by describing framing as "the way events and issues are organized and made sense of, especially by media, media professionals, and their audiences" (p. 07). Notwithstanding, they referred to agenda setting as a theory that places focus on the transformation of the prominence of certain elements in media pictures to the minds of audience, which illustrates that "the media's agenda sets the public's agenda" (Reese et al.,

2001, p. 67). To clarify, agenda setting and framing theory indeed share a common aim that is the reveal of how various critical social and political issues and phenomena are depicted by media with prominence placed on certain elements to impact the audience's views. Even so, agenda setting would still be considered broader and more inclusive since its main focus is to detect prominence placed by news media on specific issues and measure it to figure out how it impacts audience. Forthwith, it includes two different levels of application; the first of which is about studying how the audience's exposure to media content shapes their opinions; the second of which involves the study of how media presents different issues. Similarly, framing that represents the second level of agenda setting is more narrowed that it focuses on examining and analyzing the ways media introduces particular phenomena and captures the attention of the audience through them, in order to alter their views. That is to say agenda setting and framing take the same path but with different priorities; the former aims at exploring the impact of media on audience through its content, yet the latter gives more focus to the forms of representation on media content that affects audience.

In relation to that, Reese et al (2001) confirms that agenda setting lacks the theoretical ground and the in-depth interpretation and understanding of the cognitive strategies and the ideological triggers behind the media representation of phenomena unlike framing theory that delves deep into that.

Section Two: Content Analysis

Definitions

Scholars interested in both language and media have been scrutinizing the notion of content analysis for various years in order to gain a more profound understanding of it and an in-depth sight into its crucial methods. In broad terms, content analysis can be defined as the deciphering of the content held by a message that can take any corresponding form starting from long textual discourse up to audiovisual media content (Parveen & Showkat, 2017).

Being the case, Parveen et al (2017) continue to describe content analysis as "the scientific study of content of communication.....the study of contexts, meanings, subtexts, intentions contained in the messages. In simple terms, content analysis is the analysis of what is being said, written or recorded" (para. 01).

Methods of Content Analysis

In like manner, Parveen et Al (2017) reported that content analysis on its beginnings was only used with the quantitative methods of analysis; however, since the quantitative methods were not able to cover certain areas of research and provide answers to those, the qualitative methods to content analysis had been added to complete it and to cover the gray areas. Thereupon, IGNOU (2017) postulates that quantitative content analysis that he described as "conceptual analysis" deals with the quantification and measurement of the existence and/or the frequency of certain concepts in the content being examined while these concepts can be explicitly mentioned in the form of words and codes or can take the form of a cluster of many words, which is implicit. Qualitative content analysis, notwithstanding, as an extension to the quantitative method, which is typically known as relational content analysis represents the examination of the relationship between the concepts/ themes that were identified and extracted through the conceptual method. IGNOU (2017) stated that "the focus of relational analysis is to look for semantic, or meaningful, relationships" since "meaning is the product of the relationships among concepts in a text" (p. 32). In different words, relational (qualitative) content analysis stresses on the coding of elements/concepts that are semantically related to be able to group them into themes later on.

Another key point regarding qualitative content analysis was discussed by Parveen et Al (2017) that the latter can be approached through three main ways either via deriving codes and themes after the examination of data, which is the conventional analysis, or through using particular primary codes that were identified by a theory or prior research to be detected in

the content analyzed, which is directed analysis, or, at last, via the use of summative content analysis that evokes the analysis of the quantified concepts in content through making a comparison between them to reach summative results.

A great example of the application of quantitative content analysis was illustrated through the study conducted by Carson Cook on 2018. Cook's research relied on a content analysis of nine television shows from the 2016-2017 season across broadcast and streaming platforms. Its aim was to explore and quantitatively describe how representation of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender characters on television has changed since 2001. Furthermore, the objectives of the study were to answer the questions of how the representation of bisexual and transgender characters differs from that of homosexual characters in number, and how the representation of LGBT on streaming platforms differs from that on broadcast shows also in number. Remarkably, the findings of the study of Cook suggested that the representation of bisexual and transgender characters has increased since 2001 with an increase in affection displayed by those characters, and that the representation of bisexual and transgender characters is very little comparing to the display of gay and lesbian characters. Moreover, the results proved that there is more LGBT representation on streaming platforms than on broadcast television. Conversely however, despite the focus of the study on the quantitative tracing and measurement of LGBT representation over two different types of platforms, it failed to cover the qualitative forms of representation of those LGBT characters while in only referred to one of them that is "affection". Such failure was due to the broadness of the scanning that included LGBT in general rather than one sexual orientation, the generality of the sample that included nine shows from two different services, and mainly the lack of a theoretical framework that enables the researcher to accurately trace the forms of representation of LGBT. Another key criticism devoted to the study was that it did not limit itself to the quantitative content analysis discarding the qualitative one, rather it delved into

the qualitative forms of representation of LGBT characters extracting one form only (affection), which got the researcher stuck especially that forms of representation vary and do necessitate explanation.

Significance of Content Analysis

With attention given to content analysis, it is important to mention the significance of such research approach that shines through the coding of content through the inspection of its components in order to extract meanings and attain valid inferences, whether that content was in the form of written pieces or recorded communication (Parveen et Al., 2017).

In the same way, Parveen et Al (2017) emphasizes the flexibility of content analysis that can be the corner stone for both exploratory and descriptive research either through inductive or deductive techniques. He illustrates that content analysis permits the researcher to comprehend the topic of the study well in terms of the variables of frequency and prominence at the same time since "it enables the researcher to systematically identify the properties of the content" (Parveen et Al., 2017, para 05).

Section Three: Homosexuality

Gender and Homosexuality' Brief History

Decades ago, gender was simply defined by social experts and psychologists to be one's social and legal status as a male or a female based on particular social roles and behavioral criteria in relation to the biological sex and genital organism of the individual. Strangely enough, however, after the First World War the world got introduced to more open analogies about gender and sexuality with various new definitions and categorizations to those. Gender since the Roaring Twenties became defined in social science as one's consciousness of their sexual identity regardless of the sex and the genital structure and relying on more inclusive behavioral features (Dynes, 2016). To elaborate, the sociologist Dynes (2016) stated "because it is impossible to know what another human being feels,

personal gender identity can only be inferred from what the subject under observation expresses in speech, gesture, and movement" (p. 462). It means that according to modern sociology, the genital anatomy of the human being do not determine one's gender.

Tamagne (2006) says that through the indulgent period of post war in Europe after the suffering of First World War, people got more open to adopt and tolerate new social acts and behaviors. The main of which was homosexuality that represents same-sex romantic relationships, male-male and female-female (Dynes, 2016). In relation to that, Tamagne (2006) described that era saying that "the Roaring Twenties in sexual mythology, was the period just after the war conjures up a new freedom "(p. 13). Consequently, homosexuals had benefited from the flexible atmosphere at that time to spread the expression of new sexual trends and preferences.

Shortly after, the 1950s era was the nightmare of homosexuality unlike the 20s of the century. Coinciding with the Nazi tyranny after the Second World War, homosexuals faced terror and the torture of castration in Nazi camps for the purpose of getting reeducated and reoriented towards the natural sexual orientation (Tamagne, 2006). Surprisingly, much support was directed towards the actions of the Nazi regarding homosexuality by European societies despite the fact that the Nazi was an enemy to the world at that time. For instance, the American Association' Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM) listed homosexuality as a "sociopathic personality disturbance, thus giving a medical legitimacy to official and unofficial discrimination" (Cohen, 2008, p. 11). While this was the case for a few years, the 1970s that witnessed the Gay Liberation movements in the USA and Europe changed the game and steadily altered the history of homosexuality. Thereupon, a wide door to the world of homosexuality got hitherto opened (Tamagne, 2006).

Conceptual Definitions

Various terms and conceptual definitions that are related to homosexuality get confused by the general audience; thereof, clarifying their significance is very crucial.

Sexual Orientation (n). The person's identity in relation to the gender(s) to which they are sexually attracted (Rainbow Center, 2018).

Homosexual (adj). Homosexual is an expression that describes a person who is physically and sexually attracted to other humans of the same gender. This expression is inclusively used to refer to both male to male and female to female relationships (Rainbow Center, 2018).

Gay (adj). Is the informal colloquial synonym to homosexual (Dynes, 2016) and that is used the most by general audience to refer to individuals whom are sexually interested in the same sex of theirs whether male or female.

Lesbian (adj). A colloquial expression under the umbrella of homosexuality that is usually used as a sub term to refer to the same-sex female sexual relations (female-female) while male-male relationships are colloquially described as gay. However, the formal inclusive label to same-sex relationships in general whether male-male or female-female is homosexual (Dynes, 2016).

LGBTQ+ (n). An abbreviation for Lesbian-Gay-Bisexual-Transgender-Queer and any other that is used to refer to the whole community with special sexual orientations including homosexuality but not restricted to it (Rainbow Center, 2018).

Straight/heterosexual (adj). Heterosexuality is the natural sexual attraction to the opposite gender (Rainbow Center, 2018). In other words, it is the attraction that occurs between a male and a female. Therefore, the adjective straight/heterosexual is used to describe the common people apart from the LGBTQ+ community.

Queer (n/adj). An umbrella term that is semantically used to broadly refer to all the individuals with non-natural (not straight) sexual orientations and their minority groups whether homosexual, bisexual, transgender, or else (Rainbow Center, 2018). Evidently, this expression can be equal to LGBTQ+ since both are inclusive to all categories.

Pride (n). "The feeling of gratification arising from association with something good or laudable. Typically associated with the LGBTQ community in association with pride marches, and pride flags" (Rainbow Center, 2018, p. 14). Differently, the natural feeling of pride that is common to all humans became widely associated with the LGBTQ+ community, for they intend to prove that homosexuality is a virtue and acquiring it makes oneself satisfyingly prideful.

Homophobia (n). Homophobia (n) is mainly the negative reactions and behaviors towards the homosexual community (Dynes, 2016). In other words, homophobia is the cynical attitudes of individuals with natural and straight sexual identities towards the homosexual community and its odd practices.

Drag Queen (n/adj). This expression typically refers to homosexual (gay) males who dress in highly decorative ornamental women's clothing in order to perform as a stage performer for entertainment (Carman, 2023).

Same-Sex Marriage (n). Is the marriage of two people of the same legal sex (Legal Information Institute, 2021).

Rainbow Flag. It is a flag that was established as an official symbol of LGBTQ pride in 1994. The reason for the adoption of the rainbow concept was the references of each color; red for life, orange for healing, yellow for sunlight, green for nature, violet for spirit, and indigo for harmony. Moreover, rainbow is a natural phenomenon, and the adoption of it was an attempt to insinuate that LGBTQ is natural (Gonzalez, 2017).

Figure 2

The Rainbow Flag



Note. Figure by Shankle (2006)

Section Four: Netflix & Streaming Platforms

Television Streaming Platforms

Decades ago no one has ever thought that people at a certain point will neglect and dump their favorite traditional television screens for the favor of new visual technologies as television streaming platforms. Television streaming services are variant versions of classic television with multiple advantages and extra criteria that "need to be understood not merely as technological innovation, but reconceptions, profoundly altering our relationship with dominant media institutions, and with media culture in general" (Kompare, 2005, in Jenner 2018, p. 09). By definition, media refers to the collection of mass communication means as radio, television, newspapers, and the internet, which can reach and influence people (Haque, n.d.). Television (TV) streaming services, however, are the online entertainment source for diverse video-based content that gets delivered to audience through the internet and via technological devices as smartphones, tablets, computers, internet-connected TVs, instead of the regular traditional television screens using cable dishes (Frost, 2022). Notably, television

streaming sector witnessed a plethora of adjustments in the form of modes in recent decades like the Live TV streaming mode and On-demand TV streaming.

Correspondingly, in an attempt to imitate the traditional TV system but in a more advanced way, streaming platforms adopted Live TV streaming that is basically the real-time streaming of local and international content. This live streaming occurs through DVR devices (Digital Video Recorders) that do not only provide users with the weekly programming of every streamed channel, but also allows them to record their favorite live streamed content on its cloud storage (Frost, 2022).

According to Frost (2022), the following are the top live TV streaming services:

Table 1

Top Live TV Streaming Services in 2022

	Live Streaming Service	Channels
1	YouTube TV	100+ channels
2	Hulu + Live TV	85+ channels
3	Philo	60+ channels
4	FuboTV	140–215+ channels
5	Sling TV	30–50+ channels
6	DIRECTV STREAM	75–150+ channels

Conversely, On-demand TV offers free online personalized content that is available to watch on demand anytime the viewer desires on his smart devices. Since the VOD (video on demand) system permits users to watch their favorite selected content at their schedule's convenience, it do not offer live content rather a previously recorded one. YouTube for instance is among the major VOD platforms; regardless, Netflix that is also a VOD service reached the top list of best video on-demand services after it updated the sector by adding

the paid-for monthly subscription option on 2007. This significant addition by Netflix allowed it to dominate the on-demand TV streaming for years while labelled as the SVOD (subscription video on-demand) monster. Important to realize though that such update brought an end to DVD renting (digital versatile disc) (Frost, 2022).

According to Frost (2022), the following are the top on-demand streaming services and their subscription fees:

Table 2

Top On-Demand Streaming Services in 2022

	On-Demand Streaming Service	Monthly Subscription
1	Netflix	\$6.99–\$19.99/mo.
2	Hulu	\$7.99–\$14.99/mo.
3	Amazon Prime Video	\$8.99–\$14.99/mo.
4	Disney+	\$7.99–\$10.99/mo.
5	HBO Max	\$9.99–\$15.99/mo.
6	Peacock	\$4.99–\$9.99/mo.
7	Paramount+	\$4.99–\$9.99/mo.
8	ESPN+	\$9.99/mo.

Netflix Platform

On its way being one of the most popular video on-demand services, Netflix had a history rich with updates, prizes, and criticism.

