

Research Article | Araştırma Makalesi

Film Genres and Emotions: Genres Watched by Netflix Türkiye Viewers and Emotion Variations During the Pandemic

Film Türleri ve Duygular: Pandemi Döneminde Netflix Türkiye İzleyicilerinin İzlediği Türler ve Duygu Değişimleri



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Abstract

A dynamic relationship exists between a film/series and the viewer, and genres have an essential place in this relationship. Significantly, the experience of watching films and television series, which is gradually changing, also provides more detail regarding this relationship. Since the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the viewing experience has changed, primarily through digital platforms. However, the viewer's tendency to use digital platforms provides more specific data. In this study, using data of genres watched on Netflix Türkiye between 2020 and 2021, which was obtained from FlixPatrol, was analyzed in the context of genres and viewer emotions. Türkiye's data for 2020 and 2021 and the lockdown period between April 29 and May 14, 2021 were also examined. Furthermore, movie genres were analyzed quarterly and on a general basis, and the viewing rates of genres in the Top 10 were also interpreted. Numerical data were interpreted qualitatively in the context of genre and cognitive theories.

Keywords: Film Genres, Netflix, Emotions, Pandemic, Türkiye.

Öz

Tür teorisi sinema alanında uzun bir geçmişe sahip bir alandır ve türler birçok biçimde biçimsel, içerik ya da izleyici etkileşimi açısından açıklanmaya çalışılmış ve incelenmiştir. Sinemadaki tür çalışmalarının içerisinde yer alan bilişsel çalışmalar da yer almaktadır. İzlenen film ile izleyici arasında farklı biçimlerde bir ilişki oluşmaktadır ve bu ilişkide türlerin de önemli yeri vardır. Özellikle giderek değişen film ve dizi izleme deneyimi bu ilişkiyle ilgili daha detaylı bilgiler de sunmaktadır. 2020 yılından itibaren Covid-19 pandemi sürecinde de izleme deneyimi özellikle dijital platformlar aracılığıyla farklılaşmıştır. Bununla birlikte izleyicilerin dijital platformlara yönelmesi daha belirgin veriler sunmaktadır. Bu çalışmada, 2020-2021 yılı döneminde Netflix Türkiye'de izlenen türlerin verisine ulaşılarak türler ve izleyici duyguları bağlamında bir inceleme yapılmaktadır. 2020 ve 2021 yılları verileri ile birlikte Türkiye'de 29 Nisan-14 Mayıs 2021 tarihleri arasında gerçekleşen tam kapanma dönemindeki veriler de ayrıca incelenmiştir. Film türleri hem yıllık olarak çeyrek bazda hem de genel bazda incelenmiş, özellikle Netflix Türkiye Top 10 içerisinde yer alan türlerin izlenme oranları da yorumlanmıştır. Sayısal veriler tür teorisi ve bilişsel teori bağlamında niteliksel olarak yorumlanmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Film Türleri, Netflix, Duygular, Pandemi, Türkiye.



Introduction

Since its existence, art has been connected with genre, and this connection has changed over time. Even the tragedies in ancient Greece refer to a narrative genre when viewed today. However, the penetration of art into a broader space in history and the ways in which it has been handled in different forms and works in areas such as the culture industry and popular culture have divided it into categories and further into genres. Art forms such as painting, sculpture, dance, music, and theater, which are generally called traditional arts, have distinguished themselves over time. Although keeping literature separate when considering traditional arts may be necessary, it is a fact that other art forms are increasingly appealing to the visual senses. For example, auditory music has become a visual product through digital media, album covers, and music videos with developing technologies. In this context, the importance of the visual sense in the perception of the image, work of art, and the emotion it creates in the viewer has become an even deeper and more critical issue.

Since works of art, which have been integrated into popular culture over time, have also turned into consumption subjects in the context of the culture industry, how this transformed work is presented to the viewer as the consumer has increased the importance of the concept of genre. The functionality of genre has emerged more clearly due to concerns about reaching the consumer through literature, music, and of course, cinema, which is the subject of this study and of target viewer determination studies. In literature, music, and cinema, presenting works under certain genres to address the reader, listener, or viewer more quickly and easily has become a facilitating strategy. Today, users can more easily access, via the internet, their preferred artwork and works they enjoy or like through genres.

For cinema, the concept of the genre was formed in the Hollywood studio system, and although this system no longer exists in the classical sense, it left genre as a legacy for cinema. Furthermore, although the ways of watching a film—traditional movie theaters, smart televisions, mobile technologies, viewing platforms, cinema, and television—have changed, content is still being presented according to genres. The impact of content genres on algorithms that present content tailored to users developed by digital platforms, whose number of users is increasing, cannot be denied. As such, the effects of content types, periodical events, social structure, historical factors, and cultural and geographical characteristics are critical in forming and changing viewer preferences regarding genres, individually and socially. Considering the history of genre theory, particularly in cinema, it is possible to encounter questions regarding what genres are, how they should be defined, why certain genres are more prevalent at certain times, and the formal or narrative features of genres. In light of these subjects, the main subject of this study was formed, which includes film genres, a geographical area, and a temporal period.

State of Emotions

Every branch of science that strives to understand human beings' physical or spiritual aspects has tried to make sense of and understand the emotions that distinguish humans from other living things. Philosophy, medicine, biology, sociology, psychology, communication, humanities, and more in this context have aimed to reveal the characteristics that determine and influence emotions. The brain, the most important and mysterious human organ, is essential here, and data obtained from the brain is remarkable. Jaak Panksepp (1998), in his studies of neuroscience, suggested that humans

have seven main emotional subsystems: aggression, fear, lust, seeking, care, panic/sadness, and playing (as cited in Grodal & Kramer, 2010, p. 19). The first four emotional systems are reptilian in origin; however, the seeking system has evolved to support intellectual endeavors, and the last three systems reflect the evolution and expansion of mammalian emotional systems (Grodal & Kramer, 2010, pp. 19-20). Considering present-day conditions, making sharp distinctions between these feelings is a complex process. Whether reptilian or mammalian, humans are surrounded and equipped with many indicators and can react to different contexts and factors using both emotional systems.

Unlike perceptions and memory, emotions cannot be simulated via computers and are human-specific “noises” that are often seen as sources of interference with the cognitive process (Smith, 2003, pp. 3-4). In addition, emotional functions consist of three modes: the telic, paratelic, and autonomic modes. The telic mode occurs voluntarily and towards a specific goal; the paratelic mode occurs without a specific purpose, while the autonomic mode occurs with non-voluntary and out-of-control responses (Redfern, 2009, p. 2). By distinguishing these modes, it is possible to understand when and how each mode occurs under certain conditions; however, it can be challenging to distinguish them, for example, when considering the experience of watching movies. It is because although watching movies is voluntary, and the viewer usually does so for a particular emotional purpose, especially genre films, it can evoke unwanted or uncontrollable emotions since it is not entirely clear what they will encounter while watching. Therefore, cognitive and bodily states are required to form emotional states, and some situations divide the objects that create these states into certain categories and view them according to certain criteria (Carroll, 2003, p. 66). Accordingly, studies on emotions have developed general and specific fields of study and approaches. In particular, the genre theory approach to the film’s narrative and cognitive theory regarding the experience of watching films occupies an essential place in cinema studies.

