Uncovering The Elements, Viewer's Perception and Factors of Violent Content in Netflix 'You' Drama Series

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study focuses on the elements, viewer's perception and factors of violent content in the Netflix 'You' drama series. Three research objectives were addressed: (1) To analyse the elements that influence the viewers' perception to watch Netflix 'You' drama series, (2) To identify the viewers' perception of reality in the violent content portrayed in the Netflix 'You' drama series, and (3) To identify the contributed factors generating the viewers' perception of reality on the violent content portrayed in the Netflix 'You' drama series. The Cultivation Theory guided this study where meaningful findings were obtained through in-depth interviews with six (6) informants who subscribed to Netflix, watched 'You' drama series for season one and season two, which lived in the Klang Valley. Data analysis were conducted with data gathering and using the NVivo to analyse the coding. The thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Overall, the findings revealed significant themes in every research questions. For RQ1, the elements that influence the viewers' perception of watching 'You' drama series on Netflix were genre selection, binge-watching, and attraction to violent content. For RQ 2, the viewers' perception of reality on the violent content portrayed in the Netflix 'You' drama series has been revealed through the act of murder and torture, brutal actions, anxiety, fear and cautiousness. The RQ3 has revealed the accepting and dismissing violence, personal, and other experiences were the contributed factors generating the viewers' perception of reality on the violent content portrayed in the Netflix 'You' drama series.

Keywords: *Perception of violent content, perception of reality, violence portrayal, cultivation theory, binge-watching.*

INTRODUCTION

The issue concerning violence on television is not new, and television shows have been depicting violence for decades. The studies have found a correlation between exposure to violence and violent behaviour, but none have proven that exposure leads to violence (Prado, 2018). Moreover, the portrayal of violence and crime stories in media that children are exposed to from an early age might have long-term implications that cause emotional distress in children (Fitzpatrick, 2018). However, people often ignore violence on television and justify it as a form of entertainment. Violence depends on the acceptance of the people and how they interpret it. Some people are easily influenced and unable to distinguish between good and bad behaviour (Walker, 2016).

The development of perception is the key factor that changes viewers' perception of how violence affects behaviour. The different forms of high-tech innovations and inventions created have shifted viewers from traditional television to digital streaming platforms. Adults in America still prefer television as a source of information and entertainment, spending almost 8 hours a day watching it (Nielsen, 2018). The reality today is that viewers are increasingly turning to Over The Top (OTT) streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Disney Plus and Hulu (Barnes, 2020). It gives them more control over their entertainment and a more convenient way to enjoy it. These media streaming services not only bring the

traditional television program online but also provide viewers with access to premium and original drama series that are only available on the platform. Faster Internet connections with the best devices and data plans have helped with the globalisation of this trend, which is expected to supplant traditional broadcasters by 2030 (Boehm et al., 2018).

The survey conducted by the Malaysia Communications and Multimedia Commission (MCMC) found that nine out of ten children between the ages of 5 to 17 use the Internet and are directly exposed to a wide range of negative material, including implicit and explicit content, cyberbullying, violence, sex and fraud (Woon, 2018). Hence, most parents chose to set their self-regulation and restrictions on Internet use to accompany their children while surfing the Internet rather than using parental control. As a result, most parents have opted for self-regulation and restrictions on the use of the Internet to accompany their children while surfing the Internet rather than using parental control tools that are mostly provided by the website developer.

Media streaming services can be an attribute of priority for users to monitor what they want to watch through convenient 24/7 devices. It enables viewers to quickly browse the drama series, view pre-release content, and enjoy minimal ads. However, not everyone enjoys the pleasure of watching some of the original drama series on the media streaming service because the content does not promise self-comfort to those seeking light and leisure entertainment. It often takes place through content that has violence, nudity, psychology, politics, religion, and the majority of people enjoy brutality and violence rather than nudity (Mitchell, 2017). Netflix, for example, has tracked at least 70% of a movie or drama series viewed by a single account. Furthermore, viewer's interest in this genre glued them in front of the television to watch drama series and contributed to the highest ratings (Mahita, 2020).

Even though it derives from the concept of traditional television, the concept of original series reveals a unique experience when it was coined to distinguish between movies and series exclusive to the platform and those pooled from other studios after being made available elsewhere (Ball,2018). The narrative, viewing experience, and time consumption of all episodes will give the viewer a personal perception of reality (Page, 2017). The Cultivation Theory is critical for research to understand the viewer's perception of original drama series as whoever watches television heavily tends to perceive the social reality that reflects the ideas conveyed by television. According to Gerbner (1998), this will build up a negative perception known as the "mean world syndrome" phenomenon. There have also been significant differences between the perceptions of television violence and several other characteristics of television portrayals. Viewers consider violent content to be important because the types of fictional characters that inflict violence can only emerge to those who view the program.