Brief History. Getting late on his way to return a movie DVD to the video store and pay a fee for its late delivery, the computer scientist Reed Hastings got the first idea that gave birth to Netflix. Netflix on its fresh beginning on 1997, was a small firm with DVD-by-mail service that allowed users within the USA (United States of America) region to rent their

favorite movies' DVDs online and pay monthly for that (monthly subscription). This online payment method received likes from audience since it helped them to get rid of late delivery fees (Gallaugher, 2012). Additionally, despite the fact that the monthly Netflix subscriptions were flat-rate fees, the number of rentals throughout the month was unlimited, which attracted the audience even more. Unfortunately however, Netflix faced some trouble providing enough copies of DVDs for all its users at that time since the demand was beyond supply (Schmidt, 2020). Thereafter, on 2007, Netflix launched its video television streaming services inside the USA territory, and by the coming of 2010 its services impressively became available in around 190 countries to be globally known as the most wanted television streaming service (Schmidt, 2020).

Schmidt describing the watching rate of Netflix said

In terms of user penetration, defined as the number of people in a country who have watched Netflix at least once during a month, the United States has the highest rate (64.5%) but Sweden, Denmark, Canada, and Norway all have over 50% user penetration. Netflix does lag behind competitors in India and has had slow growth in China (Schmidt, 2020, p. 1204).

By the same token, Plothe & Buck (2019) affirm that Netflix slowly through its mail rental strategy followed by the television streaming technology innovated the media sector as well as the television and film industries. "Netflix has become the industry-leading video streaming platform in a way that makes its name synonymous with the concept" (Plothe and Buck, 2019, p. 01). As a result of its precious contributions, Netflix was praised for making the future of television and being a massive film power in Hollywood despite the fact that it brought the golden age of traditional screens to an end (Plothe and Buck, 2019).

Figure 3*Netflix Logo*

Note. Figure by Spangler (2019)

Netflix Content. Netflix essentially relies in its video streaming on various collections of diverse content that includes TV shows/series and movies. Such content gets collected from multiple media sources that grant permission and sometimes exclusiveness to Netflix to stream their content due to its enormous popularity worldwide. Nevertheless, in recent years Netflix started streaming its own content under the label of "Netflix Original" through which the service pays for film companies to produce original television content that is only exclusive to its platform to stream. Such original productions are not bound to the United States area, rather some of them get produced in foreign countries as Spain, Egypt, and Turkey, which explains the diversity of content provided by the service that approximately includes "+700 original television shows" (Schmidt, 2020, p. 1204). In this regard, Schmidt (2020) said "Netflix's streaming video service has over 1,500 television shows and 4000 movies across a wide range of genres. Subscribers are able to watch as many programs as they want and have full access to the catalog of titles Netflix has licenses to in their country" (p. 1204). In different words, Netflix tries to gain as many licensees as possible to the various foreign shows of other countries apart from the USA in order to enlarge its streaming capacity and attract more audience from all over the world.

From a different angle, Netflix had proved itself to be impressively witty regarding content advertisement. It has always used social media platforms as a tool of advertisement like using Twitter for instance to set audience excited the upcoming content. In relation to that, Plothe & Buck (2019) explained "Coinciding with the launch of the second season of its original series Stranger Things on 2017, Netflix published the following entry on Twitter: "Ready. Set. Binge!" to promote the uptodateness of Netflix's programming" (p. 13). By "binge" Netflix was referring to the continuous nonstop watching parties of its content shows, and through which it was constructing a cultural category of its own that is Binge-watching. Particularly, Binge-watching by definition can refer to the consumption of one media format several hours in a row. Notably, that binge-watching trend that exists up to now makes the audience very enthusiastic to scroll through the options of streamed content available on the platform while not having to wait for weeks for their favorite episodes to be released (Plothe and Buck, 2019). Apart from Twitter, Netflix had also invaded other social networks as Instagram, in which it activated social hashtags as #Letsbinge to allow its users to mention their friends on the posts of their favorite Netflix shows. As a result of that, a good portion of Netflix's programs that are divided into Netflix Originals and external streamed content get explicitly recommended by the audience itself on social media while the rest gets advertised by Netflix as binged, which attracts large numbers of binge fan viewers.

Critically speaking, however, and in relation to the abovementioned, Netflix had a considerable role in altering its audience' watching habits. Such change was put into effect due to the expressions that the service use to promote its content on social media as "Binge-Watching" and "Netflix and Chill". These social expressions apart from exciting viewers inspires them to spend more time on screen watching successive episodes of their preferable shows, which negatively impacts their watching habits as well as their lives (Plothe and Buck, 2019).

Netflix Algorithm. An objective of Netflix service was and still making it easy for its users to find their favorite content whenever desired. To achieve that, it offered its audience multiple varied categories, subdivisions, and genres of television series and movies to scroll through. More importantly, Netflix' main aim was to personalize its audience's experience that the viewers get suggested content that fits with their interests. To establish this, Netflix relied on a recommendation system led by what is called algorithm (Schmidt, 2020).

In this respect, Frey (2021) declares that

Netflix's, YouTube's, and other internet streaming services' algorithmic recommender systems seemed to constitute the culmination of a certain internet fantasy:

personalization. For many commentators, these systems— which suggest content likely to interest viewers based on their prior viewing histories—represented a fundamentally new way of connecting cultural objects and human beings. (P. 03)

Broadly speaking, streamed television users are free to select their preferable content and watch it anytime suitable to them whether divided over different periods of time or on a single setting. Nevertheless, particular streaming services like Netflix promote smart algorithm tactics to encourage certain watching habits for its audience, which makes the viewers choices very predictable, common, and implicitly guided (Plothe and Buck, 2019). Despite the fact that the audience realizes that customized content gets set for them on multiple digital platforms owing to a recommendation system, it remains vague to them how algorithms function to personalize their experience (Plothe and Buck, 2019).

About algorithms, Gillespie (2014, p. 168) says that algorithms are used "to select what is most relevant from a corpus of data composed of traces of our activities, preferences, and expressions", which means that digital platforms are so interconnected that allows their moderators to trace users' activity and their search history in order to suggest them later on a content of their preference. In other words, algorithms tend to identify then create relevance,

and by sorting data based on relevance, they shape the audience's social and cultural experiences (Plothe and Buck, 2019).

Equally important, it is crucial to explain how algorithms can reflect behaviors and affect them at the same time especially when reinforcing particular interests over other for users while convincing them that the content they watch is the result of their plain choice. On this point, Plothe & Buck (2019) affirm that the algorithmic identity attributed to every individual and that is the production of the tracking ability of web to users' mass history data is an essential part of the Netflix experience as the individual's self on the platform "is constantly produced and reproduced based on their behaviors and interactions with it" (p. 39). As a result to that high level of personalization, the viewers' profiles on Netflix and that continuously suggest them matching content to their interests tend to reflect their taste over time.

Finally, in relation to Netflix, it is crucial to speak of the studies that used it as the center of investigation. A study conducted by Karrar Muhammad on 2022 and that is similar to our study focused on analyzing the depiction of homosexuality by Netflix. Relying on an eclectic model of CDA (Critical Discourse Analysis) as a part of discourse analysis, Karrar aimed at discovering the archetypes employed by Netflix in details aswell as uncovering the ideology behind the representation of homosexuals. Accordingly, the findings of the study concluded that Netflix employed a variety of archetypal patterns to reflect that homosexuals are equal to heterosexuals. Moreover, the results confirmed that Netflix depicted a conflicting polarization between homosexuality and societal/religious beliefs, and a legitimization of homosexual rights, which asserts that Netflix promotes ideology and advocates the fact that homosexuality is natural. In spite of the accuracy and inclusiveness of the abovementioned research by Karrar (2022) relying on discourse analysis, it did not mention the audience's

perception of such ideology employed by Netflix nor the impact that the ideological representation of homosexuality has on the audience' views and opinions.

Section Five: Study Sample Synopses

Below are sub-sections to showcase synopses of the TV shows that were selected as a sample in this study.

Sex Education (Synopsis)

Sex Education is a Netflix original British teen drama series created by Laurie Nunn. The title of this series is derived from the education of the main character and his classmates in high school. The story follows a high school student (Otis Milburn played by Asa Butterfield) whose mother (Jean Milburn played by Gillian Anderson) is a sex therapist as he becomes through a series of events a sex therapist by himself in his school for his fellow students. However, Otis was not alone in his therapy trip after a social outcast student (Maeve Wiley played by Emma Mackey) saw the financial potential and helped him attracting customers to his sex therapy clinic at the high school. On January 11, 2019, Netflix launched the first season. It was well-received by reviewers and spectators alike, who applauded the film's ideas, subject matter, and performances. Due to the popularity of the Sex Education episodes, Netflix renewed it for two other seasons on 2020 and 2021. The first season that was composed of eight episodes with a 45 minutes duration per each, introduced multiple homosexual characters as Eric Effiong (Ncuti Gatwa) who needed to deal with his homosexuality in the show, Adam Groff who does not enjoy being with his girlfriend and eventually realizes he is gay, Ola Nayman who struggles to figure out whether she is attracted to boys or girls, Lily Iglehart who tried to discover her attraction towards females, Anwar Bakashi who spends his time looking for boyfriends for himself, and Sofia Marchetti who attempts to deal with being a lesbian mother (Mangan, 2019) (Sex Education Wiki, 2019).

AJ and the Queen (Synopsis)

AJ and the Queen is a Netflix original American comedy-drama series created by RuPaul and Michael Patrick. Its story follows the drag queen Robert (played by RuPaul) as a New York heartbroken drag performer who got robbed after he was saving \$100k to start his own nightclub. Consequently, he was forced to recoup his losses by going on a final cross-country tour. However, Robert faces an unexpected obstacle when a 10-year-old homeless girl named AJ (Izzy G.) hid in his campervan to escape foster care after her drug addict mother dumped her. As the story progresses, the unlikely friendship between Robert and AJ develops after they learn how to love their own selves. The one season TV show was released on January 10, 2020 with 10 episodes, and it included a large number of homosexual characters (around 22 drag queens) (Drag Race Wiki, 2020).

Young Royals (Synopsis)

Young Royals is a Netflix original Swedish drama-romance TV series directed by Erika Calmeyer and Rojda Sekersöz. Its first season that was released on July 1, 2021 had 6 episodes with a runtime of around 45 minutes per each. The TV show mainly revolved around the story of a scandalous homosexual romance between a royal and a commoner. Starring Prince Wilhelm (played by Edvin Ryding), the season one episodes portrayed the progressive romantic relationship between the prince who were sent to an elite school and his fellow classmate Simon Eriksson (played by Omar Rudberg) as well as the drama that accompanied that. Notably, the show went viral that Netflix renewed it for another season on 2022 (Sengupta, 2022).

Section Six: Critique to the Empirical Literature

The current study follows in the footsteps of two of the aforementioned studies in that it employs content analysis. The previous review of the prior studies related to the same scope and topic of research indicates that these studies are primarily concerned with the

representation of homosexuality on media; whereas, two of them focused on that representation across Netflix platform, yet the other that was conducted by Cook (2018) included all streaming and broadcast services. These studies are addressed in separate instances of media; nevertheless none of them, to the best knowledge of the researcher, has succeeded to study how homosexual characters are represented by Netflix from a mixed method content analysis point of view following a well-structured inclusive theoretical frame analysis framework to interpret and explain findings.

Despite the similarity between Hamden's study (2021) and this study concerning the mixed method content analysis, the latter relied on a shallow explanation of the findings based on the framing theory specifically based on the notions set by Goffman only (primary frameworks). Knowing that media frames vary and do function on different levels to fully highlight a certain phenomenon, it is better to rely on an inclusive theoretical model like that generated by Hope (2010) and that is utilized by this study to be able to identify, recognize, extract, and explain all the frames used by media (Netflix in our case) to ideologically spotlight homosexuality. Furthermore, the present study relying on qualitative and quantitative content analysis leaves no room for subjectivity unlike the case of purely qualitative research as that discourse analysis study conducted by Karrar (2022).

Finally, these merits run together to make the current study unique, original, and genuine.

Conclusion

The chapter covered a theoretical background of media framing, content analysis, homosexuality, and television streaming platforms. As it also explored multiple notions, theories, concepts, and terms pertinent to the current study such as LGBTQ, framing analysis, Netflix, and algorithm. Finally, the chapter included a summary of the prior studies

conducted in the same field of research, separately, then concluded by a synthesis and evaluation to those highlighting the gap covered by this study.

Chapter Four: Practical Application

Introduction

This chapter is essentially composed of five main sections. The first section involves the elaboration of the methodology relied upon in conducting the current study along with its separate components. The second section, nonetheless, presents a summary of the key findings reached by this research regarding homosexual characters representation on Netflix. Accordingly, the findings do exhibit the types and styles of characters, the implicit and explicit messages regarding them, and the social themes connected to those. Not far from that, the third section displays the discussion and interpretation of findings accompanied by the conclusions attained. At last, the final section lays out a combination of the study limitations as well as the recommendations provided by researchers for further studies to the reader.

Section One: Methodology

Following the practical data analysis of this research, researchers went through multiple methodological procedures in order to achieve scientifically accurate and appropriate results. Thereupon, this section includes an elaboration of the research design, a description of the target population and the selected sample, and a summary of the data collection and analysis methods and tools.

Research Design

This research is an exploratory descriptive study that was conducted following a content analysis method applied to a modularly sample composed of three Netflix original TV series. The content analysis, however, was employed both qualitatively and quantitatively towards a mixed method design. First, the data collected from the sample as a whole were mainly analyzed qualitatively, through which various themes and concepts concerned with

the representation of homosexuality were extracted. Then the obtained themes were quantified for the purpose of tracing frequency rates.

On one side, the qualitative analysis included multiple steps in order to be able to examine the data thoroughly and provide sufficient answers to the research questions. First and foremost, the audiovisual data extracted from the scenes of the sample (scenes of homosexual characters only in the total of 24 episodes of three different series) were transcribed and familiarized with through many readings by the researchers. Next, a coding process took place through which researchers relied on the principles of the framing theory as well as the aims of the research questions to deductively code the different data segments related to study aims. After coding data, the researchers proceeded to identify themes via gathering similar codes into main patterns of meaning. To elaborate on the essence of themes, Braun and Clarke (2006) explain that there are no strict rules about the nature of a theme and what makes a theme since a theme is all about significance. In the following step, researchers reviewed the themes that were obtained and refined them to be suitable and useful to the whole research. Similarly, the following step included linking themes to each other and to the research questions since every set of themes serves to answer one of the questions of the study. At last, the themes got reported in the dissertation within the findings section to be interpreted right after.

