



(REVIEW ARTICLE)



Various marketing tactics used by brands in collaboration with Netflix (A Special Case of Squid Game – Season 2)

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Abstract

This study is aimed to reveal that in this digital world where there is a stiff competition among brands, every brand wants to be a market leader by keeping the current trends in their mind. Currently, the Korean wave is most shining trend across the globe. One of its evidence is the buzz created by the recent Korean web series – Squid Game worldwide. This article is themed on the idea that Squid Game has got the attention of not only its viewers but also of the various brands and Netflix too. By looking at its popularity both brands and Netflix have jumped into the advertisement world with various marketing strategies to promote themselves. This tactic can be summarised as “make hay while the sun rises”.

Keywords: Brand; Digital World; Marketing tactics; Netflix; Squid Game

1. Introduction

The digital era has revolutionized modern world. The introduction of digital media has brought a shift in the global landscape. As there are variety of Over-the-Top platforms but Netflix is a leading platform that works worldwide. Netflix, Inc. was founded in 1997. It is a media company which allow users to watch movies, web series and television shows on a single platform. It is established in Los Gatos, California. It was founded by Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph (Hosch & Ashburn, 2025). As in this modern era people are so engrossed in their lives that they want to have an option of video on demand for movies, web series or all other TV shows. Because with the option of video on demand, users can choose content according to their own choice, suitable time and place (Fariandi & Ariani, 2023). As per the fourth quarter of 2024, Netflix had worldwide around 301.63 million subscribers. (Stoll, 2024). The data depicts here that Netflix has become an integral part of modern entertainment industry and changing the future of entertainment platform worldwide. Netflix has managed to crossed all the regional and linguistic barriers, making its content accessible worldwide for remaining in touch with its audience. Netflix has won numerous accolades for its original content but particularly in this paper we are taking about the Squid Game which is a South Korean web series themed as a bloody survival game. It has won People’s Choice Award and also got more than 40 international awards (Hosch & Ashburn, 2025). So, brands got this opportunity to make use of this trend and do social and digital marketing of their own brands while looking at the popularity of season- 1 of Squid Game. This paper is focused on digital and social media marketing tactics used by various brands worldwide for enhancing the popularity of upcoming season -2 of Squid Game along with promotion of their own products too. Not only brands but also Netflix get benefitted from this marketing campaign as by this they can promote their own web series- “Squid Game season – 2” through this campaign along with their own name. As per the findings of (Fariandi & Ariani, 2023) Brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty of Netflix users can be increased by Social media marketing tactics. And it has also been seen that next level social media marketing tactics implemented by Netflix leads to higher level of awareness, image and loyalty among Netflix customers.

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2. Literature review

2.1. "Current Trend" as marketing tool for brands and Netflix

Every brand wants to build a good brand image. If once, company has made the influential brand image for itself, then it need not to be worried about its sales, as a well-established brand in consumer's perception not only retain the existing consumers but will also help to acquire the new ones as well (Fariandi & Ariani, 2023).

Traditionally, the most dominant tool for encouraging the sales and interest arousal for purchase of goods and services is "Advertising". Basically, advertisements act as a link between buyer and seller for communicating the distinct features of product. But, now a days with the emergence of new marketing tools or tactics like viral marketing, internet, digital marketing the impact of advertising is diminishing (Singh, 2022). So, Trendy marketing tool is a strong marketing tactics used by brands for having influential brand image. By following the current trend they can communicate with public on more ground level. And brands like Dominos, Mc Donald, Swiggy (Instamart), Just Eat, Puma, Knorr are some examples discussed in this paper that has made the use of Trend marketing using the popularity of 'Squid - Game'. It was also found in the studies of (Fariandi & Ariani, 2023) that social media marketing tactics have positive and influential impact on the brand awareness, brand image, brand loyalty. And as a result, it can be seen that brand awareness, brand image and brand loyalty can be enhanced through social media marketing activity of Netflix users. Netflix tactics to promote or advertising its matter is efficacious (González-Chans, Membiela-Pollán, & Cortés-Cuns, 2020).