Depending on the objective of the program to be produced and the country from which it originates, there have been significant differences of opinion on the violence committed by sex itself or by law enforcement and by criminal or criminal law enforcement (Amir, 2017). For example, the viewer was most concerned about male violence against women in scenes from a British crime series, while women were more concerned about male violence in scenes from the U.S. drama series (Quinn, 2019). Any kind of violence against women is unacceptable because television has always portrayed women as physically weak, less dominant, and victimized than men, such as sexual abuse and domestic violence. Consequently, any kind of action by the male character on television that leads to violence against women is totally unacceptable because the unusual experience of women viewers is relatively disturbing (Roberts, 2019). The various physical forms of violent action such as

shootings, stabbings, and murders depicted in television dramas were the most violent, with cruel action viewed as the most terrifying (Sutton, 2016). As a result, viewers tend to value the extent to which pain, stress and suffering are related to violent actions because it is crucial to understand the viewer's response. In realistic settings, scenes showing domestic abuse of the victim were considerably more disturbing (Brown, 2020).

There is a connection between the viewer's perception and the psychological factor of television violence. The psychological factor of masculinity and femininity was evident in the viewer's perceptions of sexual violence in the television drama (Rajiva & Patrick, 2019). When watching the scenes involving male characters acting violently against women, for example, it is easy to trigger for someone who puts low masculinity and high femininity to feel disturbed. It does not matter whether the viewers are male or female, but it depends on how they put or set the level of violent acceptance on television (Daalmans et al., 2017).

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

According to a report published by Centerwall (1992) an American epidemiologist and former professor at the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Sciences (DPBS) at the University of Washington stated that if television is not created, murder and other cases of violence will decrease. Children and adolescents are affected by television because of violent scenes and immoral acts that cause behavioural changes and ultimately cause problems in social relations with the community (Lometti & Wurtzel, 2017).

Netflix's typical business model revolves around the sale and rental of DVDs. Next, Netflix shifted their business model to focus on DVD rental, rather than DVD sales. In 2007, while still maintaining DVD and Blu-ray rental services, Netflix extended their nature of the business to a more technologically sound platform known as a streaming service (Lamare, 2018). The company is expanding its business globally on streaming services, first entering the market in Canada by 2010, and since January 2016, Netflix services have been operating in more than 190 countries (Reyes, 2019).

Netflix released more than 371 original series and films in 2019 compared to 240 in 2018, making them the highest production of any cable network or channel service (Elliott, 2019). Netflix was launched in Malaysia on January 7th, 2016 and among the exclusive content of the time were the 'Marco Polo', 'House of Cards' series, Grace and Frankie', 'Marvel's Daredevil', 'Narcos', 'Marvel's Jessica Jones', and 'Sense8' (Yee, 2016). As the leading video streaming service, 15% of global internet traffic downstream comes from watching video streaming from Netflix and the demand is rapidly growing as leading video streaming services in the world (Binder, 2018). The public debate regarding Netflix content that has a disturbing element, especially soft porn and violence, will never end because many countries have a different view of law and justification for approving the content. Hence, the public, industry players, authorities, and media scholars will continuously highlight their concern about freedom to watch and the level of censorship (Nicolaou, 2020).

As a result, the study selected the Netflix drama series, 'You,' to uncover the elements, viewer's perception and factors of violent content in the drama series (Andreeva, 2017). It is inspired by Caroline Kepnes' novel, which contains a story about a bookshop manager in New York City, Joe Goldberg, falls in love with a bookshop visitor named Guinevere Beck (Bunnag, 2019). In a quick transition, a dangerous, psychological thriller develops, leading to a violent, illusionary obsession. Zach Cherry, Penn Badgley, Luca Padovan, Elizabeth Lail, and Shay

Mitchell are the stars of the 2018 season (Slauer, 2019). New casts such as Carmela Zumbado, Victoria Pedretti, Jenna Ortega, and James Scully joined the second season (Harris, 2019).

The series premiered in the USA and was broadcast internationally on December 26th, 2018 as an original Netflix series. The series is becoming more popular and critical to Netflix because of the violent content and 40 million viewers streamed in the first season (Romano, 2019). Because of the popularity of 'You', it was renewed on July 26th, 2018 and the second season was only released on Netflix on December 26th 2019 (Brown, 2019). 'You' season 2 has gained the same popularity as 'You' season 1 and will be watched by 54 million in two months and ranked as the most popular title in Netflix history (Moore, 2020). Both seasons will be reviewed for this study since the concept of violence is used as the main theme in these series.

