

Netnographic Analysis of Audience Engagement with Netflix Türkiye's Instagram Promotions

Süleyman Sırrı Yılmaz / Assoc. Prof. Dr. 

Selçuk University, Faculty of Communication
ssirriyilmaz@gmail.com

Abstract

Social media promotion has transformed film and series marketing from a one-way publicity practice into a platformed process in which audiences react, evaluate, circulate, and reinterpret promotional texts. This study examines how users engage with film and series promotions on Netflix Türkiye's official Instagram account. An archival netnography was conducted on 40 criterion-based, purposively selected posts published between January 1 and March 30, 2026. The final analytic corpus comprised 93 unique public user comments; comments were counted once even when coded under more than one theme. A hybrid inductive–deductive thematic analysis examined affective responses, participatory practices, evaluative discourse, content-format differences, and meaning-making. The findings show that engagement cannot be reduced to likes or comment volume. Users formed affective attachments, expressed anticipation and disappointment,

addressed demands to the platform, tagged others, mobilized fandom language, and acted as informal critics of performance, narrative, casting, and platform strategy. Engagement also varied by promotional format: announcements generated demand-oriented responses, emotionally intense reels elicited affective interpretation, actor-focused posts prompted performance judgments, and fandom-oriented posts encouraged collective identity work. The study contributes by treating Instagram comments as a distinct paratextual and cultural arena in which promotion, reception, criticism, and collaborative meaning-making converge within a localized streaming-platform context.

Keywords: Digital Film Promotion, Audience Engagement, Instagram, Netnography, Netflix Türkiye

JEL Codes: Z11, L82, O33, L86

Citation: Yılmaz, S. S. (2026). Netnographic analysis of audience engagement with Netflix Türkiye's Instagram promotions. *Researches on Multidisciplinary Approaches (ROMAYA Journal)*, 2026(2).

1. Introduction

The platformization of screen media has reorganized the relations among production, distribution, promotion, and reception. Subscription video-on-demand services such as Netflix do not merely distribute audiovisual texts; they structure visibility through recommendation systems, localized catalogs, interface design, and continuous social media communication (Gomez-Urbe & Hunt, 2015; Lobato, 2019; van Dijck, Poell, & de Waal, 2018). This infrastructure is not static but is continuously revised through data-driven experimentation. As Gomez-Urbe and Hunt (2015, p. 13:11) state, "A/B test results are our most important source of information for making product decisions." Recommendation, interface design, and retention strategies are therefore continually refined through the analysis of behavioral data. Viewing has consequently become more individualized and temporally flexible, while audiences encounter films and series across an extended promotional environment that includes trailers, clips, memes, posters, actor-centered materials, and platform-generated conversations (Torun, 2021; Wayne, 2018). The original ACM reference identifies the publication year as 2015, while Lobato emphasizes that subscription video-on-demand services have transformed the circulation of media content.

Instagram occupies a distinctive place in this environment because its visual architecture, short-form video formats, tagging functions, and comment threads combine promotional exposure with immediate public response. Highfield and Leaver (2016, p. 47) emphasize that "Visual content is a critical component of everyday social media." Promotional posts operate as paratexts: they frame expectations before viewing, reactivate memories after viewing, and offer interpretive cues that can reshape the perceived meaning and value of a film or series. As Gray (2017, p. 48) explains, "the promotional material that we consume sets up, begins, and frames many of the interactions that we have with texts." Promotional communication should therefore be understood not merely as external advertising but as an interpretive threshold through which audiences begin to encounter and evaluate screen texts. Yet the meanings of these paratexts are not controlled exclusively by the platform. Users add affective reactions, evaluations, jokes, demands, comparisons, and intertextual references, thereby extending and sometimes contesting the promotional text through participation.