Theorizing Film Genres with Emotions

The genre theory is deeply rooted in the field of cinema as well as other fields. Altman (1984) stated that the genre theory of cinema has three different approaches, which emphasize its historical process, its development as an industry or production, and its relationship with the viewer. According to Altman’s approaches, the historical process of the genre theory proceeds based on more general facts, while its industrial and production development parallel technology and the content of the works produced. In contrast, its relationship with the viewer is constantly progressing on a slightly different ground, with the changes in the works, the differentiation of viewing styles, and the viewer’s expectations. It is undeniable that the production, distribution, and consumption of commercial and popular cinema, as well as mass media, is related to the genre at both the local and global level because the film genre is a commercial condition consisting of a recognizable formal and thematic strategy surrounding elements such as plot, setting, characters, and sound (Aston & Feng, 2020, p. 1). Ryall (1998, p. 329) stated that there are three levels to the understanding of genre: the generic system, the individual genres, and the individual films. Considering Ryall’s levels, it is possible to say that some films coincide with individual genres, and as a system, they find reference in these genres. However, considering the change and development of the film narrative, it cannot be said that each film belongs to a single genre with particular features or that each film must belong to one genre. Nevertheless, if a general systemic narrative is being studied, one might look at the system rather than an individual film or genre.

While genre films deal with the relationship between the individual and the society, they also contribute to the ritualization of collective ideals, and the society of which the individual is a part emotionally takes into account its counterpart in the natural world (Schatz, 2012, p. 114). Since genre films are a classical form to which traditional narrative imitations are essential, the viewer usually receives solid, familiar references to the genre, and correctly designed genre films can create emotions in the viewer during and after watching them (Sobchack, 2012, pp. 128-132). Moreover, it has long been accepted that films evoke emotion in the viewer (Mokryn et al., 2020, p. 476), and although film theory has paid little attention to emotional connections and influences in the historical process, there is almost a consensus that one of the primary purposes of films is to evoke emotions (Smith, 2003, p. 4). Further, the concepts of pleasure, displeasure, and desire in film studies are too broad to explain how any film constitutes its emotional appeal (Smith, 2003, p. 5). The film industry emphasizes the fact that the viewer can choose to watch movies according to their preferences in order to attract the viewer and offer them what they want, and thus, the genre movie experience is used as a tool to reinforce the expectations and desires of the viewer (Altman, 1984, p. 9). When movies are watched, a para-social bond is formed between the viewer and the movie characters, and since the depiction of other human lives is at the center of the film experience, viewers are invited to share in the cognition, emotion, goal, situation, and social life of others (Grodal & Kramer, 2010, p. 19). New online or digital viewing habits also affect the formation of this para-social bond. For instance, since the interest in online platforms, which was already on the rise, increased due to the pandemic that began in 2019, the content of this bond has also changed, especially for viewers who watch movies at home through online platforms.

A change in the form of movie watching does not change the role of the film or viewer in the film-watching experience positionally. As a result, the film can establish the same emotional bond with the viewer in many ways, regardless of the setting or number of people. This bond is powerful and valid for genre films. Emotion adds color to the movie experience and modulates the viewer's mood, which is controlled by what happens on the screen during movie watching (Carroll, 2003, p. 62). Notably, filmmakers emotionally organize events in fictional films for the viewer through scenes and sequences (Carroll, 2003, p. 68). Smith (2003, pp. 7-9), in his work *Film Structure and the Emotion System*, listed the features of a good approach to the field of filmic emotion and emphasized the importance of understanding the emotions that films can evoke in a global or local context within these features as well as the importance of understanding the temporal context of these emotions.

The viewer's emotional engagement with fiction films consists of anxieties or attitudes focused on the film text and specific emotional criteria, which, taken as a standard, create a favorable environment for the elicitation of predictable reactions and emotional responses (Carroll, 2003, p. 70). At this point, it is evident that cognitive theory has a connection with movie genres and emotions. The cognitive theory bridges the gap between the social and cultural mind and the biological brain and body, reminding us that human beings are both cultural and biological (Bondebjerg, 2014, p. 13). This theory highlights the emotional structuring or reaction of the mind and body of the individual who is confronted with narratives, stories, and images; however, these elements not only highlight the story, character, or content of the film but are also essential dimensions of communication and interaction with the world at all levels (Bondebjerg, 2014, p. 15).

Motivation is supported by the representation of the emotional states of others and the transmission of emotions and intentions, and since these mechanisms are based on communication about the bonds between the viewer and the movie characters, they are at the center of the movie experience and resonate with the physical state, embodying the movie experience on the brain-body axis (Grodal & Kramer, 2010, p. 22).

Categorization Attempt of Genres and Emotions

All popular film genres are preoccupied with a range of emotions; therefore, all genres evoke feelings of 'anger, joy, hatred,' and similar feelings. Even evoking predetermined emotions in the viewer is indispensable to some genres; this explains why genres such as horror, thriller, or melodrama are directly named after the emotion they aim to evoke (Carroll, 2003, p. 74). Ed Tan states that movies with mainstream narratives often present the right emotional stimulus and are, therefore, emotion machines, presenting events that first increase the interest and curiosity to keep watching and then increase the intensity of the emotions typical of the movie genre, such as awe, sadness, mirth, fear, or horror (Langkjær & Gregersen, 2017, p. 72). Gross and Levenson (1995, p. 88) thought that films have an ecological validity because emotions are evoked by dynamic visual and auditory stimuli outside the individual; therefore, they researched this subject, considering the following emotions: amusement, anger, contentment, disgust, fear, neutral, sadness, and surprise. Ecological validity is critical issue which is defined as a measure of how the performance predicts behaviors in real-world settings. When the objects in the movies are perceived within specific criteria, the emotion belonging to such criteria is evoked, and this can cause physical responses such as laughter (with comic amusement), a skin-crawling sensation (with horror movies), tension (with thrillers), and crying (with melodramas) (Carroll, 2003, p. 69). While genres such as action and adventure rely on basic mammalian behaviors such as fighting, bonding, and wandering in search of resources in space, romance, comedy, tragedy/melodrama, thriller, and horror refer to basic emotions.

Furthermore, while drama covers a broader area, the science fiction, fantasy, and animation genres are based on the alternate reality situation (Grodal, 2017, p. 7). Action, crime, adventure, and war movies are most obviously based on reptilian emotions such as anger, desire, and fear (Grodal & Kramer, 2010, p. 20). Often emphasizing human misery and focusing on the playful embodiment of care and empathy, comedies sometimes allow laughter at human follies and misfortune, the resulting laughter being directly related to playing as the primary motivation of mammals (Grodal & Kramer, 2010, p. 21). The genres in which mammalian emotions are more prominent are melodrama, romantic, and children's movies (Grodal & Kramer, 2010, p. 21). Regardless of whether the genres of comedy, melodrama, and romance are positive or negative versions of avoidance, they are built on active attachment and care through negative avoidance (Grodal & Kramer, 2010, p. 21).

Some studies provide prominent and specific data on film genres and emotions. Ben-Ahmed and Huet (2018) investigated genre knowledge, and viewer interaction in the context of action, drama, horror, romance, and science fiction using movie trailers; they hypothesized that the emotional affect of the movie genre influences perceived interestingness for the viewer. In their research, Bartsch et al. (2010) examined the negative emotions created by drama and horror in the gender context. Mokryn et al. (2020, p. 476), in their study of the emotional context of online movie reviews, considered the relationship of the movie to emotions as two situations; they defined the

first as “emotions towards the movie” and the second as “emotions evoked by watching.” Kaltwesser et al. (2019), on the other hand, researched the foreknowledge that movies evoke emotion and the emotional context of the film-watching environment. Topal and Ozsoyoglu (2016) examined viewers’ emotions based on movie reviews on the IMDB website. Wang & Cheong (2006, p. 693) conducted a study to understand films effectively in the context of their genre, and they found explanatory correspondences regarding genres and emotions among different perspectives (Table 1).

Table 1. Explanatory Correspondences Regarding Genres and Emotions Among Different Perspectives.

