The effects of Covid-19 in audience’s purchase behaviors and valuations of legal streaming video platforms’ brands

Examining the moderating role of the type of content in audience’s engagement with legal streaming video, pre and since-Covid-19

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Abstract

The present health crisis resulted in behavioral and psychological consumption shifts. Among the industries that seized it as an opportunity for expanding is the Over-the-Top (OTT) industry. Particularly, legal streaming video platforms' brands could enhance their relationships with audience, especially during lockdowns. A variety of content types are provided by these platforms, namely series and films. The latter are however consumed in movie theaters as well. The subscriber-platform relationship is thus not linear, and different viewing practices can be noticed. Based on previous academic research, an empirical study was conducted, with the intention of examining Covid-19's impact on audience's purchase behaviors and valuations of streaming platforms' brands. Also, the potential moderating role of the content type in audience's engagement with streaming is to be understood. Findings show that audience's purchase behaviors and brand valuations were indeed improved in general, namely engagement, purchase intention, willingness-to-pay, brand affect, trust, loyalty, and perceived quality. Besides, the presence of a moderating role of the content type was observed, series consumers being more engaged with streaming. Finally, positive correlations between brand affect and trust, and brand loyalty, as well as between brand affect and purchase intention were observed, not being the case between brand affect and willingness-to-pay. This thesis contributes to OTT and movie-theater industries, by providing conclusions about audience's mindset in a pandemic context, their quest for video entertainment, and opportunities for both industries' value propositions.

Keywords: Streaming Platforms, Netflix & Co., Pre-Covid, Since-Covid, Audience, Series, Films, Movie-Going, OTT Industry, Consumer Engagement, Purchase Intention, Willingness-to-Pay, Brand Affect, Brand Trust, Brand Loyalty, Perceived Quality.

Resumo

A presente crise de saúde provocou no consumidor transformações comportamentais e psicológicas. Entre as indústrias que disso usufruíram como oportunidade para se desenvolverem encontra-se a *Over-the-Top*. Em particular, as marcas de plataformas de *streaming* de vídeo intensificaram as suas relações com a audiência, especialmente durante os confinamentos. Nestas plataformas encontram-se vários tipos de conteúdo, nomeadamente séries e filmes. Contudo, estes últimos são também consumidos no cinema. A relação subscritor-plataforma não é, portanto, linear e observam-se diferentes práticas de visualização. Baseado em pesquisa académica prévia, um estudo empírico foi realizado, destinado a examinar o impacto da Covid-19 nos comportamentos de compra da audiência e valorizações das marcas de plataformas de *streaming*. Pretende-se também compreender o papel moderador potencial do tipo de conteúdo no envolvimento da audiência com o *streaming*. Os resultados demonstram que os comportamentos e valorizações da marca efetivamente melhoraram, nomeadamente o envolvimento, intenção de compra, disposição para pagar, efeito da marca, confiança, lealdade e qualidade percebida. Existe também um papel moderador no tipo de conteúdo, estando os consumidores de séries mais envolvidos com o *streaming*. Finalmente, existem correlações positivas entre efeito da marca e confiança, e lealdade à marca, assim como entre efeito da marca e intenção de compra, não sendo esse o caso entre efeito da marca e disposição para pagar. Esta tese contribui para as indústrias *OTT* e do cinema, fornecendo conclusões sobre a mentalidade da audiência em contexto pandémico, a sua busca por entretenimento de vídeo e oportunidades para propostas de valor destas indústrias.

Palavras-chave: Plataformas de *Streaming*, Netflix e Cia., Pré-Covid, Desde-a-Covid, Audiência, Séries, Filmes, Cinema, Indústria *OTT*, Envolvimento do Consumidor, Intenção de Compra, Disposição para Pagar, Efeito da Marca, Confiança na Marca, Lealdade à Marca, Qualidade Percebida.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Problem Definition and Relevance

The current pandemic is one of the most tragic and appalling global crises the world witnessed in the last decades. It will provoke long-lasting consequences and shifts at political, economic, social, and cultural levels (He & Harris, 2020). Taleb (2008) mentions it as a "Black Swan" event, due to the extent to which it can actually come to revolutionize the world. In particular, the lockdowns the pandemic has been demanding provoke psychological alterations (anxiety, fear, uncertainty) which have significant effects in individuals, from the way they see the world, to the way they think and conduct their lives (He & Harris, 2020), and, consequently, the way they behave as consumers. New desires and priorities have been rising, and, as such, what was then considered a need, is now possibly considered a "triviality" (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020).

As all individuals experienced first-hand, lockdown restrictions resulted in consumer phenomena such as waves of "panic-buying" (Lufkin, 2020) and "preparedness buying" (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020) to guarantee that everything eventually needed was possessed. This resulted in empty shelves, product scarcity, and consumers adopting competitive and territorial attitudes (Kirk, Peck, & Swain, 2018). For illustrative purposes, a rise to 845% in toilet paper spending was registered (NCSolutions, 2020).

However, this situation taught individuals to appreciate and value the satisfaction of Maslow's social and self-actualization needs (McLeod, 2007), which likely leaned consumers towards more thoughtful, responsible, and prosocial choices (He & Harris, 2020). Also, it required contentment with what homes had to offer, with a very limited access to external elements.

In the slow return to normal the world is witnessing at present, marketeers find themselves repositioning brands to adapt their actions to the new consumers' behaviors, beliefs, and preferences aroused by the pandemic (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). He & Harris (2020) argued that the focus should currently be placed on how to make brands' strategic processes more innovative, flexible and agile, and messages more socially responsible and societal, for long-term survival in a new marketing landscape, where a "we are all in this together" motto between brands and consumers was set. In that way, consumers raised high expectations from their preferred brands' attitudes. Thus, this represents not only a challenge, but also an opportunity, for brands to build more "meaningful and lasting relationships" with customers, than those built in "peaceful" times (He & Harris, 2020).

Legal streaming video platforms' brands have been no exception to taking advantage of this opportunity. Here is where this study fits. Indeed, while at home, individuals' relationships as subscribers with these platforms have naturally got stronger, especially with the closure of movie-theaters. Individuals found company and distraction from boredom and loneliness in these platforms, which provide them with personalized, quality, and unlimited video content via high-speed Internet. They deliver a wide entertainment service - contents such as TV series (henceforth, referred to as "series" only), films, documentaries, reality shows, live events, etc. - and belong to a very innovative and recently expanding industry: Over-the-Top (OTT).

However, not all types of content cause such strong relationships. In other words, the present study's author is interested in examining the potential differences between the consumptions of the two content types most watched by the audience. These are, as further illustrated, series and films. Indeed, while such an intense relationship seems logical for series consumption (whose main distributors are streaming platforms), the same cannot be said for film consumption, which is also satisfied by movie-theaters, despite their weakening in the present pandemic scenario.

Grounded in the aforementioned facts, this thesis aims at understanding the impact of the pandemic on audience's engagement with legal streaming video, through the study of audience's purchase behaviors and brand valuations towards it. Specifically, the author intends to examine if the content type consumed - series versus (vs.) film - plays a moderating role in audience's engagement with streaming, and their perceptions of it, in a pandemic context. Furthermore, potential correlations between certain brand valuations and purchase behaviors and within brand valuations are intended to be examined.

1.2 Objectives and Research Questions

Four research questions were drawn as a line of reasoning for this study. The first one refers to the understanding of Covid-19's influence on audience's level of engagement and purchase intention of streaming platforms.

RQ1: How did Covid-19 affect audience's engagement and purchase intention of legal streaming video platforms?

The second research question aims at examining Covid-19's influence on audience's purchase behaviors and valuations of streaming platform brands, by measuring the levels of brand affect, trust, loyalty, perceived quality, willingness-to-pay (and willingness-to-upgrade) for streaming.

RQ2: How did Covid-19 affect audience's purchase behaviors and valuations of legal streaming platforms' brands?

The third research question's objective is to understand if there is a moderating role of the type of content consumed, being it either a series or a film, in audience's engagement and perceptions of streaming.

RQ3: To what extent is there a moderating role of the content type consumed - series vs. film - in audience's engagement and perceptions of legal streaming platforms?

The last research question intends to understand if there are positive correlations between certain purchase behaviors and brand valuations, as well as within certain brand valuations, in the studied framework.

RQ4: Are there positive correlations between streaming platforms' brand valuations and between their brand valuations and purchase behaviors?

1.3 Thesis Structure

Subsequently to the present introduction chapter, where this study's research problem, objectives, and research questions were addressed, chapter two will provide a review of the academic literature that served as a theoretical ground for this thesis' key topics.

Chapter three will present the conceptual framework and research hypotheses. Following, chapter four will cover a detailed description of the methodology used for data selection and collection: research method, sampling definition, research tools, design and procedure, stimuli development, and variables' descriptions. The research's findings and their analysis will be provided by chapter five.

Further analysis will be contemplated in chapter six. The studied model's impact on the movie-theater industry, the moderating roles of age, education and income levels in both streaming and movie-going engagement, patterns in platforms' brands and in content types consumed, as well as nonsubscribers' behaviors will be analyzed.

Finally, chapters seven and eight will provide this study's conclusion and implications, as well as its limitations and potential future research.

2 Literature Review

In this chapter, theoretical references will be exposed as a ground for the discussion to be carried in this study, and for identifying potential gaps the latter will attempt to fill.

2.1 The relationship between subscribers and legal streaming platforms' brands

2.1.1 The emergence of big players

Today, Netflix is the largest streaming video platform, with approximately 214 million subscribers worldwide, according to *Statista* (Stoll, 2021), having seized its first-mover advantage to build a stable subscriber community, while achieving continuous revenue growth since 2014 (Roxborough, 2021; Lozic, 2021). It is the leader of the new media industry (Lozic, 2021), with a mission to "lead global Internet television network" and seeking to be "your (subscribers') television" (Burroughs, 2019). "Netflix & Co." (henceforth referred to Netflix and its followers - Amazon Prime Video, HBO Max, HBO, Disney+, YouTube Premium, Hulu, Apple TV+, etc.) provide subscribers with different video content types: series; films; documentaries; reality shows; electronic news gathering (ENG); commercials; corporate/educational videos; live events such as sports and arts (Massey, 2020).

According to Smith and Telang (2016), Netflix represents a revolutionary way of consuming video contents through: detailed observations of audience's behaviors; personalized distribution channels; promotional messages based on individual preferences; a freer approach to developing content (thanks to advertising breaks and broadcast slot absences); a "new level of creative freedom for writers" thanks to the space for on-demand content that can meet the needs of a specific audience; a "new way to compete with piracy"; and a "new and more economically efficient way to monetize content".

Netflix & Co. have a great ability for "industrial knowledge" (Havens, 2007), that is for distinguishing what is attractive and acceptable as media culture to particular audience segments from what is not, through the "algorithm culture" (Hallinan & Striphas, 2014) and a system of "big-data" processing (Lozic, 2021). These allow them to know their audiences' preferences and needs (based on, e.g., previous activity) and consequently offer them personalized content and respond to their expectations on which, where, and how to watch contents: this is known as the "Netflix effect" (Matrix, 2014).

2.1.2 Subscribers as "content producers"

Since 2007, millennials and post-millennials have been replacing the model of "owning media content" by that of "subscribing to media content or streaming platforms" (Seemiller & Grace, 2018). More specifically, most of them associate the act of *watching television* to streaming content online. For them, Netflix & Co. represent what once were television channels. Subscribers stream the contents they enjoy the most, on different types of devices (smartphones, computers, tablets, televisions with Smart TV, etc.), expecting entertainment and knowledge (Podara et al., 2019).

This is linked to the transition of the "old" media industry to the "new" media one, brought by the phenomenon of digitalization (the rise of smartphones, small screens, high technologies, etc.) (Lozic, 2021). The new media industry was born in the "post-network" era, that begun after the 90's, and in which Internet television and the transition of activity's focus from production to distribution were witnessed (Pearson, 2011).

While provoking a decline in demand for cable television (post-millennials being symbolically considered in this respect as "cord-cutters" (Lozic, 2021)), Netflix & Co. have been shaping and constructing their own television programs with a very different management model than traditional cable television (Jenner, 2016). Indeed, not only they provide content owned by other producers, but also original content (Amoroso et al., 2021). For illustrative purposes, Netflix's expenditure on content has been increasing, with $17,3 billion spent on content in 2020 (Spangler, 2020), from which 85% were original shows, suggesting that the audience is satisfied to pay for Netflix's own productions, and demands unusual and unique content (Amoroso et al., 2021).

Not only platforms' affordable prices and personalized content, but also their wide catalog of licensed-film productions, as well as their availability, convenience, intuitive interface, and ease of use, result on the audience considering them as the most attractive option. Furthermore, it is noted how this unlimited offer of content allows the achievement of highly different audience segments, as well as different cultures and countries (through international and intercultural content), enhancing the processes of globalization (Titova, 2021).

2.2 Covid-19, lockdown, and renewed streaming video practices

2.2.1 Staying at home: "telepresence"

Since Covid-19 emerged, and especially during lockdown periods, the only external element to be totally accessible is the Internet (He & Harris, 2020). It is a "safe harbor" in moments of "social distancing", bringing about the idea of "social connectedness", based on the "need to belong" as one of the most fundamental human motivations (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). Individuals have been proving to be innovative and resilient enough to satisfy this need: virtual gatherings, professional life transited to online, "*Zoom*" as a day-to-day word, and a great adaptability to interactive digital technologies (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). Staying at home was thus a "catalyst" for unprecedently speeding up the adaptation to technological offers that would take much more time to adopt in normal circumstances (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020).

In this sense, streaming video platforms allow individuals at home to entertain and distract themselves from the loneliness and anxiety felt (Dastidar, 2020). Needless to say, lockdown boosted on a large scale the interest in these platforms, increasing their number of users (Titova, 2021), and facilitating their content diffusion and provision (Dastidar, 2020).

This is yet not without challenges for Netflix & Co. Despite the feeling of a decreasing psychological distance (Trope & Liberman, 2010) thanks to "telepresence" - "the extent to which one feels present in the mediated environment, rather than in the immediate physical environment" (Steuer, 1992) -, interactive digital technologies don't manage to replace physical proximity (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020). There is thus a "new digital entertainment business" that streaming platforms need to entirely adapt to (Dastidar, 2020).