PROBLEM STATEMENT

Studies on the effects and exposure of viewing violence on television, leading to the potential for aggression and harmful effects, have remained a debate since the emergence of television. It has become a common theme among media industry players and media scholars as it has appeared in various media such as novels, poems, films, and television programs (Vossen et al., 2017). According to Bandura (1973), learning takes place through observations and interactions with others. People learn and then imitate other people's actions by watching them. The most common thing on television is violence. Violent behaviour can influence the viewer's attention or motivation, depending on the component processes involved. The higher proportion of observational learning is achieved by symbolically organizing and repeating modelling behaviour before openly implementing it. Coding patterns in words, labels or images leads to better retention than simple observation. On the contrary, viewers tend not to favour the violent themselves, but they tend to understand why violence occurs, whether it is seeking truth and justice or vice versa (Karray & Debernitz, 2017).

Television programming and advertising are rich in messages, scenes and materials that can promote harmful behaviours, including aggressive and risk-taking actions that are thought to cause both deliberate and unintentional injuries. It considers that television viewing is positively linked to risky behaviours such as aggression, antisocial behaviour, drugs, and alcohol (Prot et al., 2019). Some personality characteristics appear to place some viewers at higher risk than others, with aggression being one of the most important variables. Those who are typically aggressive appear to be more vulnerable than those who are not usually aggressive, yet the relationship between trait aggression and violent media is complicated (Allen & Anderson, 2017). Exposure to media violence also leads to trait aggression, increasing the likelihood of aggressive behaviour (Anderson & Bushman, 2018). Thus, although they are exposed to violence in the short term, it still leads to a downward spiral of more aggression.

The Statista Research Department (2016) estimates that Netflix will have more than 336,000 subscribers in Malaysia by 2020. This is not impossible because the research by 'Sandvine Global Internet Phenomena Report 2018' (Cullen, 2018) showed that Netflix consumed 26.6 % of the global video streaming traffic share, leaving 'YouTube' at number three (21.3 %) behind. Referring to the global traffic share, it was concluded that viewers with a tendency to binge-watching or marathon viewing Netflix were found to be a form of addiction. This can lead to psychological effects, stress, and anxiety (Ahmed, 2017).

In fact, the use of smartphones is a factor contributing to the demand for online television programs and this has been exacerbated by the emergence of media streaming services using the OTT media platform that allows viewers to watch the serial drama without interruption. In other words, the viewer tends to binge-watching or participate in marathon viewing of this online serial television program for hours or days. According to Rubenking (2018), most parents in the US are concerned about this phenomenon. Long periods of observation affect cognitive, emotional, and psychomotor aspects. Knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking are part of cognition. Effective aspects refer to how you respond to emotions such as values, social skills, and emotional development. Psychomotor can manipulate instruments that are physically and briefly related to motor skills. Naturally, the binge-watching habit is a thrill that motivates viewers to press the next button after watching the drama episode in another episode. Many do not know, however, that such a feeling exists because the brain secretes the dopamine hormone that keeps the viewers watching continuously.

In addition, discussions about the content filtering of Netflix's streaming video platform are often discussed and call for many controversies. Pressure has been exerted by various parties to encourage Netflix content through the government's filtering process. This serious matter should be discussed in such a way that it does not bring any harmful elements to society and at the same time does not affect the rights of the user (Asma et al., 2019). The content of Netflix's controversy over several international drama and film channels is not limited to the issue of violence (Afiezy, 2019). Controversial content can have an impact on the local community's social fabric, discipline, and civilization. Nudity, rape scenes, lesbianism, excessive drug use, erotic asphyxiation, and orgy are all featured in several programs. Not only did the call to refine streaming media content have an impact on children with this content, but it also applies on adults. The main point is the desensitization to violence has the inadvertent effect of making the community natural.

Netflix officially launched in Malaysia back in 2016, which raised concerns about content filtering by looking at the context of law enforcement. At the time, Datuk Seri Salleh Said Keruak, Minister of Communications and Multimedia, stated that Netflix still needed to follow the guidelines provided by the Malaysian Communications and Multimedia Commission. MCMC can act on Netflix if it finds a scene that violates the supervisory control standard and broadcasts through Netflix Malaysia (Malaymail, 2016). The Government is still seeking to amend the provisions of the 1998 Communications and Multimedia Act to introduce licenses for OTT content providers. Malaysia strictly controls its broadcast content, which potentially brings discomfort, public order, and security to viewers (Afiq, 2016). To date, Netflix has not been subject to any restrictions or filtration by the authorities. Streaming platforms like Netflix, on the other hand, have several security features to protect user accounts, including the ability to split censored content using a pin code set by the subscriber.

On the other hand, Netflix has often shown violence against the victim through acts of abuse, rape, prostitution, and murder (Beauregard & Martineau, 2017). Studies have shown that increasing media violence will make viewers more tolerant when faced with a similar situation in reality. Those who are unable to tolerate a violent show can cause a frightening experience, which the viewers still have some fear even though there are no more dangers (Hird, 2018).

