

# Netflix and the Entertainment Industry Streaming Monopoly

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## Abstract

The model of supply-and-demand evaluates streaming content business as a phenomenon within the “the most widely used economic model” in order to illustrate affordable consumption that offers more at lower prices (Perloff, 2024: p. 10). Netflix’s broad catalogue of movies and television makes available multiple genres, foreign content, and even faith and spiritual content. Netflix often gains favor with buyers because entertainment content at low price subscriptions offers more. This policy brief acts on research that illuminates findings to inform firms about the implications and lucrative possibilities of content streaming, now a big global consumer’ market. Streaming content challenges traditional theater exhibition and television viewing but there is international audience reach. The innovation of streaming platforms places business in a cost-effective situation and in a circle of global competitors like Disney+, Amazon, Warner Bros Discovery, Paramount Global, and HULU, ESPN, or HBO MAX (Disney Plus, 2025). While innovations can produce wealth, they can also produce implications (Hazlett, 2024: p. 75). Implications are accountability and anti-trust restrictions. The massive “200 million subscribers in more than 190 countries, Netflix is the largest subscription video on-demand platform in the world” (Wayne, 2022: p. 193).

## Keywords

Netflix Imperialism, Monopoly, Entertainment, (VOD) Video On-Demand, Theory of Supply and Demand

## 1. Introduction

Netflix operates in a system and market of broad Entertainment for the popular VOD or Video on Demand industry, or streaming content. In 2007, Netflix’s innovation turned the Entertainment Industry upside-down and placed streaming

content, movies, and television shows, into the hands of anyone. The best feature is the low cost for this service, a mere flat and small monthly subscription. Now, anyone, anywhere around the world can watch movies and television programming in the comfort of their own home, on any communication device like a smartphone or laptop, without a set time. Research argues that Netflix focuses on “binge-viewing as a mode of audience behavior that improves upon traditional television’s live-ness and linear scheduling” (Wayne, 2022: p. 195). Netflix created and acquired up to \$18.6 billion in content in 2025 alone according to the equity research company Moffett Nathanson (Frankel, 2025: para 7). The implications are low prices while competitors struggle, global monopolization, social accountability, and servicing like television without traditional advertising. Netflix’s low cost model proves demand wheels-in competitors. The Entertainment industry remains cautious but offers their own streaming platforms and keeps their value-driven theatrical releases (Hazlett, 2024: p. 75).

Netflix managed to bring in “200 million subscribers in more than 190 countries” so that makes Netflix the “largest subscription video on-demand platform in the world” (Wayne, 2022: p. 193). Some label this outcome as “Netflix imperialism” (Davis, 2021: p. 1). Analysts placed Netflix in the lead during the outcome of the “streaming wars” where Disney+/Hulu bundle, Amazon, Warner Bros. Discovery, Paramount, and NBC Universal were at the bottom (Frankel, 2025: para 1). The theory of supply and demand finds that cost and consumer urges meet “the means of consumption” (Ionascu & Perez-Danielescu, 2010: p. 7). Where major studios resisted over a decade of change, their marketing strategy still maintains theater exhibition and tackles the implications of potential ticket sale losses. The studios consist of narrower catalogues that tend to cause a lag in the market but still have popularity in the global arena. Competition with Netflix is growing and most of the time, only Disney+ remains by a narrow miss, Netflix as a form of “platform imperialism” with “three times more users than Disney+ (over 3,300,000)” (Wróblewska, 2025: p. 50).

## 2. The Golden Age

The “Golden Age for video content” lives (Hazlett, 2024: p. 104). Supply and demand are in a good situation for streaming content if you have wide and diverse catalogues that can sell. If Netflix, in comparison, were modeling the innovation of Apple products, one might soon learn that streaming content merits the talk of the town like “Apple’s iPhone, which was a key trigger for the mass popularity of smartphones” (Dwyer et al., 2018: p. 4554). Netflix carries more content and streams more material than Disney+, but carries less value as their catalogue has no studio; but the programming is wide and far more diverse as a result. Netflix relishes categories for action, comedy and drama, but also for smaller niche groups like faith and spiritual content. Supply and demand actively illustrates the need for Netflix’s diverse catalogue. “Not too long ago, anyone who said Netflix would soon be worth more than Walt Disney Co. would have sounded as arrogant as

John Lennon calling the Beatles more popular than Jesus in 1966” (Faughnder, 2021: para 2).