Output Emotions (Psychological)	Feelings (Viewer)	Genre (Cinema)
Anger (Aggression)	Exciting, Dangerous, Aggressive, Angry	Action Adventure
Sad	Depressed, Sad, Bad, Hopeless	Melodrama
Fear	Scary, Fearful, Terrified	Horror
Surprise	Surprised, Tense, Anticipation	Suspense, Thriller
Happy	Exuberance, Joyous, Enjoyment, Happy, Heart-Warming, Tender, Sentimental, Relaxed	Comedy
Disgust	-	-
Neutral	Neutral, Boring	-

(Wang & Cheong, 2006, p. 693). Since it is not in the scope of this study, the Dichotomized VA Space has been omitted.

One of the critical studies widely referenced in the relationship between movie genres and emotions is the schema of emotion characters created by Grodal (as cited in Redfern, 2009, p. 2) corresponding to genres (Table 2).

Table 2. Genres and Characteristic Emotions.

Genre	Characteristic Emotion
Action/Adventure	Aggressive tensity
Horror	Fear
Comedy	Laughter
Pornography	Desire
Tragedy	Sorrow
Romance	Romantic love

(Grodal, 2004, as cited in Redfern, 2009, p. 2)

In particular, the pairings revealed by these two studies can allow for a more precise analysis of genres and the emotions they can create.

Netflix and Genres in Türkiye

Netflix started broadcasting in Türkiye in 2016. From 2017 to 2020, Netflix reached 606 thousand users (Statista, 2016), and as of 2021, it has around 3 million users in Türkiye (Moody, 2021), and this number reached 3.5 million in 2022 (Vivarelli, 2022). It shows that Netflix is an increasingly progressive and preferred platform for the audience in Türkiye. In addition, as of 2021, Netflix’s contribution to the Turkish economy with local productions and the number of employees is worth 52 million dollars (Daily Sabah, 2021). Therefore, the increase in the number of Netflix users from 600 thousand to 3 million between 2020 and 2021, the period covered by this study, can also be considered as the effect of the pandemic period. In line with these figures, it can be said that people’s

habits of watching movies and TV series at home have also increased in Türkiye. In the context of academic studies, there are studies on the effects of Netflix in Türkiye after 2017, when Netflix was available in Türkiye. Among these studies, Beyza Yazıcı's (2022) study on the effects of cultural indicators and personality traits on genre preferences provides information on Netflix users and genres. In her study, Yazıcı reached 119 Netflix users and collected data through a survey. In Yazıcı's study, 21.8% of the participants stated that they took into account the compatibility of the genres they chose with their own characters, 1.3% stated their mood, 3.8% stated getting away from the real world, 6.4% stated educational motivation, 7.7% stated interest, 7.7% stated excitement, and 14.1% stated entertainment and pleasure as the reasons. When these data are considered, almost all the reasons for preference other than characters and educational motivation seem to be related to emotions. It shows that emotional effects are at the forefront for the audience.

Although this study covers the Netflix platform, the lack of research on the general genre preferences of viewers in Türkiye outside the pandemic period does not allow for a comparison. On the other hand, the most comprehensive study on the genre preferences of audiences in terms of cinema in Türkiye was conducted in 2017 (Boxoffice Türkiye, 2017)). In this study, Türkiye's most preferred movie genres were listed from most to less as adventure, comedy, horror, romantic, action, fantasy, animation, politics, and documentary. Although this study, conducted before the pandemic, covers box office figures, it can provide information and comparisons on which genres Turkish audiences traditionally prefer in movie theaters.

Genres and Pandemic

Like many things in the normal flow of life, the pandemic has changed viewing and consumption habits with the lockdown periods and an increase in the majority of daily life being lived at home. In the context of the habits of viewers during this period, genre choices have also changed. Clark (2020) examined the changes in viewers' genre preferences during the COVID-19 period and stated that the viewing rates of genres such as disaster, thriller, horror, and sports have increased at high rates, and family films have maintained their place. In the US and Europe, the number of users of various platforms has increased, while in countries such as the UK and France, for example, the comedy genre has declined, while in France and Spain, interest in thrillers, action, and horror has increased ((Filmpulse, 2020 as cited in Nikolij, Kostic-Stankovic, & Jeremic, 2022, p. 6). 41% of Netflix users wanted to see more action, adventure, or fantasy content (Gorman, 2020). In a study conducted in the US, those who were advised to stay at home due to health conditions during the pandemic preferred action and comedy genres more (Stoll, 2021). This information proves that the pandemic affected movie viewing habits and genre preferences locally in different parts of the world.

The fact that studies on the genre preferences of the audience during the pandemic period were conducted on digital platforms is actually due to the increase in the number of viewers on digital platforms created by the pandemic. The reason for this is that in a normal period, there is a presumption that the audience can watch different genres through movie theaters and digital platforms to their preferences. However, this assumption shifted to digital platforms during the pandemic due to low access to movie theaters. On the other hand, the rapid increase in the number of users of digital platforms both in Türkiye and globally during the pandemic period and the archiving of data in digital media enable studies on preferences, at least in terms of audience habits.

Moreover, while there are studies on digital platforms and genre preferences during the pandemic period in various countries, the lack of a study in this context in Türkiye makes it even more critical to make sense of this situation.

Aim and Methodology

This study sample comprised the ratios of genres watched on Netflix Türkiye between March 2020 and December 2021. This period covers the COVID-19 pandemic, including the period between April 29 and May 14, 2021, when the whole of Türkiye was completely locked down. Data obtained from the literature review and the FlixPatrol site, which was used to access the data, were used in categorizing the genres. The ratios of watched genres were handled quarterly, and the types of the Top 10 content watched daily during the lockdown were also examined separately. In addition, during the 15 days of total lockdown, the Top 10 most prominent genres of movies and TV series in Netflix Türkiye were listed every day to enable an evaluation of the period when people were assumed to have spent the most time at home. Netflix Türkiye's Top 10 lists were accessed through FlixPatrol; they covered the dates from March 30, 2020, to December 31, 2021.

Additionally, the most-watched genres in the weekly Top 10 lists in both years were examined. While categorizing the genres, those whose content the FlixPatrol site categorized were considered. However, for content categorized in more than one genre or suspected to be in more than one genre, the first genre in which the relevant content was categorized on the IMDB site was considered. For analysis, data on emotional reactions to genres in the literature created based on the cinema genre theory and emotions were considered. Therefore, this study aimed to make an emotional qualitative analysis of the genres watched on Netflix Türkiye during the pandemic.

Notably, the ratings of genres are directly linked to Netflix Türkiye's content. Therefore, the limitation of this study is that it is not clear what content Netflix Türkiye offers and when. During data collection, we observed that newly released content gets more views when it debuts, regardless of genre. However, another observation is that the length of stay in the Top 10 varies for each content that first appears in the Top 10, and this is directly or indirectly related to the content itself and its genre. It is assumed that genres that are more preferred and watched by viewers stay longer in the Top 10.

In addition, since this study covers the years 2020 and 2021, considering that the number of Netflix users in Türkiye increased from 600 thousand to 3 million during this period, according to the data given above, the percentages of the watched genres should be taken into account. However, the study aims to present findings and discussions within the limitations and period of the study rather than making a generalization about the relationship between genre and emotion. Since the number and categorization of film and TV series genres vary locally, globally, and on digital platforms, this study considers genres in the context of the data obtained in this study but instead highlights the variables related to genres in the aforementioned pre-pandemic study. The reason for not conducting a separate analysis of the content monitored in the study is that, although the genres of content are similar, the number of content accessed is high due to the variability of the content and it is also thought that content analysis in the context of the scope of the study may be the subject of another study.

Findings

The First Year: 2020 and the Upheaval of Emotions

In this study, we examined the watching rates of each film and series genre in 2020 and 2021 quarterly. Since the data available on the FlixPatrol site includes the period after March 30, 2020, only Q2 (April-May-June), Q3 (July-August-September), and Q4 (October-November-December) data for 2020 were considered (Figure 1). The first case of COVID-19 in Türkiye was announced on March 11. On March 16, restrictions were placed on gatherings in public areas, and the online education process began. Subsequently, because measures such as remote work were gradually taken, people began to spend more time at home, directly or indirectly caused by all these regulations. With these measures put in place during this period and the lifestyle changes that followed, individuals turned to online platforms in their homes to watch movies, and the genres watched during and after this period have influenced people's preferences. The effect of the period when the first measures were taken due to the pandemic can be observed in the Q2 period.