Existing research approaches this field from several directions. Marketing scholarships commonly measure engagement through likes, shares, comments, reach, purchase intention, or electronic word of mouth (Brodie et al., 2011; Smith, Fischer, & Yongjian, 2012; Vivek, Beatty, & Morgan, 2012). Within this tradition, engagement extends beyond purchase and encompasses cognitive, emotional, behavioral,

and social connections between individuals and organizational activities. Platform studies, by contrast, emphasize algorithmic visibility, datafication, and the economic capture of user activity (Napoli, 2014; Srnicek, 2017; van Dijck et al., 2018). From this perspective, audience responses are not merely indicators of preference but data inputs that can influence prioritization and circulation of content. Studies of Netflix have examined recommendation systems, localization, viewing habits, branded content, and community management (Hendriks & Castro, 2022; Özel, 2020; Özel & Özyay, 2021; Sarı & Sancaklı, 2020). These bodies of work establish the importance of social media promotion, but they often privilege platform strategy, measurable response, or consumption behavior over the cultural work performed inside comment threads.

Instagram comments constitute a specific research arena for three reasons. First, they are naturally occurring responses produced in direct proximity to a promotional object rather than answers elicited by a researcher. Second, they make visible the coexistence of emotional attachment, informal criticism, fandom identity, platform-directed demands, and peer-to-peer interaction. Third, their semi-public and algorithmically ordered character means that they are simultaneously expressions of reception and inputs into platform visibility. A comment can therefore function as affective testimony, recommendation, critique, social address, and promotional labor at the same time. This multifunctionality requires an interpretive approach capable of distinguishing the cultural meaning of comments from their measurable contribution to engagement metrics.

The central gap is thus not whether social media matters for film promotion, but how users qualitatively transform localized promotional posts into spaces of reception and collective meaning-making. Prior Netflix research has shown that the company "portrays the brand as a humorous and a relatable peer" but also "does not encourage Facebook users to engage in the content on the platform" (Hendriks & Castro, 2022, p. 108). This tension suggests that an active and informal brand voice does not necessarily produce a reciprocal community environment. Recent work on film advertising has also mapped the strategic content patterns of large-scale social media campaigns (DeFelice, 2025). Less attention, however, has been paid to how users on a localized Instagram account interpret different promotional formats, redirect platform-generated conversations, and negotiate the cultural value of promoted texts. Addressing this gap, the present study uses archival netnography to analyze 40 Netflix Türkiye Instagram posts and 93 unique comments. Its contribution is fourfold: it centers user discourse rather than engagement volume; examines a Turkish-localized platform context; compares engagement across promo-

tional formats; and integrates affect, participation, evaluation, and meaning-making within a single interpretive framework.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Digital Film Promotion, Platformization, and Netflix

Digital media have shifted film promotion from a bounded pre-release campaign toward an ongoing circulation process. Traditional publicity relied primarily on trailers, broadcast advertising, print coverage, and outdoor media, whereas contemporary campaigns distribute modular content across multiple platforms and invite users to amplify it through their own networks (Aytaş & Yavuz, 2024; Jenkins, 2006). Marketing-oriented research accordingly treats social media as an environment in which user-generated content and electronic word of mouth can extend reach and influence attention. Smith et al. (2012, p. 102) emphasize that "particular social media channels and marketing strategies may influence consumer-produced brand communications. More recently, DeFelice (2025) analyzed "promotional posts from major studios across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter/X" between 2017 and 2023. The final dataset comprised 22,235 posts.

This strategic literature is valuable for identifying content patterns and campaign effects, but it tends to operationalize audience activity as an outcome variable. Platform scholarship complicates that view by showing that visibility is co-produced by user behavior, ranking systems, and commercial infrastructures (Napoli, 2014; van Dijck et al., 2018). Likes and comments are therefore not neutral indicators of interest. They are data signals that feed platform distribution while simultaneously expressing social and cultural judgments. Srnicek's (2017) account of platform capitalism further suggests that participation creates economic value for the platform even when it takes the form of criticism or unpaid fan labor.

Netflix exemplifies this convergence of content, data, and promotion. Its recommender system uses behavioral data to organize discovery and retention (Gomez-Urbe & Hunt, 2015), while its social media accounts cultivate attention beyond the streaming interface. Research in Türkiye has emphasized Netflix's influence on viewing habits, algorithmic selection, and glocalised content communication (Özel, 2020; Özel & Özyay, 2021; Sarı & Sancaklı, 2020; Sarı & Türker, 2021). These studies support the argument that Netflix adapts its communication to local cultures, yet they primarily examine platform structures, content policies, or users' viewing practices rather than the discourse generated around individual promotional posts.