Notably, in answering the first question specifically, researchers took extra exceptional scientific procedures unlike those relied upon above to answer the rest of questions due to the nature of data being analyzed. To demonstrate, certain useful themes that were needed to answer the first question such as employment status, gender, social integration, and age were not available on the transcribed data due to their visual nature. Hence, researchers developed a set of coding rules in order to code that visual data then categorize it into corresponding themes.

On the flip side, the quantitative approach to this research took the form of a univariate frequency distribution analysis that was based on the quantification of the qualitative data. In other words, the themes gathered through the qualitative analysis got separately quantified as isolated variables to be measured for frequency. For this reason, the researchers relied on the use of univariate descriptive statistics in SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to be able to identify the frequency rate of every theme and illustrate it via statistical charts.

In justification of the use of content analysis instead of thematic analysis for the study, the researchers, while dealing with a complex nature of data that ranges from an audiovisual transcribed form to a solely visual form, realized that a mixed method to content analysis would be the most suitable to conduct the research. The reason behind such decision lays in the limited capacity of thematic analysis to examine a non-textual data that have not been transcribed knowing that researchers had to deal with a portion of visual data to answer the first research question. Contrastingly, content analysis permits a more flexible approach to analyze qualitative data through having the capacity to analyze transcribed audiovisual data as well as solo visual data in the presence of convenient coding rules in order to extract themes, concepts, and even meanings. Considering the aforementioned, various scholars tend to categorize thematic analysis as a subpart of content analysis since the former is included within the latter. In this point, Anderson (2007) listing thematic analysis as a subtype of content analysis said that "thematic content analysis is a descriptive presentation of qualitative data" (p. 01).

An illustrative example of the qualitative data analysis is explained as follows:

Table 3*Illustration of the Qualitative Analysis*

TV Series	Episodes	Transcribed Scenes	Codes	Theme
AJ and the Queen	06	It's my kid, my business. And I'll be goddamned if my son is gonna be prancing around in a dress. (scene of Brick happily dancing in a girly dress until his father saw him)	Harsh family unacceptance to homosexuality	Harsh family environment
Sex Education	03	It's time for you to grow up! Put that stuff off your face before your mother sees it. (scene of Eric wearing makeup then his father showed up)	Family cruelly ashamed of homosexuality	
Young Royals	06	You realize that this will have consequences!! It looks like we can't cover this up....I don't want you to see Simon for the time being. (scene of Wilhelm speaking to his mother after his sex tape with Simon was leaked)	Tyrannical family disrespect to the choice of homosexuality	

All and above, in terms of theoretical basis, this study relied upon the framing theory for the formulation of research questions, the qualitative analysis of data, and the interpretation of findings. Therefore, researchers believe it is the most appropriate and suitable framework for such work due to its exact nature that investigates, identifies, and interprets the ideologies employed by media. Notably, the theory and its corresponding model used for this research are thoroughly explained in the literature review chapter (pp. 11-22).

Population

The population of the study refers to the entire large groups of individuals or things from which the sample was selected from and on which the results were generalized over (Shukla, 2020). In the current study, the population is composed of all the TV shows that were originally produced by Netflix from 2019 to 2021; however, due to the complexity of mentioning all of them, the number was not specified.

Sample

The sample of this study is a purposive sample composed of three Netflix original TV series chosen carefully to fulfil the objectives of the study. These TV series are "Sex Education", "AJ and the Queen", and "Young Royals". In defining purposive sampling, Maxwell (1996, p. 70) said it is a technique of sampling in which "particular settings, persons, or events are deliberately selected for the important information they can provide that cannot be gotten as well from other choices". In this regard, the unique criteria spotted by the researchers in the selected sample for this study incorporate essential elements such as the release date, the content nature, the popularity rate, and many others (specified in pp. 7-8).

Data Description

Table 4

Sample Data Description

TV Series Title	Rate On IMDb	Number of Episodes	Target Scenes
Sex Education	8.3/10	08	All
AJ and the Queen	7.5/10	10	All
Young Royals	8.3/10	06	All
Total	/	24	/

Unit of Analysis

As a part of the selected sample for this study, which includes original TV series produced by Netflix, homosexual characters were separately identified as the unit of analysis. The reason behind the choice of such unit goes back to the framing theory. To emphasize, the theory's framework indicates that the different frames that can be employed by audiovisual media on a micro scope are usually presented on the level of individuals. Forthwith, the focus of researches that adopt this theory to examine media framing on a micro level ought to be on individuals that are in the case of this study "characters".

Data Collection

For the purpose of collecting authentic data for the study, researchers relied on different sources of data. On one hand, in order to tackle the practical aspects of the study, a content analysis form was designed to collect the qualitative set of data. Markedly, the form following the scientific standards comprised the selected TV series, their episodes, the transcribed scenes needed for the analysis, the generated codes, and the extracted themes. Equally important, a set of quantitative data that was generated on the basis of the qualitative input was collected through illustrative charts designed by the SPSS. On the other hand, in regards to the theoretical aspects of the research, a combination of primary written sources of information that included books, journal articles, online news reports, published thesis, web articles, statistical reports, and social media posts was used to collect the sufficient data for the theoretical background.

Section Two: Study Findings

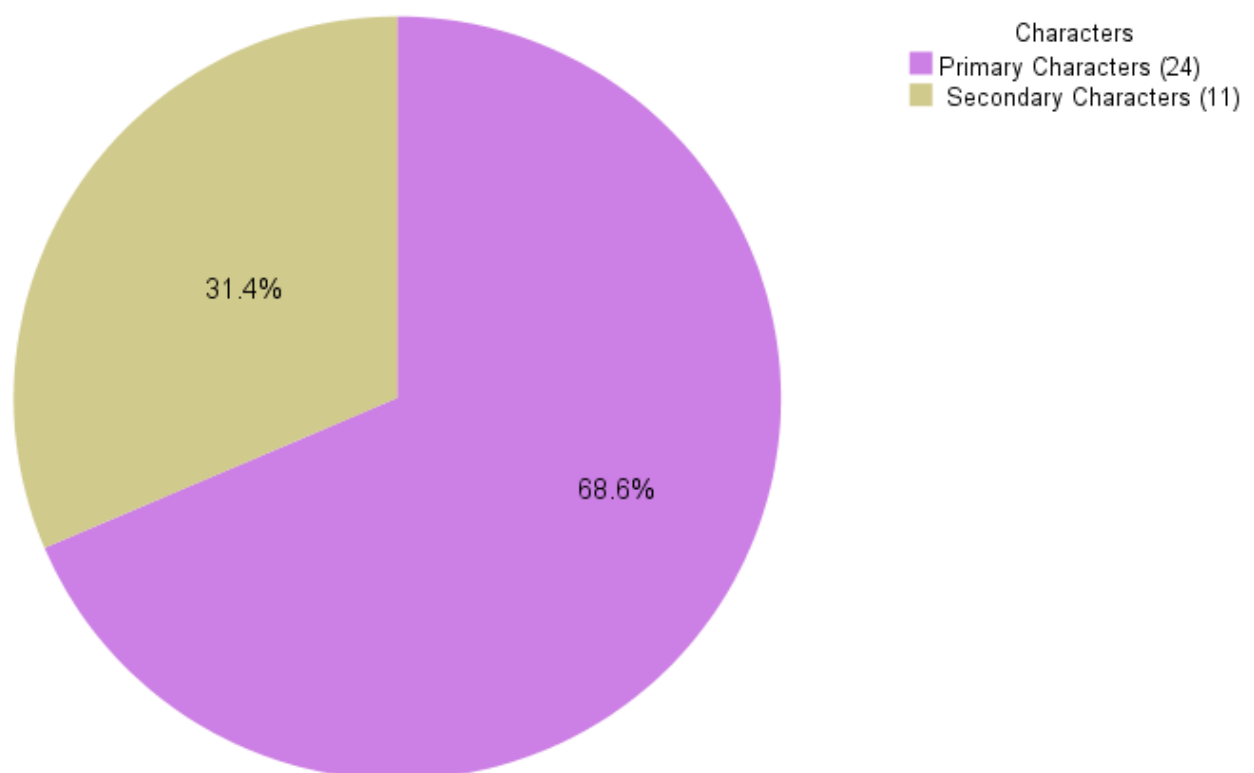
Findings of the First Question

The thorough examination of the research sample revealed crucial key findings concerning the typical features of homosexual characters employed by Netflix original TV series as well as their role distribution in such content.

Homosexual Cast According to Their Roles. In terms of role distribution, the characters were categorized into two main categories. The first of which is primary roles category that includes the principal actors whose positions in the TV series are significant to the plot. However, the second category displays the secondary roles that are identified as supporting roles of the primary roles with less significance to the plot.

Figure 4

Role Divisions



As illustrated in figure 4, findings revealed that the total number of homosexual characters (Gay & Lesbian) in the targeted sample is 35 characters. 24 characters of those represented by 68.6% were introduced as primary characters. Whereas, 11 characters that represent 31.4% of the homosexual cast were introduced as secondary characters.

Characters Age. In the matter of age, the characters were grouped into four age categories. Significantly, each group inclusively includes a range ages that do correspond to a particular age reference. The first category represents adolescence through the ages of 13 to

19. Furthermore, the second group represents young adulthood with the ages of 20 to 29.

Additionally, the third category displays later adulthood using the age range of 30 to 49.

Finally, ages between 50 and 59 are illustrated through the early elderhood category.

Figure 5

Age Groups

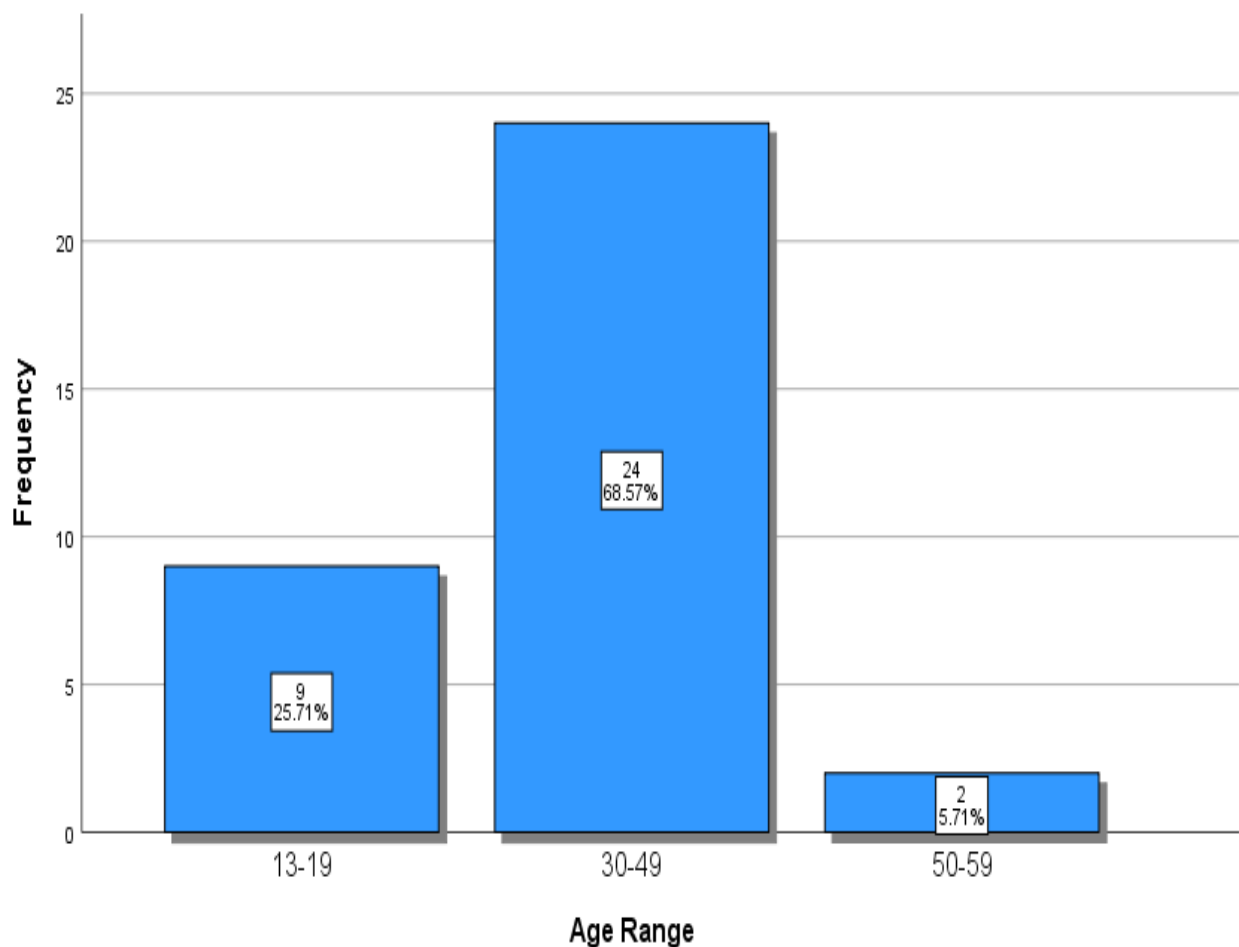


Figure 5 shows that ages of characters do vary. Correspondingly, characters between the ages of 13 to 19 were illustrated by 9 characters only with 25.71% of the total cast. Quite differently, characters between the ages of 30 to 49 were presented by 24 characters with 68.57% which stands for the highest percentage among the rest of age groups. At last, only 2 characters with 5.71% were spotted to represent those between the ages 50 to 59. It is

important to mention that no characters were spotted with the young adulthood age group (20-29).

Sexual Orientation. Regarding sexual orientation, characters were grouped into two main categories that the first of which indicates the female-female sexual attraction labelled as Lesbian; however, the second of which refers to male-male sexual attraction labelled as Gay.