In describing the existing violence element on Netflix, Jessica Scatterson, a 12-year-old girl from the United Kingdom, committed suicide by hanging herself after watching the Netflix original drama Series '13 Reasons Why.' According to her mother, Rachel Warburton said that her daughter was watching the series with her friends, and she explained six reasons why she was supposed to die. She called for a ban on the series because of the influence on giving children ideas for self-harm, even though the real objective is to raise awareness of suicide (Drewett, 2019).

Following a public debate and advice from medical experts from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) on July 6th, 2017, Netflix decided to delete the controversial scenes of its popular adolescent drama '13 Reasons Why' (Marshall, 2019). The scene of Hannah Bakers committing suicide by cutting her wrist in a bathtub has been deleted. However, the series is still available online, but with an extra warning at the beginning of each episode. According to the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP) study, suicide cases among U.S. adolescents between the ages of 10 and 17 have increased by almost a third in a month after the initial '13 Reason Why' series in April 2017 (Copeland, 2019).

Regardless of the violence and what happened before, Netflix again takes the risk of promoting a similar genre of original television series with '13 Reason Why,' but focuses on adult content with the title 'You.' After the release date of December 26th, 2018, a world record of 40 million viewings was broken in the first four weeks (Romano, 2019). As a result, 'You – Season 1' received 93% of positive critics and 79% of viewers scored 4/5 star ratings and Netflix set 'You' at Maturity Rating-18+ because it contains language, violence, sex, nudity and substance (Rotten Tomatoes, 2018).

The main actor, Penn Badgley, who played the 'Joe Goldberg' character, warned his fans to stop idolizing and supporting his negative characters such as sociopaths, stalkers, kidnappers, and serial killers (Kickham, 2019). Fans begin to romanticize his charming character and defend the 'Joe' as problematic behaviour. He also agreed that such violent behaviour could be justified under certain circumstances (Guerra, 2019). Penn Badgley did not expect fans to really enjoy the violence, including scenes of gruesome murders and torture. Ironically, most fans believe that the victim deserves to be treated like this (Andrew, 2019). Some fans used Twitter to share their thoughts and feelings about the main character, such as being willing to abduct and nominating Penn Badgley as a dangerous, attractive person and an endearing psychic (Buff, 2019).

The University of Southern California (USC) U.S. Survey of Violence on Entertainment Media Platform found that Netflix has made it one step ahead of its competitors because most of the television shows will focus on corpse or murder. However, Netflix changed this trend by promoting the character of stalkers and serial killers (Clay, 2017).

In conclusion, some of the most popular online series portray violence in ways that do not accurately reflect what is going on in real life. Watching these shows affects the way we see the world, even after we have stepped away from a computer or a television screen. Too much watching television leads people to believe that the real world is closely aligned with what they see on the screen. It may be impossible to prove that a show like '13 Reasons Why' has led to an increase in suicides, but it has suggested that fear has a reasonable cause to happen. Precautious is part of Netflix's retroactive action, including more warnings about controversial content. However, the level of acceptance of violence shown is subject to the jurisdiction of the viewer. Thus, the different view of the ''You' drama series could be argued that the violent content portrayed would have a different perception of the viewers.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

This study aims to uncover the elements, viewer's perception and factors of violent content in the Netflix 'You' drama series. The trend of subscribing and watching media streaming has been so popular nowadays and has left traditional television competitors behind. Other than that, most viewers tended to binge-watching and marathon watch drama series that run through many episodes and seasons. As a result, 'You' drama series has become one of the successful Netflix drama series in terms of profit, with the success of reaching 40 million viewers in four weeks (Romano, 2019). Popularity has brought more viewers to the perception of this genre, whether violence was intentional or required consideration by the viewer to justify the act. The drama series seeks to inspire viewers to distinguish and assess the true meaning of violence through their perception of whether to accept or reject the concept.

Perception is a process for individuals to organize and interpret environmental impressions (Cherry, 2020). The process of perception formation begins with the input of sources through image, audio, view, taste, aroma, and human touch (Krantz & Schwartz, 2017). The process is accepted by human senses (sensory receptors) as a form of sensation that is ultimately received from the process and then selected. The filtering function is performed based on factors such as individual expectations, motivation, and attitudes (Judge et al., 2005). This study analyses how viewers interpret violent content in drama series in real life.

As a giant streaming platform that makes a billion dollars a year, Netflix focuses its marketing strategy on choosing a violent genre on screen as the main theme (Srinivas, 2020). This violent genre has gained popularity, making it a step ahead of its competitors. This is the concept presented in the 'You' series of dramas in which the victim was murdered, tortured, imprisoned and even poisoned in the way we never expected (Zeitchik, 2019).