Hendrikx and Castro's (2022) qualitative analysis of 100 posts and 826 comments on Netflix's United Sta-

tes Facebook page offers a closer point of comparison. They found that Netflix maintained an active posting schedule and presented itself as a humorous, relatable peer. Their study establishes community relationship management as a central feature of the Netflix brand. However, its analytical emphasis remains on how the brand manages community relations. The present study shifts the center of analysis to how users appropriate the promotional space: whether they affirm the brand's intended tone, redirect the conversation toward demands, challenge content decisions, or use the post as a prompt for their own interpretive communities. The findings indicate that Netflix "portrays the brand as a humorous and a relatable peer" (Hendrikx & Castro, 2022, Abstract, para. 1).

2.2. Audience Engagement, Participatory Culture, and Affective Publics

Audience engagement is a multidimensional concept. In service and marketing research, it includes cognitive attention, emotional investment, and behavioral participation that exceed purchase or exposure (Brodie et al., 2011; Vivek et al., 2012). This formulation usefully distinguishes meaningful engagement from raw reach, but it can still treat participation as a relationship between a consumer and a brand. Media and cultural studies broaden the concept by locating engagement within circulation, interpretation, and cultural production. Jenkins (2006) describes participatory culture as an environment in which audiences circulate and remake media, while Bruns (2013) uses *produsage* to capture the blurred roles of producer and user.

The two traditions converge in recognizing active audiences but differ in their assumptions. Marketing models often regard participation as a desirable indicator of relationship strength, whereas critical platform research emphasizes that participation is structured, monetized, and unequally visible. Algorithmic ranking can amplify highly responsive content and marginalize less legible forms of engagement (van Dijck et al., 2018). Consequently, a request for a new season, an angry critique, a tagged friend, and a fandom emoji may all increase visibility while carrying very different meanings. A qualitative approach is required to separate these functions.

Emotion is especially important in this distinction. Papacharissi's (2015) concept of affective publics explains how networked participants connect through shared intensities, narratives, and expressions of feeling. Anticipation, nostalgia, disappointment, and humor do more than reveal private reactions; when publicly articulated and repeated, they organize collective orientations toward a media text. This perspective helps explain why negative comments should not automatically be interpreted as disengagement. Anger at a finale or frustration with a

cancellation can indicate sustained investment and may produce more public interaction than uncomplicated approval. Papacharissi (2015) argues that storytelling practices facilitate engagement and that networked publics temporarily form around shared channels of sentiment.

Participatory engagement also includes vernacular creativity. Memes, ironic comparisons, hashtags, and fandom shorthand allow users to signal cultural competence and group belonging (Shifman, 2013). At the same time, users evaluate acting, narrative coherence, casting, and platform policy. Such comments complicate the distinction between audience and critic by distributing evaluative authority across everyday users. Couldry and Hepp (2017) argue that media are embedded in the construction of social reality; from this perspective, comment threads are not peripheral noise but sites where the value and meaning of screen texts are negotiated.

2.3. Netnography and the Analytical Value of Instagram Comments

Kozinets (2002, p. 61) defines netnography as “ethnography adapted to the study of online communities.” Its principal advantage is access to naturally occurring communication: users respond in the contexts in which platform culture is performed rather than in a research setting created by an interview or survey. Netnography is therefore well suited to studying the meanings attached to promotional posts, the interactional conventions of comment sections, and the relationship between platform affordances and user discourse.

Methodologically, netnography differs from simple content harvesting. It requires contextual interpretation of language, tone, symbols, platform norms, and the relation between individual comments and the wider communicative environment. Herring’s (2004) computer-mediated discourse analysis highlights the importance of rhetorical form, while Highfield and Leaver (2016) show that Instagram research must account for visibility, platform-specific conventions, and the instability of accessible data. Comments may be reordered, removed, hidden, or edited, making a bounded archival record and transparent sampling procedure essential.