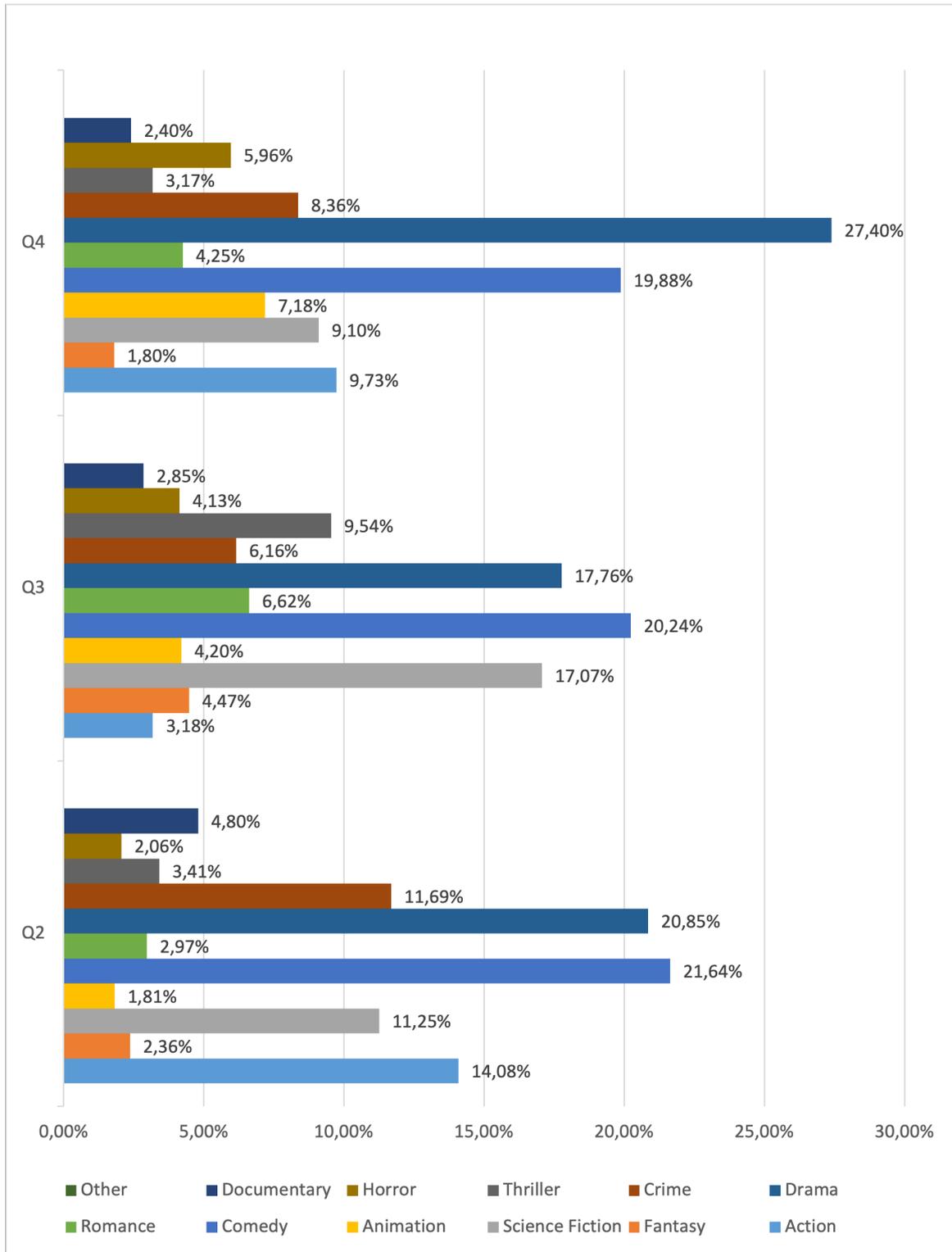


Figure 1. Quarterly watching rate of genres in 2020
 Data was obtained from FlixPatrol.

Drama and comedy genres, also called the main genres, were the most watched during the 2020 Q2 period. The action, crime, and science fiction genres followed these. These ratios show that individuals were initially interested in stories closer to reality and gravitated toward the genres which could make them laugh more. Regarding the action, crime, and science fiction genres, those with a high sense of expectation and curiosity and those more likely to offer alternative stories attracted more people. In the Q3 period, comedy

and drama were the most-watched genres, perhaps due to the same emotional reasons, while the rise in engagement of the science fiction genre was remarkable. The novelty of the pandemic and the fact that people felt as though they were in a science fiction dystopian story, both nationally and globally, may have increased the viewer's interest in the science fiction genre. Perhaps the reality of the pandemic also made people want to associate more with this genre. Another remarkable point regarding the Q3 period was the rise in engagement of the thriller genre. Since thriller is a genre involving tension and anticipation, we believe that raising the viewer's expectations of a fictional event allowed them to direct the tension that the pandemic may have created to a fictional narrative.

In the last quarter of 2020, drama was the most-watched genre by a large margin. The fact that drama conveys happiness and unhappiness and portrays stories that are more likely to be experienced in real life can be considered a reflection of people's need to live the old sense of reality during the COVID-19 pandemic, which was expected to end but kept increasing its spread. While the public engagement of the drama genre increased and that of the crime genre remained constant, that of the comedy genre suddenly declined in the last quarter of the year. It could have been due to the rise in engagement of the drama genre. Although the hopelessness regarding the pandemic, the proliferation of bad news, and local and global expectations suggest that the need to laugh was needed more, the viewers could not maintain their motivation in the last quarter.

Furthermore, although not the most-watched genres during the year, the horror and animation genres steadily rose in all quarters. The rise in the engagement of the horror genre may indicate the purification of the most basic fear that the reality of the pandemic had created. Watching more frightening stories, seeing characters in worse situations, and feeling better can be presented as the cause of this increase in engagement of this genre. In contrast, the increase in the animation genre can be interpreted as the desire to have the experience of watching movies as a family or the desire of children and young people who are educated at home to have fun by choosing this genre.

According to FlixPatrol, in 2020, comedy ranked first in the Top 10 most-watched genres in 39 weeks, followed by drama and science fiction (Figure 2).

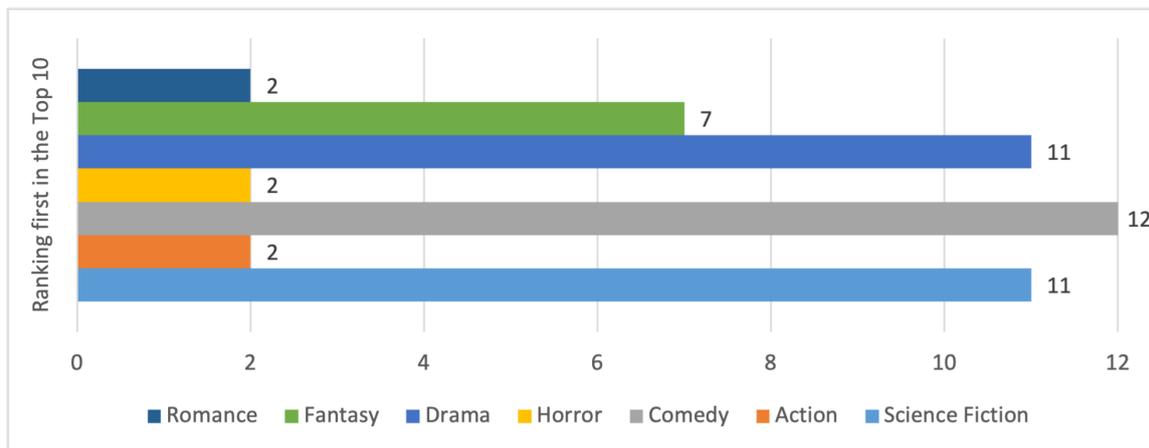


Figure 2. Weekly Ratio of the Genres Ranking First in the Top 10 in 2020
These data were generated by examining the daily and weekly Top 10 lists of each genre.