Figure 6

Sexual Orientation

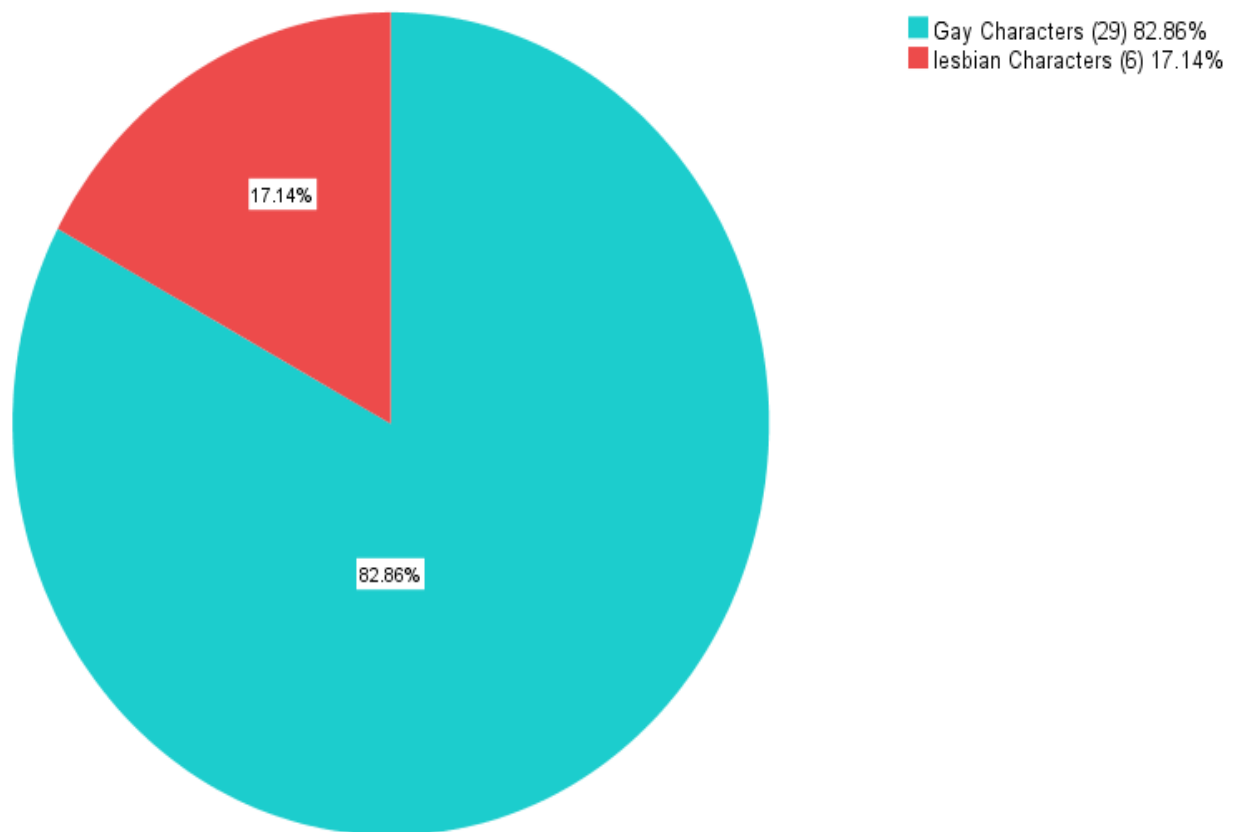


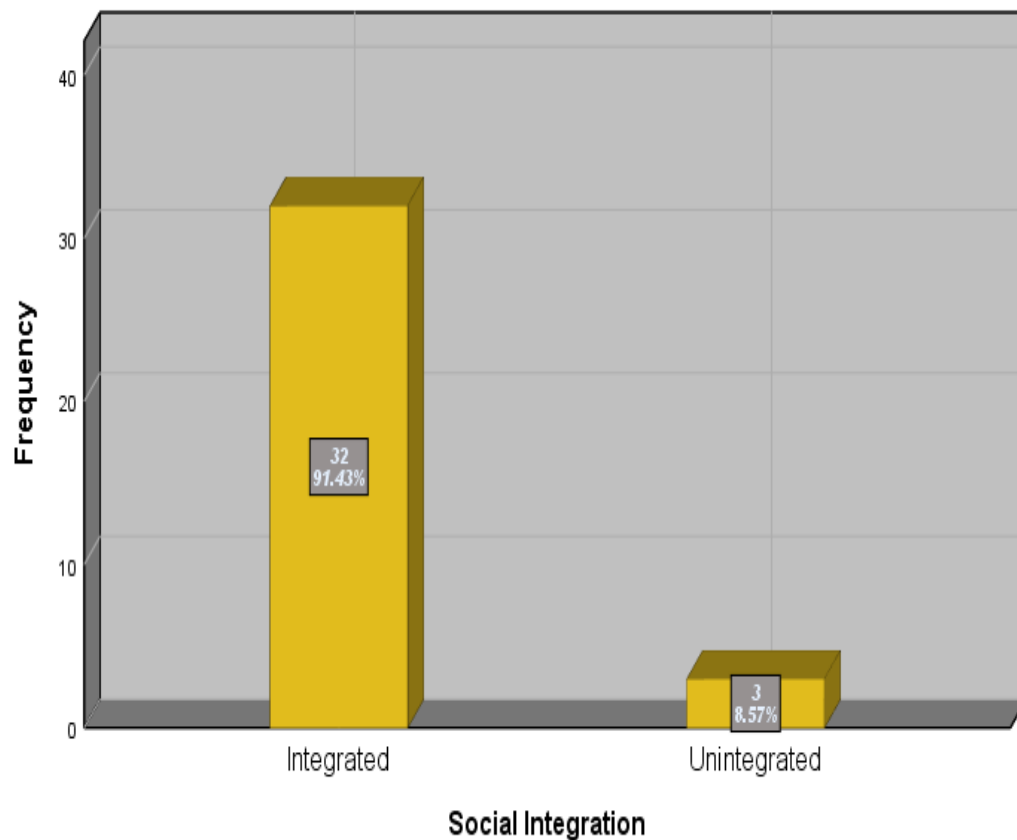
Figure 6 effectively illustrates how intended characters were divided according to their sexual orientation. Evidently, 29 characters out of 35 were presented as gay with 82.86%. Nonetheless, 6 characters only were introduced as lesbian with 17.14% percentage.

Noticeably, the number of gay characters extracted from the study sample majorly exceeds that of lesbian ones.

Social Integration. Characters were divided into two main categories regarding their social integration that is concerned with their socialization and communication skills in society and with other individuals.

Figure 7

Social Integration

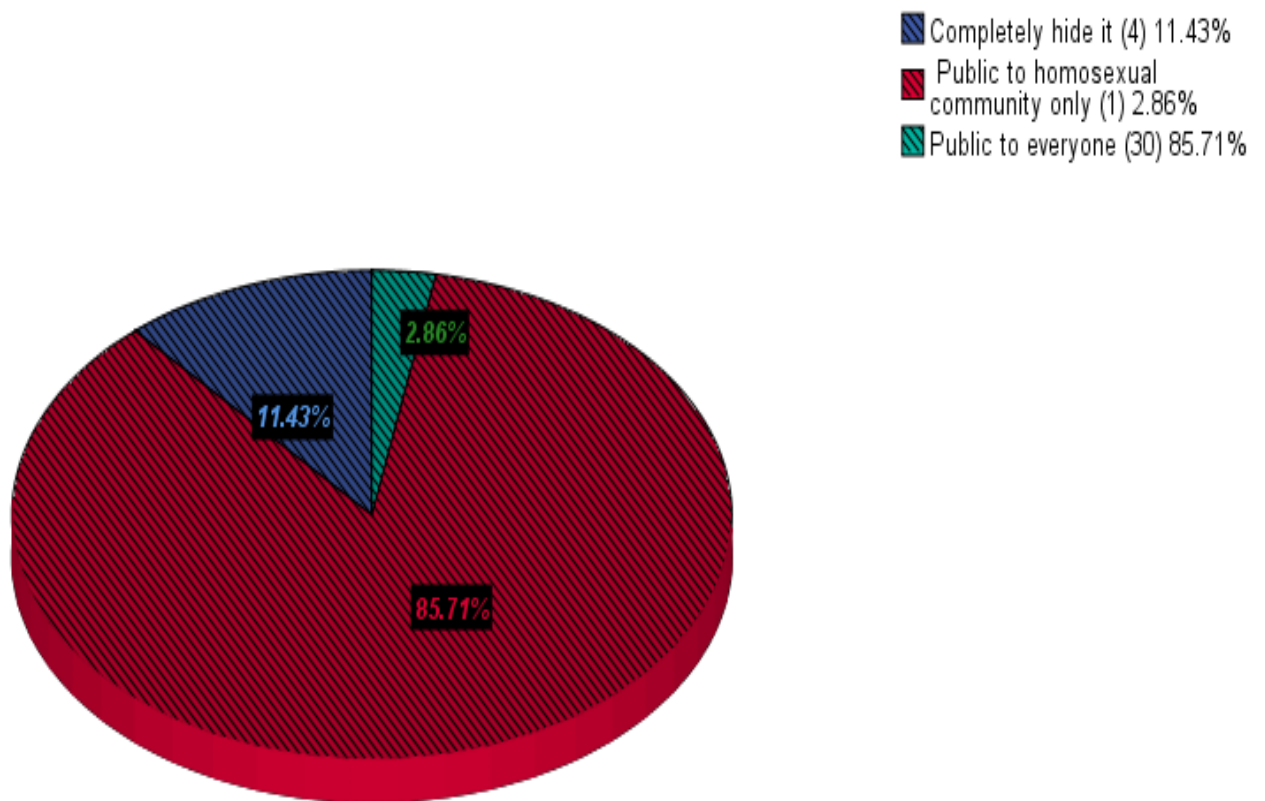


As represented in Figure 7, results revealed that 32 characters were proved to be socially integrated accounting for 91.3% out of the total number of homosexual characters; notwithstanding, only 3 characters were introduced as socially isolated accounting for 8.57%.

Homosexuality Reveal. Homosexual characters portrayed in the selected study sample had different ways to deal with their homosexual identity; thereof, they were categorized based on the way they chose to deal with their orientations either by completely revealing it to public, revealing it to the homosexual community only, or totally hiding it from everyone.

Figure 8

Homosexuality Reveal

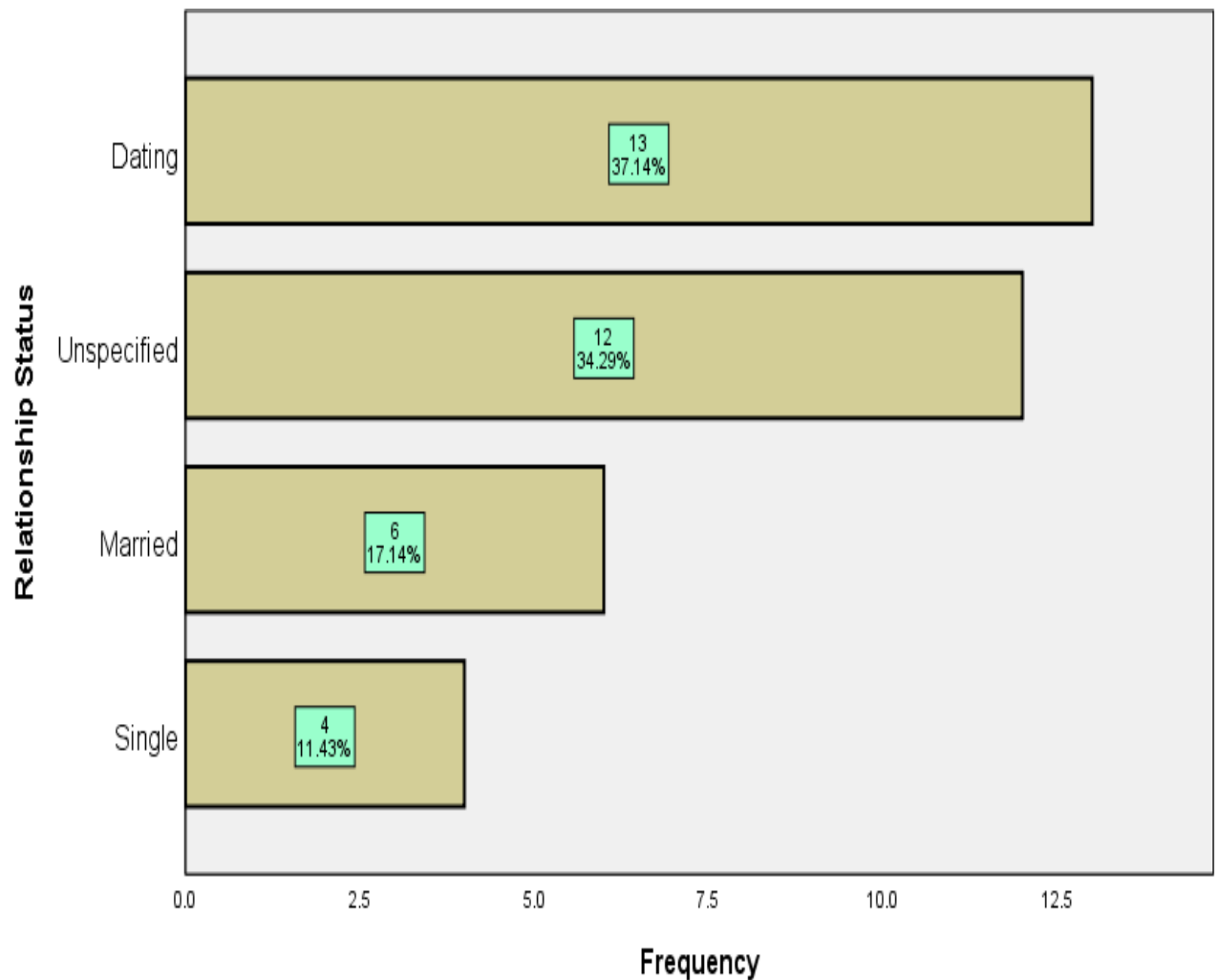


Corresponding to the findings, 30 characters accounting for 85.71% chose to reveal their homosexuality to everyone in society. Opposingly however, 4 characters accounting for 11.43% chose to hide their homosexuality from everyone in their community, when only 1 character with 2.86% revealed it to the homosexual mates only.