Existing netnographic work in film culture demonstrates the value of this interpretive orientation. Günevi Uslu (2026), examining AI-generated trailers and posters on Reddit and YouTube, found that fan communities negotiated creativity, authenticity, ethical legitimacy, and aesthetic value. That research supports the view that promotional or para-promotional materials become sites of cultural negotiation. However, its focus is user-produced AI content across two platforms. The present study instead examines platform-authored promotional posts on

Instagram and asks how users negotiate established films and series, performers, narrative decisions, and Netflix’s own content strategy.

The literature therefore leaves a specific empirical and analytical gap. Quantitative film-promotion studies explain reach and campaign performance; Netflix studies explain recommendation, localization, and brand voice; participatory-culture research explains circulation and fan creativity; and netnography explains online meaning-making. Few studies combine these perspectives to compare user responses across promotional formats on a localized Netflix Instagram account. This study addresses that gap by treating comments as a paratextual corpus through which audiences express affect, perform participation, exercise criticism, and reconstruct narrative meaning.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research Design and Case Selection

The study employed an archival netnographic design. Archival netnography examines user-generated material that was produced before and independently of the researcher’s intervention (Kozinets, 2015). Netflix Türkiye’s official Instagram account was selected as a bounded case because it combines global platform branding with localized promotional communication and provides a visually oriented environment in which posts and public comments remain directly connected. The observation period covered January 1–March 30, 2026, allowing the analysis of a concentrated three-month promotional cycle rather than an indefinite account history.

The unit of contextual analysis was the Instagram post, including its visual or audiovisual format, caption, promoted production, and visible engagement environment. The unit of textual analysis was the individual public user comment. Replies were considered only when they contributed substantive meaning to the parent comment or revealed an interactional sequence. Likes and visible comment counts were recorded as contextual indicators, not treated as direct measures of interpretive engagement.

3.2. Sampling Strategy and Corpus Size

A criterion-based purposive sampling strategy was combined with maximum variation. Posts were eligible when they (a) appeared on the official Netflix Türkiye account during the observation period, (b) directly promoted a film or series, (c) had publicly accessible comments at the time of archiving, and (d) added variation to the corpus in terms of promotional format, production origin, genre, or engagement intensity. Duplicate uses of the same creative asset, purely corporate announcements unrelated to a specific screen text, posts with comments disabled,

and posts whose visible responses were dominated by spam or commercial solicitation were excluded.

The final sample comprised 40 posts and included trailers and release announcements, scene-based reels and clips, actor- or character-centered materials, posters, memes, and fandom-oriented posts. The number 40 was not selected as a statistical threshold and does not claim probabilistic representativeness. It was justified through information power: the study had a narrow and bounded aim, a highly specific account and period, established theoretical sensitizing concepts, a dense comment environment, and an in-depth cross-case analytic strategy (Malterud, Siersma, & Guassora, 2016). The sample was closed when all predefined dimensions of variation were represented and additional candidate posts duplicated combinations already present in the corpus. Expanding the sample solely to increase *N* would have shifted the design toward frequency description without improving the interpretive depth required by the research questions.

Comments were then screened within the 40 selected posts for analytical relevance. The final textual corpus contained 93 unique user comments. A comment was counted once even when it was assigned to more than one code or discussed under more than one research question; repeated use of an excerpt in the Findings section therefore does not increase the corpus size. Comments were retained when they expressed a discernible affective, participatory, evaluative, or interpretive function. Emoji-only responses were included only when their fandom or affective meaning was contextually recognizable. Duplicates, automated messages, spam, commercial solicitations, and comments unrelated to the promoted production were removed.

3.3. Data Collection and Analytical Procedure

The posts and comments were archived manually during the observation period. A structured spreadsheet recorded post date, promoted title, content format, visible interaction indicators, anonymized comment identifier, original-language comment, English rendering, initial code, and analytic memo. The corpus was read repeatedly to preserve the relation between comments and their post-level context. Most comments were originally written in Turkish. Quotations presented in English were translated and lightly paraphrased to preserve meaning while reducing searchability and protecting user traceability; punctuation and repeated letters were normalized only where this did not alter tone.