'You' Season 1 was aired on September 8th, 2018 with 10 episodes and continues with 'You' Season 2 released on December 12th, 2019 with 10 episodes. 'You' season 2 has gained the same popularity as 'You' season 1 and will be watched by 54 million in two months and ranked as the most popular title in Netflix history (Moore, 2020). Both seasons will be reviewed for this study since the concept of violence is being used as the main theme in these series.

The aim of this research is therefore to uncover the elements, viewer's perception and factors of violent content in the Netflix 'You' drama series.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Perception of Reality

As cited in the research by Fitzpatrick (2018), children are easily influenced by violent material and to adopt actions. Kids about the ages of three and four are beginning to build beliefs and opinions about their surroundings, which influence them to believe the world is a dangerous place for them.

The study by Wormwood et al. (2019) on the psychological effect of mass violence against the Boston Marathon bombings in 2013 has used repeated interventions designed to understand the participant's anxiety, eye reactivity and interpretation of the violent display in the media, particularly on television. Participants are residents of Boston and citizens who have a direct link to the case and the television news reporting shows an inappropriate image and video has been displayed in a repeated fashion. The effect is that participants have

demonstrated a high degree of anxiety, physiological responses and understanding of truth based on the emotional tones of the media material. Feelings of anger and anxiety also recur every time they watch photos and videos involving abuse. This makes them phobic and always wary, even though the incident has been around for years.

The research conducted by Coker et al. (2016), identify the relationship between media exposure and physical aggression towards fifth-grade children. The study found that physical violence and aggressive representation in the media tends to occur in their everyday life. The outcome was also influenced by children surrounding, such as domestic abuse, environment, gender, and mental health.

Perception of Violent Content

There is increasing evidence that exposure to media violence contributed to the development of aggression, violent behaviour (Anderson, 2016) and impacted social change (Renner, 2019). The trend shows that violent crime has exponentially since the advent of television 50 years ago (Strasburger & Wilson, 2014).

Research by (Kaya, 2019) through his study on violent rape in prime time Turkish television has found the television producer tend to use the image of beautiful young girls and women who have been raped as a marketing strategy. The violence scene involves women as a victim who has been on the air since 2010. Most of the drama series that will be the content of the rape scene will be the most widely viewed, especially those involving eroticization and gang rape.

Research conducted by Blackburn and Scharrer (2018) on viewing reality television and its association between the amounts of adult television consumption has shown a link to aggression and violent behaviour. Male characters have been more likely to perform violent acts over time, and the portrayal of violence in each episode has led respondents to believe that the behaviour shown is the same as in the real world.

Violent Content on Netflix

Research by Asma et al. (2019) analysed Malaysian nowadays faced a dilemma on Netflix content. In Malaysia, rules and regulations are a way of life for most of the population. Preventive and punitive measures to protect the public are two key aspects to consider when justifying rules and regulations. In many countries, however, society and industry are hostile to censorship. The study explored the theme of viewing motivations, experiences, and government regulation on media streaming in Malaysia. The study revealed the experience of informants who were anxious and concerned about the content. Anxiety was found through informants who already married and have children because the content of most Netflix programs is uncensored, including language, violent elements, nudity, sex, and LGBTQ.

A study by Horeck (2019) about sexual violence through Netflix original drama series, '13 Reasons Why' has found that seasonal drama series with long drama episodes has led the viewers to binge-watching and build the narrative hermeneutics and reception of structures. The '13 Reasons Why' showed particularly content about sex and nudity that are cultivated around the viewer's mind and to be similarly addicted to playing a video game.

Binge-Watching on Drama Series

Referred to a survey by Netflix in February 2014, 73% of the viewers has defined the binge-watching as sitting for a television show that consuming time watching 2 to 6 episodes at one session (Ana, 2018). However, some researchers have defined that binge-watching is based

on the actual content and context of the programme. Binge-watching is becoming popular because of the advent of online streaming that Netflix pioneered when they began performing full episodes simultaneously in 2013 (McAlone, 2016).

According to the research by Krongard and Tsay-Vogel (2020), in examining the portrayal of violence in popular binge-watching online drama series, the study collected responses from 366 university undergraduates. The findings revealed that almost six acts of violence per hour were shown to be serious, explicit, disturbing, and intentional. The justification for the morality of violence is less to be discussed because they merely accept such violent behaviour without objection. Women were also portrayed as primary targets and victims of sexual violence in drama series, according to the study.

Davies (2018) in his research found that people who love to binge-watching tend to have less rest and sleep. As a result, 2,000 adults joined the online survey in January 2018 and the result found that 27 % delayed their sleep schedule by about one and a half to two hours. The study also discovered that the tendency to binge-watching has a negative impact on one's health, particularly on sleep quality and the rest of the body. When the body is deprived of sleep, it tends to stimulate violence and thriller content into a real-life, creating an anxiety sensation.