Moreover, the OTT sector is naturally less sensitive to environmental crises, thanks to digitalization and the fact that streaming giants are full of opportunities to adapt to new consumers' minds and behaviors. Nevertheless, the sector is not fully protected from global economic crises (Lozic, 2021), and managerial efforts to create a user experience as valuable and fulfilling as possible are crucial. Streaming brands face thus a great challenge, and simultaneously an opportunity, to maintain and empower their positioning towards audience, by examining their adaptability behaviors, in a context of pandemic and telepresence (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020).

2.2.2 New productions and renewed subscribers' expectations

It is important to note that the movie industry and audience behaviors were already shifting before the pandemic, in a new digital world that saw streaming giants emerging. However, Covid-19 contributed to enhancing this phenomenon (Dastidar, 2020) with impressive progressions and capabilities of streaming platforms in current development until today: the speed of content distribution and promotion, content variety, algorithm improvement to increasingly meet subscriber individual tastes, and the variety of devices where contents can be watched are mechanisms to "approach", "attract", and finally "retain" the audience (Titova, 2021).

As observed nowadays, producers are becoming increasingly engaged with streaming platforms for their production releases, which can be now considered as a trend that goes beyond lockdown (Dastidar, 2020). Internationally recognized and awarded films such as "Roma" (Cuarón, 2018), "Marriage Story" (Baumbach, 2019), or "The Irishman" (Scorsese, 2019) were all Netflix's co-productions released on the platform itself, before the pandemic (Reséndiz, 2020). However, "Mank" (Fincher, 2020) was produced and distributed by Netflix in full pandemic, and films like "The Trial of the Chicago 7" (Sorkin, 2020) and "Pieces of a Woman" (Mundruczó, 2020), although not produced by Netflix, were distributed by it also in the end of 2020. Today, the same continues to happen with movies such as "Don't Look Up" (McKay, 2021), or the "The Power of the Dog" (Campion, 2021), the latter not even being exhibited in movie-theaters.

Aligned with this trend, contents' quality (particularly series, films, and documentaries') has been considerably improved. Indeed, a renewed subscriber-platform interaction established, in which subscribers perceive platforms as transformers of the practices of series and film viewing and the standard image of it. Recently, contents have thus not been so commercially-oriented anymore, since a higher quality is expected. A successful video production "should be a combination of both commercial success and creative contribution, which is expressed in clearly defined values and help build artistic taste in the audience" (Titova, 2021). In that regard, platforms have actually been "changing the perception of film art which reflects social processes" (Titova, 2021).

Today, there is constantly more room, and expectations, for new kinds of productions. For instance, international films ("domestic film productions") that transmit creativity, ideas, and messages to "cultivate high standards of esthetics and creative perception", shape and create a "rich global culture", as an opportunity for audience to experience new kinds of film-viewing, to "enrich their own horizons" (Titova, 2021). Indeed, the movie industry has been expanding the distribution of local content that disseminates "country-specific economic and cultural characteristics including influence of global auditing" (Titova, 2021). "The Crown" (Morgan et al., 2016) or "Oktoberfest: Beer & Blood" (Limmer et al., 2020) are both examples of series based on true historical events, provoking great interest in audience and making local productions become "part of the world film culture", without limiting it to American cinema, which used to dominate (Titova, 2021).

2.3 The movie-theater industry

2.3.1 Digitalization of our homes: cinema at home, a new trend?

Streaming at home allows great convenience and comfort. With a monthly subscription fee very close to the price of a movie ticket (Titova, 2021), subscribers can choose the time and place they wish, sit or lay comfortably, pause if needed, "binge-watch", or "second screen" (Podara et al., 2019). The act of consumption is personal or "virtually shared" rather than "physically shared" as in cinema rooms, and no willingness to commit time and displacement is needed. These attributes have a great contrast with those of movie-going, resulting in home-cinema growing popularity and making it a powerful movie-theater competitor (Weinberg et al., 2021).

A variety of questions about the future of consumer behaviors in the digital era can be stressed at this point. Will virtual reality, augmented reality, video conferencing, and online distribution belong exclusively to lockdown or actually form a long-term pattern? Will the technological fast advancements during the pandemic emphasize individuals' digital representations? Will human beings get gradually more "machine-like" (Belk, 2020) due to the "anthropomorphized personas" and interchangeability taken on by robots and humans (Belk, 2019)? Will this digital world be preferred and more attractive to individuals in post-pandemic or will individuals miss their usual freedom and "non connectedness" to such a point that they will feel grateful and seize what the "natural" world gives them?

2.3.2 Long term impact on the movie-theater industry

The movie-going experience represents a whole different feeling and aesthetic of film-viewing, providing a unique environment. However, going to movie-theaters requires effort, from having to leave home to buying tickets and being limited to cinema schedules. During the pandemic, individuals have naturally come to better realize these requirements, which resulted in an accelerated decline in movie-theater revenues, preventing its development (Titova, 2021).

Nonetheless, if movie-theaters established managerial and marketing strategies to respond to the rise of new technologies, and raised their value proposition by boosting their adaptability to the digital world by offering products that match consumer preferences, like streaming platforms do, and by becoming as convenient as home-cinema, they wouldn't necessarily be replaced by streaming and could keep on being the first and exclusive choice for film-viewing (Weinberg et al., 2021).

Netflix & Co.'s use of "big data" heightens the pressure on the movie-theater industry to do the same in order "to remain competitive", by focusing on how, when, and where consumers want to view content (Weinberg et al., 2021). Another chance for movie theaters to take advantage of is to look into operational ways to boost their usage capacity, which was already an issue prior to the pandemic: Weinberg et al. (2021) use data from a prominent movie-theater chain in the Americas from 2015, to show that even during peak hours, a full movie theater operated at half of its total capacity on average.

Movie-going has a "social dimension", since spectators "share the consumption" with each other. Its "venue" is very appealing and traditional, with very particular "consumption conditions" and aesthetics. Not only movie-viewing, but also sound and image quality, the "big screen", seating arrangement, and the sale of typical cinema food and beverages make it a unique experience. Last but not least, movie-theater exhibition is essential for the release of "feature films" (Weinberg et al., 2021).

In an interview written by Torres (2021), Tiago Guedes, director of "Glória", the first Portuguese series on Netflix (which totally invested in it), stated that despite the "development of stories and characters streaming platforms allow (especially in series), and cinema unlikely allows", it got to a situation of "overpopulation" in which such a quantity of series produced end up making the audience "open many doors and then not finish them all, leaving many contents half seen". As a director, Guedes misses "the dark, the movie-theater room, and the big screen, in which our connection is always different from what it is in our computer or smartphone screens". He also mentions that "for those who have so much work building images, it is a bit painful".

2.4. Consumers' Purchase Behaviors and Brand Valuations

2.4.1. Purchase Behaviors

Consumer Engagement (CE)

Literature presents "consumer engagement" as "a vehicle for creating, building and enhancing consumer relationships" (Brodie et al., 2013). It is generally viewed as a "strategic imperative for establishing and sustaining a competitive advantage", and a "valuable predictor of future business performance" (Sedley & Perks, 2008). Neff (2007) adds that CE is "a primary driver of sales growth".

Brodie et al. (2013) identify five CE sub-processes which compose its "interplay": "learning", "sharing", "advocating", "socializing", and "co-developing" (cf. Resnick, 2001). The same authors identify an emotional dimension of CE as well, as "affective attitudes directed toward specific engagement objects", composed of a sense of gratitude, empathy, trust, safety, and belonging felt by consumers when engaging in a certain brand or community, which in turn highlights a social dimension of CE.

When subscribing to a streaming platform, and frequently consuming its content, individuals engage to a relationship, which has also a cognitive dimension, as they build "value-laden relationships by sharing information and experiences" (Brodie et al., 2013).

Purchase Intention (PI)

Purchase Intention is one of the pivotal constructs that have been used by advertising scholars and practitioners (Spears & Singh, 2004). It refers to "personal action tendencies relating to a brand" (Ostrom, 1969). As a predictor of consumer behavior, PI is "consumer's willingness to buy a given product at a specific time or in a specific situation" (Lu, Chang, & Chang, 2014). The distinction between "intentions" and "attitudes" is crucial (Spears & Singh, 2004): whereas attitudes are summary evaluations, intentions represent "a person's motivation in the sense of his or her conscious plan to exert effort to carry out a behavior" (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993).

A successful video production is one that "actively interacts" with subscribers, attracting them each time they rewatch it (Titova, 2021), and resulting in regular consumption, leading to behaviors like "binge-watching" (Podara et al., 2019).

Willingness-to-Pay (WTP)

Willingness-to-Pay (WTP) is the "maximum amount of money a consumer is willing to spend for a product or service" (Cameron & James, 1987; Krishna, 1991). Being aware of a consumer's or potential consumer's WTP concerning a specific product or service is crucial for firms to be able to manage decisions such as pricing or new product's development (Breidert et al., 2006). According to Homburg et al. (2005), customers are willing to pay a higher price for a product or service when their satisfaction with it is high, and contrarily when it is low.

Streaming's "all you can eat" type of consumption is an enhancer of subscribers' WTP, since these pay an affordable price once for a monthly or yearly subscription, and then pay as little as possible for any additional released production (Waldfogel, 2018). This is not encountered by spectators in movie-theaters, since for each film one ticket is paid.

2.4.2. Brand Valuations

Brand Affect (BA)

Brand Affect is defined by Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001) as "a brand's potential to elicit a positive emotional response in the average consumer as a result of its use". The same authors point it as a spontaneous and immediate process than can lead to greater commitment in the form of attitudinal loyalty, willingness-to-pay, and purchase intention. Based on these authors' study, while the hedonic value present in a product category is significantly positively related to BA, the utilitarian value of a product category is significantly negatively related to it.

Streaming platforms use segmentation for the process of adaptability to the new digital panorama (Dastidar, 2020), and currently the pandemic panorama, which arouses great interest in the audience. More precisely, the "Netflix effect" (Matrix, 2014) allows streaming platforms to respond to consumers' expectations about what they want to watch, where, and how.

Brand Trust (BT)

Brand Trust can be defined as "the willingness of the average consumer to rely on the ability of the brand to perform its stated function" through "the belief that the brand is willing and able to deliver on its promises" (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001; Rajavi et al., 2019). It is generated when consumers' evaluation of a brand's offerings is positive, in terms of safety, honesty, and reliability on that brand (Doney & Cannon, 1997).

BT involves a well-thought and carefully considered process, more deliberately reasoned than BA (Chaudhuri & Holbrook, 2001). According to Keh and Xie (2009), consumers' trust in a brand is a crucial attribute for enabling positive consumer-brand relationships. It also has an impact on factors such as sustaining market share and price flexibility, related with marketing results (Gommans et al., 2001).

Streaming platforms offer personalized content to subscribers, based on their preferences and tastes, thus the latter feel close to the platform's brand, and believe that it is honest and safe.

Brand Loyalty (BL)

Brand Loyalty refers to "a deeply held commitment to rebuy and repatronize a preferred product or service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same brand or same brand-set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behavior" (Oliver, 1999).

BL is classified under two categories - attitudinal and behavioral loyalty - which suggests that it is a dimensional concept (Rundle-Thiele & Bennett, 2001). Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) argue that BA and BT both contribute to BL, which in turn contributes significantly to market share and relative price. High levels of trust and loyalty to a brand result in high satisfaction, high repurchase intention, and consequently brand wealth (Amoroso et al., 2021).

By feeling emotionally attached to and trusting the consumed platform's brand, subscribers also feel loyal to it. Moreover, Covid-19 provoked a large-scale and intensified use of these platforms (Dastidar, 2020), which results in a conservation of loyalty.

Perceived Quality (PQ)

In Rowley (1998), Zeithaml (1987) defines Perceived Quality as a "consumer's judgment about an entity's overall excellence or superiority". PQ results from "a comparison of expectations with a perception of performance" and represents a type of attitude close to satisfaction (without being it) (Rowley, 1998). Indeed, episodes of satisfaction over time lead to positive perceptions of quality (Rowley, 1998).

Previous findings (cf. Sweeney et al., 1999; Teas and Agarwal, 2000) show that PQ has a direct positive impact on the perceived value of different products, as well as an indirect positive impact by reducing perceived risks (Snoj et al., 2004). Finally, there is a need for brands to focus on PQ's factors consumers value the most (Snoj et al., 2004).

As subscribers' expectations are met by platforms' brands, the quality perceived is high (Yoo & Donthu, 2001), and they consider it as a better option than other video platforms (Inpo, 2015), and, especially, than movie-going.

In summary, in a context of growing subscriber-platform relationship, naturally enhanced by a health crisis, the intensity of this enhancement remains to be understood, as well as the extent to which it impacts audience's behaviors and valuations of platforms' brands.

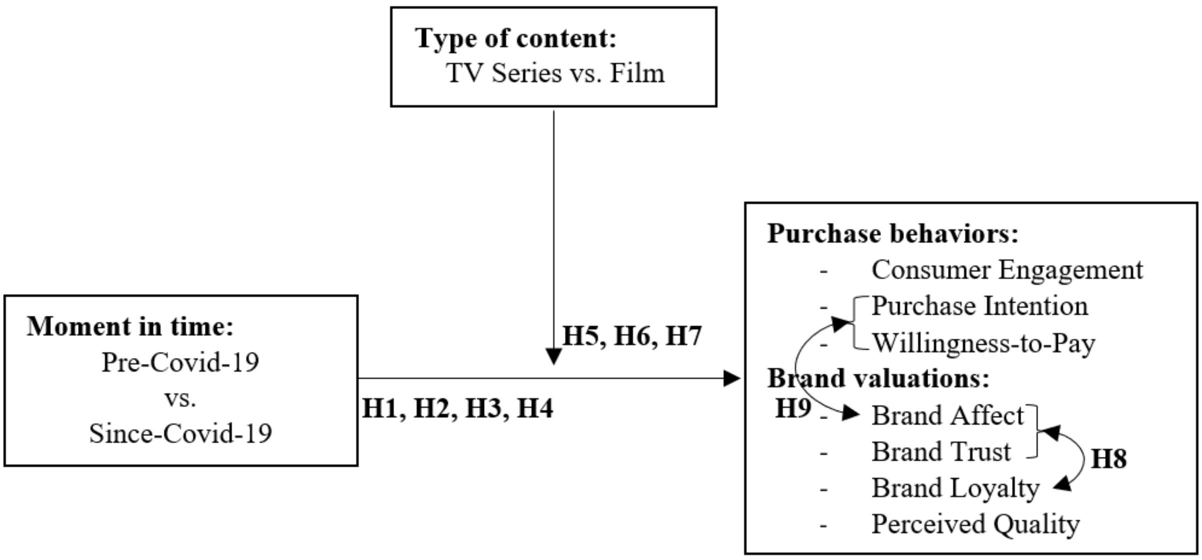
Besides, the author will attempt to identify the potential differences between series and film consumers' behaviors and expectations, since series are an exclusive creation of platforms, whereas films are also produced, sometimes exclusively, for movie theaters.