Analysis followed a hybrid inductive–deductive thematic procedure informed by Braun and Clarke (2006, 2021, 2022). The research questions and theoretical framework supplied broad sensitizing do-

main—*affect, participation, evaluation, format, and meaning-making*—while specific codes were generated inductively from the comments. Initial open codes included anticipation, attachment, nostalgia, disappointment, season request, tagging, humor, fandom display, acting appraisal, narrative critique, casting judgment, platform critique, comparison, personalization, intertextuality, and alternative-story speculation. Codes were compared across posts and grouped into higher-order themes that corresponded to, but were not mechanically determined by, the research questions.

Coding consistency was addressed through procedural transparency rather than an intercoder agreement coefficient. The analysis was conducted by a single researcher within an interpretive netnographic design; therefore, statistical agreement between independent coders was neither available nor treated as a substitute for reflexive rigor (Braun & Clarke, 2021; O'Connor & Joffe, 2020). A written codebook specified each code's definition, inclusion and exclusion boundaries, and representative examples. After the provisional themes were developed, the complete corpus was coded a second time, code boundaries were revised where overlap occurred, and negative or contradictory cases were retained. An audit trail linked each excerpt to its post context, code history, and analytic memo. These procedures strengthened internal consistency while keeping the researcher's interpretive role explicit.

3.4. Ethical Considerations

The study used only publicly accessible material and involved no direct interaction, recruitment, intervention, or access to private profiles. Ethical decisions followed netnographic guidance and the Association of Internet Researchers' context-sensitive approach to public online data (Franzke, Bechmann, Zimmer, & Ess, 2020; Kozinets, 2015). Usernames, profile details, links, and other identifying information were not retained in the manuscript. Direct handles were replaced with functional labels such as [friend] or [Netflix Türkiye]. Quotations were translated and lightly paraphrased, and no screenshots of user profiles were reproduced. The analysis focused on recurring cultural patterns rather than individual users.

3.5. Research Questions

RQ1: How do users express emotional and affective responses to Netflix Türkiye's Instagram promotions?

RQ2: How do users enact participatory culture through comments and interaction practices?

RQ3: What evaluative and critical discourses emerge in user comments?

RQ4: How do different promotional formats sha-

pe patterns of audience engagement?

RQ5: How do users construct meaning around films and series in the Instagram comment environment?

4. Findings

The findings are organized by research question. Because comments could carry more than one function, some excerpts are relevant to several themes. The quotations below are anonymized English renderings of the original comments.

4.1. Research Question 1: Affective Responses

Four recurrent affective patterns were identified: anticipation, emotional attachment, disappointment, and nostalgia. Anticipation was most visible around returning series, final seasons, and delayed releases. Users employed countdown language and repeated requests, turning the comment thread into a shared waiting room rather than a simple reaction space.

"I'm eagerly waiting for Mezarlık Season 3."

"When is the final season coming?"

"Release them all at once; waiting is so hard."

"Finally! I have been waiting for this."

Emotional attachment was particularly strong in actor-focused and fandom-oriented posts. Users connected productions to personal biography, long-term viewing, and belonging. These responses indicate that engagement derives not only from the promoted post but also from accumulated histories with characters, performers, and fan communities.

"Half of my life has passed with them; they feel like a second family."

"I waited four years for this moment."

"This is a series I watch again and again."

"I grew up with them."

Disappointment was equally intense. Users criticized finales, acting, narrative predictability, and emotional credibility. Negative evaluation did not mark withdrawal; rather, it showed that expectations were sufficiently strong to motivate public response.

"I definitely did not like the finale."

"It could not have ended in such an empty cliché."

"The acting was nonexistent."

"It did not resonate with me at all."

Nostalgia connected present promotional material to earlier viewing experiences. Users recalled first encounters with a series, compared early and later seasons, or wished to experience the text again without prior knowledge. Affective engagement was therefore temporally layered: the post activated me-

mories that preceded the current campaign.

"I watched it when it first came out and loved it."

"The early seasons were wonderful, but I still keep watching."

"I wish I could forget it and watch it again."

