

## COVID-19: Effect of Binge Watching on Psychological Well-Being during Lockdown

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### ABSTRACT

Lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic has brought many changes in the life of an individual due to which the screening time has increased. Binge-watching is a behavior in which the individual watches 4-6 episodes in one sitting. Binge-watching episodes can be addictive. It can often lead to various health issues. Nowadays all the age groups spend a lot of time on mobile phones while using OTT platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and other platforms due to which people tend to show binge-watching behavior which tends to affect not just their daily routine but also psychological well-being. The present study aims to see the effect of binge-watching on psychological well-being in 60 young adults between 20-30 years of age. Standardized scales were used for the study. The result indicates that there is no significant correlation between psychological well-being and binge-watching behavior. People should spend less time on online services and more time on online courses that help them acquire various skills. Therefore, it is suggested, one should regulate the amount of time they spend in front of television and indulge in some productive pastime.

**Keywords:** Binge-Watching, Netflix effect, Psychological Well-Being, COVID-19

*“Whatever our televisual drug of choice—Battlestar Galactica, The Wire, Homeland—we’ve all put off errands and bedtime to watch just one more, a thrilling, draining, dream-influencing immersion experience that has become the standard way to consume certain TV programs”– Willa Paskin, Wired*

In March 2020 World Health Organization (WHO) declared an outbreak of coronavirus pandemic which further lead to lockdown. All the activities were restricted and people were bound to stay in their homes. Inability to do anything led to the demand for online streaming as people were bound to stay at home and all the tasks were supposed to be done from home. So, Netflix and chilling became a new trend that not only affected the physical health but also the mental health of an individual.

Binge-watching behavior is one of the behaviors that can be seen in many individuals these days as the demand for the OTT platforms has increased due to the lockdown during the pandemic that is Covid-19. The word “binge” is often related to some sort of excess, like

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associate degree excess of food (binge eating) or maybe over-consumption of alcohol (binge drinking). In the context of exposure to media, bingeing emerged decades past as a TV viewing apply largely related to a show's most devoted fans (Jenner, 2017), others, on videotapes, and carried a similar meaning of indulging related to bingeing in different domains. Although binge-viewing has been around since the age of video box sets, in recent years streaming services have refreshed and normalized bingeing (Stelter, 2013).

Due to the advancement of technology and easy availability of high-speed internet service at home give access to streaming services like Netflix, Amazon Prime, Tencent Video, iQIYI, or Twitch, allow the consumer to watch whatever and whenever they feel like. As the market is growing, the content to services is also growing which is leading to the growth of such platforms and the demand is being increased day by day.

Binge-watching has been for the most part positioned as a typical and celebrated modern kind of recreation. Binge-watching was declared "the new normal" (Netflix, 2013). TV series can be defined as a series of stories with different characters playing different roles representing a theme that is being aired for a fixed duration of time usually distributed into episodes that add up to make a season over the years.

Defining binge-watching by the minimum number of episodes per session is how actual binge-watchers understand the behavior. A survey done by Netflix (2013) shows that 73% of the population believe that they are Binge watchers as they watch 2-6 episodes in one sitting. Yet, some researchers have argued that since the length of associate degree episodes will vary considerably across shows, the length of the viewing session ought to be the operative criterion (Perks, 2014). Binge-watching is additionally changing into standard within the Mideast and geographical area (Dennis et al., 2019). In the US, 60% of on-demand TV viewers binge-watch weekly, with 15% bingeing every day (Sabin, 2018). Overall, 75% of Americans engage in binge-watching. The rates are highest among younger audiences, 91% for Gen Z respondents (born between 1997 and 2003) and 86% for Millennials (born between 1983 and 1997) (Deloitte, 2017). Streaming services, like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, provide the chance to observe a vast variety of episodes or whole series while not advertisements intermediate (Netflix, 2018). Consistent with Netflix (2018), the internet recreation branch is increasing quickly because of quick and reliable internet connections, user flexibility similarly because the freedom to determine to observe personalized content on any device. 'Digital Democracy Survey' outlined binge-watching as 'watching 3 or additional episodes of 1 show' per viewing session. (Deloitte, 2015). Netflix's "autoplay" feature releases viewers from a load of clicking" next episode" to binge, and its "skip intro" operate permits to continue from one episode to the future while not worrying regarding the rhythm of the show, or delaying the resolution of a cliff-hanger ending (Pitre, 2019).