This means that Netflix subscribers prefer Netflix because of demand for larger quantity of content at a lower price rather than a more niche catalogue with higher value and higher price. By performing a supply and demand analysis that’s conceptual, the theory estimates that the “price affects the quantity demanded” (Perloff, 2024: p. 11). The hypothesis reasons this way:

RQ: How does a \$1 USD change in subscription price that pertains to supply and demand affect Netflix’s global subscriber and viewership numbers relative to Disney+?

Often, the quality of Netflix cannot stand against the major studios but it can have a similar or significant effect on supply and demand, and demand of lesser value. There’s not less attention, however. The offerings welcome all kinds of interesting movies and TV shows. Netflix works as a good all-fits-one package deal. Other streaming services are a good “substitute” rather than a primary service consumed (p. 10). This can cause a shift in demand curves for Disney, and the number of subscribers as a result will increase. However, new scholarships on streaming services are developing more understanding but tends to argue that Netflix’s “approach to industry practice” moves through a “prism of the company’s competition with traditional networks” (Wayne, 2022: p. 196).

## 2.1. Literature Review

Streaming services directly “to the home” has opened up “new sectors of the New Economy” (Hazlett, 2024: p. 76). By reselling content for multiple regions across the globe within a wide catalogue of diverse offerings, consumers gain more for less, and even foreign content and faith and spiritual content to explore. Osmanski (2025) at Parade online pointed out that there are “plenty of Christian movies on Netflix to choose from if that’s what you’re looking for” (para 1). Streaming content moves fast in sells and it can amass lucrative potential in “the practice of expanding on and reusing existing material in the form of spin-offs, sequels, re-makes, reboots, literary adaptations, and so on” (Cuelenaere, 2024: p. 992). Content recycling works in this aspect as the key factor that buyers enjoy at Netflix.

## 2.2. Implications

Netflix is not popular television in that content arrives by digital platform. It has a lot of freedom, and subscribers have the power of decision on what they watch and what time they watch. In fact, Netflix has a broad “anti-transparency policy” regarding content. Other streaming businesses own the same privilege however those that stem from traditional studio production or television viewing exist within a foundation of Entertainment history with restrictions. The implications involved do not reflect “discernible ties to the ideological project of a generally ‘Western’ imperialism or specifically American geopolitical ambitions” (Davis, 2021: p. 2). For example, Amazon publishes and sells books online and works as

a tool for consumers to sell their own original product but also sells video content (Hazlett, 2024: p. 95). Amazon focuses on merchandise and delivery and for that reason carries some policy restrictions. U.S. competition policy works for users for the most part (Hazlett, 2024: p. 104). For Netflix, it is very diverse and anti-political. It acts as a catalogue of content, a library filled with many different genres and other areas of interest, like foreign content, or faith and spiritual content. The diverse nature may not act as a cultural beacon with “efforts to demonstrate popularity with audience data is a traditional industry practice. In another sense, however, Netflix’s use of non-standard viewership metrics reflects the distance between the world’s most popular video streaming service and the US commercial television industry” (Wayne, 2022: p. 198).

The low cost subscriptions with streaming content popularized the platform so the economic implications foresee greater demand based on the standard Model of Supply and Demand. Rather, the diverse content is the result of the “dramatic rise of communications, social media, and e-commerce platforms, extremely popular with users and prized by financial investors” (Hazlett, 2024: p. 76). Because there is the opportunity to monopolize the streaming market by globalizing an audience to content, an economic implication arises with value and social responsibility.