Overall, Netflix Türkiye's Instagram account functioned as an affective public in which excitement, attachment, frustration, and nostalgia became visible and mutually reinforced. The findings also demonstrate why sentiment should not be reduced to a positive-negative binary: disappointment and criticism frequently represented durable investment.

4.2. Research Question 2: Participatory Practices

Participation took four main forms: platform-directed requests, tagging and circulation, vernacular humor, and fandom-based visibility work. The most common platform-directed practice was the request for a new season, a specific title, dubbing, or regional availability. These comments positioned users as claim-making participants who attempted to influence the platform's agenda.

"When will Mezarlık Season 3 arrive?"

"Please make a third season of Pera Palace."

"We want more C-dramas."

"I hope it comes with Turkish dubbing."

Tagging transformed the comment section into a networked invitation. Users addressed friends, actors, Netflix Türkiye, or other regional accounts, thereby moving promotional content beyond the original follower-brand encounter.

"[Netflix Türkiye], we need a third season."

"[friend], this is legendary."

"[regional Netflix account], when will it be available there?"

Humor and irony were not ornamental additions but participatory techniques. Users adapted dialogue, exaggerated character traits, and connected the promoted text to local popular-culture references. Such comments demonstrated shared cultural competence and increased the social portability of the post.

"I trusted Anthony, but Benedict, you were a disappointment."

"I thought this was a continuation of Yasak Elma."

"I hugged the obelisk the other day, but nothing happened."

Fandom participation relied on hashtags, emojis, collective pronouns, and repeated slogans. These compact forms signaled identity and solidarity even when they contained little propositional content.

"BTS Army is always with you."

"Our favorite duo."

"Team Vecna."

"❤️❤️❤️"

The participatory culture observed here was therefore not limited to producing derivative media. It also involved demand articulation, social distribution, insider humor, and identity performance. At the same time, these practices remained platform-dependent: participation generated visibility and data for Instagram and Netflix even when users were criticizing the platform.

4.3. Research Question 3: Evaluative and Critical Discourse

Users acted as informal critics by evaluating performance, narrative quality, casting, and platform policy. Acting was a dominant criterion. Praise focused on emotional expression and role embodiment, whereas criticism targeted repetitive performance, limited range, or perceived miscasting.

"He conveyed the emotion through his eyes."

"An outstanding performance."

"The same gestures, the same tone, the same character again."

"This lead does not fit such a strong cast."

Narrative critique addressed coherence, originality, pacing, and emotional payoff. Users frequently judged endings against the expectations developed over several seasons. Short comments such as 'boring' coexisted with more interpretive explanations of why a storyline failed.

"The ending was empty and predictable."

"It was good until the final episode."

"The story did not earn that emotional conclusion."

"It was extremely boring."

Casting and character construction formed a related but distinct discourse. Users compared performers with imagined character identities, previous adaptations, or other actors. These comments reveal that authenticity was understood relationally: a performance was judged according to the user's prior knowledge of genre, star persona, and narrative world.

"The female lead could have been different."

"This role does not suit the actor."

"Someone who resembled Tommy would have worked better."

Platform-level criticism moved beyond individual titles. Users questioned Netflix's emphasis on series, perceived decline in film quality, unfinished productions, and cancellation practices. In these comments, users addressed Netflix as an accountable cultural intermediary rather than a neutral distributor.

"Netflix has turned into Diziflix."

"Is there nothing other than series?"

"Please upload genuinely strong films."

"You cannot leave every series unfinished."

Comparative judgments were also common. Users positioned one series, season, performance, or finale against another to establish hierarchies of quality. The comment section thus functioned as an informal reviewing environment in which cultural value was negotiated publicly and cumulatively.

4.4. Research Question 4: Differences Across Promotional Formats

Promotional format shaped both the topic and the intensity of response. Trailers and release announcements generated future-oriented discourse: users asked when content would arrive, whether all episodes would be released together, and whether particular language options would be available. Engagement centered on access, timing, and platform responsiveness.

Scene-based reels and emotionally intense clips generated more immersive reactions. Users described crying, shouting, heartbreak, or identification with a specific moment. These posts also encouraged interpretive comments because the selected scene supplied enough narrative material for users to discuss motivation, relationships, and emotional credibility.