The fantasy genre took fourth place, and although there were variety in the genre distribution, the comedy genre ranked first in the Top 10, and the negative emotions that the pandemic evoked may have led to the choice of entertainment and laughter in the

genre preference. On the other hand, the balance observed between drama and science fiction might show that both the sense of reality and the need to escape from reality, such as temporal and spatial change, are balanced for the viewers of these genres. The less balanced distribution of genres that carry more contrasting but distinctive emotions, such as action, horror, and romance, suggests that the viewer sometimes needs high tension, frightening, or completely relieving emotions.

The Second Year: 2021 and Settling of Emotions

When the quarters of 2021 were analyzed, there was no stable monitoring rate for the genres in each quarter (Figure 3).

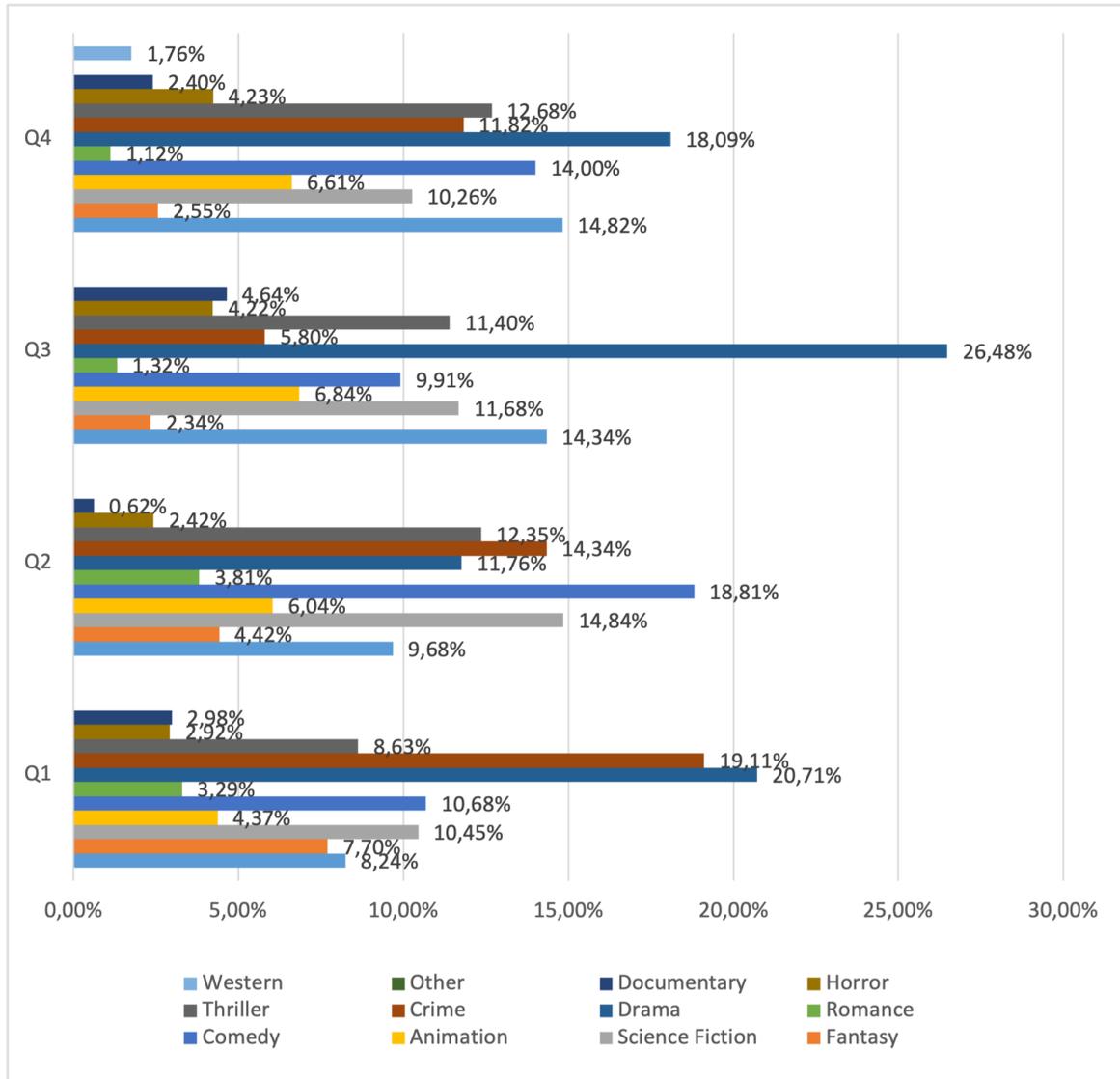


Figure 3. Quarterly Watching Rate of Genres in 2021
 Data was obtained from FlixPatrol.

The drama and crime genres ranked first in Q1, with close ratios. Comedy and science fiction had similar ratios, followed by the thriller and action genres. Compared to the previous year, the thriller genre ranked higher in 2021. The Q2 period, which covers the period of total lockdown, draws a different outlook than the entire year. During this period, the comedy genre came to the fore, followed closely by the ratings of other genres. In particular, the thriller and science fiction genres increased in rating compared to the

previous quarter; however, the rating for the crime genre decreased. The total lockdown could have been responsible for the comedy genre being the most-watched genre in Q2. It reflects the need for people to have fun, enjoy, and be happy. During the year, the action genre ranking regularly increased in each quarter. Aggression, excitement, fighting dangers, and perhaps successfully getting rid of them were possibly the feeling the viewers needed.

It is observed that eight genres took first place in the Top 10 either jointly or individually in the weeks of 2021 (Figure 4). The crime and action genres had the highest number of Top 10s. With the gripping nature of the action genre, the narrative creates a sense of escaping from dangerous situations as well as that of accomplishment and a situation in which truth is found, a mystery is unraveled, and the viewer is made an element in the story and is drawn into events; these can be considered as the emotional states preferred by the viewer.