One, Netflix offers content with no guard for ratings. Netflix’s content can be self-serving to one’s preference. Competitors like Disney+ are straggled down with ratings, but for good reason, the American Entertainment Industry requires good corporate social responsibility. To compete with Netflix, a competitor will need to offer a wide and diverse catalogue like Netflix. For that reason, the diverse nature of Netflix’s catalogue can offer global endowment. There is good in this model; and it’s interesting to note that The Sherman Act of 1890 did not “outlaw monopolies” (Hazlett, 2024: p. 78). So, the digital economy works as a landscape to confuse antitrust law with anti-transparency policy and for “cost efficient entertainment” (Wayne, 2022: p. 198).

Netflix corporate responds with no concern. “We don’t plan on releasing ratings since it’s irrelevant to us, we don’t sell advertising, we don’t negotiate carriage fees, there’s no reason for us to give a specific number of how shows are performing” (p. 198). Consider CSR research for the value of the content that might create a better digital economy even for any laggards, but the viewership tends to act as a diverse global cluster anyway.

### **3. Platform Capitalism**

The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to doubling Netflix subscribers and studios did not wait during the pandemic either to become streamers of content, nor did they wait to premier new movies online. The pandemic changed the Entertainment Industry forever, and platform capitalism became the only source to dig out of the hole of economic silence. “Netflix added over 26 million new paying subscribers in the first half of 2020—more than double the 12 million subscribers that

Netflix added over the same period in 2019” (Henderson, 2024: p. 586). To engage in “platform capitalism” or to gain a “monopoly position” subscribers need to express demand options (Davis, 2021: p. 2). The Department of Justice (DOJ) (2023) has defined this kind of monopoly power as a company that possesses “the ability to control prices in a market or exclude actual or potential competition” (p. 5). Supply and demand on Netflix “boast the highest number of users (over 10,000,000). According to research, Netflix has three times more users than Disney+ (over 3,300,000)” (Wróblewska, 2025: p. 50). For this reason, expansion resolved economic hardship.

### 3.1. The Netflix Model

The Netflix model is now a “global trend” in business and “for subscription e-commerce” requires the selling of “subscription payment services” that offer goods and services at large quantities to satisfy “consumer demand for a prospectively determined fixed price” (Cherla et al., 2021: p. 114). This model is now in use with many other industries not related to Entertainment, and even used for subscription services for pharmaceuticals (p. 114).

### 3.2. Global Success of Squid Game

Netflix’s success veers on a global level as supply and demand reaches a diverse hierarchy of viewership with South Korean content. South Korean content is the most popular non-English-language content streamed by Netflix (Wayne, 2022: p. 1354). Netflix’s streaming TV series Squid Game became an “international phenomenon” and with a “complex narrative” that achieved “the most watched show in 94 countries” and also “indicated that 24% of all Americans had reportedly already watched the series” (Sinyor et al., 2025: p. 2). After the first season of streaming Squid Game it “received approximately 144 million views and 275 million views, respectively” (Wayne, 2022: p. 1353). According to trade press reports, more expensive productions like Netflix’s Stranger Things (namely, the fourth season) cost “an estimated \$270 million for nine episodes” in contrast averaged less views. Supply and demand here can accumulate more interest because nine episodes of Stranger Things cost significantly more to produce than season one of Squid Game which cost only “\$21.4 million to produce” (pp. 1353-1354). This means that Netflix tapped into a market with less cost and more demand than the average high quality traditional TV show. More, South Korea has a bigger subscription population for Netflix than the UK (p. 1355).

The global market however is not without concern or unsupported claims. Sinyor et al. (2025) mention that Squid Game can involve subplots with suicide that has caused a real suicide. The relevancy of this may not be a good or positive discussion but the study argues that the characters are serious to the point of concern, and are “invited to take part in a series of life-or-death children’s games for the chance at a massive financial reward” (p. 2). The fall of financial success brings dramatic loss that also brings terrible reality. Statistical measures from South Ko-

rea, Germany, and the UK are analyzed in the study to determine whether higher suicide rates increase after airings. These unsupported implications bring content responsibility to attention. But Netflix can move with more creative freedom as major studios have strict ratings. Netflix may be more lax and liberal. More understanding can help in this matter to bring corporate social responsibility (CSR) to the forefront, however, the potential for higher demand is alive and well regardless of nationality.

