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# The Netflix Economy in the Perspective of Consumerism

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**Abstract:** Consumerism is different from consumption in any economic sense. It refers to a way of life in which the purpose of consumption is not to satisfy one's legitimate practical needs, but to satisfy the needs created by consciously stimulated desires. With the continuous development of mass media, the "Netflix economy" is showing a huge development trend. The essence of the Netflix economy is the consumption of symbolic values of commodities, the consumption of desires, and the transmission of a "subculture". Therefore, although it has a catalytic effect on social and economic development, the drawbacks it brings cannot be ignored, and the regulation and guidance of the net popularity economy should be strengthened.

**Keywords:** Consumerism; Netflix Economy; Netflix

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## 1. Introduction

As we all know, "Netflix products" is a process of converting fans into purchasing power by using fashionistas as image representatives, taking the taste and vision of celebrities as the main focus, selecting models and visual promotion, gathering popularity on social media, and relying on a large fan base for targeted marketing. Netizens, also known as "internet celebrities", are people who have become popular in real or online life because of an event or an act that has been noticed by netizens, or people who have become popular by consistently exporting their expertise over a long period of time. Their popularity is due to the fact that some of their qualities are magnified by the Internet, and they fit in with the aesthetics, ugliness, entertainment, excitement, voyeurism, imagination, taste and spectatorship of netizens, and are sought after by the Internet world, intentionally or unintentionally, to become "internet celebrities".

The internet celebrity economy is a business model in which the internet celebrities themselves or the people behind the celebrities use their public influence and popularity to take advantage of certain realisation channels to gain economic benefits. The net popularity economy is a companion to the internet celebrity, and it is formed as a result of the popularity of the internet celebrity.

## 2. Results

The object of consumption is the symbolic value of the commodity. Jean Baudrillard, analyze the results of Netflix consumption from a "postmodernist" perspective, arguing that "Netflix" exists in the form of symbols on the Internet and is consumed in the form of "individuality", "subversion", "curiosity" and "pleasure"<sup>[1]</sup>. They argue that "Netflix" exists in the form of symbols on the Internet, and is consumed with postmodernist cultural characteristics such as "individuality", "subversion", "curiosity" and "pleasure". " consumption gradually becomes a symbolic activity. Once it becomes a Netflix consumption commodity, the commodity inevitably becomes a symbol of consumption and is increasingly detached from the material entity, becoming a "Netflix economy" built on the fetishism of cultural commodities in pursuit of distinction and unconscious consumption and reproduction under the manipulation of the "Netflix". The rapid development of self-media and social media has provided fertile ground for its development, gradually separating the object of consumption from the result, and making people more comfortable with the symbolic and symbolic value of this cultural commodity.

According to Mike Featherstone, "People consume with the satisfaction of emotional pleasure, dreams and desires."<sup>[2]</sup>For example, the personal labels of Li Jiaqi and Li Ziqi, "Chef Chungu", and their unique flirtatious speech patterns have become symbols that are consumed with pleasure by the audience. This kind of consumption is essentially a kind of symbolic consumption. The cashing in of the value of "net celebrity" is essentially a process of reproduction of cultural capital. The actions and words of the "netizens" become the cultural capital to be consumed, gaining the attention of the audience through the spontaneous sale of social media, and then gaining widespread attention and popularity, which is essentially determined by the cultural capital represented by this class. John Fiske points out that "cultural goods circulate in two economic spheres,

the financial economy, which circulates the dominant power represented by money, and the cultural economy, which circulates meaning and pleasure and shows the decoded differences of consumers." [3]In this sense, popular culture is a battlefield of symbols, the essence of which is a cultural field where cultural and economic capital intersect and merge.

Netflix consumption is a consumption that satisfies desire. Consumerism refers to the uncontrolled consumption of material wealth and natural resources, and the view of consumption as the meaning of life's existence. Unlike consumption in any economic sense, it refers to a way of life in which the purpose of consumption is not to satisfy one's own legitimate practical needs, but to satisfy needs formed by desires that have been consciously stimulated. Consumerism has three forms of expression. One of them is sensual consumption. The consumer, encouraged by the media, blindly pursues the symbolic information of the product, and the act of consumption itself is no longer rational and restrained, i.e. it is a consumption that "follows the feeling" without considering whether the consumption of a certain product is necessary or not. In addition, consumption is reckless and does not take into account the plundering of natural resources or the damage to the ecological environment. Secondly, it is wasteful consumption. Consumerism advocates a kind of "disposable consumption" in which "things are used and thrown away", and "consumer durables" are "disposable-like consumption. Consumerism advocates a "disposable consumption" in which "things are used and thrown away". The use of a good is not determined by its use value, but by whether it is "in fashion", "fashionable" or "do I like it". Waste is also evident in the excessive packaging of consumer goods, to the extent that the cost of the packaging is greater than the value of the goods themselves. Thirdly, there is conspicuous consumption. Under consumerism, consumers eat and dress with pomp and circumstance, fighting for wealth, and making a big deal out of everything. In addition to satisfying their physiological needs, consumer goods can also be used to show their relative ability to pay and to satisfy their self-esteem, or more precisely, to satisfy their vanity, hence the emergence of conspicuous consumption. It has also been argued that in a capitalist society, man is not free in production, so in the pursuit of freedom, man turns his attention to the sphere of consumption, trying to make his sense of unfreedom go away and realise his latent desire for equality through the free act of buying consumer goods.