Relationship Status. Regarding relationship status, characters were assigned to four groups. The first group refers to dating status; the second to single status; the third to married status; and finally the fourth refers to unspecified relationship status.

Figure 9

Relationship Status



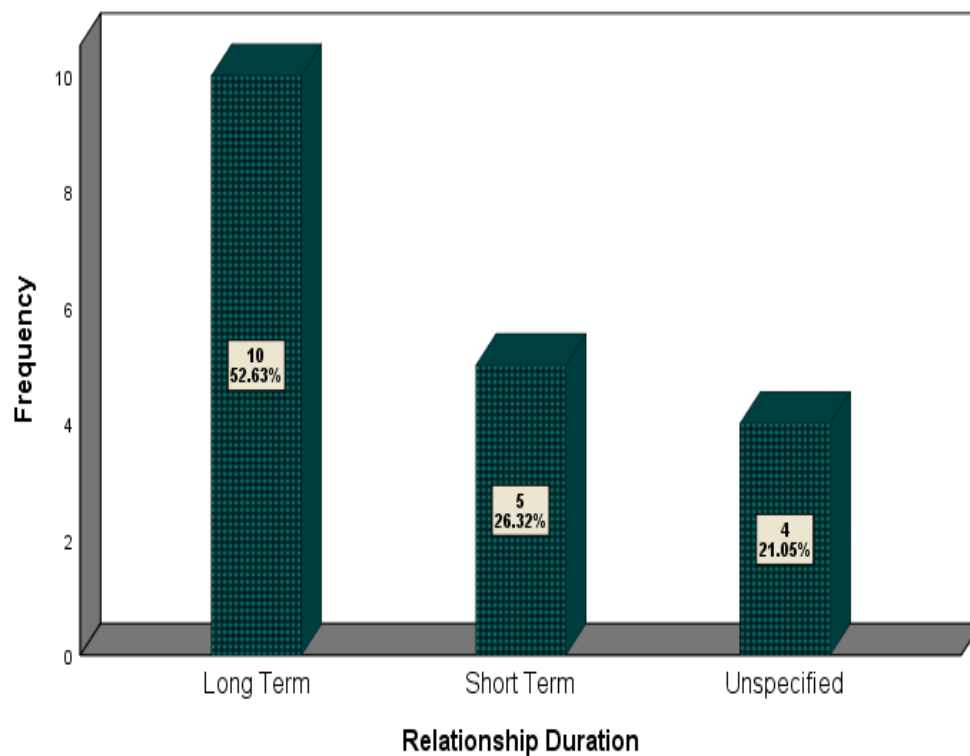
Findings as illustrated in Figure 9 found that the bigger portion of characters were engaged in love relationships either through dating or through marriage; where 13 characters accounting for 37.14% were dating and 6 characters accounting for 17.14% were married.

In spite of that, a tiny portion of characters were portrayed as single (4 characters that account for 11.43%) while the rest were not specified.

Relationship Duration. In terms of duration, homosexual relationships were categorized into three major groups: "long," "short," and "unspecified." "Short" was used to refer to relationships that lasted for less than a year, howbeit "long" was used to point out long term relationships that either included years of dating or was expressed through a marriage bond.

Figure 10

Relationship Duration



According to the findings, 52.63% of the relationships were long-term (10 relationships), while 26.32% were short-term (5 relationships), and 21.05% were unspecified (4 relationships).

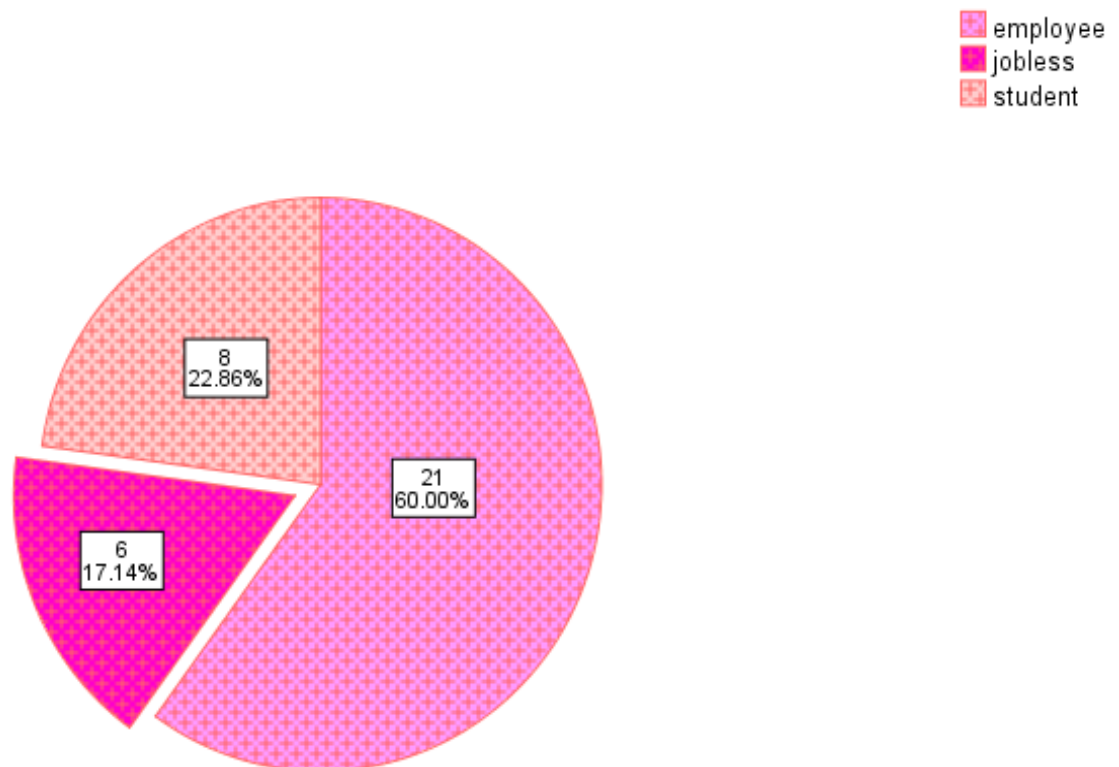
Therefore, it can be inferred that a greater number of homosexual relationships were long-term, while a smaller number of relationships were either short-term or unspecified. It is

important to note that this graph represents a specific dataset and may not be generalizable to all homosexual relationships.

Employment. Addressing the occupation of the analyzed characters, they were divided into three groups. The first grouping includes employees who belong to a certain job within a particular field; opposingly, the second set indicates jobless characters who do not have a job career. Nevertheless, a third exceptional group was added to include students who cannot be categorized in neither of the previous categories.

Figure 11

Employment Status



Research findings illustrated in Figure 11 showed that a large number of characters were introduced as stable employees with permanent job carriers, this category included 21 characters accounting for 60% off the total number of homosexual characters. Nevertheless, a

smaller number was used to refer to the category of students who were all attending high school; they represented 22.86% with a number of 8 characters. Finally, the 6 remaining characters accounting for 17.14% were labeled by the jobless status.

Given these points, all the above mentioned findings serve to answer the first research question "What are the types and styles of homosexual characters on Netflix?".

Findings of the Second Question

The study findings revealed the use of multiple explicit themes with a high repetition rate to send public messages about the social norms surrounding homosexuals.

Correspondingly, most characters were mainly presented as being socially accepted by others while being sexually different, loved by friends and common people, respected for their choices, psychologically supported in need, and physically helped when in they are in trouble.

However, a portion of those characters were specified by the highlighting of other themes that were foregrounded as for instance characters were socially bullied and ashamed for their genders, despised and ignored being considered worthless, and poked and ridiculed by people like Eric from Sex Education and Damian and Robert on AJ and the Queen. Additionally, other characters were introduced as emotionally exploited by people, embarrassed of by family, and dumped by loved ones like Wilhelm on Young Royals, Adam, Eric, and Anwar on Sex Education, and Robert and Louis on AJ and the Queen.

Finally, few characters were shown to be publicly hated by a portion of society as Ruby, Louis, Danielle, and Lee from AJ and the Queen who were called devils and described to be going to Hell for their deeds as well as Eric from Sex Education who got physically harmed because got hated for his homosexuality while dressing like a lady.

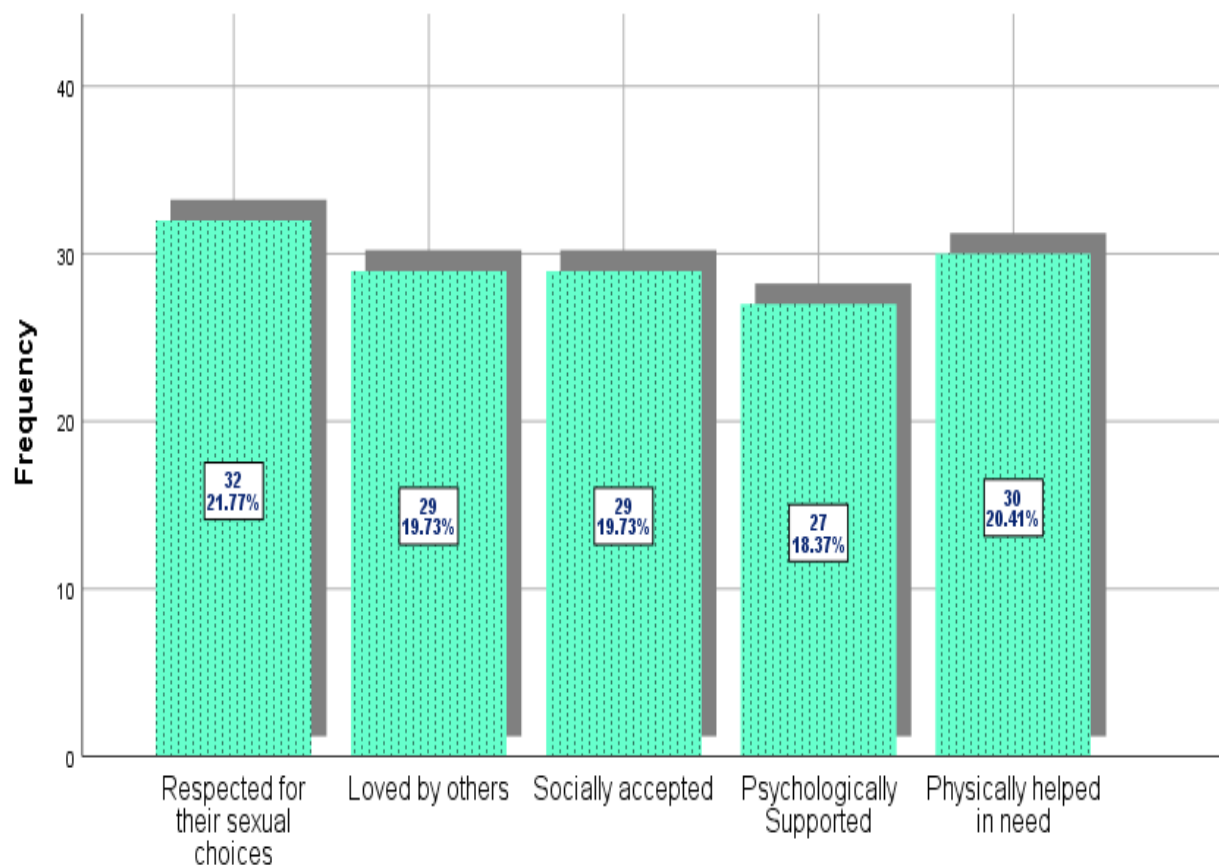
The quantitative description of data findings allowed the researchers to trace the frequency rates of each explicit message (theme) extracted from the study sample. However,

the frequency representation of those got divided over two different charts due to the reason that some main explicit messages were overgeneralized and repeated with almost all characters, when other messages were particularly highlighted.

In the light of the aforementioned findings, the second research question "What are the explicit messages conveyed by Netflix about homosexual characters and homosexuality?" was sufficiently answered.

Figure 12

Main Norm-based Explicit Messages Themes

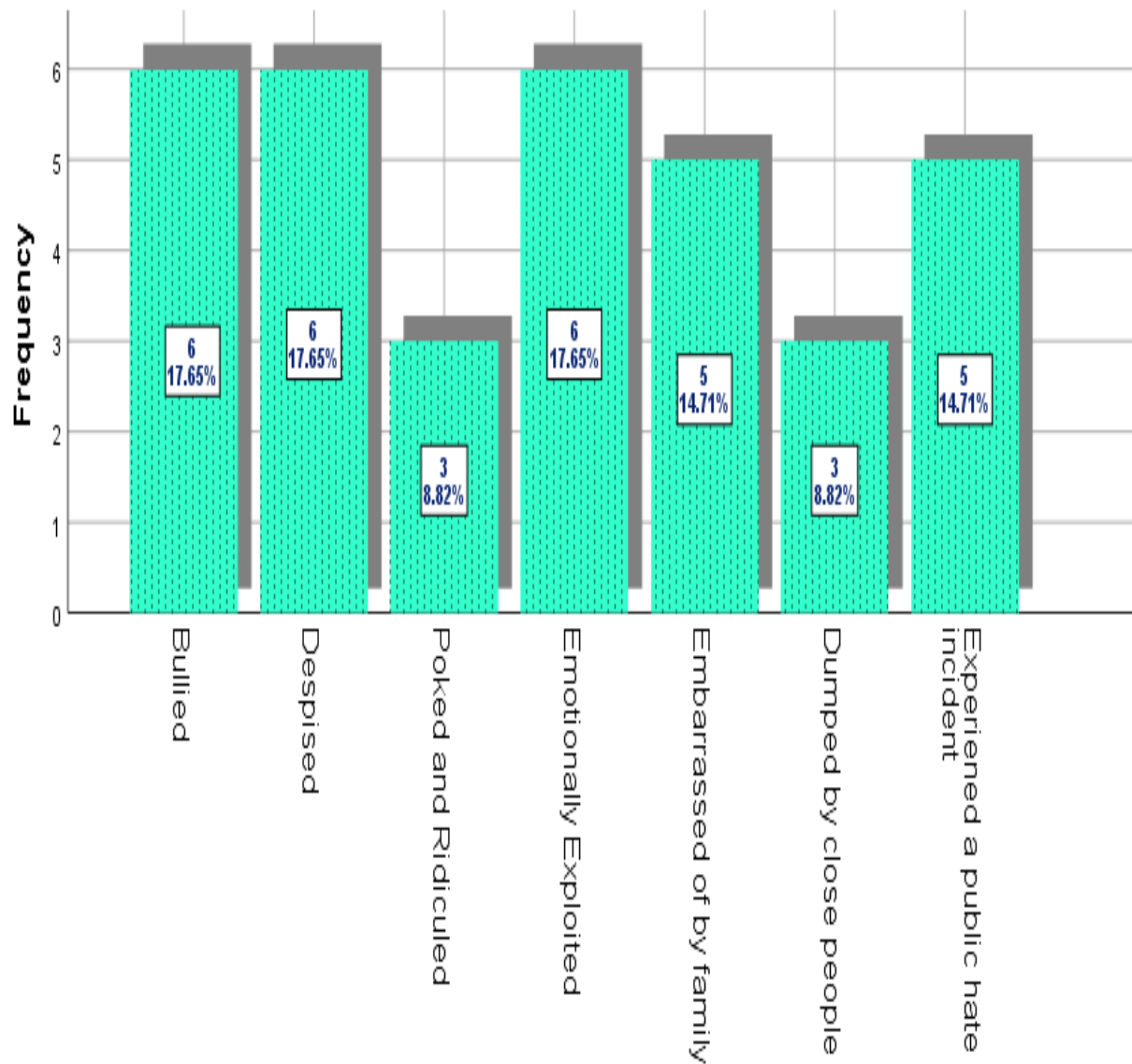


The frequency and percentage of the main norm-based explicit messages shown in figure 12 are as follows: respect with 21.77% (32 times), love with 19.73% (29 times),

acceptance with 19.73% (29 times), support with 18.37% (27 times), and help with 20.41% (30 times).