Dividing these production costs by the number of views, it seems that Netflix spent \$0.08 per view for Squid Game while spending \$1.87 per view for Stranger Things most recent season. This difference indicates Netflix's most popular non-English-language series achieved a significantly larger audience with significantly less economic investment (Wayne, 2022: pp. 1353-1354).

Today, the digital economy consists of many competitors that "are best understood to recent theorizations of platform imperialism which interrogate how American platform corporations—nicknamed FAANGs [Facebook, Amazon, Apple, Netflix, and Google]" dominate society (Davis, 2021: p. 2). But platform imperialism also contains diverse content like Squid Game that pushes streaming content to global success and monopolize significant outcomes because inside this market contains an abundant supply for recycled demand at a low-cost.

### 3.3. Demand Curve

Because digital platforms are in use rather than traditional theatrical exhibition, Netflix reaches "over two hundred million homes subscribed and is present in every country in the world" (Agirre, 2021: p. 112). The positive effects of "binge-watching titles based on personalized user preferences" suit the demands of many who simply do not have the cash flow to go to the cinema (Afilipoaie et al., 2021: p. 305). What is not available on HBO or Showtime can be found on Netflix (Wayne, 2022: p. 195). The large catalogues of titles are attractive and in great demand. Even if Disney focuses on children's titles, or half of their content focuses on content for children, families know they can find children's content or clean Christian content on Netflix as well. Netflix may not be a superpower, but offers abundant content. Perloff (2024) explains that the factors that influence the quantity demanded are: income, substitutes, complements, tastes, and consumer information (pp. 14-15).

## 4. Methodology

The research here uses the supply-and-demand theory (Perloff, 2024: p. 36). As a policy brief, the text evaluates the competitive market within the limitations of the supply and demand model. Expectations of the good's usefulness can vary between classifications of participants (Inoua & Smith, 2020: p. 4).

An underlying concept of the "value theory" exists within the model here where "pleasure or satisfaction in consuming a good" gets experienced (Inoua & Smith, 2020: p. 4). The model investigates "the buyer's (maximum) willingness to pay

(WTP) value (a potential price) and the seller’s (minimum) willingness to accept (WTA) value (a potential price) at the marketplace” (p. 4). This conceptual analysis uses the MoffettNathanson data that measures U.S. streaming hours viewed to add evidence to the hypothesis that buyers are willing to pay for the value determined (see **Table 1**).

**Table 1.** U.S streaming hours viewed per average subscriber (highest peak).

| Netflix | Disney+ | Hulu | Prime Video | HBO, MAX, Discovery+ | Peacock | Paramount | Apple TV |
|---------|---------|------|-------------|----------------------|---------|-----------|----------|
| 10.8    | 3.0     | 4.9  | 5.0         | 2.6                  | 2.0     | 1.8       | 0.4      |

a. Nielson, MoffettNathanson analysis.

The value of the good determines consumer expectations. Consumption needs are the “fundamental reason” to meet the need “generated either by a natural demand or by the behavioral demands of the society, urging to actions which may be met by means of consumption” (Ionascu & Perez-Danielescu, 2010: p. 7). The supply-and-demand theory can test accurate predictions (Perloff, 2024: p. 10).

## 5. Results

The interpretation of the results in support of the hypothesis tends to coincide with existing literature. Netflix achieves a monopoly in households and achieves an extensive catalogue of offerings so that supply and demand functions as a way to obtain more for the money and something “much more liberal than traditional television networks” (Wayne, 2022: p. 196). Netflix’s “popular content” meets the need to consume “diverse global content in several significant ways” (Wayne & Ribke, 2024: p. 1349). The implications that concern digital platforms can revolve around the streaming industry’s more liberal presence and this often leads to an “avoidance of fiduciary accountability to regulators” (Davis, 2021: p. 12). But the global success of Netflix however did encourage other companies, especially the major studios (and competitor Disney+) to open up content platforms of their own, including platforms run by “Amazon, Apple, Facebook, and Google” (pg. 13).