Additionally, movie-going seems to possibly still be preferred by some consumers and not totally replaced by streaming, and one could ask himself if movie theaters will transit from the "primary channel" of the movie productions' release, replaced by streaming platforms and turned into an alternative channel, or if they will manage to adapt and also "benefit from digital technologies", improving and enhancing cinemagoing experience (Weinberg et al., 2021).

3. Model Framework and Hypotheses

This thesis aims at examining the impact of Covid-19 on audience's purchase behaviors and valuations of streaming platforms' brands. Also, the moderating role of the content type consumed in audience engagement and perceptions of streaming, as well as the potential correlations between certain brand valuations and purchase behaviors and within certain brand valuations are to be understood. For that, an empirical study will be held, in which two relationships will be examined. One is the influence of the moment in time (pre-Covid vs. since-Covid) on purchase behaviors (CE, PI, and WTP) and brand valuations (BA, BT, BL, and PQ). Alongside, content type's (series vs. film) moderation of audience's engagement and perceptions of streaming will be studied.

Figure 1 - Model Framework



Hypotheses

Literature demonstrates that Covid-19 enriched individuals' relationship with streaming video platforms, as an activity that provides them with entertainment, knowledge, and company in unusual times. It seems then probable that audience's engagement and purchase intention of these platforms were intensified, the following hypotheses being proposed:

H1: Covid-19 enhanced audience's engagement with legal streaming platforms.

H2: Covid-19 increased audience's purchase intention of streaming platforms.

Also, the author believes that subscribers' purchase behaviors and valuations of streaming platform's brands improved since Covid, formulating then the following hypotheses:

H3: Covid-19 had a positive impact on audience's valuations (BA, BT, BL, and PQ) of streaming platforms' brands.

H4: Covid-19 had a positive impact on audience's WTP (and willingness-to-upgrade) for streaming platforms' brands.

Furthermore, media mass consumption and new practices, like "binge-watching", implied by streaming, relate more to series than film consumers, as shown by previous literature. Therefore, this study intends to understand if the content type plays a moderating role in audience's engagement and perceptions of streaming, and specifically if series consumers are more engaged with it than film consumers (since these can still be attracted by movie-theaters). The next hypotheses were formulated:

H5: Audience's level of engagement with streaming platforms is moderated by the content type consumed.

H6: Series consumption leads to a higher engagement with streaming platforms than film consumption.

H7: Audience's perceptions of streaming are moderated by the content type consumed.

As mentioned, Chaudhuri and Holbrook (2001) argue that brand affect and trust are positively correlated with loyalty, and that brand affect can lead to greater willingness-to-pay and purchase intention. The author is then interested in examining if high platform's brand affect and trust in that brand are positively correlated with high loyalty to it, and if a high platform's brand affect is positively correlated with high willingness-to-pay and purchase intention of that brand.

H8: A streaming platform's brand affect and consumer trust in that brand are positively correlated with consumer loyalty to it.

H9: A streaming platform's brand affect is positively correlated with the willingness-to-pay and purchase intention of that brand.

4. Methodology and Data Collection

4.1. Research Method

With a view to supporting the secondary data reviewed from previous literature, primary data from participants was collected and analyzed, through Qualtrics Survey Software and SPSS. The research was composed of three components (a pre-test, a pilot-test, and the main study). For each, one online survey was designed - taking the form of a questionnaire - and was posted on a number of social media.

Online questionnaires are a simple, low-cost and flexible method to collect data. They provide participants with convenience since they are the ones deciding the appropriate time and place to answer it (Evans & Mathur, 2005). They also allow question inclusion and variety and have a wide reach in a short period of time (Evans & Mathur, 2005). According to Fleming and Bowden (2009), answers can be automatically inserted into spreadsheets, databases, or statistical packages, resulting in time and money savings, as well as human error reduction (when entering and coding the data). Lastly, the fact that it is individual and anonymous reduces potential fear of public-speaking and others' judgements.

Online questionnaires carry however some disadvantages, such as "nonresponse bias" which happens due to attitude and demographic discrepancies between those included in the sample and those excluded because of unequal Internet access. Also, because the questionnaire is answered online and not in person, the author cannot control participants' disposition, concentration, and individuality while filling the survey (Fleming & Bowden, 2009).

4.2. Sampling Method

The sampling method applied in this study was the convenience-sampling, which refers to a nonrandom sampling that reunites easily accessible individuals of the target population, with specific useful characteristics such as availability at a given time and the willingness to participate (Dörnyei, 2007). It is affordable and easy, and the subjects are readily available (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016).

According to Explorable.com (2009), authors should however be aware that if a randomly selected sample was used, it would be different from the convenience one, since certain subjects might be excluded from the selection, or overrepresented (cf. nonresponse bias).

4.3. Research Tools

As mentioned before, Qualtrics Survey Software and SPSS were the platforms used for this study's data collection. The first allowed the creation and online sharing of the surveys. The data collected in Qualtrics was directly transferred to SPSS, a scientific software that provides advanced statistical analysis, algorithms, text analysis, and others. Below are the descriptions of each component of the study: the pre-test, pilot-test, and main study.

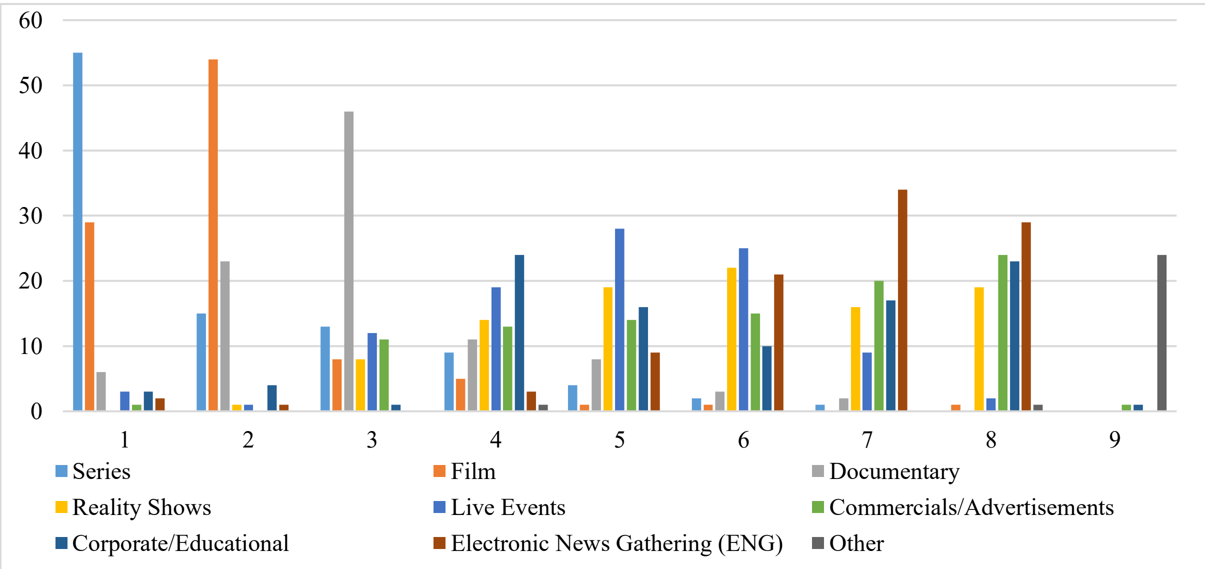
4.3.1. Pre-test

First of all, a pre-test survey (Appendix 1) was shared during five days in October 2021. Its purpose was to identify the two content types preferred by the audience, in order to define which moderating variables were interesting to analyze.

It was composed of four sections. Following an introduction section, respondents were asked to rank content types from the most to the least consumed in legal streaming platforms. A note was included, reminding participants which content types were considered as video contents, according to Massey (2020). Respondents were asked their email addresses in case they wished to ensure their participation in the main survey and were lastly thanked for their participation.

It was shared via WhatsApp, and a total of 109 individuals responded, from which 105 valid responses (100% filled) were considered. The results presented in Figure 2 show that the two content types preferred by participants were series (voted 1st position by 55.56% of them) and films (voted 2nd position by 54.55%). Thus, series and films were the two content types whose moderating roles in audience's engagement and perceptions of streaming were examined.

Figure 2 - Pre-test results - Participants' ranking (from 1 to 9) of content types - Bar Chart



4.3.2. Pilot-test

A pilot-test was conducted in order to correct any fault or lack present in the main survey, before sharing it. It was meant for 12 participants, who filled it entirely and were afterwards interviewed to provide the author with feedback on the understanding and convenience of all questions, manipulations, and transitions between sections.

4.3.3. Main study

The main-study survey (Appendix 2) was available between November 10th and 19th 2021. English and Portuguese versions were available, so that participants could read and fill it in the language they felt most comfortable with. The questionnaire was designed to be as convenient and clear as possible, and eventually pleasant for participants to motivate them not to drop out. The answers were anonymous, and when more intimate questions were asked, a "prefer not to answer" option was available.

The main survey was shared via WhatsApp, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, with the goal of reaching a 400-participant sample. It was additionally sent by email to respondents who had shared their email addresses on the pre-test, to ensure they would participate and make it a more personalized process.

In the end, a total of 714 answers were collected from which 515 were complete and taken into account for the research. The 199 dropped-out answers can be justified by a lack of attention and/or commitment, due to a bad disposition or nonproper concentration (Fleming & Bowden, 2009).

The detailed design and the procedure of the main survey are described in the following subpart.

4.4. Design and Procedure

The main survey aimed at understanding the impact of Covid-19 on audience's purchase behaviors - CE, PI, WTP (and willingness-to-upgrade) -, and valuations - BA, BT, BL, and PQ - of streaming platforms' brands. According to the pre-test's results, series and films were the two preferred content types, thus the research intended besides to understand whether the consumption of series and the consumption of films differently influenced audience's engagement and perceptions of streaming.

The survey was built within a 2 (type of content: series vs. film) x 2 (moment in time: pre-Covid vs. since-Covid) scenarios design:

- **Scenario 1:** The consumption of series on streaming platforms pre-Covid.
- **Scenario 1A:** The consumption of films on streaming platforms pre-Covid.
- **Scenario 2:** The consumption of series on streaming platforms since-Covid.
- **Scenario 2A:** The consumption of films on streaming platforms since-Covid.

It is important to state that scenarios 1 and 1A correspond to the pre-Covid period, that is to neutral circumstances (without the pandemic). Therefore, the author attempted to consider these two scenarios as the study's control group, since the pandemic was not possibly a manipulated treatment, rather an uncontrollable health phenomenon.

The main survey was composed by 5 blocks. The introductory block presented participants with the study's purpose. Block one started by asking participants if they subscribed to at least one streaming video platform (if so, to which and how many). Respondents who were nonsubscribers were then exposed to questions about the reasons why they didn't subscribe, their television consumption, their movie-going experience, and demographic questions. For subscriber participants, the survey followed by asking if they already were subscribers before Covid, the content type they consumed the most, and if they started consuming new content since Covid. Their preferred streaming platform's brand was asked to be considered as their brand reference throughout the survey. The same block assessed their general preference between series and film consumptions, their streaming frequency, and their familiarity with the concept of "binge-watching" (manipulation check 1).

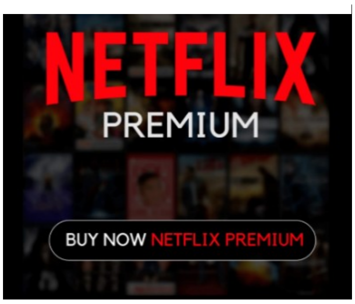
At this stage, a pre-Covid or since-Covid scenario was randomly allocated to more series-oriented participants, and, in parallel, to more film-oriented participants. In each of the four scenarios, participants' CE, PI, BA, BT, BL, and PQ were evaluated through their level of agreement with 25 statements based on literature. Participants' WTP for a streaming platform and willingness-to-upgrade to a premium version of it were also evaluated (the latter based on a visual stimulus). Finally, participants' focus on the randomly allocated scenario was evaluated (manipulation check 2).

Block three was meant for the study's additional analysis and was common to all scenarios. It aimed at assessing respondents' motivations towards movie-going - particularly their frequency, PQ and WTP - through two stimuli (clips from three movies and a text based on two articles). The fourth block concerned demographics (age, gender, nationality, country of current residence, country of residence during the first lockdown, education and monthly income levels, and occupation). The last block thanked respondents for their time and participation.

4.5. Stimuli Development

Image, video, and text stimuli were exposed to respondents throughout the survey, as a tool for more interaction and familiarity with topics.

Figure 3 - Graphic stimulus (A)

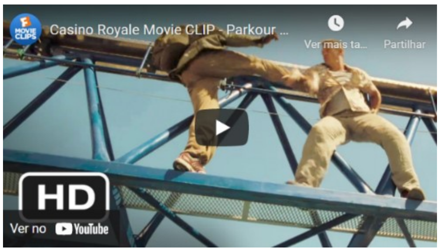


First, graphic stimulus A (Figure 3) presented a Netflix Premium's advertising, for the purpose of evaluating participants' willingness-to-upgrade to a premium version of a streaming platform.