Figure 13

Highlighted Norm-based Explicit Messages Themes



The frequency and percentage of the highlighted norm-based explicit messages shown in figure 13 are as follows: bullying by 17.65% (6 times), contempt (despising) by 17.65% (6

times), derision (Poking) by 8.82% (3 times), emotional exploitation by 17.65% (6 times), desertion (dumping) by 8.82% (3 times), and public hate by 14.71% (5 times).

Findings of the Third Question

The results of the study sample analysis showed that there are a number of implicit messages provided by Netflix specifically regarding homosexual individuals themselves and to their own not to society.

Life Background. The study findings regarding the implicit messages hinted about the life background of characters revealed that the homosexual characters were often portrayed to come from a harsh family environment in which they faced many emotional challenges and fought for their own identity. Notably, these characters tend to find a way to survive and save their homosexual entity and actually be proud of it in spite of their unsupportive families. Good examples of those characters is Eric from Sex Education who had a very unsupportive religious family that was ashamed of his homosexuality to a certain degree, and that tried to convince him to act as any other normal being. Eventually, Eric faced the shame and finally came out to his family dressing as a lady showing them that he is so proud of who he is, which made his father support him by the end. Another good illustration to the aforementioned is Brick the 13 year old kid in *AJ and the Queen* who discovered he wants to be a girl but his parents were very strict that they punished him for dressing like a girl, yet eventually his father understood it is something natural to happen and that his son is free to be whomever he wants. At last, many other characters were shown to be hindered and ashamed and even punished by their families when they revealed their sexual orientation such as Robert who was left out by his family because he wanted to play with dolls then he succeeded to face that when he became an adult drag queen. Also Anwar struggled with his family since he comes from a Muslim family that is strict and intolerant to sexual orientation; nonetheless, he made it by getting the courage to announce his

homosexuality to them. Finally, there is Wilhelm who comes from a royal family that considers homosexuality to be odd yet he faced his mother speaking about the classmate he is in love with. Apart from that, the rest of secondary characters were not specified with details about their family lives, yet were shown to face their own ups and downs in life.

Personal Features. On one hand, the findings proved that the sample shows implicitly illustrated homosexual characters to seem more emotional, romantic, and understanding of love than others like Robert in *AJ* and the Queen who fantasized ambitious perfect love and gave it much of his attention as well Louis, Damian, and Darrell, from the same show who expressed their thirst and craving for a passionate long lasting love. Furthermore, *Young Royals* clearly hinted that Wilhelm and Simons were very passionate and emotional about love unlike the rest of straight characters who were reported to be shallow and just looking for sex.

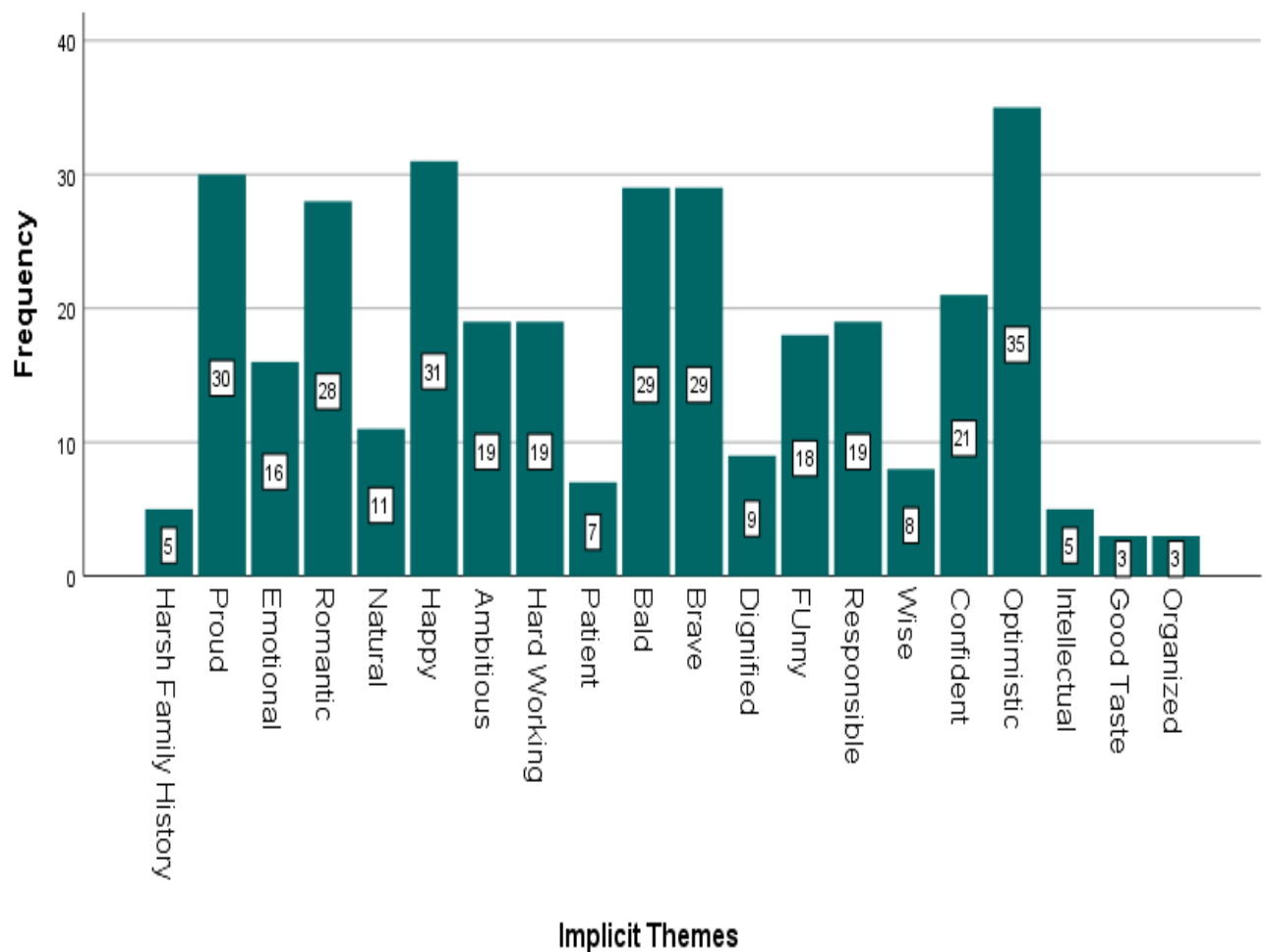
On the other hand, results uncovered hidden messages showing homosexual current material life of characters as a natural successful happy life without embellishment or regret and full of fun, laughter, hard work, and ambition. Additionally, more personal implicit messages were hinted to show that homosexuality makes people more patient, bold, brave, responsible, wise, confident, and mainly optimistic. In other scenes, the homosexual character appeared as an intellect who is interested in reading books and getting inspired by those such as Robert who was extremely intellectual reading books and listening to Oprah talk show to be braver and of an unbeatable dignity.

Finally, multiple homosexual characters were presented as having a good taste in life and well etiquette manners with noticeable dressing styles that makes them look unique as it is the case for Drag Queens on *AJ* and the Queen and Eric in *Sex Education*.

Considering the antecedent findings, the research question "What are the implicit messages conveyed by Netflix about homosexual characters and homosexuality?" was elaborately answered.

Figure 14

Implicit Messages Themes



The frequency of the implicit messages themes shown in figure 14 are as follows: harsh family environment by 5 times, proud by 30 times, emotional by 16 times, romantic by 28 times, natural by 11 times, happy by 31 times, ambitious by 19 times, hardworking by 19 times, patient by 7 times, bald by 29 times, brave by 29 times, dignified by 9 times, funny by 18 times, responsible by 19 times, wise by 8 times, confident by 21 times, optimistic by 35 times, intellectual by 5 times, and finally good taste and organization by 3 times for each.

Findings of the Fourth Question

Multiple themes and frames were extracted from the sample regarding the social attitudes and behaviors of homosexual characters in society and with other people.

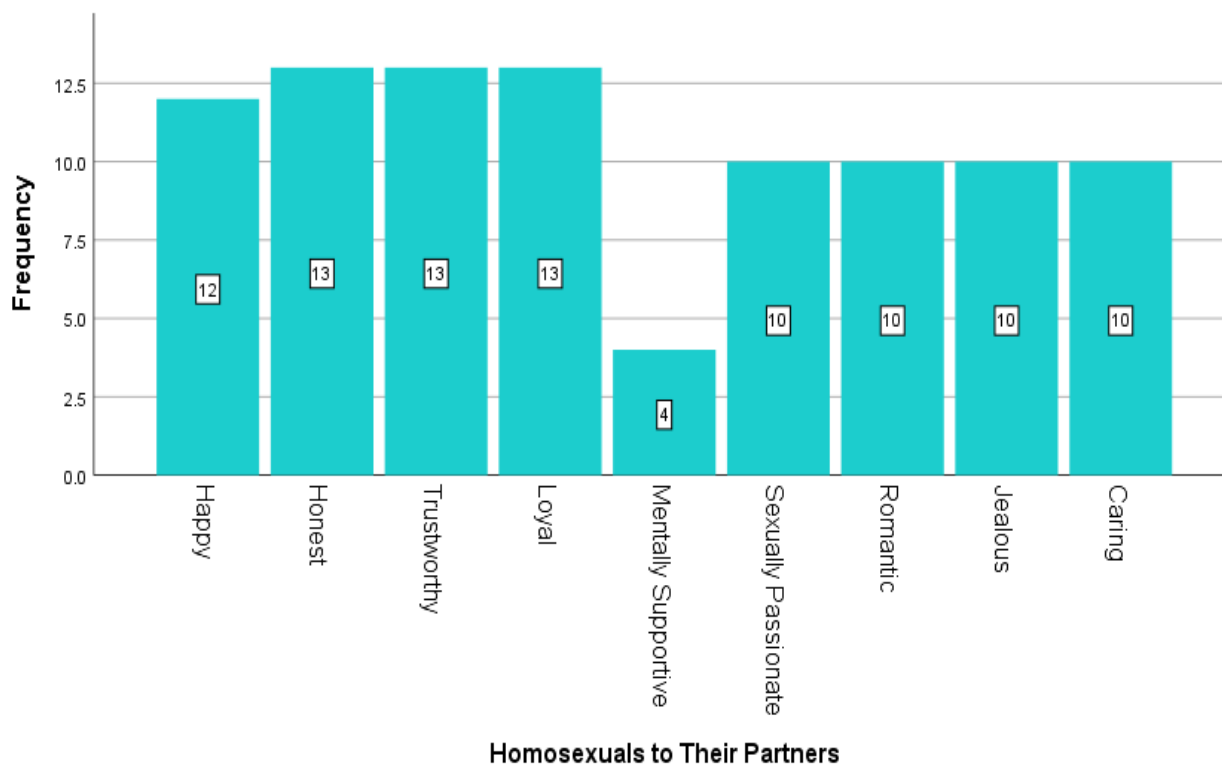
Homosexuals towards Their Partners. According to the findings, homosexual characters in relationships were described to be so happy with their partners as it was the case for the dating couples Louis and Patrick in *AJ and the Queen*, Ruthie and Jessa in *Sex Education*, and Wilhelm and Simon in *Young Royals*. Furthermore, married couples like Sofia and Roz, the Carls, and Ewan and Kevin were introduced as stable happy and satisfied couples.

Similarly, such characters were mostly reported as honest, trustworthy, and loyal to their partners. For instance, Robert and Damian, Louis, the Carls, Ewan and Kevin, Sofia and Roz, Ruthie and Jessa, Wilhelm and Simon were very loyal partners that have always shared their secrets, dreams, and fears with each other. Not to mention that most homosexual characters that were spotted in both short and long term relationships showed a mental and an emotional support to their partners during hard times and carefully looked after each other such as Wilhelm and Simon who firmly stood by each other's side when they got publicly exposed after their sex tape was leaked.

Sexually speaking, homosexual partners were shown to be very passionate during sex in which they made fast-paced love reflecting physical enjoyment through gestures. Furthermore, they were portrayed to be more romantic than regular couples by preparing food for each other, designing future plans together, showing love in public and being proud of each other, kissing on a daily basis, reflecting jealousy for their love partners, taking care of each other, having fun doing activities, and sharing the desire to spend more time together. Accordingly, accurate illustrations of those would be Robert and Damian, Louis and Patrick, the Carls, Ewan and Kevin, Wilhelm and Simon.