2.2. High temperature of South Korean wave

The South Korean wave is roaring throughout the world. People are fond of Korean culture including Korean food, singing, Korean cosmetics products are also in race as they are more demanded by the urban population. In order to fulfil customer's demand Korean beauty brands can easily be found at online shopping platforms. Even, Korean movies and web series are in hot trend like "Squid Game" which is a thriller web series, it has got the attention of the viewers and ranked no. 1 on Netflix, comprising of India as well (Singh, 2022). Korean dramas are known for their authentic quality content. So, by understanding the modern roaring South Korean wave, brands are trying to keep in touch with these waves so that they are not outdated. By, doing so they can convert the potential customers into actual ones. Evidence for proving this point are some examples of brand denoted in this research paper which are using the popularity of Korean web series - "Squid Game".

2.3. Increasing craze for online watch time

In this hard and fast paced world people prefer video on demand as per their available time and choice because television don't give them such option. Television programs are disciple based they work according to their time slot not as per consumer's convenient time. This drawback gives reason for increasing demand of online watch time using OTT (Over The Top) platforms. The choices for media selection for entertainment purpose has been changed drastically. The entertainment industry has also been influenced by this changed pattern, Over The Top (OTT) works without the traditional satellite pay TV or cable providers and it is a transformed media platform designed to deliver video content on-demand via the internet (Chatterjee, Mustaphi, & Kasbekar, 2024). As per (Stoll, 2024) Netflix subscribers has been increased from 54.48 Million (as per quarter 4 of 2014) to 301.63 Million (as per quarter 4 of 2024). So, this data of past 10 years depicts the increasing craze of world for online entertainment platforms. This is also one of the opportunities for brands to make use of such platforms for promoting their goods and services.

Objectives of this study

- To understand that how brands make use of trends for doing their marketing.
- To understand that Squid Game (Season - 2) was promoted by equal collaboration of Netflix and brands.

3. Collective Marketing Strategies used by Brands and Netflix using Squid Game

- **Just Eat (UK based online food delivery marketplace):** Advertisements are trailblazing tool for promoting products or services through which companies can enhance the level of awareness and preferences for purchasing of their products or services. Through advertisements brands can communicate with consumers and potential consumers to increase credibility of businesses (KAWAKAMI, KIMURA, & AKIE, 2018). As advertisements enhance brand visibility, Just Eat which is a U.K. food delivery platform launched a Squid Game-themed 360-degree campaign in collaboration with full-service digital agency Department where customers of the Just Eat playing game of "red light, green light" which is one of the game of Squid Game (Orosa, 2024).