Netflix products are a "subculture" of transmission. As a kind of cultural commodity, the consumption of Netflix products is accompanied by the circulation and transmission of cultural meaning. The consumption of Netflix culture is mainly focused on the following levels: firstly, the consumption of Netflix's body as capital, including visual culture consumption such as exaggerated performance, facial appearance and fashion taste; secondly, the entertainment consumption of Netflix's manufactured skills such as segments, songs and dances; thirdly, the identification consumption of Netflix's values and cultural significance; fourthly, the impulsive consumption of actual goods or virtual ones such as advertisements and programmes targeted by Netflix.

### **3. Discussion**

While pursuing their own values, Netflix often leads to a series of ethical and moral contradictions and conflicts, such as the contradiction between the emancipation of Netflix's personality and traditional ethical values, the bad social culture of young people who are eager to make quick profits due to the Netflix economy, the phenomenon of dishonesty in the Netflix economy, etc. These issues deserve people's vigilance and consideration.

Consumers are reduced to being sold and exploited while consuming. The main core of the "net popularity economy" industry chain is the "net celebrities", and the path of dissemination of net celebrities is the social networking platforms, such as microblogging, WeChat, posting and other online social networking platforms. The net-celebrity economy is a model in which net-celebrities gain a large number of fans by becoming popular on various social media platforms, and use this as capital to gain economic benefits in conjunction with e-commerce platforms. The social media under the Netflix economy model gives fans the right to browse, like, comment, retweet and even participate directly in the production process of goods, and the number of followers, likes and retweets and other information capital gains the favour of the capital market, through which capitalism hopes to attract many participants to spontaneously and voluntarily contribute their invisible labour. From this it is clear that the seemingly unconscious pastime of fans for fun is in fact what Netflix wants most. The individual work of the fans, along with their personal information, is quantified and sold to advertisers, thus directly translating into purchasing power for the shops. This is tantamount to the primitive accumulation of capital, as the netizens do everything they can to gain popularity, and the fans are sold and exploited as they consume.

Netflix's "overnight fame" stirs young people's impatience for quick success. The economic model behind Netflix is an important driver of the Netflix rush. The Netflix economy is a fast-food economy, with one Netflix replacing another in the online world, and the Netflix life cycle is often very short. In order to make the most profit in the shortest possible time, weblebrities are always trying to find new ways to stick to their fans, and only when they have a large number of fans can they reap lucrative commercial rewards. The short life cycle of a net-celebrity has created a net-celebrity economic model that seeks short term profits, while the net-celebrity economy's profit model that seeks quick returns forces net-celebrities to adopt the most effective and eye-catching behaviours to attract public attention. This Netflix economic model is like a high-speed machine that does whatever it takes to please the public in pursuit of efficiency, while ignoring the moral quality of the Netflix themselves and the social influence of the Netflix. The lack of focus on the improvement and self-containment of the Netflix themselves is both a weakness that inhibits the further development of the Netflix economy and a bottleneck that hinders the development of the Netflix economy business model towards professionalism and scale.

#### **4. Methods**

As a new business model, we should look at the emergence, existence and development of the Netflix economy with a rational and cautious eye. On the one hand, we should affirm that the net popularity economy is an innovation and development of the "Internet+" model, which is itself a product of the extension of the Internet economy, and we should support the deep integration and docking of the Internet with other industrial forms to continuously meet the reasonable needs of society. On the other hand, we should also treat the Netflix economy scientifically, reflect on the problems and shortcomings of the Netflix economy itself, reasonably regulate the behaviour of Netflix themselves, guide Netflix to abide by the law and take the initiative to promote socialist core values, and lead by example to promote the benign, healthy and lasting development of the Netflix economy.

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#### **Author contributions**

H.L. wrote the paper and contributed to the interpretation of the results.

Data Availability

No datasets were generated or analysed during the current study.

Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.