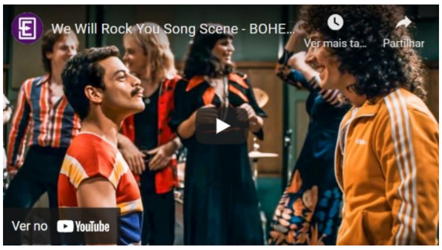
To assess participants' motivations towards movie-going, video stimuli from three different movies were presented: a romance/drama movie *Casablanca* (Curtiz, 1942) (Figure 4, Stimulus B); action movie *007: Casino Royale* (Campbell, 2006) (Stimulus C); musical movie *Bohemian Rhapsody* (Singer, 2018) (Stimulus D). The objective was to understand which film attributes motivate the most the audience to go to movie-theaters when the same film is available on streaming platforms.

Figure 4 - Video stimuli (B, C, and D)

Stimulus B



Stimulus C



Stimulus D

Last, a text (Appendix 3) quoting brief excerpts of two articles exposed the recent growing revenue and awarding of legal streaming services, to measure respondents' level of awareness of this situation, and its potential influence on their perceptions of streaming platforms and movie-going. Here, the author's goal was ultimately to understand if the audience was aware and appreciated the comparability between streaming platforms' own productions and movie-theaters' productions.

4.6. Variables Descriptions

4.6.1. Manipulation Checks

The first manipulation check was meant to understand if participants who consumed more series were indeed more familiar with the series-related concept of "binge-watching". As predicted, and as described further on, this was validated.

A second manipulation check was used to assess participants' attention to the scenario randomly exposed to them, by measuring their level of focus on the "pre-Covid" or "since-Covid" scenario while answering the questions.

4.6.2. Independent Variable

Moment in time: The independent variable to be assessed was the moment in time relatively to the emergence of Covid-19: pre-Covid or since-Covid. It was randomly exposed to respondents, meaning that the latter evaluated their experience of series or film consumption on their favorite streaming platform, either pre or since-Covid.

4.6.3. Dependent Variables

Most dependent variables were assessed by the main survey, on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1- Strongly Disagree to 5- Strongly Agree) (Likert, 1932), both in the "pre-Covid" scenarios (1/1A) and "since-Covid" scenarios (2/2A), for both series and film consumers. The 5-point scale was chosen rather than 7-point, to reduce respondents' potential boredom, while still providing them with a wide answer-option scale.

Consumer Engagement: Subscribers' level of engagement with their favorite streaming platform was evaluated through 1 item adapted from Inpo (2015).

Purchase Intention: PI of legal streaming platforms was assessed through measuring participants' level of agreement with 2 statements adapted from Inpo (2015).

Willingness-to-Pay: WTP was measured by asking respondents how much they were willing to pay for a basic monthly subscription to a streaming platform from 0 to 30€, as well as their willingness-to-upgrade to a premium version of their favorite platform. WTP for one movie-theater ticket was also assessed from 0 to 20€.

Brand Affect: Streaming platform brands' affect was assessed by measuring participants' level of agreement with 2 statements, adapted from Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001).

Brand Trust: Audience's trust in streaming platform brands was assessed by measuring respondents' agreement with 3 statements, based on Chaudhuri & Holbrook's paper (2001).

Brand Loyalty: The level of respondents' loyalty to streaming platform brands was evaluated by measuring respondents' agreement with 2 statements adapted from Yoo & Donthu (2001).

Perceived Quality: The PQ of legal streaming video was assessed by measuring respondents' agreement with 1 statement based on Yoo & Donthu (2001). The same construct was measured relating to movie-going.

4.6.4. Moderating Variable

Type of content: The moderating role, in the studied model, of the content type consumed - series vs. film - was assessed by exposing respondents to manipulations related either to series consumption on streaming platforms (scenarios 1 and 2) or to film consumption on the same platforms (scenarios 1A and 2A). This allocation was defined based on each respondent's answer to the question "In general, do you consume more series or films?".

4.6.5. Covariates

Additional questions present in the survey allowed the assessment of respondents' additional motivations and valuations.

Subscribers' preferences towards streaming platforms: Subscriber participants were asked to how many and which platforms they subscribed to before and since-Covid. Besides, their brand and content preferences before and since-Covid were assessed.

Nonsubscribers' motivations and patterns: The reasons why nonsubscribers didn't subscribe to streaming platforms, as well as their level of engagement with television were analyzed. Also, patterns in terms of nonsubscribers' age, education and income levels were attempted to be identified.

Audience's motivations towards movie-going: The survey's third block was exclusively dedicated at understanding participants' relationship with movie-theaters in a pandemic context. Visual and text stimuli were exposed, to evaluate motivations towards movie-going. The safety participants feel in movie-theaters was also measured, as well as their perceptions of movie-theaters in a context of growing revenue and awarding of streaming platforms.

5. Analysis and Results

5.1. Sampling Characterization

Participants' demographic data collection was made in two groups, to compare them: subscriber participants (445 in a total of 515), and nonsubscriber participants (the remaining 70).

Within subscribers, most were female (77.4%). A 37.8% were aged between 18 and 24, followed by 18.7% aged 45-54, 11.9% aged 55-64, and 11.4% aged 35-44. Only 8.6% were 25-34, 7.9% were 65 or above, and the remaining were 17 or below.

Most subscribers were Portuguese (88%), followed by countries such as Brazil, France, Germany, Angola, USA, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Vietnam, UK, Qatar, China, Lebanon, and the Netherlands. Likewise, most lived in Portugal (87.6%), the remaining living in Austria, Brazil, Cuba, France, Germany, Italy, Kyrgyzsta, Mozambique, the Netherlands, South Africa, Switzerland, UK, USA, and others.

Most subscribers' highest education degree was a bachelor's degree (52.6%), followed by a master's (26.6%), high school (15.6%), doctorate (2.3%), and professional degree (1.8%). Only 0.68% held less than a high school degree, and 0.9% didn't answer. Almost half (47.5%) stated to be currently employed, 30.3% students, 8.1% working-students, 7.5% retired, 3.6% unemployed, and 3.6% didn't answer. Subscribers' monthly individual net income was below

500€ for 19.6%, between 501€ and 1000€ for 13.3%, 1001€-1500€ for 13.3%, 1501€-2000€ for 11.9%, and above 2000€ for 23.4%. A significative 18.5% didn’t answer.

Regarding nonsubscribers, the majority was likewise female (79.3%). Out of the seventy nonsubscribers, twenty-one were aged 18-24, thirteen were 45-54, thirteen over 64, twelve 55-64, five 25-34, four 35-44, and only two aged under 18. Most were Portuguese (57 out of 70), and the remaining were French, Angolan, Swiss, Mozambican, Brazilian, Spanish, Luxembourg, and Singapore. The majority was currently living in Portugal, followed by France, Switzerland, Poland, Singapore, Spain, and the UK.

Concerning nonsubscribers’ education level, almost half held a bachelor’s degree, thirteen a master’s, thirteen a high school’s, eight a doctorate, and three a professional degree. None held less than a high school degree, although one didn’t answer. Out of seventy, thirty-two stated to be currently employed, twenty-three were students, ten were retired, two unemployed, two working-students, and only one didn’t answer. Finally, fourteen nonsubscribers’ monthly individual net income was below 500€, eight between 501€ and 1000€, six 1001€-1500€, ten 1501€-2000€, and sixteen over 2000€. Sixteen didn’t answer.

5.2. Scales Reliability

Despite the fact that literature was the ground for the selection of the items used to measure dependent variables, some were adopted to this study’s topics. It is thus important to evaluate the reliability of these items’ scales to guarantee the consistency of results. Different tests were conducted according to the number of items used for each variable, using the pre-Covid scenario as a reference (and then, checking if results were alike in the since-Covid case).

First, bivariate correlation tests were conducted for constructs with 2 item-scales (PI, BA, and BL), through the Pearson correlation. To be able to conduct Pearson’s correlation analyses, the author verified that the data met specific assumptions: variables’ continuity, approximately normal distribution, a linear relationship, and without significant outliers.

Results from Appendix 4 show that all three variables were measured by statistically significantly positively correlated items (all p’s<0.0001), and nearly perfectly correlated ($0.5<r<1$ for both PI and BA and $r=0.313$ for BL) (Terry & Mae, 2016). The same conclusions were drawn in the case of since-Covid’s same scales.

Concerning BT-construct, with a 3 item-scale, the measure of the Cronbach's Alpha was applied to assure items' internal consistency, according to George & Mallery's (2003) rules of thumb (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). The alpha showed a good internal consistency ($0.8 \leq \alpha < 0.9$). None of the items' removal would result in a higher alpha, thus the author decided to maintain the 3 items for BT's evaluation. In the since-Covid's same scales case, an acceptable consistency was observed ($0.7 \leq \alpha < 0.8$) and the 3 items were also maintained.

5.3. Manipulation Check Results

To remind the reader of the four scenarios exposed in this study, Table 1 should be considered:

Table 1 - Moments in time's descriptions

Scenarios	**Description**
1/ 1A	Consumption of series or films pre-Covid → Neutral circumstances
2/ 2A	Consumption of series or films since-Covid → Pandemic circumstances

Manipulation Check 1:

Findings from the main survey showed that series and films are the two content types preferred by subscribers both pre and since-Covid, and that series are more consumed than films (70.8% consumption vs. 29.2%). These results are aligned with the pre-test's ones.

To check if participants who consumed more series had more knowledge of the series' field than film consumers, levels of familiarity with "binge-watching" were compared, in both pre and since-Covid scenarios, through independent-samples t-tests (Table 2).

For that, the author verified that the following assumptions were met: the dependent variables' scales' continuity, two-group separation of independent variables (here series consumers vs. film consumers), observations independence, significant outliers' absence, the approximately normal distribution of the dependent variable in each group, and variance homogeneity.

Table 2 - Manipulation Check 1:
Participants' level of familiarity with "binge-watching" - Independent-Samples t-tests

	Series consumers		**Film consumers**			
Pre-Covid	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	2.67	1.75	1.97	1.46	3.056	0.003
Since-Covid	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	2.78	1.81	2.38	1.74	1.506	0.133

As predicted, the mean of the level of familiarity with the concept is lower for film consumers in both scenarios, however without statistical significance in the since-Covid scenario (Sig. = 0.133), which means that film consumers got more acquainted with the concept during the pandemic ($M_{Pre\text{-}Covid} = 1.97$ vs. $M_{Since\text{-}Covid} = 2.38$).

Manipulation Check 2:

Concerning participants' level of attention to the exposed scenario, a one-sample t-test was conducted using the mean of the pre-Covid scenario as the test-value.

To be able to conduct a one-sample t-test, certain assumptions were verified by the author: dependent variable's continuity, observations' independence, outliers' absence, and the approximately normal distribution of the dependent variable.

Table 3 - Manipulation Check 2:
Level of participants' attention to since-Covid scenario - One-Sample t-test

Test-value ($M_{AttentionPre\text{-}CovidScenario}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.62	2.99	1.18	-8.101	0.000

Table 3 shows that the attention level's mean was statistically significantly higher towards the pre-Covid scenario, with $t(230)= -8.101$, $p=0.000$. This led the author to conclude that it was easier for participants to think about their consumption habits in neutral circumstances than in pandemic circumstances, which suggests that the changes aroused by the pandemic are still not fully set in individuals' minds.

5.4. Main Results

5.4.1. Covid-19's effect in audience's engagement and purchase intention of legal streaming video platforms

H1: *Covid-19 enhanced audience's engagement with legal streaming platforms.*

The evolution of audience's engagement with streaming platforms since-Covid was measured through three components: the addition of new subscriptions; streaming's weekly frequency; and Consumer Engagement construct.

First, findings showed that out of 443 respondents, 173 didn't subscribe to any new streaming platform since-Covid. Among the remaining 270, four subscribed to 5 new ones, 17 to 4, 40 to

3, 81 to 2, and 128 to 1 only. On average, one new platform was subscribed to by each respondent since-Covid. Despite the mean difference being negative relatively to that of the number of platforms respondents already subscribed to pre-Covid, there was an addition of platforms.

One-samples t-tests were run for analyzing the next two components while comparing both time scenarios. With previously mentioned assumptions verified, and using pre-Covid scenario means as test-values, the evolution of streaming weekly frequency was first analyzed:

Table 4 - Streaming's weekly frequency since-Covid - One-Sample t-test

Test-value ($M_{StreamingFrequencyPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
2.90	3.37	0.90	7.933	0.000

Table 4 indicates that streaming weekly frequency's mean since-Covid (M=3.37, SD=0.90) is statistically significantly higher than pre-Covid's, with t(231)=7.933, p=0.000. Since Covid, subscribers watch content from 1-3 to 4-6 times a week (almost daily) whereas before Covid, they watched it rarely or ultimately 1-3 times a week.

In respect to the evolution of CE-construct, the author observed that there was no statistically significant difference between the two moments in time. The level of CE-mean only increased by 0.02 since Covid, with p=0.71 (Table 5).

Table 5 - CE with streaming platforms since-Covid - One-Sample t-test

Test-value ($M_{CEPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.92	3.94	0.78	0.372	0.71

Thus, H1 was only partially validated.

H2: *Covid-19 increased audience's purchase intention of streaming platforms.*

Concerning purchase intention of platforms' brands, a one-sample t-test was equally run (Table 6). Even though PI-mean only increased by 0.075 since-Covid, it was a statistically significant increase (p=0.047). Thus, the author validated H2.

Table 6 - PI of streaming platforms' brands since-Covid - One-Sample t-test

Test-value ($M_{PIPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
4.09	4.16	0.57	1.994	0.047

5.4.2. Covid-19's effect in audience's purchase behaviors and valuations of legal streaming video platforms' brands

H3: *Covid-19 had a positive impact on audience's valuations (BA, BT, BL, and PQ) of streaming platforms' brands.*

To measure the evolution of the four valuations, one-sample t-tests were conducted to compare pre and since-Covid means:

Table 7 - Brand Affect, Trust, Loyalty, and Perceived Quality comparisons between pre and since-Covid - One-Sample t-tests

BA since-Covid				
Test-value ($M_{BAPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.53	3.62	0.84	1.612	0.108
BT since-Covid				
Test-value ($M_{BTPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.76	3.76	0.62	0.066	0.948
BL since-Covid				
Test-value ($M_{BLPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.44	3.51	0.84	1.302	0.194
PQ since-Covid				
Test-value ($M_{PQPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.90	4.00	0.73	2.057	0.041

According to Table 7, BA and BL means didn't increase statistically significantly since-Covid ($p>0.05$), and BT-mean stagnated. However, PQ increased statistically significantly ($p=0.041$), which can suggest that subscribers evaluate more positively more objective constructs, like PQ, than emotional ones. H3 was thus partially validated.