Cultivation Theory
This theory is based on the relationship between mass media and the value inculcation, which has an impact on viewer's attitudes and behaviour. The cultivation theory aided in deciphering the public's perceptions of television. Gerbner has created the term resonance to describe heavy viewers who exhibit a higher level of cultivation because of their personal real-life experiences. Nowadays, online streaming platforms will be the future of cultivation since the function of television has been largely replaced. A messaging system and an institutional and cultivation analysis will be needed to understand better what the user cultivates from these platforms on the existing networking communities (Nevzat, 2018).

Cultivation Theory is much related to the exposure to television. According To Weiss (2020), for many years television has become a domestic necessity. It was common for families to watch television together, but each person's experience was unique. Television's persistent visual and auditory stimulation of an individual makes it a valuable media source for cultivating particular messages, thoughts and feelings. Violence on television was a big part of the theory. People's perceptions of each other were shaped by the violence associated with their race, gender, and sexual orientation. Some demographics are depicted in a very negative way in the media.
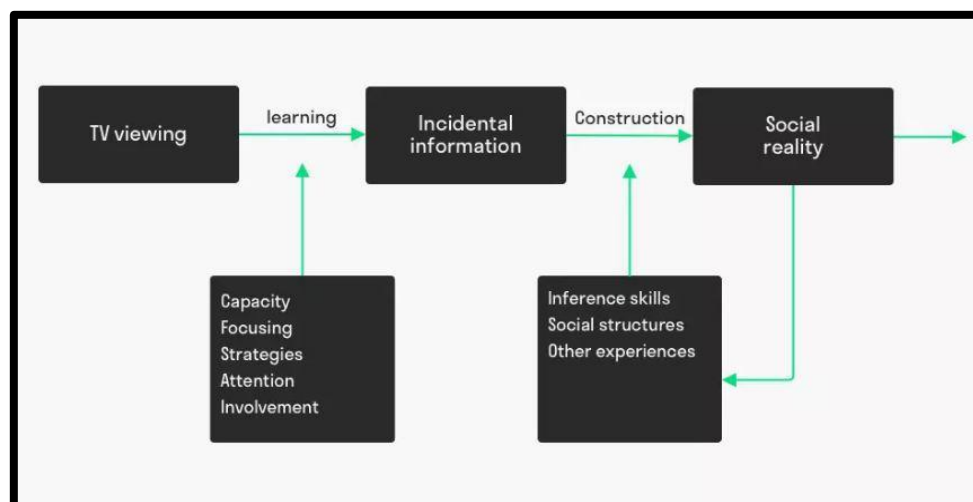
Figure 1: The Cultivation Theory (Gerbner, 1998)

Based on Figure 1, by using Cultivation Theory in this study, it will be associated with our objective, which is to uncover the elements, viewer's perception and factors of violent content in the Netflix 'You' drama series. Images and messages from television viewing is a medium of learning that has brought with it incidental information that has constructed a perception of social reality.

Research by Humphries (2018) on cultivation theory and binge-watching for horror drama series on Netflix has found the cultivation theory was applied to understand the time consumption on television perception, and exposures to various genres. The study found the relationship between the numbers of hours spent watching horror and the sex of viewers. Women are always stigmatized by the fear of being a victim. As part of the study conducted, the University of Hawai'i (UH) has sent a reminder regarding sexual harassment and theft on the campus. According to the findings, women who binge-watching horror scenes feel slightly unsafe and risky and try to avoid being alone on campus. The horror perception that often portrayed a victimized woman leads them to believe that every corner of the campus is unsafe, and even the stains can be interpreted as blood.

As cited in the research by Jones et al. (2018) about the College women's attitudes toward imprisoned women in 'Orange is the New Black' (OITNB) drama series on Netflix has raised the concern of women conditions in the prisons. The study found perceived significant relationships between attitudes about sexual and drug abuse by inmates and correctional officers in women's prisons in the Netflix drama series that the respondent believes are taking place in a real prison.

METHODOLOGY

According to Cresswell and Poth (2018) a qualitative study is defined as a process of research to understand social or human issues, based on a comprehensive and broad picture, word-shaped, reported in detail by informants, and conducted in a natural environment. The in-depth interviews will be conducted in a free and independent manner. It was intended to obtain as much information from the informant's perspective without any prior expectations, bias or influence from the researcher (Bengtsson, 2016). The researcher has developed a detailed interview method for obtaining data from informants who subscribe to Netflix.