Figure 15

Attitudes towards Their Partners



The frequency of attitudes of homosexual characters towards their partners illustrated in figure 15 are as follows: happy by 12 times, honest by 13 times, trustworthy by 13 times, loyal by 13 times, supportive by 4 times, sexually passionate by 10 times, romantic by 10 times, jealous by 10 times, and caring by 10 times.

Homosexuals towards Others. Findings showed that in relation to the attitudes of homosexual characters towards others there are both positive and negative attitudes.

Positively. Characters were reported to be kind to everyone, whereby, most characters were loved by common people. Likewise, those homosexual characters were presented as being influencing and inspiring role models who teach people around them how to accept others regardless of who they are and what they aim to be, how to express support when needed, how to tolerate mistakes of others when they show regret, and how to physically or financially help people in need. An illustrative example of these criteria would be Robert

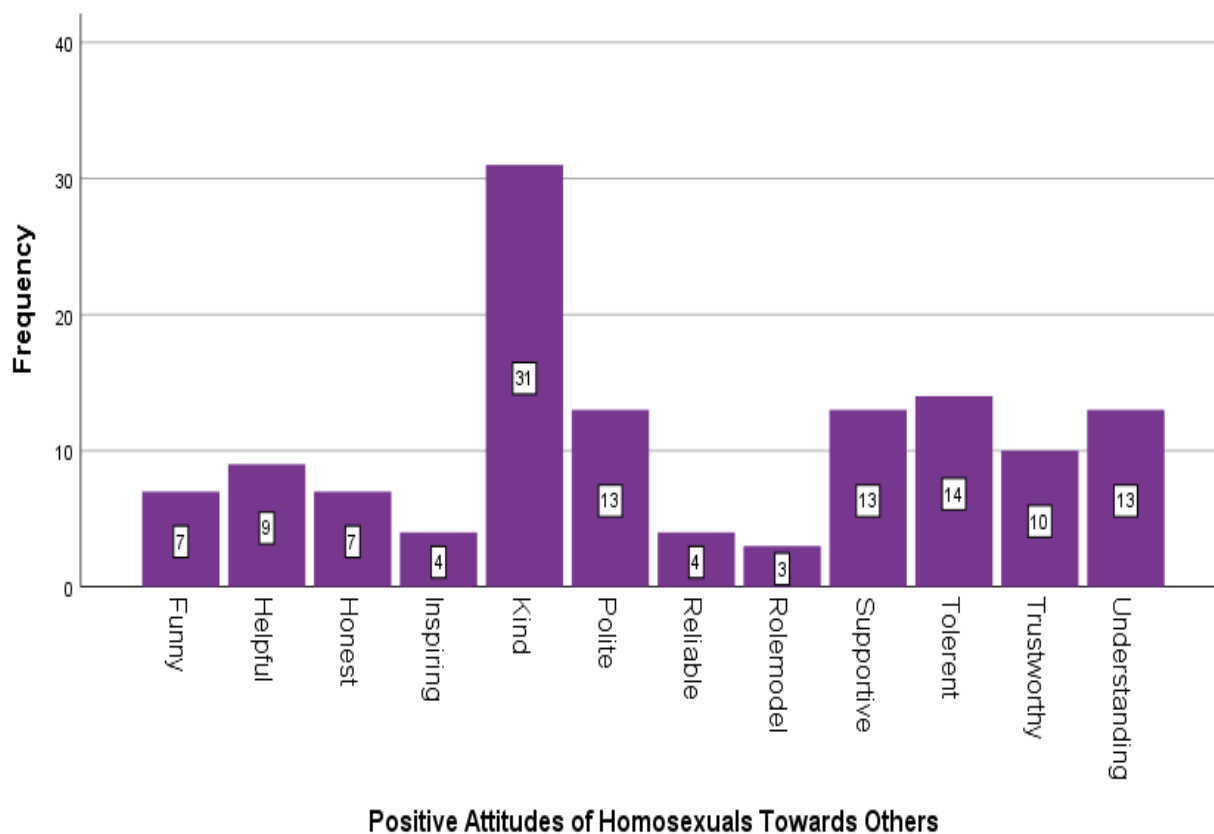
from AJ and the Queen who revealed a great sense of collaboration with others through helping them as he did with AJ the little kid, his friend Louis, and his other friend Brian. Furthermore, Robert showed psychological support to Brick the 13 year old who wanted to be girl as he also taught Brick's father how to tolerate people's choices and accept them as a part of them, which made Robert seem as a heroic role model especially after his long journey of advising AJ, helping her to love herself, and taking care of her.

From a different angle, homosexual characters were mainly presented as people of values, whom are totally honest in dealing with others and so trustworthy that they gained the trust of everyone else around them. Significantly, their values prevents them from doing inappropriate and unethical actions in various occasions such as Robert who refused to steal things he genuinely loved even when he had the chance to. Adding to that, it was portrayed that if any unethical behaviors were mistakenly committed by homosexual characters, they instantly express regret and provide compensation as it is the case of Damian in AJ and the Queen whose values could not allow him to enjoy Robert's money and ended up asking for forgiveness.

Equally important, homosexual characters were essentially described as funny characters who interact with people and make them laugh, in different occasions, such as Robert, Louis, Patrick, Alma, Magda, Edie, Faberge, Terri, Tommy from AJ and the Queen, and Eric on Sex Education. By the same token, the characters were depicted to be polite dealing with others in society expressing respect and gratitude in their communication.

Figure 16

Positive Attitudes towards Others



The frequency of the positive attitudes of homosexuals towards others demonstrated in figure 16 are as follows: funny by 7 times, helpful by 9 times, honest by 7 times, inspiring by 4 times, kind by 31 times, polite by 13 times, reliable by 4 times, role model by 3 times, supportive by 13 times, tolerant by 14 times, trustworthy by 10 times, and understanding by 13 times.

Negatively. It is important to mention the very few exceptions of homosexual characters who were described with negative attitudes. Thereupon, Adam from Sex Education was the only gay character among the 35 characters who expressed violence in his behavior towards certain people while bullied others. However, Adam's behavior was explicitly justified by the show to be the result of him having an abusive father who had always belittled him and expressed hate and constant criticism to his person.

In like manner, Damian was the only manipulative character since he tried to manipulate Robert at first but he found the right path as soon as he discovered he is a good person to finally give him the right apology; meanwhile, his manipulation was explicitly explained by his confusion trip finding himself as well as him having a criminal fake friend (lady danger) whom he succeeded to get rid of by the end.

At last, one character was portrayed as a cheater which is Patrick whose jealousy for Louis and his need for more attention led him to cheat on him with Jordan. The show described the regret of Patrick yet no more details were provided about the relationship in season one.

Figure 17

Negative Attitudes towards Others



The negative attitudes of homosexuals towards others portrayed in figure 17 are violent, bully, manipulator, and cheater with the frequency of only one character per each theme.

On the whole, considering the findings mentioned above, it is fair to say that the fourth research question "What are the social themes (frames) used by Netflix to represent homosexuality?" was adequately addressed.

Section Three: Discussion of Findings

In the light of the obtained findings that were formerly described and categorized in accordance with the research questions in the previous chapter, this section provides a meticulous analysis, an interpretation, and an evidential explanation to those findings. Of course, the findings were put into the context of the overall research so as to be able to link the dots and reach final conclusions.

Primary Frameworks

Particular stereotypes of homosexual characters were repetitively reported in the examined sample, and this indicates the existence of unique patterns that were intentionally employed for specific reasons. As a support to this, referring to the framing theory and its corresponding model by Hope (2008) that are interested in how frames are used by media in intended manners to shape some social phenomena and to send implicit messages about them, the stereotypical forms spotted do identify as primary frameworks. To recall the literature, primary frameworks according to Goffman (1974) are the most basic level of frames that are very obvious and clear to the individual on the first glance. Notably, these primary frames are typically divided into natural primary frames and social primary frames. By this token, a portion of the identified stereotypes are presented as natural frames, yet the other portion is a set of social frames.

Natural Primary Frameworks. Be that as it may, the themes presenting age and gender of homosexual characters are categorized as natural primary frameworks due to their physical, biological nature. Goffman (1974) defining natural frames said that they are merely physical, biological, and uncontrollable features of individuals reported on media for special

reasons. Therefore, looking at the findings obtained in regards to such frames, it is apparent that Netflix intended to devote the majority of its characters ages' to the range of 30 to 49 year old while a smaller portion was represented by the age range of 13 to 19 year old.

Referring back to the framing theory and taking into consideration the social aspects surrounding the phenomenon, such age ranges were carefully selected to serve particular purposes. To illustrate, placing the focus on individuals between the ages of 30 to 49 in figures 18 and 19 below as an example among many was due to the aggression of people at this age line towards homosexuality. In this regard, De Ven (1994) reviewing decades of empirical studies about homophobia and homosexuality says that people who are usually homophobic are older males at their 40s.

Figure 18

Character Aged between 30 and 49



Robert from *AJ and the Queen* in this scene (episode 01/ 3.58 minute) is happily performing as a drag queen on stage showing acceptance to his homosexuality and getting the support from audience.

Figure 19

A Group of Characters Aged between 30 and 49



Likewise, this scene illustrates a group of homosexual characters from *AJ and the Queen* (episode 07/ minute 16:30) aged between 30 and 49 happily enjoying a meal while discussing business. They are represented as natural people who are successful and who are doing business alongside with the ordinary people.

Furthermore, stressing on the second age category that includes individuals between the ages of 13 to 19 in figure 20 as an example goes back to purely social factors that the main one of which is the fragile nature of people at this age, which makes them vulnerable to the new ideologies and brand new thoughts such as homosexuality. In addition, teenagers are the source of inspiration to adopt new things in all over the globe, and their trends can impact societies as a whole.

Figure 20

Character at the age of 13



The scene above taken from *AJ and the Queen* (episode 06/ minute 41:30) indicates the youngest homosexual character in the sample of the study. Brick getting affected by Robert the drag queen dancing on stage wore a girly dress and came out in public showing interest in being a girl. Notably, everyone in audience felt he was cute looking.

Not far from this, also as a part of natural primary frames, Netflix gave an interesting attention to gays (male-male sexual attraction) comparing to that given to lesbians (female-female sexual attraction). Considering the historical factor, a few studies that investigated and compared between the acceptance of gays and that of lesbians among people found that lesbians are more accepted than gay men around the world. In this point, Fitzsimons (2020) reported "we found that gay men are disliked more than lesbian women in every country we tested" (para. 02). On the basis of the aforementioned studies and referring back to framing theory that emphasizes the employment of specific natural frames and the manipulation in use of those for certain purposes, it can be said that by placing stress on gays throughout the TV series, Netflix intends to normalize the gay culture among its audience.

Figure 21

Multiple Gay Characters in a Beauty Pageant



This scene from *AJ and the Queen* (episode 10/ minute 43:43) portrays how multiple gay (male) characters gathered in a drag beauty pageant were celebrated by the straight audience in the place. Referring to another context, it seems that Netflix intends to enforce homosexuality across all domains.

Social Primary Frameworks. Speaking about the role category, social integration, gender announcement, relationship status, duration, and employment status of homosexual characters in terms of their social nature allows us to classify them as social primary frameworks. Defining social frames, Goffman (1974) said that they incorporate the social status, social roles, social connections, and societal circumstances and happenings of individuals on media. On this basis, it is suggested that Netflix through portraying the different social features of its homosexual characters and highlighting on them by frequency appearance intends to foreground particular ideas and transmit them to the audience.

In this regard, referring to the framing theory basic interpretations and taking into account the prior studies that reached similar conclusions as that conducted by Hamdene (2021), it can be said that the different social frames have separate indications. First, placing most homosexual characters identified in the sample of the study in primary role categories reveals the intention of Netflix to portray them as important leading individuals in society especially that primary roles indicate the major significance of characters to the plot. Moreover, reporting the high social integration of such characters and their active communication with others is socially interpreted that such individuals have a sense of communality and natural belonging to their community (Lefler and Lunstad, 2019). In this point, it can be evident that the platform depicts those characters to be no less active than ordinary individuals in society. In addition to that, most characters were depicted to be engaged in love relationships for a long time, and such highlighting of this fact can be, according to the framing theory as well as the social indications, interpreted as an attempt to

show the long lastingness of homosexual love affairs just as ordinary ones which happen between straight individuals. To illustrate, the scene from Sex Education (episode 05/ minute 11:57) is good enough:

Figure 22

Married Lesbian Couple



This scene, among many other similar ones illustrate how the long-term married couple Sofia and Roz are happily enjoying the meeting with their son's girlfriend. The scene shows the long lasting relationship between lesbian while the following scene (figure 23) extends Netflix ideology to male gay which is the most significant issue for Netflix.

Figure 23

Married Gay Couple



The scene from *AJ and the Queen* (episode 10/ minute 10:30) portrays a happy gay married couple who are judges at the homosexual beauty pageant. They are aged above 35 and they are members of committee which means they are doing well as others and they are officially recognized.

To carry on with social frameworks, findings illustrated the tendency of Netflix to portray most characters as being comfortable with their homosexuality in public and in front of everyone else in society. This depiction according to the framing theory basics and sociology notions reflects the self-acceptance, openness, and honesty about one's sexual identity (LGBT Ireland, 2022). In this regard, it can be inferred that Netflix expresses support to those hiding their homosexuality and shows its audience that coming out reflects positive features within the psyche of the person. At last, the description of the employment status of characters which reveals that most of them are having stable job carriers indicates the success of those in achieving high social status and being productive similarly to the rest of individuals in community, based on social connotations.

Comparatively, however, this study shares its findings and a portion of its interpretations with the research conducted by Hamdene (2021) in terms of primary frameworks with both divisions; natural and social.

On the whole, it can be said that through adopting a combination of natural primary frameworks and social primary frameworks, Netflix intends to emphasize certain manipulated facts about homosexuality and implant them in the minds of the audience to alter their views.