"I cried so much in this scene."

"Our hearts broke here."

"I screamed when this happened."

Actor- and character-focused posts shifted attention from plot to performance, charisma, suitability, and star persona. The same post type could generate admiration and criticism, making it especially productive for evaluative discourse.

"He is perfect for period roles."

"She performed brilliantly."

"This role does not suit him."

Romance and drama promotions produced polarized responses. Their emotional framing encouraged attachment, but it also raised expectations regarding chemistry, acting, and narrative credibility. Fandom-oriented posts, in contrast, generated repetitive, collective, and identity-based engagement through emojis, slogans, and shared references. Humorous posts elicited memes and local intertextuality, thereby facilitating circulation through platform-native language.

These differences show that content type does not merely change the quantity of engagement; it changes what engagement is for. Announcements organize anticipation and demand, emotional clips or-

ganize affective interpretation, actor-centered posts organize evaluation, and fandom materials organize collective identification.

4.5. Research Question 5: Meaning-Making

Users constructed meaning through personalization, interpretive narration, intertextuality, collective language, and counterfactual storytelling. Personalization connected media narratives to life history and changing emotional perspectives.

"Watching the series at different ages feels like reading the same story with different emotions."

"I have experienced this feeling too."

"Half of my life has passed with them."

Interpretive narration went beyond evaluation. Users explained character motivations, moral tensions, and relationship dynamics, thereby expanding the narrative frame supplied by the promotional post.

"Fusun was lively at first; Kemal understood it was love only after losing her."

"A person should not carry the anger of the past forever."

"Afife is presented as a feminist character, but her choices contradict that position."

Intertextual references situated Netflix productions within broader cultural repertoires. Comparisons with novels, myths, Turkish television, and global franchises supplied shared interpretive shortcuts.

"The novel Eylül should be adapted after this."

"It is a love story like Ferhat and Şirin."

"The worst finale since Game of Thrones."

Finally, users proposed alternative endings, theories, and possible continuations. These speculative comments challenged textual closure and turned the comment thread into a participatory narrative space.

"I imagined a much stronger ending."

"There should have been a different conclusion."

"My theory was that the character would return."

Meaning was therefore neither located solely in the original film or series nor determined by the promotional caption. It emerged through interaction among the primary text, platform-authored paratext, user biography, popular-cultural memory, and collective commentary.

5. Discussion

The findings confirm that social media engagement with film and series promotion is qualitatively heterogeneous. The affective responses identified in RQ1 align with Papacharissi's (2015) account of affective publics: users connected through shared

anticipation, nostalgia, disappointment, and attachment. However, the study extends this framework by showing that positive and negative affect frequently performed the same engagement function. Disappointment with a finale or anger at a platform decision did not signal indifference; it demonstrated sustained narrative and relational investment. This complicates marketing approaches that infer relationship quality from positive sentiment or aggregate engagement counts.

The participatory practices identified in RQ2 support Jenkins's (2006) and Bruns's (2013) accounts of active audiences, but they also reveal the limits of an empowerment-only interpretation. Users tagged peers, used fandom language, generated humor, and addressed requests to Netflix. These practices expanded circulation and gave audiences a visible voice. At the same time, they occurred inside infrastructures that convert activity into data and visibility (Srnicsek, 2017; van Dijck et al., 2018). Platform-directed demands therefore represent a form of constrained agency: users can publicly pressure the service, but the platform retains control over production, acquisition, recommendation, and cancellation.

RQ3 demonstrates that user comments are not merely promotional reactions; they are vernacular criticism. Evaluations of acting, casting, narrative coherence, and platform policy distributed critical authority across ordinary users. This finding resonates with Couldry and Hepp's (2017) argument that media-related reality is constructed through everyday communicative practices. It also extends Gray's (2017) paratext theory. The Instagram post frames reception, but user comments become secondary paratexts that may reinforce, redirect, or contest the promotional frame. A celebratory actor post, for example, can be transformed into a debate about repetitive performance or miscasting.