Purposive sampling is used to select the population for this study and the population of the study were six (6) informants. Purpose sampling is also known as a judgmental and expert sample that guides a researcher to select a specific informant and assumes that the informant may represent the population (Saunders et al., 2018). Creswell and Poth (2018) recommend ten (10) or fewer informants if the subject is narrow. According to Moser and Korstjens (2018), a study sample of less than ten (10) informants is recommended. The sample population was therefore derived from the following informants: (i) Netflix subscribers; (ii) Adult male and female; (iii) Completed watching 'You' drama series for season one and two. Thus, the informant selection is based on the Netflix subscriber and has already watched 'You' for full episodes in season one (10 episodes) and season two (10 episodes). The selection of this type of informant is important for the collection of data and information for study purposes.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The analysis result will fulfil the purpose of this study, which seeks to expose the viewer's understanding of the truth in the representation of violent material in the Netflix drama series 'You.

1) Elements that Influence the Viewers' perception to Watch Netflix 'You' Drama Series
a.   Genre Selection
The genre has four key elements, such as character, story, plot, and setting, where viewers will investigate this element when deciding which genre is suited to their interest (Harvey, 2019). In the context of this study, the genre of violent, psychological thriller, horror and action has led them to choose to watch this drama series. Although this violent genre tends to exist, it did not prevent them from feeling disturbed by the violent scene. The selection of genres is very important in building the perception of the violent content of the informants. For informants who do not like this genre, it was normal for them to watch the genre as opposed to their normal viewing, because of the feeling of knowing more but the story was influenced by the surroundings, such as Netflix's recommendation and word of mouth.

b.   Binge-Watching
According to Yearry (2020), the increasing demand for American television series has led to binge-watching activities that take time to complete media content in one session. In the context of this study, Binge-watching was the preferred watch style for most informants, although some of them were not favored by the genre, they were beginning to establish their interest in watching all seasons and episodes.

c.   Content of Violence Attraction
According to Gabrielli et al. (2016), at least one risk of violent content was identified in each episode, containing 70% of the total episodes and 2.3 seconds in each episode to attract viewers. Sexual and horrible violence was the only behaviours that show an increase in prevalence but widely seen in the adult category. It stated that the significant violence in the 'You' series of dramas was murder and torture. However, they felt that the murder and torture in this story have made violence attractive to watch.

2) Viewers' Perception of Reality in the Violent Content Portrayed in the Netflix 'You' Drama Series

a.   Act of Murder and Torture

Television used to produce contains elements of violence as a marketing strategy (Kaya, 2019). The trend shows that violent crimes have occurred exponentially since the advent of television 50 years ago (Strasburger & Wilson, 2014). According to Kamini (2016), most television programs have violently surrounded their contents with murder, shooting, and fighting. The indicated type of violent content that was portrayed in a series has pictured the scene of murders, stabbing, fist fighting, obsessions, torture, stalking and intrusion of privacy.

b.   Brutal Actions

The study by Gross and Mendoza (2018) on media exposure to violence as a function of trait aggression had shown that individuals who have been exposed to many violent media would have stable learning of aggression that has contributed to their perception. The brutal act in the 'You' drama series was perceived by the majority of informants as reality. Particularly, brutality was portrayed in the most dehumanizing and abusive way.

c.   Anxiety

Repeated measures designed to understand the participant's distress, eye reactivity and perception of the violent show in the media, especially on television. The result has shown a high degree of distress, physiological reactions and perception of reality depending on the emotional tones of the media content. Feelings of anger and anxiety often recur every time they watch images and videos containing violence (Wormwood et al., 2019). They tend to link anxiety to what may happen. Thus, those who are like the violent ones shown in the drama series will be influenced, disturbed, uneasy and anxious about their surroundings.

d.   Fear

Repeated measures designed to understand the participant's distress, eye reactivity and perception of the violent show in the media, especially on television. The result has shown a high degree of distress, physiological reactions and perception of reality depending on the emotional tones of the media content. Feelings of anger and anxiety often recur every time they watch images and videos containing violence (Wormwood et al., 2019). They tend to link anxiety to what may happen. Thus, those who are like the violent ones shown in the drama series will be influenced, disturbed, uneasy and anxious about their surroundings.

e.   Cautiousness

Cautiousness is a cognitive assessment of an individual's likelihood of danger affecting them and how bad it is if it does. Feeling threatened explains individual responses to threats in the form of appeals (Schmid & Muldoon, 2015). The violent content in the 'You' drama series has led them to be cautious in their real life and it is related to the psychological issue as it takes time for informants to reduce the discomfort. According to the Trace Decay Theory (Ricker et al., 2016), the process of forgetting a memory will depend on the function of time. Accordingly, the informants cited that there must be a gap between watching the same genre and forgetting the troubling experience.

3) Contributed Factors Generating the Viewers' Perception of Reality on the Violent Content Portrayed in the Netflix 'You' Drama Series
a.   Accepting and Dismissing Violence
It was believed the character of Joe is a psychopath, and that Joe does indeed show some traits disorder (Naftulin, 2020). He also shows symptoms of certain mental illnesses, such as antisocial personality disorder. According to the National Health Institutes (NHI) (Masterson & Parker, 2019), people with an antisocial personality disorder lack empathy, immoral, manipulating and violating privacy. Joe character has led informants to have an acceptance and rejection of violence in the context of this research.