H4: *Covid-19 had a positive impact on audience's WTP (and willingness-to-upgrade) for streaming platforms' brands.*

Concerning WTP-mean for a monthly subscription, Table 8 shows that it actually decreased since-Covid, though not statistically significantly ($p=0.067$). However, willingness-to-upgrade mean increased statistically significantly, with $t(230)=3.345$, $p=0.001$, partially validating H4. This may indicate that Netflix Premium's visual stimulus had an effect on participants.

Table 8 - WTP for a basic monthly subscription and Willingness-to-upgrade comparisons between pre and since-Covid - One-Sample t-tests

WTP since-Covid (in €)				
Test-value ($M_{WTPPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
11.37	10.73	5.21	-1.838	0.067
Willingness to upgrade since-Covid				
Test-value ($M_{WTUpgradePre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
2.62	2.87	1.12	3.345	0.001

5.4.3. The moderating effect of the content type consumed in audience's engagement and perceptions of legal streaming video platforms

H5: *Audience's level of engagement with streaming platforms is moderated by the content type consumed.*

Linear regression analyses were conducted in order to study the influence of the content type (series or films) in both streaming's weekly frequency and CE-construct. To conduct it, the author first verified that the data met the following assumptions: variables' continuity, linear relationship, observations independence, data homoscedasticity, and no significant outliers.

First, streaming's weekly frequencies were analyzed:

Table 9 - Linear regression of consumers' streaming weekly frequency based on content type

Content type		
Model Summary		**ANOVA**
R	*R^2*	*Regression Sig.*
0.324	0.105	0.000

Table 9 demonstrates that a positive correlation is present between the content type consumed and streaming weekly frequency (R=0.324). Also, 10.5% of streaming frequency's variation can be explained by participants' age. Finally, Sig.=0.000, meaning that this regression model is statistically significant: the content type consumed has a significant role in streaming's weekly frequency.

Regarding content type's influence in CE with streaming platforms, Table 10 shows that a positive correlation was observable (R=0.139), and that the content type has a statistically significant role in CE (Sig.=0.035). Thus, H5 was validated.

Table 10 - Linear regression of CE with streaming platforms based on content type

Content type		
Model Summary		**ANOVA**
R	*R^2*	*Regression Sig.*
0.139	0.019	0.035

H6: *Series consumption leads to a higher engagement with streaming platforms than film consumption.*

Since the moderating role of content type in audience's engagement with streaming is present, a comparison between series and film's degrees of engagement was conducted, hypothesizing that series led to a higher engagement.

First, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare series and film consumers' streaming weekly frequencies. As shown in Table 11, before Covid, film consumers' streaming weekly frequency mean was statistically significantly lower than series consumers' (p=0.000). Likewise, since-Covid, the difference was statistically significant (p=0.000). Indeed, there is a pattern in the content type's streaming weekly frequency that extends from pre-Covid to today: in general, series consumers stream content more regularly in a week than film consumers.

Table 11 - Series and film consumers' weekly streaming's frequencies comparison - Independent-Samples t-tests

	Series consumption		***Film consumption***			
Pre-Covid	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	3.07	0.85	2.52	0.68	4.609	0.000
Since-Covid	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	3.54	0.89	2.89	0.76	5.556	0.000

To compare the CE-construct between series and film consumers, the same test was conducted. Table 12 shows that, again, film consumers' CE-mean was statistically significantly lower than series consumers', both pre and since-Covid (p=0.028 and p=0.035, respectively).

H6 was then validated.

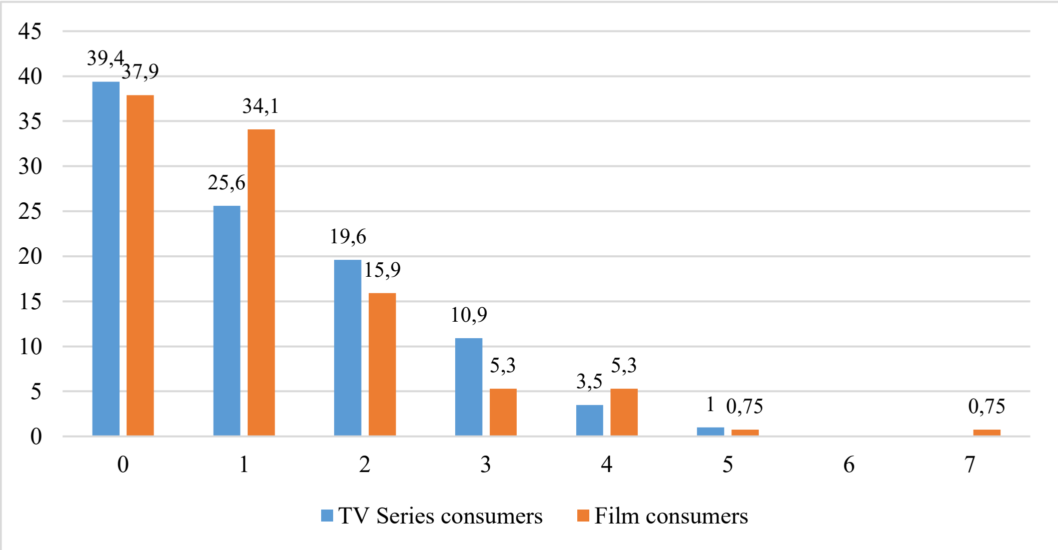
Table 12 - Series and film consumer engagement comparison - Independent-Sample t-tests

	Series consumption		***Film consumption***			
Pre-Covid	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	4.01	0.75	3.72	0.97	2.228	0.028
Since-Covid	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	4.01	0.75	3.76	0.84	2.125	0.035

However, it is interesting to note an increase in film consumers' engagement from pre-Covid to today against a stability in the case of series consumers' (Table 12).

Also, Figure 5 demonstrates that despite the percentage of series and film consumers having subscribed to new streaming platforms since-Covid being very close, it was slightly higher for film consumers (62.1% against 60.6% for series consumers). Also, there was a percentage (despite small) of film consumers having subscribed to 7 new platforms since-Covid. It can also be noted that the percentage of film consumers having added one platform to their subscriptions was almost 10 points higher than that of series consumers.

Figure 5 - Series and film consumers (in %) per number of streaming platforms added (from 0 to 7) - Bar Chart



This shows that despite series consumers being more engaged to streaming, film consumers' engagement also stands out in certain aspects, pointing the consequences of the impossibility of movie-going due to movie theaters' closure.

H7: *Audience's perceptions of streaming are moderated by the content type consumed.*

Besides, the author was interested in understanding if the content type had an influence on the perceptions of streaming, for which a linear regression analysis was conducted:

Table 13 - Linear regression of perceptions of streaming based on content type

Content type		
Model Summary		**ANOVA**
R	R^2	*Regression Sig.*
0.078	0.006	0.101

Table 13 shows that there is almost no correlation between the content type and the perceptions of streaming (R=0.078), and nearly none of streaming perceptions' variation can be explained by the content type. Since Sig.=0.101, content type has no statistically significant influence in streaming perceptions, rejecting H7.

5.4.4. Correlations between brand valuations and between brand valuations and purchase behaviors

Bivariate Pearson correlations were run for the following two hypotheses testing, to identify the correlations' directions and statistical significance degrees. The correlations were analyzed in both time scenarios, to understand if they were maintained.

H8: *A streaming platform's brand affect and consumer trust in that brand are positively correlated with consumer loyalty to it.*

Table 14 indicates that statistically significant positive correlations were observable between both BA and BT relatively to BL in both time scenarios (p's<0.0001). Also, all four correlations were half-way to perfect with r's=0.52 and r=0.53. The author could then validate H8.

Table 14 - Pearson Correlations between Brand Loyalty, and Brand Affect and Brand Trust

Pre-Covid			
		BA	BT
BL	*Pearson Correlation (r)*	0.52	0.52
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000
Since-Covid			
		BA	BT
BL	*Pearson Correlation (r)*	0.53	0.52
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000

***H9:** A streaming platform's brand affect is positively correlated with the willingness-to-pay and purchase intention of that brand.*

Table 15 - Pearson Correlations between Brand Affect, and WTP and Purchase Intention

Pre-Covid			
		WTP	PI
BA	*Pearson Correlation (r)*	-0.012	0.53
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.858	0.000
Since-Covid			
		WTP	PI
BA	*Pearson Correlation (r)*	0.073	0.58
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.273	0.000

According to Table 15, BA is statistically significantly correlated with PI in both time scenarios (p's<0.0001), positively and nearly perfectly (r=0.53 and r=0.58). However, it is not the case regarding BA and WTP's correlation: in both moments, these are not statistically significantly correlated (p>0.05), with a negative correlation pre-Covid (r=-0.012), and almost no correlation since-Covid (r=0.073). H9 could thus only be partially validated.

The following table summarizes hypotheses testing results:

Table 16 - Hypotheses testing results summary

H1	Partially validated
H2	Validated
H3	Partially validated
H4	Partially validated
H5	Validated
H6	Validated
H7	Rejected
H8	Validated
H9	Partially validated

6. Additional Analysis

6.1. The impact of the model framework on the movie-theater industry

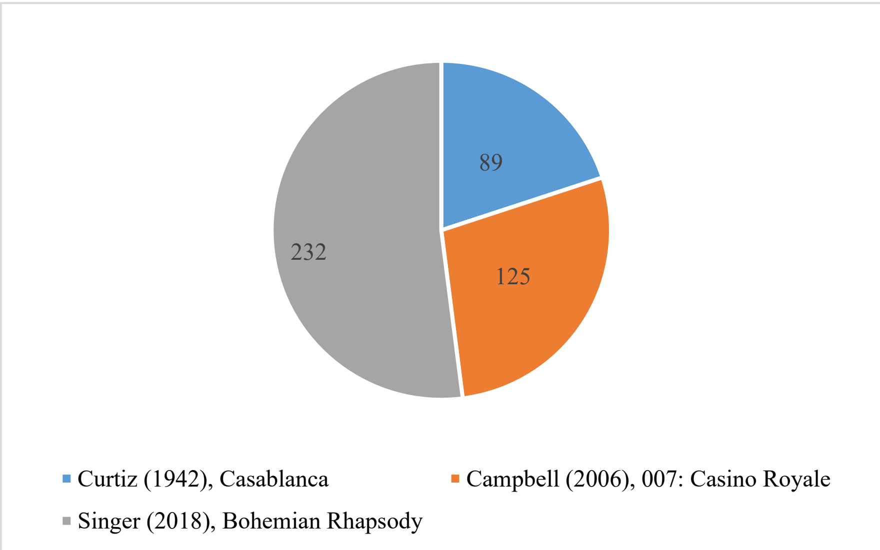
The impact of audience-streaming relationship enhancement on the movie-theater industry was one of the additional topics of this study.

First, the author was interested in examining Covid's impact on audience's movie-going weekly frequency, PQ, and WTP. Appendix 5 presents one-sample t-tests allowing to conclude that both the frequency and WTP means decreased statistically significantly. However, PQ of movie-going decreased without statistical significance (p=0.267), remaining a positive perception of quality.

It is important to point that the decrease in movie-going's frequency is naturally reflected by movie-theaters' closure and/or restrictions in the past almost-2 years. Indeed, subscribers go to movie-theaters every 3-4 months nowadays versus every 2 months pre-Covid, and in a 5-point Likert scale, the degree of safety felt by respondents while in a movie-theater nowadays is 3.96.

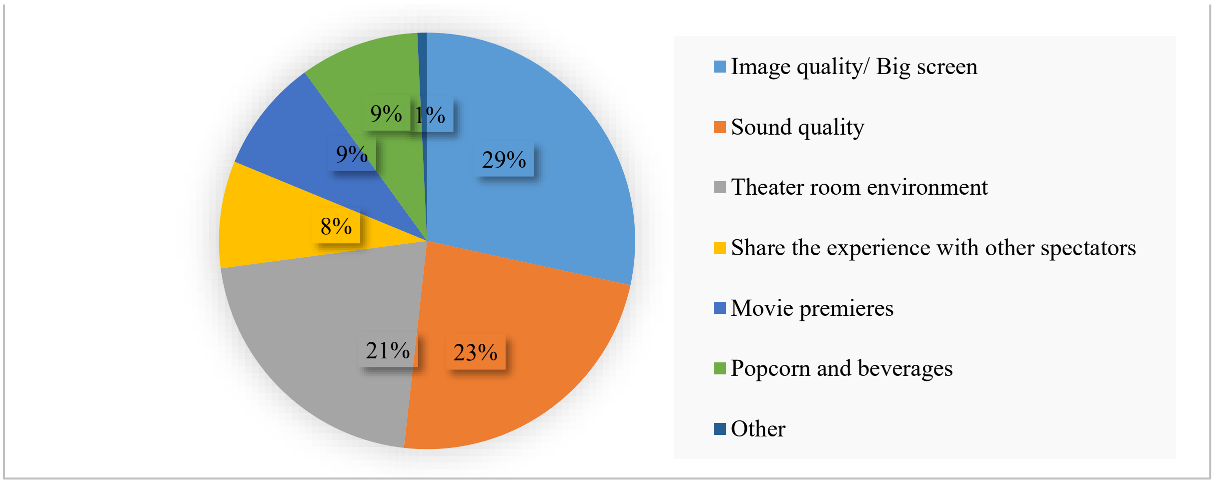
Also, Figure 6 presents the degree to which specific types of films, when also available on streaming platforms, can lead spectators to movie-theaters: musicals (represented by *Bohemian Rhapsody*), selected by 232 respondents; action/adventure (represented by *007: Casino Royale*), selected by 125; romance/drama (represented by *Casablanca*) selected by only 89. This suggests that sound and image quality are the most valued film attributes for movie-going, action/adventure films are a moderate movie-going enhancer, and calmer films justify movie-going for a few individuals only.