The format differences in RQ4 are consistent with research showing that social media strategies should be platform- and content-specific rather than generic (DeFelice, 2025; Smith et al., 2012). This study adds qualitative specificity to that claim. Announcements were effective at organizing temporal anticipation; emotional reels invited experiential testimony; actor-focused posts activated star and performance discourse; and fandom posts supported identity signaling. These mechanisms explain why identical engagement totals may conceal fundamentally different audience relations. A thousand demand comments and a thousand fandom emojis are not interchangeable evidence of engagement.

The results also refine existing Netflix research. Hendrikx and Castro (2022) found that Netflix's U.S. Facebook presence cultivated a humorous and relatable peer identity. Humor was also visible in the Netflix Türkiye corpus, but users did not simply reproduce the brand voice. They localized it through

Turkish television references, idioms, and everyday jokes, while simultaneously holding the platform accountable for release schedules, cancellations, dubbing, and content quality. The localized account therefore operates as a negotiated interface between global brand strategy and locally situated audience expectations.

Comparison with Günevi Uslu's (2026) netnography further clarifies the contribution. Both studies show that film-related digital materials generate negotiations about value and legitimacy. In AI fan cultures, the central tensions concern creativity, authenticity, and human-machine collaboration. In the present corpus, the tensions concern performance, narrative credibility, casting, cultural familiarity, and platform responsibility. Taken together, these studies indicate that paratextual environments are increasingly important arenas in which audiences negotiate what counts as a legitimate and valuable screen experience.

The principal theoretical contribution is an integrated model of promotional engagement as a four-part circuit: affect motivates attention and attachment; participation makes that attachment publicly actionable; evaluation assigns cultural value; and meaning-making connects the promoted text to biography, fandom, and other cultural texts. Promotional format and platform affordances condition each part of the circuit. Engagement is therefore neither a single behavior nor a stable metric; it is a platformed cultural process in which users simultaneously respond to content, address others, evaluate institutions, and produce interpretive value.

The findings have practical implications for streaming-platform communication. Comment volume should be read alongside comment function. Demand-heavy announcement threads require timely information and expectation management; actor-focused posts may need active moderation when criticism becomes personalized; emotionally intense clips can support deeper conversation; and fandom posts can sustain community identity. Responding selectively to recurring questions, acknowledging criticism without suppressing it, and distinguishing local cultural references from generic global messaging could strengthen community relations without reducing participation to promotional optimization. Several limitations qualify these conclusions. The study examines one account, one national-linguistic context, and a three-month period. The 40-post purposive sample supports analytical depth but not statistical generalization. The 93-comment corpus represents substantively relevant visible comments rather than all users, silent audiences, deleted comments, private shares, or algorithmically hidden responses. Instagram's ranking system also affects which comments are displayed, but its operation could not be independently observed. Future re-

search should compare localized Netflix accounts, examine the same titles across Instagram, TikTok, YouTube, and X, and combine netnography with interviews or computational mapping to connect interpretive patterns with broader distributions.

6. Conclusion

This archival netnography examined audience engagement with 40 film and series promotional posts and 93 unique user comments on Netflix Türkiye's Instagram account. The study responded to a gap in research that has largely explained film promotion through campaign strategy, engagement metrics, platform infrastructure, or viewing behavior while giving less attention to the cultural work performed within localized comment threads.

The findings show that Instagram promotion is a hybrid space of affect, participation, criticism, and meaning-making. Users express attachment and disappointment, mobilize demands, circulate posts through tagging and fandom practices, evaluate performance and narrative quality, critique Netflix's broader strategy, and connect promoted texts to biography and cultural memory. Promotional formats activate different functions: announcements organize anticipation, emotional reels intensify affective interpretation, actor-centered posts invite evaluative discourse, and fandom content supports collective identity.

The study's main contribution is to conceptualize user comments as secondary paratexts that can amplify, redirect, or contest platform-authored promotion. This perspective makes visible forms of engagement that numerical indicators cannot distinguish. It also shows that localized streaming-platform communication is not simply the transmission of a global brand voice; it is an ongoing negotiation in which users articulate local expectations and participate in the cultural valuation of films and series.

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