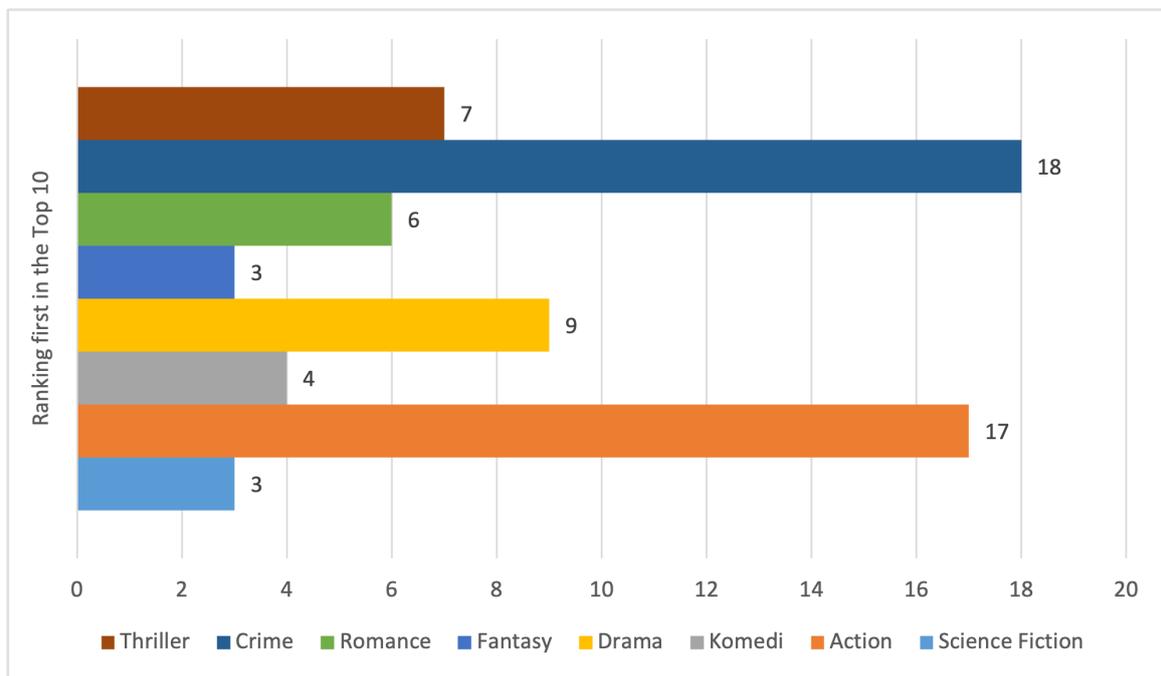


Figure 4. The Weekly Ratio of the Genres Ranked First in the Top 10 in 2021.

The data were generated by examining the daily and weekly Top 10 genre lists.

The drama and thriller genres came to the fore among all the genres. Although they were not the preferred genres during the total lockdown period, in 2021 these genres are in the first place along with action and crime genres. The feelings of expectation, surprise, and excitement created by tension may have been among the viewers' preferences, while the drama may have reflected the fluctuating feelings between happiness and unhappiness. Comedy, one of the most-watched genres during the total lockdown, could not be the most preferred at this point. The viewer may have preferred a more romantic narrative and needed to watch a romantic comedy. Considering the science fiction and fantasy genres, it can be said that the viewer chooses more realistic stories but occasionally needs to feel disconnected from that reality.

Disclosure of Closed Emotions: 2021 Total Lockdown Period

During the first two days of total lockdown, viewers preferred the comedy genre the most (Figure 5).

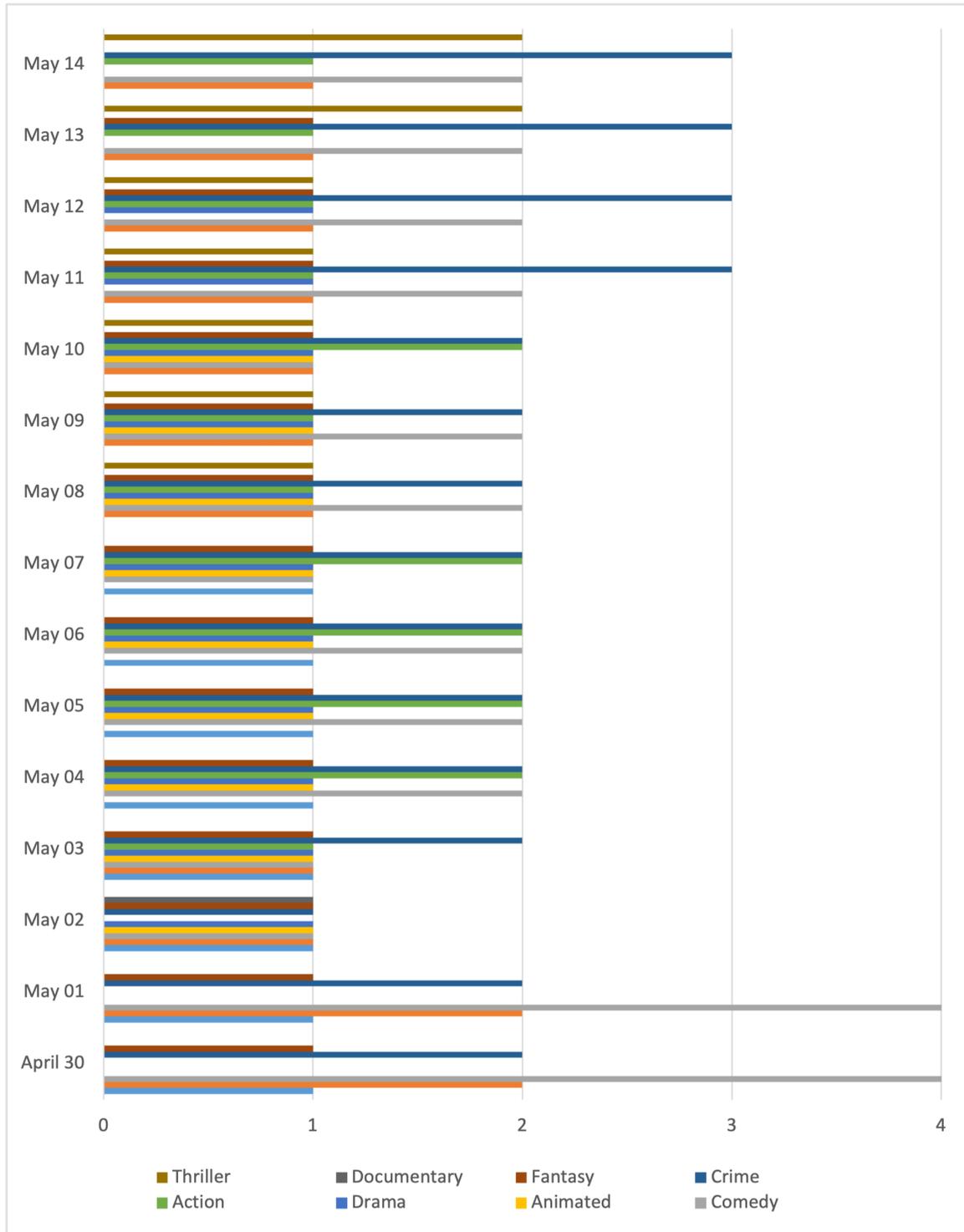


Figure 5. Number of Genres in the Daily Top 10 during the Total Lockdown (out of 10)
 The data were generated by examining the daily Top 10 genre lists during the total lockdown.

This figure highlights the assumption that the psychology of lockdown needs a sense of laughter by the viewer in the first place. Significantly, in the first four days of the total lockdown, three out of ten content in the Top 10 were crime genre, while in the last two days of the lockdown, four out of ten content changed to comedy genre. Drifting through other events or imagining another place/time may have caused the surge in the ranking of the crime and science fiction genres to second place within the first two days. In addition, every day during the lockdown, the crime genre ranked among the Top 10, and similarly,

comedy was always included in the Top 10 list in the same number of days, except for one. This shows that the initial interest of the viewer was divided between the crime and comedy genres. Towards the last days of the lockdown, the crime genre was watched less; however, it became the most-watched genre in the last four days. In addition, the ranking for the thriller genre increased in the last two days of the lockdown. Considering that the crime genre generally has a structure that includes tension, surprise, expectation, and suspense, it can be said that the thriller and crime genres gradually increased because the viewer wanted to get rid of the feelings of mediocrity, calmness, and boredom that the total lockdown may have caused. The action genre received more attention in the middle of the lockdown, suggesting that the viewer was searching for a dynamic and highly emotional feeling.

Ten genres were included in the Top 10 genre list between April 30 and May 14, 2021, when there was a total lockdown (Figure 6).