Figure 6 - Number of respondents per film chosen for movie-going - Pie Chart



Regarding the reasons that justify movie-going when the film is also available on streaming, Figure 7 shows that the most selected reason is image quality/big screen (selected by 304 respondents), followed by sound quality (250). This is aligned with the previous finding. Following, the selected reasons were movie-theater room environment (226 respondents), popcorn and beverages (99), movie premieres (94), and the sharing of the experience (89). Examples of other mentioned reasons are: "cinephile imaginary", "social program/ hang-out", "isolation", "a movie one is especially interested in", "the fact that one cannot be interrupted".

Figure 7 - Subscribers (in %) per selected reason justifying movie-going - Pie Chart



Finally, regarding streaming platform growing revenue and awarding's influences on both movie-going and streaming, a one-sample t-test (Appendix 6) was run to compare both perception influence's means. The test-value used was the mean influence on the perceptions of streaming (M=3.23, SD=0.717), meaning a neutral to slightly positive influence.

Despite the mean influence on the perceptions of movie-going being slightly less positive, it was a non-statistically significant difference ($p>0.05$). Therefore, even if the referred streaming situation has a positive influence on the perceptions of both streaming and movie-going, it is slightly less positive on movie-going's perceptions. This may suggest that subscribers support the growing popularity of streaming, or at least don't have a negative image of it relatively to movie-theater industry, rather a better one. However, it is important to note that subscribers' mean awareness of the situation was 3 points in 5, so half respondents were not totally aware of it.

Thus, audience's engagement, will and perceptions of movie-going seem to have been slightly negatively affected by Covid-19.

6.2. The moderating roles of age, education level, and income level in the engagements with streaming and movie-going

The analysis present in Appendix 7 first assessed the roles of the three demographics in the decision of engaging or not with streaming. Independent-samples t-tests were conducted to compare subscribers and nonsubscribers' demographic means.

Subscribers' age mean is statistically significantly lower than nonsubscribers', with $t=-2.425$, $p=0.017$. Subscribers are on average 25-44, whereas nonsubscribers are 35-54. However, in terms of education level, the mean difference is not statistically significant ($p>0.05$), although slightly lower for subscribers: on average, both hold a bachelor's degree. The same is observable in the income level's mean difference: it has no statistical significance ($p=0.503$), subscribers' income mean being lower by only 0.16. Both average monthly individual net incomes are in the interval 1501€-2000€.

Thus, there is a statistically significant pattern in age: nonsubscribers are in general older individuals than subscribers. However, it is not the case in education and income levels, those being very close between both consumer types.

In a second moment, the roles of the three demographics in movie-going were examined by conducting linear regression analyses (Appendix 8). These demonstrate that practically no correlation is present between participants' age and movie-going weekly frequency ($R=0.016$), not being a statistically significant regression model ($p>0.05$).

The same is observable for both regression models with respondents' education level and monthly income level: there is almost no correlation between each and movie-going frequency ($R=0.074$ and $R=0.024$, respectively), and $p>0.05$ in both cases, meaning these regression models are not good fits for data.

As such, neither age, education, nor income levels moderate movie-going's engagement.

6.3. Patterns in streaming platforms' brands consumed

Survey findings undoubtedly represented Netflix's popularity: 390 respondents in 444 stated that Netflix was their most consumed platform, followed by HBO, Disney+, Apple TV+, Filmin, Amazon Prime Video, Mubi (by preference order), and still platforms such as YouTube Premium, Canal+, Opto (SIC), and RTP Play.

Among the new subscriptions added since-Covid, the most common were to Netflix (173 respondents in 495), again followed by HBO, Disney+, Amazon Prime Video, Filmin, Apple TV+, YouTube Premium, Mubi, Hulu, and still others like Canal+, Curiosity Stream, Eleven, F1 TV, Gymboco, Opto (SIC), Peacock, Sport TV, TVI Player, Ivi, and KinoPoisk.

This suggested that, even though Netflix continues to lead legal streaming services (continuing to be subscribed to by those who weren't before Covid), a wide set of new platforms were subscribed to since the pandemic emerged. This puts forward individuals' additional attention and sensitivity to what the OTT market offers, especially during lockdowns, being thus willing to subscribe to new platforms.

6.4. Patterns in content types consumed

Figure 8 - Number of respondents per content type watched pre-Covid - Histogram Chart

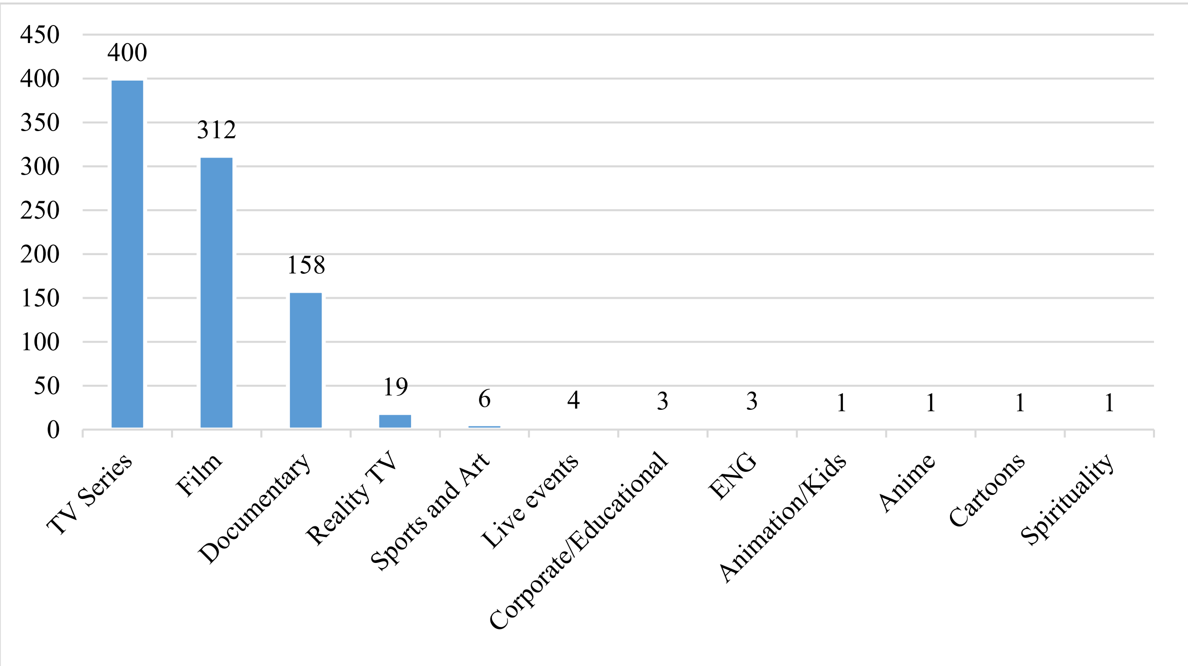
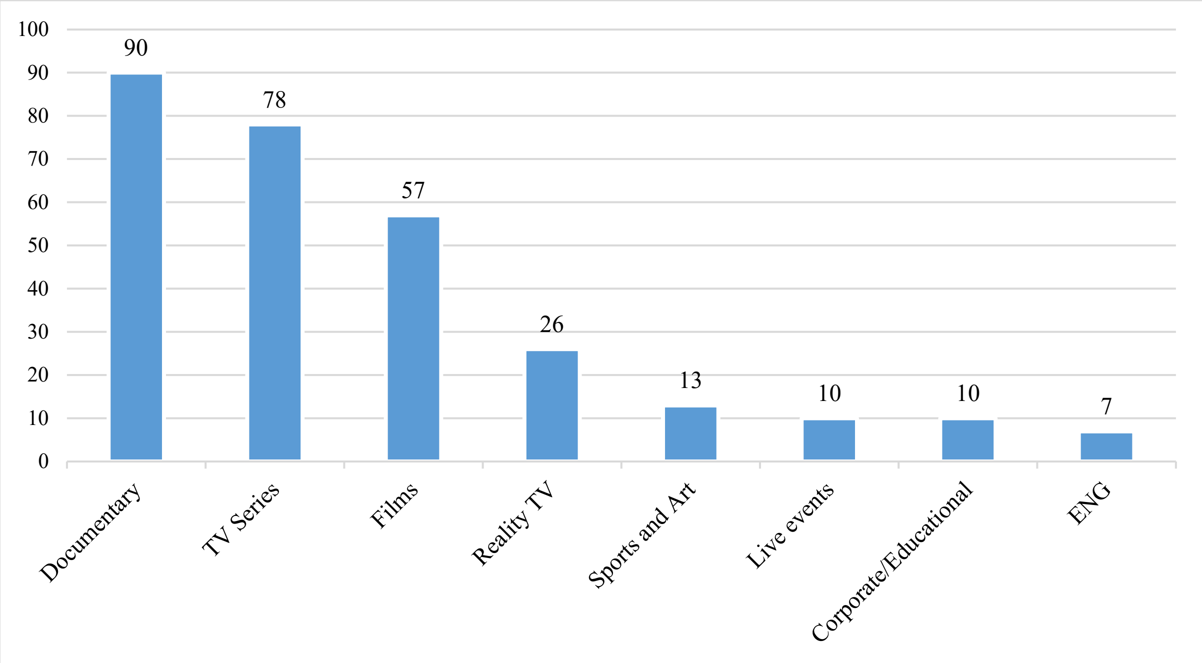


Figure 9 - Number of respondents per new content type watched since-Covid - Histogram Chart

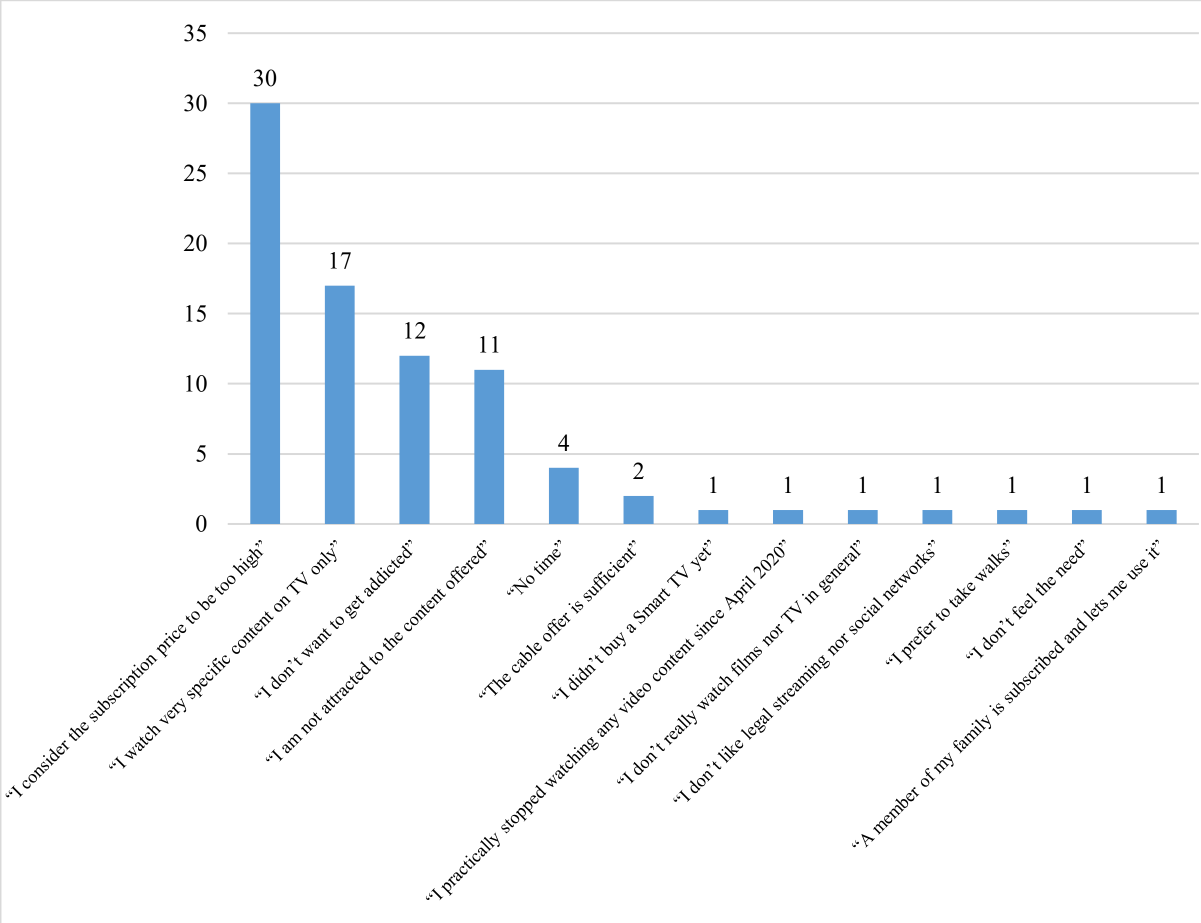


Figures 8 and 9 indicate that despite, as concluded before, a wide set of new streaming platforms having been subscribed to since-Covid, the same is not observable in the new content types consumed: no different contents from before Covid-19's were added. However, the author noted that there was a remarkable addition of documentary consumers, superior to that of series and films. This may suggest that individuals have been searching for interesting content that brings them knowledge, despite series and films maintaining 1st and 2nd positions.

6.5. Nonsubscribers' behaviors

First, among the reasons why nonsubscriber respondents decided not to subscribe to any streaming platform, the following, presented in Figure 10, were selected or mentioned:

Figure 10 - Number of respondents per reason for not subscribing to a streaming platform - Histogram Chart



Regarding nonsubscribers' relationship with television, among the 70 nonsubscribers, 14 stated not to watch TV. Appendix 9 shows that, among the remaining who watched TV, they started watching it more regularly since-Covid, however not statistically significantly more. Since the pandemic emerged, they watch TV on average 4-6 times per week, almost daily, identically to series consumers' streaming frequency.