- **McDonald (Australia):** It has been concluded in the studies of (KAWAKAMI, KIMURA, & AKIE, 2018) that companies try to boost their brand value by advertising and marketing. That's why, they generate new tactics to increase their corporate image and corporate value. And these lines suits to the Mc Donald Australia digital marketing skills perfectly as they have used one of the concepts of Squid Game i.e. stroking out the dalgona candy where the theme is made of Mc Donald outlet having players as their customers and one customer got "M" shape emblem in dalgona candy, where "M" shape symbolizes the brand logo of Mc Donald. As McDonald's Australia Marketing Director – (Amanda Nakad) said that as 'Squid Game' is Netflix's most-viewed series, and we are using this cultural sensation to life at Macca's. This partnership offers our customers and fans a one-of-a-kind chance to immerse themselves in the game and experience it in a completely new way. (Orosa, 2024). In this way both Netflix and Mc Donald got benefits of promotion and advertisement.
- **Domino's (New York):** Business houses try to get benefitted from the dominance of social media networks like: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or YouTube to relate with consumers (González-Chans, Membiela-Pollán, & Cortés-Cuns, 2020). Domino's also participated in the "Squid Game: The Experience" event using the thriller game of "red light, green light" where they gave free Emergency Pizza to Squid Game players. To add domino's presence and showing its quick delivery services dominos add the concept of "call for Emergency Pizza" where one contestant of Squid Game is saved by Domino's delivery person (Orosa, 2024). People on social media platforms experience the urge to distribute content they deem significant, beneficial, or with which they can relate. So, the brands share such elements which can generating virality in networks (González-Chans, Membiela-Pollán, & Cortés-Cuns, 2020).
- **Swiggy (Instamart) (India):** Swiggy which is an Indian food delivery application also participate in the marketing tactics for its extension brand (Instamart). Where fake auditions were conducted in the public place for cast of Squid Game – (Season 2) in Gurugram and created the curiosity and excitement among the general public regarding the exclusive theme of Squid Game. This marketing style brings the attention of the public for the promotion of both Squid Game and Swiggy (Instamart) (Gawri, 2024).
- **Knorr (India):** There has been a worldwide tremendous growth of the 'Korean wave' or 'Hallyu wave' and due to this the south Korean culture has gained significant importance for not only their music but their dramas are also loved worldwide, food like Ramen, Kimchi and Tteokbokki, etc. are gaining popularity (Singh, 2022). Knorr an Indian packed food brand launched a limited edition of *Korean Ramen* range and named it "Dare to Slurp" to make itself associated with the deadly thriller of Squid Game. This limited edition of Knorr packed eatables would not only make Squid Game popular but also generated brand popularity among food lovers.
- **PUMA:** Worldwide famous footwear and apparel brand PUMA also jumped into the marketing strategies with Netflix, it has launched its special game collection and to make itself attached with Squid Game, the colours and pattern of the new collection is aped as the dress code of the Squid Game. By capturing the show's massive popularity and Puma effectively targeted a younger audience and generated significant buzz and excitement around its brand. The company was of the view to give fans an actual experience of Squid Game -2 rather than only being a viewer (Simon, 2024).
- **OLIVE YOUNG:** One of the leading South Korean brand in health and beauty has launched special edition of skincare and cosmetics influenced by the Young- Hee doll of Squid Game. This collection includes the 'Bringgreen Zinc Teca Blemish Serum' and a palette for eye makeup. This collection or edition is available on both online and offline mode across nine countries (Simon, 2024). In this way this brand has tried to relate more with the viewers of Squid Game.

4. Discussion

In Today's fast paced business landscape, it is the need of the hour for brands to incorporate innovative marketing strategies to step ahead of its competitors and stand out in a crowded market which will help to build strong relationships and drive business growth by keeping a customer centric approach. The Korean Wave has taken the world by storm and brands are indeed seizing the opportunity to ride the wave and bask in the spotlight of being the first market leader among their competitors so brands like Puma, Knorr (India), Swiggy (Instamart), Just Eat (UK), Dominos in collaboration with Netflix have tried to increased their visibility and appeal to a wider audience. Ultimately, we can say that brands have made use of trend of K- drama (Squid Game) as their marketing tool.

According to (Stoll, Most popular non-English language Netflix TV shows of all time as of January 2025, by number of views, 2025) Squid Game is the most watched show on Netflix having around 391.4 Million views. Netflix has exclusive broadcasting rights of Squid Game for both season- 1 and season -2 that's why each and every promotion idea of brands is centric around Netflix. For Example, Netflix is known for OTT Broadcasting but it can be seen that all the advertisements like Puma and Olive Young are marketing their merchandise through Netflix's official website. Not only this all the advertisements revolves around the theme of Squid Game (Season- 2). The excitement created among

potential customers through brand advertisement leads to interest in the theme of Squid Game too which is exclusively broadcasted through Netflix. So, we can say that Squid Game (season – 2) was promoted by equal collaboration of Netflix and brands.

5. Conclusion

As discussed above the K- dramas are gaining love worldwide. One of the examples is popularity gained by the Squid Game. Some influential and popular brands have leveraged the popularity of Squid Game to create a memorable and engaging marketing campaigns, by incorporating elements of the show's themes, characters, and challenges by captivating the interest of audience across all age groups. The findings of the study enlightened the partnership of brands and Netflix that has set up the benchmark for all other brands and OTT platforms to conquer customer engagement with the use of mere a popular web series named "Squid Game".

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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