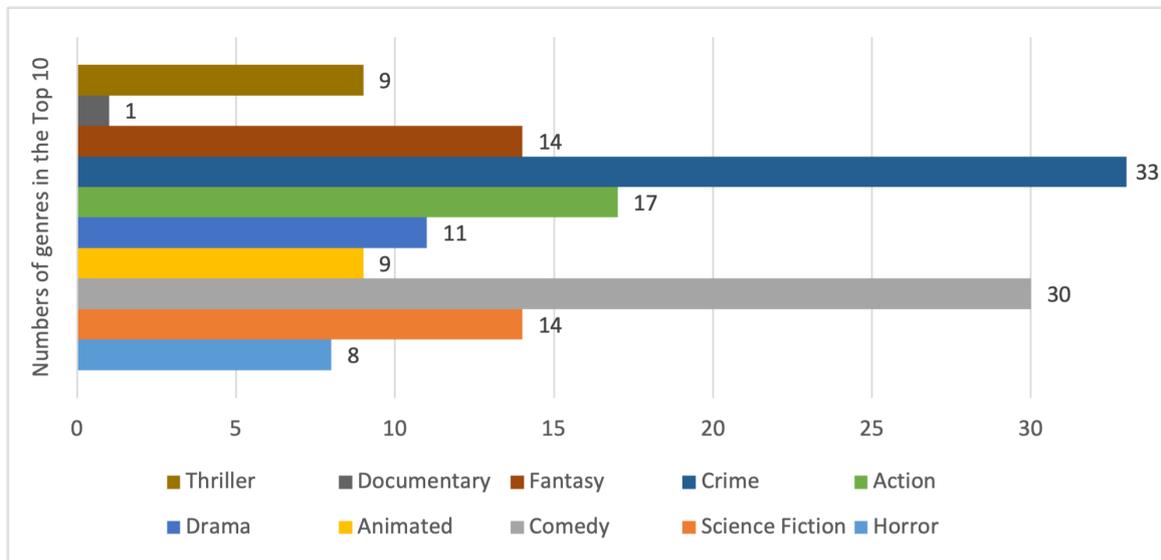


Figure 6. *The Total Ratio of the Genres Included in the Top 10 During the Total Lockdown.*
The data were generated by examining the daily Top 10 genre lists.

The most-watched genres within this period were crime and comedy. Although the crime genre is not usually among the main movie genres, it puts the viewer in an immersive mode since it usually proceeds with a detective plot that contains elements of suspense and mystery. Plots about solving a crime can raise the viewer's attention and isolate them from real-world events. The unusual situation in which people found themselves during the lockdown and the fact that people had to isolate themselves from the outside world and be locked in their homes may have fed their motivations for solving other events, even if fictional. Comedy was the second most-watched genre, indicating the need for entertainment, enjoyment, and disconnection from reality. In addition, the action genre was the third most-watched genre, indicating the viewer's need to feel directly or indirectly free through the sense of aggression and adventure. In contrast, the science fiction and fantasy genres may have made the viewer feel a sense of time-space-universe-society by offering an alternative to the real-life science fiction-like pandemic.

Discussion and Conclusion

Cinema genres are a factor in the viewer's choice of content and have been discussed many times. In addition, the possibility of evoking different and specific emotions in

the audience through the genres of movies and TV series was examined in the context of temporal variability in genre preferences. Furthermore, the changing experiences of viewers on digital platforms provide broader and more detailed data. Therefore, in this study, the genres watched by Netflix Türkiye viewers during part of 2020 and the whole of 2021 were examined by categorizing them in temporal and sequential terms. Primarily, since the period examined covers the COVID-19 pandemic, it is considered that the data obtained regarding the viewers' experience of watching on digital platforms were extensive. In this context, the relationship between Netflix Türkiye viewers and genres and their approach to genres in the context of the pandemic have been evaluated.

Netflix viewers prioritized the comedy, drama, and crime genres in Türkiye during the period covered by the study. This reflects a variation in mood from the fun of comedy, the suspense of crime, and the stagnation of drama. Genres such as suspense and action with high expectations of surprise, high motion, and tension, and others such as science fiction and fantasy with different worlds are preferred because they often offer hope. In this context, it can be said that the viewer chooses genres with higher rates of realistic stories, whether they are tense, sad, happy, or funny. On the other hand, genres likely to contain more surprising, surreal, or adventurous stories are chosen less. The diversity of genres should be highlighted when considering both the quarters of the years and the overall distribution among the Top 10. As stated before, the content offered by Netflix Türkiye also impacts the formation of this situation, but the emotions and expectations that genres have the potential to create cannot be denied in the formation of diversity.

Importantly, data on the total lockdown period, in particular, offer a two-sided field of study. On the one hand, there may be genres that the viewers chose to purify the emotions they felt due to their reality; on the other hand, there may be genres that the viewer chose because of a connection with the emotion they want to feel. Regardless of the reason or result, the change in the viewing rate of the genres shows that the viewer makes choices among the genres. This change during the observed years and the lockdown, can be interpreted in the context of genre and emotions, in terms of the reasons for the transition from comedy to crime, from action to drama, in order to see the reflections of the differences in genre preferences on the emotional state in viewing practices.

This study only covers a specific period during the pandemic. However, it can also provide a comparison example for future studies on the genre preferences of Netflix viewers in Türkiye after the pandemic. In addition, it can also provide a comparison and evaluation opportunity for studies on other digital platforms in Türkiye, such as BluTV, Amazon Prime, and Disney+, which started broadcasting in 2022. Furthermore, since the study reveals a situation rather than generalizing, it can also provide data for studies to be conducted with different methods regarding the genre preferences of the viewers in Türkiye. Finally, the findings and interpretations presented in the study can also be used in studies on cultural differences by associating them with studies conducted in other countries in the context of pandemics and genre preferences.

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Film Türleri ve Duygular: Pandemi Döneminde Netflix Türkiye İzleyicilerinin İzlediği Türler ve Duygu Değişimleri

Özgür ÇALIŞKAN (Asst. Prof. Dr.)

Genişletilmiş Özet

Hollywood stüdyo sistemi klasik anlamda bitmiş olsa da türü sinemaya miras olarak bırakmıştır. Günümüzün izleme biçimleri; geleneksel sinema salonları, akıllı televizyonlar, mobil teknolojiler, izleme platformları, sinema ve televizyon değişmiş ve değişmekte olsa da tüm bu alanlarda içeriğin sunulma biçimi hala türlere göre bir kategorizasyon içinde sunulmaktadır. Kullanıcı sayısı giderek artan dijital platformların kullanıcılarla ilgili içerikleri sunmak için geliştirdikleri algoritmalarda içerik türlerinin etkisi de yadsınamaz. Tüm bunlar göz önünde bulundurulduğunda hem bireysel hem de toplumsal olarak türlere ilişkin izleyici tercihlerinin oluşmasında ve değişmesinde içerik türlerinin, dönemsel olayların, toplumsal yapının, tarihsel faktörlerin, kültürel ve coğrafi özelliklerin etkisi kritik sayılabilir. Tür kuramının tarihine bakıldığında, özellikle sinemada türlerin ne olduğu, nasıl tanımlanması gerektiği, belirli türlerin neden belirli bir zamanda daha yaygın olduğu ve türlerin biçimsel ya da anlatısal özellikleri gibi sorularla karşılaşmak mümkündür. Bu konular ekseninde film türleri, coğrafi bir alan ve zamansal bir dönem göz önünde bulundurulurken bu çalışmanın konusu oluşturulmuştur.