Concerning nonsubscribers' movie-going weekly frequency, Appendix 10 shows that, like subscribers, its mean is lower since-Covid, meaning that nonsubscribers have also reduced their movie-going's frequency in pandemic circumstances, particularly due to movie-theaters' closure and restrictions. However, their movie-going frequency's mean is always statistically significantly lower than subscribers' (p's<0.05), with a higher mean difference since-Covid (-0.544).

Nowadays, nonsubscribers go to movie-theaters on average 1-3 times a year, versus every 3-4 months in subscribers' case. This may point, regarding movie-watching, an easier replacement of movie-theaters by television than by streaming platforms.

Concerning nonsubscribers' perceived quality of movie-going, its mean didn't differ statistically significantly between pre and since-Covid: it decreased slightly, remaining a quite positive PQ of movie-going (M=3.68 in a 5-scale), very close to subscribers' PQ of movie-going. The same was observable in WTP for a movie ticket: a non-statistically significantly mean difference between the two moments. Nonsubscribers are willing to pay on average 7.53€ for a movie ticket since-Covid, a slightly higher value than subscribers (WTP=6.39€).

7. Conclusions and Implications

This thesis objective was to examine how Covid-19 influences audience's engagement with legal streaming video, through the study of audience's behaviors and valuations of streaming platforms' brands. Also, it aimed at understanding if there is a moderating role of the content type consumed - series vs. film - in audience's engagement and perceptions of streaming, as well as positive correlations between certain brand valuations and purchase behaviors and within certain brand valuations.

Results from RQ1 show that indeed audience's engagement was intensified since the pandemic, with new platforms being subscribed to and streaming's frequency increasing significantly. As predicted, the intention of purchasing these platforms has remarkably increased since-Covid, which aligns with previous literature on pandemic's enhancement of entertainment tools like streaming (Dastidar, 2020), and how the ability of controlling what, when, and where to watch content, as well as having expectations met by platforms, raised audience's interest in streaming (Titova, 2021, and Lozic, 2021): the "Netflix effect", as Matrix (2014) mentioned.

Concerning RQ2, despite a non-significant increase of BA and BL, a stagnation of BT, and a decrease of WTP, both PQ and willingness-to-upgrade for streaming platforms significantly increased since the pandemic. This follows Weinberg et al.'s (2021) theory that streaming platforms are gaining popularity and powerfully facing the movie-theater industry as a new way of consuming video content, specifically films.

Findings from RQ3 show that a moderating role of the content type in audience's engagement and frequency of streaming is present, indicating a pattern: series consumers' engagement has been superior to film consumers' one from pre-Covid to today, despite an increase in film consumers' engagement. This aligns with series industry's growth, nourishing streaming platforms daily and allowing a larger imaginary than movies (Torres, 2021). It seems thus natural that series consumers are more engaged with streaming platforms, a more attractive service for them than for film consumers (also attracted to movie theaters). The perceptions of streaming were found nonetheless not to be influenced by content type.

RQ4's findings indicate positive and close-to-perfect correlations between the mentioned brand valuations and purchase behaviors and within brand valuations (except for BA-WTP's correlation which was absent). This is aligned with Chaudhuri & Holbrook (2001), Breidert et al. (2006), Homburg et al. (2005), and Amoroso et al.'s (2021) previous research.

Further analysis allowed conclusions such as pandemic-streaming relationship's slightly negative effect in movie-theater industry, with limited room for movie theaters to evolve. However, findings show that, despite being fragile, the movie-theater industry is definitely more positively perceived by film consumers. Following Weinberg et al. (2021), this points an opportunity for movie-theaters to work on adaptability, capacity and convenience as yet an essential exhibitor for film consumers.

Additional interpretations are first that subscribers are in general younger individuals than nonsubscribers. Also, within the brands most consumed by subscribers, Netflix maintains its leadership, followed by other giants. However, different brands have elevated and drawn audience's attention, in particular during lockdowns. The same didn't happen with content types consumed, despite that not so popular contents have been gaining popularity.

Finally, nonsubscribers' behaviors towards television were concluded to be similar to subscribers' behaviors towards streaming platforms, the same not being observable towards movie-going, with subscribers surprisingly going more often to movie-theaters.

7.1. Theoretical Implications

It was concluded that, indeed, pandemic circumstances have enhanced subscriber-platform relationships, with individuals locked down considering the entertainment offered by the Internet as a "safe harbor", when their needs of "belonging" and "socially connecting" (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), as well as their capacity of adapting to the digital world (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020), are at their peak. This study contributed to the subject, by showing how behaviors and brand valuations, particularly CE, PI, and PQ of streaming platforms have improved since-Covid.

It was as well possible to give evidence to the presence of a moderating role of the content type in audience's engagement with streaming, and, particularly, to the fact that series consumers are more engaged to streaming, whereas film consumers can also satisfy film consumption through movie-going.

Also, it is particularly interesting to put the previous comments in parallel with new consumer behaviors and minds in a stay-at-home context. The quest for entertainment and knowledge while escaping from loneliness and boredom was shown to be aligned with their satisfaction with what their homes could offer, particularly with video entertainment (Dastidar, 2020).

Besides, the additional analysis showed that despite being affected by the pandemic, movie-theaters' PQ remains positive and there are specific film attributes and reasons to choose movie-going over streaming. These are valuable bottom lines for a redefinition and uplift of movie theaters.

Overall, this thesis contributes to the understanding of the new video entertainment panorama that has been emerging with the rise of digitalization, and ultimately to how a health crisis, present for two years now, had the ability to socially and psychologically modify consumers' behaviors and choices.

7.2. Managerial Implications

In terms of managerial implications, this thesis contributes to literature about the Over-the-Top (OTT) sector and the omnipresence it has recently gained in a new digital and global panorama, as well as its services' upgraded quality and creativity facing more exigent audience's expectations, as a "social process" (Titova, 2021). It is aligned with Lozic's (2021) statement that even being less sensitive, the OTT sector is not fully protected from economic crises.

Indeed, it is suggested that the sector has managerial efforts to make in order to maintain the present strong relationship of streaming with audience and making it an experience as fulfilling as possible, always in the direction of quality content to follow new behaviors and expectations (Kirk & Rifkin, 2020).

It is natural that the OTT sector will continue to expand with giants like Netflix continuously growing. However, this study points movie-theater industry's need to take actions in order to win back its competitive advantage. Following Weinberg et al.'s (2021) theory, if the industry responds to the popularity and convenience of home-cinema, by proposing an original new value, it may maintain its role of film exhibitor and be the exclusive choice of film consumers, in the end standing as importantly as streaming platforms.

8. Limitations and Future Research

Due to time and resource constraints, this thesis is not without limitations. First, the choice of a convenience-sampling method didn't allow a much miscellaneous set of individuals, rather an overrepresentation of a specific geographical proximity, gender, education level, availability, and willingness-to-participate (Dörnyei, 2007). Here, Portuguese population, female, and holding a bachelor's degree, were a majority, even though a variety of other nationalities and education degrees were mentioned.

The fact that the survey was online provoked "non-response bias", from participants' exclusion, due to social and spatial factors, to attitude unknown, since the author was unable to control respondents' disposition, concentration, and individuality (Fleming & Bowden, 2009).

Since the survey was available for 9 days only, individuals exceeding the deadline, but aiming at participating in the study, weren't able to do so. Also, although it reached 714 individuals, these were in general close in terms of network and common acquaintance with the author.

Thus, further analysis on a more varied sample, with random individuals and especially different nationalities, genders and education levels would add value to the evaluations of OTT and movie-theater industries.

An important limitation resulted of the different scenarios-design of the survey. The author didn't wish individuals to answer questions about a consumption type - series or film - they weren't familiar with, so allowed them the choice between both. As such, series consumption or film consumption scenarios were not allocated randomly. Thus, both sample sizes were unequal, which led to less reliable comparisons than those between pre-Covid and since-Covid scenarios (randomly allocated, evenly present).

Concerning pre-Covid/since-Covid scenarios, the author could observe that the capacity of distinguishing the two moments, being a recent event, is not acquired by all, resulting in limited accuracy of respondents' evidence. Also, as stated before, the definition of this study's control group was an attempt, due to author's impossibility of treating scenarios 1/1A with a manipulation, since the goal was the study of a natural event's impact.

Last, the fact that movie-theaters, despite being open, are still restricted by health measures (mask, no intermission, etc.), this can bias movie-theater's actual valuations.

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10. Appendices

Appendix 1: Pre-Test Study Survey

Introduction Block

Dear participants,

Thank you for taking the time to open and answer to this pre-test study survey, which is part of my master's thesis.

This part of my research is meant to provide me with a ground for the development of the main survey, which will be shared later on. The pre-test survey intends to identify the types of video content (viewed on legal streaming media platforms, e.g. Netflix) that are preferred by the audience in general.

Your answers will be totally anonymous, however your email address will be asked at the end of the survey in case you wish to guarantee your participation in the main survey as well.

This questionnaire won't take more than one minute to complete.

Thank you for your participation and help!

Inês Rau Silva

Block 2

Q1: Types of video content preferred: Please, rank the types of video content you prefer to consume on legal streaming media platforms (from 1- the most consumed to 8- the least consumed) by dragging and dropping the elements presented in the list below.

Note: According to Massey, T. (2020), the different types of video content are included in the list below.

- Film (1)
- Documentary (2)
- Commercials/ Advertisements (3)
- Series (4)
- Reality shows (5)
- Live Events (6)
- Electronic News Gathering (ENG) (7)
- Corporate/ Educational (8)
- Other: … (9)

Block 3

In case you wish to guarantee your participation in the main survey, please let me know your email address below:

____

Acknowledgement Block

Thank you for your time spent answering the pre-test survey!

Appendix 2: Main-study Survey

Block 0

Q1 **Are you subscribed to at least one legal streaming video platform?**

- ○ Yes
- ○ No

Q2 **How many legal streaming video platforms were you subscribed to before Covid-19?**

- ○ 0
- ○ 1
- ○ 2
- ○ 3
- ○ 4
- ○ 5
- ○ Other: ____

Q2a **Which?**

- ☐ Netflix
- ☐ HBO
- ☐ Amazon Prime Video
- ☐ Disney+
- ☐ Apple TV+
- ☐ YouTube Premium
- ☐ Filmin
- ☐ Hulu
- ☐ Other: ____

Q2b **And how many did you subscribe to since Covid-19 outbreak?**

- ○ 0
- ○ 1

○ 2

○ 3

○ 4

○ 5

○ Other: ____

Q2c **Which?**

- ☐ Netflix
- ☐ HBO
- ☐ Amazon Prime Video
- ☐ Disney+
- ☐ Apple TV+
- ☐ YouTube Premium
- ☐ Filmin
- ☐ Hulu
- ☐ Other: ____

Q3 **Please, select below your favorite or most consumed legal streaming video platform's brand.**

Consider the chosen brand as your <u>brand reference</u> throughout the survey. It will always be mentioned as "brand X" or "streaming platform X".

- ◯ Netflix
- ◯ HBO
- ◯ Amazon Prime Video
- ◯ Disney+
- ◯ Apple TV+
- ◯ YouTube Premium
- ◯ Filmin
- ◯ Hulu
- ◯ Other: ____

Q4 **Now, please think of your experience as a <u>spectator in movie-theaters</u>, considering a <u>pre-Covid-19 scenario</u>.**

How regularly did you go to movie-theaters?

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Rarely (1 to 3 times a year)
- ◯ Every 3 to 4 months
- ◯ Every 2 months
- ◯ Once a month
- ◯ More than once a month

Q4a **How often did you feel like the next two statements (from 1 = Never to 5 = Always)?**

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
Before Covid-19, watching movies in movie-theaters was worthwhile.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Watching movies in movie-theaters was more pleasant than watching them on television at home.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q4b **Before Covid-19, how much would you be willing to pay in euros for one movie ticket? Please, move the cursor and select a value between 0 and 20.**

	0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20
€	

Q5 **Please, think again of your experience as a <u>spectator in movie-theaters</u>, this time considering a <u>Covid-19 scenario</u>, and in particular <u>since movie-theaters reopened and restrictions were relaxed</u>.**

How regularly do you go to movie-theaters?