Meta Frames (Norm-based Frames)

Considering the findings about the explicit messages delivered by Netflix regarding homosexuality and in regards to the framing theory, the use of various norm-based frames was spotted to foreground particular explicit messages. Correspondingly, taking into account the framing model designed and generated by Hope (2008), which is used as a theoretical

framework for this study and which puts various levels of media framing into a coherent system, it can be inferred that a portion of the norm based frames extracted from the sample do identify as Meta frames. To elaborate on this, Meta frames as mentioned in earlier chapters are those frames that tend to surround a specific phenomenon in order to reflect the norms that stand against it (Dombos, 2009). Accordingly, by looking at the findings we notice the use of multiple norm-based frames that explicitly portray how social norms treat homosexuality. That major portion of these was not stressed over on by Netflix in the different scenes of the sample welcomes homosexuality; such norm-based frames were demonstrated through themes of love, respect, support, help, and acceptance to homosexual characters. Nevertheless, the smaller portion that was highly foregrounded by Netflix throughout the scenes via repetitive themes of bullying, contempt, derision, emotional exploitation, desertion, and public hate form the norm-based Meta frames that express an opposition to homosexuality. Dombos (2009) says in this regard that "*metaframes* are overarching frames of a higher level of generality that can be operationalized as the normative aspects of issue frames" (p. 6) and that a metaframe gets expressed via using a normative theme that refers back to social norms in order to portray an exaggerated reality of the norms that stand against the phenomenon.

Along with this, in further interpretation of the Meta frames identified, it is evident that the employment of these frames by Netflix was for the purpose of spotlighting them as major obstacles in the lives of characters that should be effectively dealt with. To illustrate, figures 24, 25 and 26 are representative of the metaframes use in the sample:

Figure 24

Public Strikes against Homosexuals' Beauty Pageant



This scene from *AJ and the Queen* (episode 10/ minute 35:10). An assembly of homosexual characters is organized to defend their homosexuality. This depicts homosexuality as a right to be claimed, inviting the viewer to claim it as well and inculcating in his mind that sexual orientation is not any shame but rather a right that should be pursued.

Figure 25

Character Being Despised



This scene from *AJ and the Queen* (episode 09/ minute 10:10) depicts Robert being looked down at by the audience at his friend's house because of his gay attitude and the way he dresses. This would invoke a kind of sympathy from the part of the audience.

Figure 26

Character Being Publicly Hated



On this scene from Sex Education (episode 05/ minute 31:31) Eric going back home from a movie night on his birthday dressing like a lady gets stopped by a stranger that punched him in the face and left him bleeding because he was gay.

In brief, employing norm-based Meta frames that reflect the different social norms and facts that stand in the face of homosexuality reveals Netflix's ideology to problematize such norms and get rid of them on the long run.

Implicit Issue Frames

Analyzing findings and taking the framing theory as a basis for interpretation, it is evident that multiple implicit issue frames that took the form of life stories and in depth personal criteria of characters were employed in order to gain the audience's sympathy towards homosexuals. Dombos et al (2009) in explaining the notion of issue frames described them as abstract constructions and elements of meaning that do not take a clear textual statement form but are told through a story or a reasoning to grab the audience's senses. These themes of meaning tend to work on problematizing the undesired social norms related to the phenomenon (Meta frames) and alter them through such attraction of the audience's sympathy. Dombos et al (2009) stated "issue frames have an inherent normative aspect: by identifying certain social facts as problematic and proposing changes towards a more desirable state of the world" (p. 5).

To emphasis, several characters were illustrated as survivors of their own wars with their unhealthy families, and were introduced as victims of those in order to gain sympathy of the audience. Moreover, such characters were implicitly framed by positive personal features that would not only attract the audience's sympathy but also its love. To point out, these features depicted a large number of homosexual characters as being proud, dignified individuals whom are emotional, romantic, natural, happy, ambitious, hardworking, patient, bald brave, responsible, wise, confident, optimistic, funny, intellect, organized, and of a good taste.

Figure 27

Character Getting Scolded by Their Father



Eric from Sex Education (episode 03/ minute 37:45) after a makeup session with his female friend gets caught by his father who scolds him asking him to grow up and act normal. The idea of gay children being rejected by their parents and therefore being suffering in their homes is problematized in this scene and the implicit message is an invitation to sympathize with them and to change this reality.

Equally important, Netflix succeeded to portray how these characters despite their harsh personal history achieved the goal of becoming good people with positive thoughts,

manners, behaviors, and values to bravely face the opposing social norms that are only the victim of.

Explicit Issue Frames

Taking into account the framing theory model relied upon in the interpretation of the results of the current study, findings revealed the use of another layer of issue frames. To clarify, Netflix employed different layers/levels of issue frames that are as previously mentioned core frames that do not take a clear statement form but rather expressed through abstract life stories and personal criteria of individuals. Henceforth, apart from the in-depth issue frames that were elaborated in the previous part and that were concerned with the stories of characters and their personal criteria in isolation, Netflix also relied on the use of a surface layer issue frames represented through stories and criteria of characters but in relation to others in society and not separately. Similarly interpreted however, such frames according to the theory tend to attract the love and sympathy of the audience towards the characters, thereby, towards the phenomenon as well. This would automatically orient the audience towards fighting the opposing norms to the phenomenon (Meta frames as previously labeled) to alter them.

Taking for instance examples of such issue frames, it was found that several of these were used to characterize the life of homosexual characters in relation to their love partners. Such frames included themes of happiness, loyalty, honesty, trustworthiness, support, sexual passion, romance, jealousy and care. The scene below is just an example among many:

Figure 28

Romantic Homosexual Couple



In this scene from *Young Royals* (episode 03/ minute 09:50) Simon and Wilhelm share a romantic moment after they agreed to spend the whole weekend together alone having fun and expressing affection. This is very natural according to Netflix.

In the same way, Netflix linking the stories of characters to others in community apart from their partners, used frames that promote the characters as being honest with people, helpful and supportive to them, kind, inspiring, polite, reliable, tolerant, understanding, funny, and even a role model.

Figure 29

Character Showing Kindness and Giving Help to Another



In this scene from *AJ and the Queen* (episode 01/ minute 46:48) Louis gives his favorite donuts to the homeless prostitute next door as an act of kindness. This would depict a homosexual character as having qualities similar to those of ordinary people. It would be unreasonable, therefore, that the only difference which is the sexual orientation is relied on to judge homosexuals.

In summary, both implicit and explicit forms of issue frames were employed by Netflix for the purpose of drawing a desired positive image about homosexuality to captivate the audience's sympathy and love. At the same time, it also attempts to alter the opposing social norms standing in the phenomenon's way.

Conclusion

It is evident that Netflix used the combination of the three levels of media frames (primary, Meta, and issue frames) that fall into the framing model generated by Hope (2008). This is an attempt to promote a positive image of the phenomenon of homosexuality. Additionally, the high frequency rate of several frames shown through the quantification process of the qualitative data confirmed the emphasis placed on different elements and chunks of meaning by Netflix.

Section Five: Limitations and Recommendations

Throughout the journey of this research, the researchers faced many limitations. Some of these are related to the topic itself while others are related to the research methodology and time. Nevertheless, they could come up to conclusions upon which they set forward some recommendations. These are as follows:

Limitations of the Study

Recognizing the limitations of the current study may inform future works into effective revisions and guide them towards the employment of other methodologies on multiple dimensions and according to different perspectives.

To begin with, the first shortcoming is concerned with the sample size. Although the sample relied on was large enough to allow the researchers to draw meaningful conclusions, it hindered them from offering a very large set of descriptive data that is necessary and preferable in such kind of exploratory research. Another potential limitation crops up from the limited theoretical literature and prior research on the topic. Dealing with the representation of homosexuality on Netflix, the researchers found a few studies only that tackled the subject matter, which urged them to develop their own research typology for the most part. At last, a final major limitation was in regards to time constraints. Notably, this study considers the thorough qualitative then quantitative analysis of a somewhat large sample composed of 24 episodes for 3 different shows in a short period of time. Thus, working on the topic for a Master's thesis had only allowed the researchers to focus on one dimension of the issue, and for this reason, saving such topic for a PhD thesis would be way effective in order to be able to tackle it from all possible aspects.

Recommendations for Further Studies

1. Considering the social and religious aspects when investigating a particular phenomenon in order to solve root problems in the Arab communities.
2. Investigating to what extent the Arab audience is impacted by Netflix's ideology regarding homosexuality.
3. Applying critical discourse analysis to examine homosexuality on Netflix since CDA is another effective method in language studies.
4. Studying the representation of homosexuality on Netflix relying on agenda setting for explanation of ideologies.
5. Examining the representation of LGBTQ+ in Netflix Shows using thematic analysis.
6. Conducting a discourse analysis of Gay and Lesbian Alliance against Defamation's (GLAAD) media articles.

7. Launching a comparative study to examine the difference between frames used to represent homosexuals and frames used to represent straight people on Netflix.
8. Performing a descriptive content analysis to identify the frames used to represent homosexuality on modern Arab movies.
9. Exploring the representation of homosexuality on Disney+ platform.
10. Investigating the representations of LGBTQ+ characters on famous television streaming platforms: HBO/Disney+/Amazon Prime/Hulu.

Conclusion

This chapter introduced a thorough explanation of the research design adopted by the present study along with the methodology opted for by the researchers. It entails a qualitative and quantitative description of the data. Furthermore, it compromised a summary of findings which are thoroughly discussed in a separate discussion section. Finally, a set of limitations and recommendations are highlighted for the benefit of future studies.

General Conclusion

Typically, the way media presents important social issues and phenomena impacts individuals in community, and in many cases it alters their views regarding these issues. For the last couple of decades, noticeably, homosexuality has been taking the spot of the trendiest phenomenon with the fastest growth all around the globe, specifically in the Arab world. For this reason, visual media took the chance to reflect its own beliefs about homosexuality through the content that millions of viewers have access to. Particularly, Netflix as a television streaming platform that remained on top of the best streaming services for several years relied on the use of some media frames that are transmitted and expressed through language in order to spread its ideology that aims at enforcing homosexuality.

In this sense, this research attempted to explore and reveal the different frames employed by Netflix to address the phenomenon of homosexuality and transmit positive messages about it. For this reason, theoretically, the study provided a literature review that tackled an overall explanation of the framing theory with regard to its basic notion of frames, its main frame divisions developed by Goffman, Minsky, and Dombos, and the inclusive framing model generated by Hope. Besides that, it highlighted the main differences between frame analysis and agenda setting. Additionally, the theoretical background also offered an overview of homosexuality and its related terminology as well as a brief background about media platforms including from a methodological point of view, the theoretical data elaborated on content analysis with all of its approaches and methods of application.

Empirically, however, through adopting a mixed method research and applying a qualitative content analysis followed by a descriptive quantification, the purposive sample of three Netflix original television series was analyzed with respect to the primary, meta, and issue levels of framing. Accordingly, the exploration and description of the frames employed by Netflix to depict homosexuality revealed that the former portrays a positive image about

the latter to enforce it through the use of a set of media frames that correspond to Hope's model. Moreover, it unveiled how Netflix relies on a high frequency rate depiction of such frames, which according to the framing theory confirms the ideology being transmitted.

Appendixes

Appendix A

Sex Education

Season 01. (2019). In L. Nunn (Producer), *Sex Education*. [Season 01]. United Kingdom: Netflix.



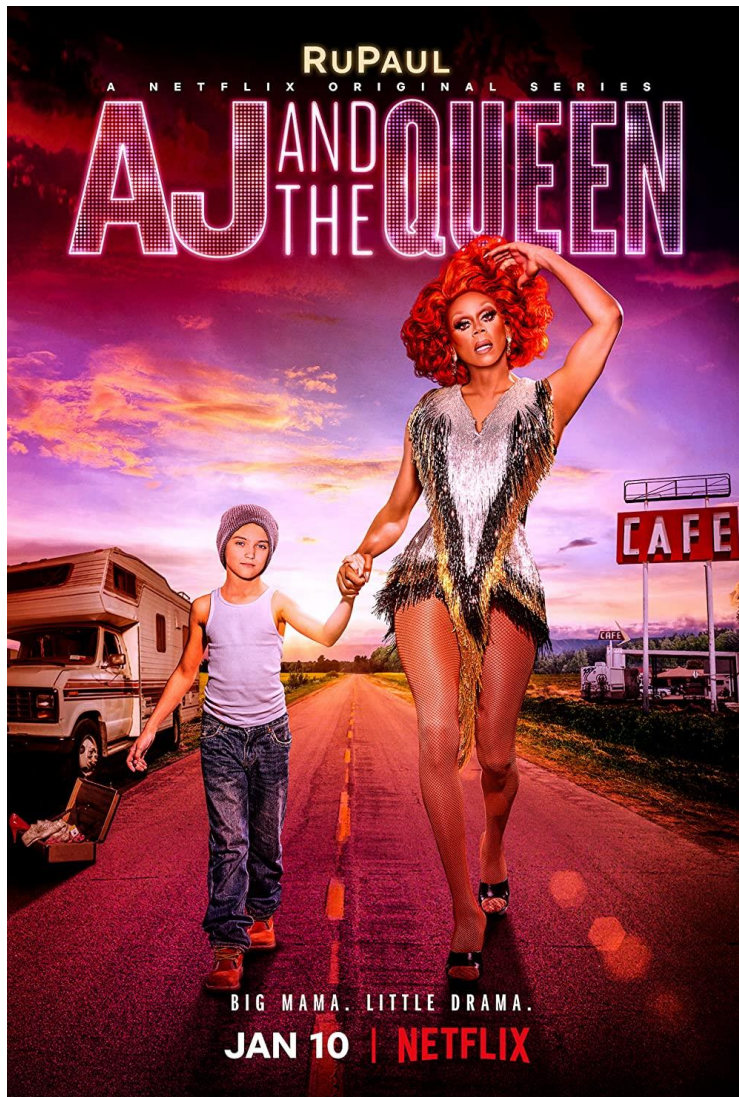
Official trailer: <https://www.netflix.com/dz-en/title/80197526>

Appendix B

Aj and the Queen

Season 01. (2020). In RuPaul Charles & Michael Patrick King (Creators), *AJ and the Queen*.

[Season 01]. Netflix.



Official trailer: <https://www.netflix.com/dz-en/title/80237329>

Appendix C

Young Royals

Young Royals. (2021). [Television series]. Created by Lisa Ambjorn. Sweden: Netflix.



Official trailer: <https://www.netflix.com/dz-en/title/81210762>

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