Filmin anlatısına ilişkin tür kuramı yaklaşımı ve film izleme deneyimine ilişkin bilişsel kuram sinema çalışmalarında önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. İzleyiciyle kurulan ilişki ise eserlerin değişmesi, izleme biçimlerinin farklılaşması ve izleyicinin beklentilerinin değişmesiyle sürekli olarak biraz daha farklı zeminlerde ilerlemektedir. Filmlerin bazıları belirli türlerle ve bu türlerde referans buldukları bir sistemle örtüşmektedir. Film anlatısının değişimi ve gelişimi göz önüne alındığında, her filmin belirli özelliklere sahip tek bir türe ait olduğu ya da her filmin bir türe ait olması gerektiği söylenemez. Bununla birlikte, genel bir sistemik anlatı inceleniyorsa, tek tek filmlere ya da türlere değil, sistemik oluşuma bakılabilir. Özellikle izleyiciyle kurulan ilişkide film endüstrisi izleyiciyi çekmek ve ona istediğini sunmak için izleyicinin filmleri kendi tercihlerine göre seçebildiğine dikkat çekmekte ve böylece tür filmi deneyimi izleyicinin beklenti ve arzularını pekiştiren bir araç olarak kullanılmaktadır. Biçimsel olarak değişen izleme biçimi, filmin ya da izleyicinin film izleme deneyimindeki rolünü konumsal olarak değiştirmez. Sonuç olarak film, ortamdan ya da kişi sayısından bağımsız olarak izleyiciyle birçok yönden aynı duygusal bağ kurabilir. Bu bağ tür filmleri için daha güçlü ve geçerli olabilmektedir. Dolayısıyla tüm popüler film türleri bir dizi duyguyla meşguldür ve bu nedenle tüm türler 'öfke, sevinç, nefret' ve benzeri duyguları uyandırır, hatta izleyicide önceden belirlenmiş duyguları uyandırmak bazı türler için vazgeçilmezdir, bu nedenle korku, gerilim veya melodram gibi türler doğrudan hedefledikleri duygunun adını almaktadır.

Bu çalışmanın örnekleme, Mart 2020 - Aralık 2021 tarihleri arasında Netflix Türkiye'de izlenen türlerin oranlarından oluşmaktadır. Bu dönem, yerel ve küresel olarak yaşanan Covid-19 pandemisi ile Türkiye'nin ulusal çapta tam kapanma yaşadığı 29 Nisan - 14 Mayıs 2021 tarihlerini kapsamaktadır. Türlerin kategorilendirilmesinde literatür bölümünden oluşturulan kategorilendirme ve verilere erişim için kullanılan Flix Patrol sitesinin kategorilendirmesi kullanılmıştır. İzlenen türlerin oranları üçer aylık dönemler

halinde ele alınmış, tam kapanma döneminde günlük olarak izlenen İlk 10 içeriğin türleri de ayrıca incelenmiştir. Ayrıca tam kapanma anındaki 15 gün boyunca Netflix Türkiye'nin Top 10'unda en çok öne çıkan film ve dizi türleri her gün listelenmekte, böylece ulusal bazda kişilerin evde en çok vakit geçirdiği varsayılan dönem incelenmektedir. Flix Patrol üzerinden erişilen Netflix Türkiye'nin Top 10 listeleri 30 Mart-31 Aralık 2020 tarihlerini ve 2021 yılının tamamını kapsamaktadır. Her iki yılda da haftalık Top 10'da en çok izlenen türler de incelenmektedir. Türler kategorize edilirken öncelikle Flix Patrol sitesinin içerikleri kategorize ettiği türler dikkate alınmış, ancak birden fazla türde kategorize edilen ya da tür konusunda şüphe duyulan içerikler için IMDB sitesindeki ilgili içeriğin kategorize ettiği ilk tür dikkate alınmıştır. Analiz için sinema tür kuramı ve duygular konusunda oluşturulan literatürdeki türlerin duygusal tepkilerine ilişkin veriler dikkate alınmaktadır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, pandemi döneminde Netflix Türkiye'de izlenen türlerin duygusal niteliksel analizini yapmayı amaçlamaktadır.

Özellikle, türlerin izlenme oranları Netflix Türkiye'nin içeriğiyle doğrudan bağlantılıdır. Bu nedenle, Netflix Türkiye'nin hangi içeriği ne zaman sunduğu bu çalışmanın sınırlılığıdır. Veri toplama sırasında gözlemlenen önemli bir nokta, yeni yayınlanan içeriklerin, türü ne olursa olsun, ilk yayınlandıklarında daha fazla izlendiğidir. Bununla birlikte, Top 10'da ilk kez gösterilen her içeriğin izlenme süresinin farklılık gösterdiği ve bunun hem içeriğin kendisiyle hem de türüyle doğrudan veya dolaylı olarak ilişkili olduğu da gözlemlenmiştir.

Sinema türleri, izleyicinin izleyeceği içeriği seçmesinde bir etken olduğu birçok kez tartışılmış ve kabul edilmiştir. Ayrıca film ve dizilerin tür kavramını kullanarak izleyicide belirli duygular uyandırdığı da farklı bakış açılarıyla incelenmiş bir durumdur. Ayrıca dijital platformlar aracılığıyla değişen izleme deneyimleri izleyiciye dair daha geniş ve detaylı veriler sağlamaktadır. Bu çalışmada Netflix Türkiye izleyicilerinin 2020 yılının büyük bir bölümünde ve 2021 yılının tamamında izledikleri türler zamansal ve sırasal olarak kategorize edilerek incelenmiştir. Öncelikle incelenen dönem Covid-19 pandemi dönemini kapsadığı için dijital platformlardan elde edilen verilerin izlenme deneyiminin daha fazla gerçekleştiği bir dönem olarak da değerlendirilebilir. Bu bağlamda Netflix Türkiye izleyicilerinin hem türlerle ilişkisi hem de pandemi bağlamında türlere yaklaşımı değerlendirilmiştir.

Çalışmanın bulguları genel olarak Netflix Türkiye izleyicilerinin komedi, drama ve suç türlerine öncelik verdiğini göstermektedir. Bu durum komedinin eğlencesi, suçun gerilimi ve dramın durağanlığı arasında değişken bir ruh halini yansıtmaktadır. Sürpriz beklentisi yüksek, hareket ve gerilimi yüksek gerilim ve aksiyon gibi türler ile bilim kurgu ve fantastik gibi farklı dünyalar, en çok olmasa da belli ölçüde bazen karamsar bazen de umutlu hisler sunan türleri tercih etmişlerdir. Bu bağlamda izleyicinin ister gerilimli, ister hüznü, ister mutlu, ister komik olsun gerçekçi hikâyeler içermesi oranın daha yüksek olan türleri seçtiği söylenebilir. Öte yandan, daha şaşırtıcı, gerçeküstü veya macera dolu hikâyeler içermesi muhtemel türlerin tercih edilme olasılığı daha düşüktür. Hem yılların çeyreklerine hem de genel olarak İlk 10 arasındaki dağılıma bakarken türlerin çeşitliliğinin altı çizilmelidir. Daha önce de belirtildiği gibi Netflix Türkiye'nin sunduğu içerik de bu durumun oluşmasında etkili ancak çeşitliliğin oluşmasında türlerin yaratma potansiyeline sahip olduğu duygu ve beklentiler de yadsınmaz.

Özellikle tam kapanma dönemine ilişkin veriler iki taraflı bir çalışma alanı sunmaktadır. Bir yandan izleyicinin yaşadığı gerçeklik nedeniyle hissettiği duygulardan arınmak için seçtiği türler olabileceği gibi; diğer yandan da hissetmek istediği duyguyla bağlantılı olarak

seçtiği ya da seçebileceği türler de olabilir. En belirgin olanı ise tam kapanış dönemindeki genel ve günlük değişkenliktir. Nedeni ya da sonucu ne olursa olsun, türlerin izlenme oranlarındaki değişim, izleyicinin türler arasında seçim yaptığını göstermektedir. Hem yıllar içinde hem de tam kapanma dönemindeki bu değişim, komediden suça, aksiyondan drama geçişin nedenleri bağlamında tür ve bilişsel teori ele alındığında duyguların etkili olduğunu bir kez daha teyit etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Film Türleri, Netflix, Duygular, Pandemi, Türkiye.

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In this study, the rules stated in the “**Higher Education Institutions Scientific Research and Publication Ethics Directive**” were followed.

Araştırma tek bir yazar tarafından yürütülmüştür.

The research was conducted by a single author.

Çalışma kapsamında herhangi bir kurum veya kişi ile **çıkar çatışması** bulunmamaktadır.

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