The character of the Joe that is calm and charming has cultivated them to accept the violent action he played in the drama series 'You,' but they rejected the same idea of violent action portrayed as is happening in real life. In short, the scene should be displayed in the terms of entertainment only and unacceptable for real life.

b.   Personal Experiences
Subsequent aggressive behaviour exposed to media violence and at the same time faced a family conflict were received the double-dose effect which increases aggression compared to those that have low conflict in families (Fikkers et al., 2013). This double dose of the television message tends to amplify the cultural effect by which the resonance describes the intensified impact on viewers of what they have seen on television with what they have experienced in life (Vinney, 2019). The double dose resulted in them relating previous encounters to violent scenes. Therefore, it is easy for them to remember the experience, and it takes time to be calm because past experiences may be something they did not want to remember.

c.   Other Experiences
The experiences of other people are not a threat, but human psychology can re-identify the experience, depending on the situation in which they are afraid to respond (Javanbakht & Saab, 2017). Others' experiences have influenced the perception of reality, as they had previously in that situation despite involving other parties. The recall process involves access to information and stuff that occurred before it was encoded and stored in the brain (Bergland, 2015). According to Gålnander (2019), others would never experience violence directly but instead will learn about these events indirectly, via the social networks they are involved in, news and other representations of violent acts in the media or other sources. Other people will learn about violence by mixing direct and indirect information.
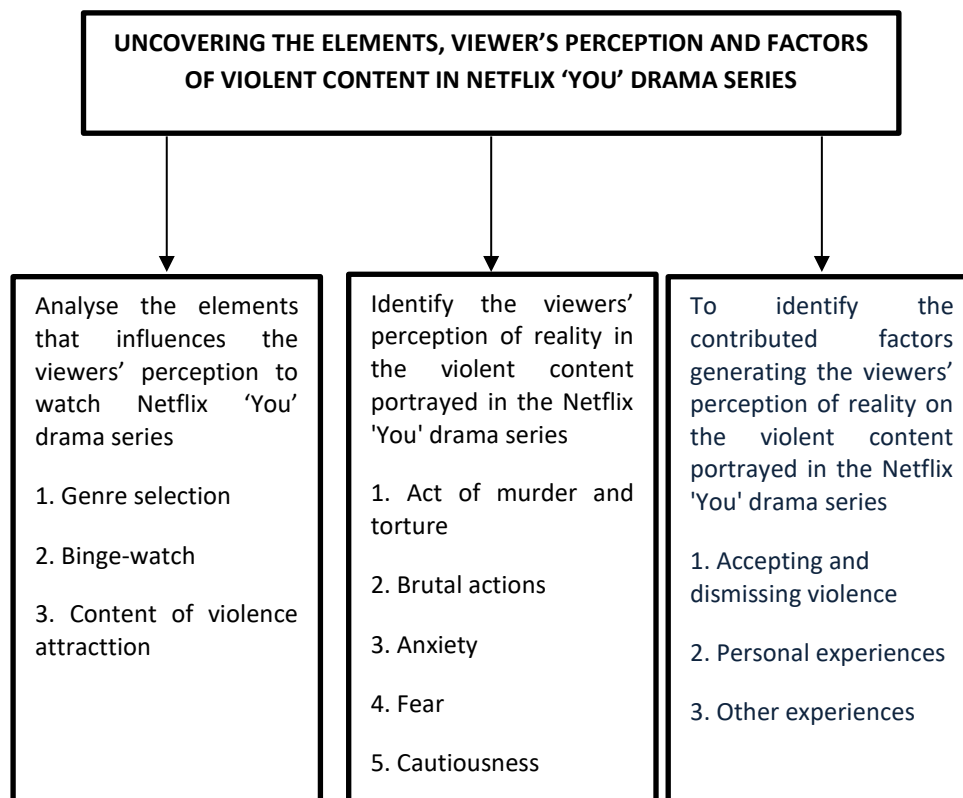
CONCLUSION

Figure 2: Key findings to uncover the elements, viewer's perception and
factors of violent content in Netflix 'You' drama series

Overall, the findings of the research were illustrated in Figure 2 to describe the elements, factors and viewer's perception of violent content in the Netflix 'You' drama series. Key findings are based on the identification of different themes which connect the relationship between violent content in drama series and perception of reality.

Therefore, this study reveals that the violent content exposure and the details of the violent scene shown in the drama series have created an image and audio representation for viewers and made them connected with what they are familiar with as a symbolic environment. In other words, the viewer may have a particular necessary attitude, viewpoint, and belief about the violent material between them, despite the principles of self-judgment on which the assumptions are based.

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