Statistical data from equity research company MoffettNathanson shows that Netflix is still in the lead when U.S. streaming hours viewed are measured (Frankel, 2025: para 3-4). MoffettNathanson researchers also clarify that Netflix has more subscribers overall, and this generates more \$1 USD (Boughedda, 2025, para 4). Neilson who measures behavior on streaming platforms rates Netflix as out-performing other platforms at a 42% gain in viewings for the month of June where the third season release of Squid Game “generated nearly a billion viewing minutes—per day” (Nielson, 2025: para 2). More streaming hours viewed coupled with significantly more subscribers can offer a better understanding of the market power at Netflix. A conceptual analysis using the MoffettNathanson data for U.S. streaming hours viewed in 2025 places the measurement into a table and this can add

evidence to the hypothesis.

Netflix has more streaming hours viewed, and those statistical features appear “fixed” (para 4). Netflix spends less money to make money and because of the demand and consumer needs seek a larger catalogue with less viewer restrictions and offerings that most likely will keep Netflix in the lead for a long time (Frankel, 2025: para 1-7).

## 6. Discussion

In 2007, Netflix opened up shop for digital streaming of movies and television. And by 2016, “Netflix was available in over 190 countries” (Henderson, 2024: p. 588). It took well over a decade for other major online competitors to dive into the market mostly due to possible risk factors and the fear of an influence “on the long-term decline of cinema admission” or “possible lagged or curvilinear effects” (von Rimscha, 2013: p. 436). Netflix began as a DVD rental service through the mail with not much concern but eventually it became a sensational multibillion dollar investment, an upstart that mimicked a blockbuster of sorts. Blockbuster went bankrupt in 2010. The demand, therefore, felt high for home video consumption to return at a lower cost; online for just a small subscription fee every month for a wide catalogue of Entertainment.

The latest use of “content production” caused a “shift in global consumer spending from theatrical (from 36.4 billion USD in 2014 to 41.1 billion USD in 2018) to home entertainment (from 15.8 billion USD in 2014 to 42.6 billion USD in 2018: MPAA 2019)” (Hadida et al., 2021: p. 214). The diverse nature of Netflix’s content, however, goes “beyond English speaking countries” to change industry perspectives on home video and to launch Western “consumption of US-produced media content” across the globe (Wayne & Ribke, 2024: p. 1349). As a result, Netflix amassed global expansion with 62.5% English-speaking audience and 37.5% non English-speaking audience (p. 1353). The supply and demand consumption for streaming content came into the homes of anyone with high quality preferences with manageable implications.

## 7. Conclusion

Netflix subscribers prefer “large quantity” or a bigger catalogue of content at a lower price. Often, the quality of Netflix cannot stand against the major studios, but there is no concern that Netflix lacks demand. Netflix’s catalogue welcomes all kinds of interesting movies and television shows, it can achieve a custom all-fit-one package at an affordable cost. Netflix remains a powerful global brand and is the fastest growing in the U.S. with “consistent prices” and popular and innovative “screen content” (Cunningham & Scarlata, 2020: p. 151). Market concerns are mostly “long-term decline of cinema admission” (von Rimscha, 2013: p. 436).

Some limitations of the classical supply and demand model are relationships to value and usefulness. Supply and demand is a “cumulative distribution” process of buyer and seller prices. The motivation of the “market participants” and the

“usefulness” of the purchase (or value) measures consumer behavior and not statistical algorithms (Inoua & Smith, 2020: p. 4). The maximum amount of the consumer is willing to pay for the good to receive the “expectation of the good’s usefulness” can vary between classifications of participants.

Competitive streaming services like Disney+ bundles together ESPN, HULU, or HBO MAX increase value as a good “substitute” service to Netflix (Perloff, 2024: p. 10). A future empirical study might compare value to general binge consumption. But the recommendations in this study are strong CSR policies to resolve any social implications regarding imperial economic tendencies or global streaming factors.

## Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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