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely (1 to 3 times a year)
- ○ Every 3 to 4 months
- ○ Every 2 months
- ○ Once a month
- ○ More than once a month

Q5a **How often do you feel like the next two statements (from 1 = Never to 5 = Always)?**

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
Nowadays, watching movies in movie-theaters is worthwhile.	○	○	○	○	○
Watching movies in movie-theaters is more pleasant than watching them on television at home.	○	○	○	○	○

Q5b **Nowadays, how much would you be willing to pay in euros for one movie ticket? Please, move the cursor and select a value between 0 and 20.**

	0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20
€	

Block 1 for Nonsubscribers

Q6 **Please, select below the reason or reasons why you don't subscribe to legal streaming video platforms.**

- ☐ I am not attracted to the content offered
- ☐ I consider the subscription price to be too high
- ☐ I watch very specific content on TV only
- ☐ I don't want to get addicted
- ☐ Other: ____
- ☐ Prefer not to answer

Q7 **Do you watch television?**

- ○ Yes (1)
- ○ No (2)

Q7a **Nowadays, and in particular during lockdown periods, how regularly in a week do you watch television?**

- ○ Never
- ○ Rarely (less than once a week)
- ○ 1 to 3 times a week
- ○ 4 to 6 times a week
- ○ 7 or more times a week

Q7b **What type(s) of content do you watch on television?**

- ☐ Films
- ☐ Series
- ☐ Documentaries
- ☐ Commercials/ Advertisements
- ☐ Reality shows

- [ ] Live Events
- [ ] Sports and Art Events
- [ ] Electronic News Gathering (ENG)
- [ ] Corporate/ Educational

Other: ____

Q7c **Are there new type(s) of video content that you started consuming since Covid-19 emerged, especially during lockdown? If so, please select which below:**

- [ ] Films
- [ ] Series
- [ ] Documentaries
- [ ] Commercials/ Advertisements
- [ ] Reality shows
- [ ] Live Events
- [ ] Sports and Art Events
- [ ] Electronic News Gathering (ENG)
- [ ] Corporate/ Educational
- [ ] Other: ____

Q7d **Before Covid-19, how regularly in a week did you watch television?**

○ Never

○ Rarely (less than once a week)

○ 1 to 3 times a week

○ 4 to 6 times a week

○ 7 or more times a week

Q8 **Before Covid-19, what was your level of familiarity with the following concept (from 1 = Not at all familiar to 5 = Extremely familiar)?**

	Not at all familiar (1)	Slightly familiar (2)	Somewhat familiar (3)	Moderately familiar (4)	Extremely familiar (5)
"Binge-watching"					

Q8a **Nowadays, what is your level of familiarity with the following concept (from 1 = Not at all familiar to 5 = Extremely familiar)?**

	Not at all familiar (1)	Slightly familiar (2)	Somewhat familiar (3)	Moderately familiar (4)	Extremely familiar (5)
"Binge-watching"					

Demographic questions (see Subscribers' Block 4)

Block 1 for Subscribers

Q6 **What type(s) of video content do you watch the most on streaming platform X?**

- ☐ Films
- ☐ Series
- ☐ Documentaries
- ☐ Commercials/ Advertisements
- ☐ Reality shows
- ☐ Live Events
- ☐ Sports and Art Events
- ☐ Electronic News Gathering (ENG)
- ☐ Corporate/ Educational
- ☐ Other: ____

Q6a **Are there new type(s) of video content that you started consuming since Covid-19 emerged, especially during lockdown? If so, please select which below:**

- ☐ Films
- ☐ Series
- ☐ Documentaries
- ☐ Commercials/ Advertisements
- ☐ Reality shows
- ☐ Live Events
- ☐ Sports and Art Events
- ☐ Electronic News Gathering (ENG)
- ☐ Corporate/ Educational
- ☐ Other:____

Q7 **In general, and not necessarily on streaming platforms, do you consume more Series or films?**

Note: If you consume both equally, select the one you prefer to watch or the one you feel like answering the next questions about.

- ○ More series
- ○ More films

Block 2 - By default, the scenario here presented is scenario 1 (Series consumption pre-Covid). In the study, this block's questions were exactly the same, however adapted to each scenario (1, 1A, 2 or 2A).

Q8 **To answer the following questions, please think of your experience as a <u>consumer of Series</u> on streaming platform X, in a <u>pre-Covid-19 scenario.</u>**

Before Covid, how regularly in a week did you watch Series?

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Rarely (less than once a week)
- ◯ 1 to 3 times a week
- ◯ 4 to 6 times a week
- ◯ 7 or more times a week

Q9 **Before Covid-19, what was your level of familiarity with the following concept (from 1 = Not at all familiar to 5 = Extremely familiar)?**

	Not at all familiar (1)	Slightly familiar (2)	Somewhat familiar (3)	Moderately familiar (4)	Extremely familiar (5)
"Binge-watching"	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q10 **What is your level of agreement with the following statements (from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree)?**

Before Covid-19, what I valued the most on streaming platform X was:

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongl y agree (5)
Its wide catalog of Series to choose from.	○	○	○	○	○
Its personalized content offer, taking into account my preferences and activity.	○	○	○	○	○
The fact that I could control how, when and where to watch content.	○	○	○	○	○
The fact that many profiles could be created on one account.	○	○	○	○	○
The fact that I could watch content across devices.	○	○	○	○	○
The fact that there were no advertisements.	○	○	○	○	○
Its convenience, since I didn't have to leave home.	○	○	○	○	○
Its ease of selecting audio and subtitles in the wished language.	○	○	○	○	○
Its ease of downloading video content to watch offline.	○	○	○	○	○
Its good customer support.	○	○	○	○	○
The fact that it was a legal platform.	○	○	○	○	○

Q11 **What is your level of agreement with the following statements (from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree)?**

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Before Covid-19, I used streaming platform X every time I watched a Series	○	○	○	○	○
I felt good when I was using streaming platform X.	○	○	○	○	○
Streaming platform X distracted me from boredom.	○	○	○	○	○
Streaming platform X distracted me from loneliness.	○	○	○	○	○
Streaming platform X made me happy.	○	○	○	○	○
I considered streaming platform X as a high-quality platform.	○	○	○	○	○
I considered legal streaming platforms in general as a better option than other video platforms.	○	○	○	○	○

Q12 **What is your level of agreement with the following statements (from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree)?**

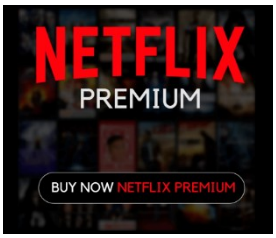
	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I trusted brand X.	○	○	○	○	○
I relied on brand X.	○	○	○	○	○
Brand X was an honest brand.	○	○	○	○	○
Brand X was a safe brand.	○	○	○	○	○
Brand X was always my first choice over other brands.	○	○	○	○	○
I was likely to recommend brand X to my family and friends.	○	○	○	○	○
I intended to continue consuming brand X.	○	○	○	○	○

Q13 **Before Covid-19, how much would you be willing to pay in euros for a basic monthly subscription to a legal video streaming platform?**

Please, move the cursor and select a value between 0 and 30.

	0 3 6 9 12 15 18 21 24 27 30
€	

Q14
Netflix Premium's monthly cost is $17.99 (15.99€ in Portugal). It allows you to:
- Watch on 4 screens at the same time;
- Have downloads on 4 phones or tablets;
- Have access to unlimited movies, TV shows and mobile games;
- Watch on your laptop, TV, phone and tablet;
- Have access to HD available;
- Have access to Ultra HD.



Based on the above example of an advertising for a premium version of a well-known legal streaming video service (in this case, Netflix Premium),

what is your level of agreement with the next statement (from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree)?

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
Before Covid-19, I would definitely be willing to upgrade to a premium version of streaming platform X.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q15 **Now, please think of your experience as a <u>spectator in movie-theaters</u>, considering a <u>pre-Covid-19 scenario</u>.**

Before Covid-19, how regularly did you go to movie-theaters?

- ◯ Never
- ◯ Rarely (1 to 3 times a year)
- ◯ Every 3 to 4 months
- ◯ Every 2 months
- ◯ Once a month
- ◯ More than once a month

Q15a **How often did you feel like the next two statements (from 1 = Never to 5 = Always)?**

	Never (1)	Rarely (2)	Sometimes (3)	Often (4)	Always (5)
Before Covid-19, watching movies in movie-theaters was worthwhile.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯
Watching movies in movie-theaters was more pleasant than watching them on streaming platforms at home.	◯	◯	◯	◯	◯

Q15b **Before Covid-19, how much would you be willing to pay in euros for one movie ticket? Please, move the cursor and select a value between 0 and 20.**

	0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20
€	

Q16 **At what frequency were you thinking of a pre-Covid-19 scenario while answering the previous questions (from 1 = Never to 5 = Every time)?**

	Never (1)	Almost never (2)	Occasionally (3)	Almost every time (4)	Every time (5)
I was thinking of a pre-Covid-19 scenario:	○	○	○	○	○

Block 3 - Motivations towards the movie-going experience

Q17 **The next few questions are meant to analyze your motivations towards the movie-going experience, <u>nowadays</u>.**
Watch a few seconds of each of the next three movie clips. Imagine a situation where these three movies were available in movie-theaters as well as on your favorite streaming platform.

Are there any that you would take the initiative to watch in a movie-theater? If so, please select which (one or more) on the list <u>below the videos</u>.

- ☐ Curtiz (1942), *Casablanca*
- ☐ Campbell (2006), *007: Casino Royale*
- ☐ Singer (2018), *Bohemian Rhapsody*

Q17a **Which of the following represent(s) a major reason(s) for you to take the initiative to watch a film in movie-theaters when the same film is available on your favorite streaming platform?**

- ☐ Image quality (big screen)
- ☐ Sound quality
- ☐ Cinema room environment (lights off, seating arrangement, etc.)
- ☐ Share the experience with other spectators
- ☐ Movie premieres
- ☐ Popcorn and beverages
- ☐ Other: ____

Q18 **What is your level of agreement with the following statement (from 1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree)?**

	Strongly disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither agree nor disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly agree (5)
I believe to feel safe in a movie-theater room with the current health situation starting to get back to normal.					

Q19 **Please carefully read the following short text regarding the recent situation of the growing revenue and award dominance of legal streaming platforms:**

"A new status quo and landscape have been emerging in Hollywood since February 2013, when Netflix (...) released the first season of House of Cards, which made history by winning three Emmys." (Bishop, 2018).
"Subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) services have seen their revenues skyrocket from $14.6 million in 2010 to $11.7 billion last year (...). Covid-19 lockdown measures also helped drive consumers to streamers," (Roxborough, 2021).

To what extent were you aware of this situation (from 1 = Fully not aware to 5 = Fully aware)?

	Not at all aware (1)	Slightly aware (2)	Somewhat aware (3)	Moderately aware (4)	Extremely aware (5)
My level of awareness of this situation:					

Q19a **Does this situation have any influence on your perceptions of legal streaming video platforms and of movie-theaters (from 1 = Very negative to 5 = Very positive)?**

	Very negative (1)	Slightly negative (2)	Neutral (3)	Slightly positive (4)	Very positive (5)
Influence on my perception of streaming platforms:					
Influence on my perception of movie-theaters:					

Block 4 - Demographics

Q20 **How old are you?**
- o Under 18 (1)
- o 18 - 24 (2)
- o 25 - 34 (3)
- o 35 - 44 (4)
- o 45 - 54 (5)
- o 55 - 64 (6)
- o Above 64 (7)
- o Prefer not to say (8)

Q21 **What is your gender?**
- o Male (1)
- o Female (2)
- o Other (3)

Q22 **In which country were your born?**

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

Q23 **In which country do you currently live?**

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

Q24 **In which country did you spend the first lockdown?**

▼ Afghanistan (1) ... Zimbabwe (1357)

Q25 **What is your level of education?**
- o Less than high school (1)
- o High school (2)
- o Bachelor's degree (3)
- o Master's degree (4)
- o Doctoral degree (5)
- o Professional degree (6)
- o Prefer not to say (7)

Q26 **What is your current occupation?**
- o Employed (1)
- o Unemployed (2)
- o Retired (3)
- o Student (4)
- o Working student (5)
- o Prefer not to say (6)

Q27 **What is your monthly individual net income in euros?**
- o Under 500€ (1)
- o 501€ - 1000€ (2)
- o 1001€ - 1500€ (3)
- o 1501€ - 2000€ (4)

- Above 2000€ (5)
- Prefer not to say (6)

Acknowledgements Block
Thank you for your time spent answering this survey!
Your contribution was of great help.

For any question or feedback, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail: inesrausilva@hotmail.com.

Appendix 3: Text stimulus

"A new status quo and landscape have been emerging in Hollywood since February 2013, when Netflix (...) released the first season of House of Cards, which made history by winning three Emmys." (Bishop, 2018).

"Subscription video-on-demand (SVOD) services have seen their revenues skyrocket from $14.6 million in 2010 to $11.7 billion last year (...). Covid-19 lockdown measures also helped drive consumers to streamers," (Roxborough, 2021).

Appendix 4: Scales Reliability - Purchase Intention, Brand Affect, and Brand Loyalty's Pearson Correlations

<table>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">PI</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>Item 2</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Item 1</td><td>Pearson Correlation (r)</td><td>0.776</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td><td>0.000</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">BA</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>Item 2</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Item 1</td><td>Pearson Correlation (r)</td><td>0.534</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td><td>0.000</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="3" align="center">BL</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2"></td><td>Item 2</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Item 1</td><td>Pearson Correlation (r)</td><td>0.313</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sig. (2-tailed)</td><td>0.000</td></tr>
</table>

Appendix 5: Movie-going's weekly frequency, PQ, and WTP's comparisons between pre and since-Covid - One-Sample t-tests

Movie-going weekly frequency since-Covid-19				
Test-value ($M_{FrequencyTheatersPreCovid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.44	2.80	1.45	-6.718	0.000
PQ of movie-going since-Covid-19				
Test-value ($M_{PQTheatersPreCovid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.79	3.72	0.87	-1.113	0.267
WTP for a movie ticket since-Covid-19 (in €)				
Test-value ($M_{WTPTheatersPreCovid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
7.06	6.39	2.56	-3.655	0.000

Appendix 6: Comparison between the influences on the perceptions of streaming and movie-going - One-Sample t-test

Influence on subscribers' perceptions of movie-going				
Test-value ($M_{InfluencePerceptionsStreaming}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.23	3.17	0.73	-1.642	0.101

Appendix 7: Subscribers and nonsubscribers' age, education, and income levels' comparisons - Independent-Samples t-tests

	Subscribers		***Nonsubscribers***			
Age	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	3.71	1.79	4.33	2.01	-2.425	0.017
Education level	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	3.21	0.85	3.41	1.14	-1.411	0.162
Monthly income level	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	3.61	1.81	3.77	1.87	-0.671	0.503

Appendix 8: Linear regression of movie-going's weekly frequency based on respondents' age, education, and income levels

Age			*Education level*			*Monthly income level*		
Model Summary		***ANOVA***	***Model Summary***		***ANOVA***	***Model Summary***		***ANOVA***
R	*R^2*	*Regression Sig.*	*R*	*R^2*	*Regression Sig.*	*R*	*R^2*	*Regression Sig.*
0.016	0.000	0.788	0.074	0.005	0.200	0.024	0.001	0.679

Appendix 9: Nonsubscribers' TV-watching weekly frequency pre vs. since-Covid - One-Sample t-test

Since-Covid				
Test-value ($M_{TVFrequencyPre\text{-}Covid}$)	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
3.88	4.04	1.06	1.098	0.277

Appendix 10: Subscribers' and nonsubscribers' movie-going weekly frequency's comparisons - Independent-Samples t-test

	Subscribers		***Nonsubscribers***			
Pre-Covid	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	3.44	1.45	3.03	1.40	2.054	0.041
Since-Covid	*Mean*	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*	*t-test*	*Sig. (2-tailed)*
	2.80	1.45	2.26	1.38	2.785	0.006