### ***Binge Watching***

The phrase binge watching was coined by the Netflix chief operating officer Reed Hastings as a result of that's specifically however individuals were watching episodic content on Netflix. Rubenking & Bracken (2018) centered on the length of episodes, and outlined binge-watching as watching 3 to four or more thirty-minute-long episodes of TV series or watching 3 or more one-hour-long episodes. Studies shows that binge-watching can often lead to negative emotions such guilt, loss of control and dependency than positive emotion like enthausiam , gratification, pleasure etc. Studies have shown that binge-watching is associated a lot with negative emotions than with positive emotions. (Flayelle et

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al., 2019). Another study conducted by Mehra & Gujral (2018) showed that 71.2% of participants reported feelings of guilt as they spent more hours binge-watching. Yet people still like to binge-watch shows which can be addictive. Research done by (Panda et al., 2017) concludes that students who experience negative emotions post-binge-watching tend to spend more time Binge-watching. A cross-sectional study was done during the time of lockdown result shows that binge-watching behavior tends to be beneficial as tends to create a lifestyle and prevent the development of disorders. (Dixit et al., 2020). Research from the sphere of neurobiology shows that viewers binge-watch for each utilitarian and hedonic reasons (Shim & Kim 2018; Merikivi et al. 2019; Starosta, Izydorczyk, and Lizinczyk, 2019). Utilitarian reasons embrace a want for potency (“I wish to urge through this program” or “I wish to observe a program I do know I prefer, instead of searching for a unique one”) and a want for autonomy (“I watch what I prefer, instead of following some network’s programming schedule”). Hedonic motivations embrace a want for enjoyment (“I forestall to looking this show”) and expressions of followers (“She’s my idol! I dream of taking the globe by storm like her!”)

### ***Psychological Well-Being***

It refers to the positive functioning of an individual that includes relatedness with others and self-referent methods such as a sense of mastery and personal growth. It often leads to positive effects such as life satisfaction. Positive interpersonal relationships, personal mastery, autonomy, a sense of intent and meaning in life and self-growth and development are all components of psychological well-being.

Well-being is described by Shin and Johnson (1978) as "a global evaluation of a person's quality of life compatible with his own chosen criteria."

Study shows that psychological well-being revealed that positive relations with others, autonomy, purpose in life, and personal growth weren't powerfully tied to previous assessment indexes, thereby supporting the claim that key aspects of positive functioning haven't been diagrammatical within the empirical arena. Moreover, age profiles disclosed an additional differentiated pattern of well-being than is obvious in the previous analysis. (Ryff, 1989).

Study shows that psychological well-being is related to versatile and artistic thinking, pro-social behavior, and good physical health. (Huppert, 2009)

### ***Purpose***

The purpose is to study the effect of binge-watching on psychological well-being during the lockdown.

### ***Hypothesis***

There will be no significant correlation of binge-watching and psychological well-being.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Sample***

The sample consisted of 60 young adults between the age group 20-30 years (30 males and 30 females) from Chandigarh.

### ***Measures***

The following standardized tests were used:

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- **Psychological Well-Being-** It is an 18 item self-report measure that consists of subscales like autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations, purpose in life, and self-acceptance which was developed by Ryff et al., (2010). Respondents were asked to rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly agree) to 7 (strongly disagree).
- **Watching TV Series Motives Questionnaire (WTSMQ)-English Version-** It is a 22-item scale assessing TV series watching motivations with four core dimensions: social, emotional enhancement, enrichment, and coping/escapism which developed by Flayelle et al., (2019) Items are rated on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (not at all) to 4 (extremely) (to a great extent).

### Procedure

The participants were given the necessary information about the research and the mode through which information was collected was through google forms. The participants were assured of the information's confidentiality, allowing them to give honest answers without fear or inhibition. Participants were given standardized psychological assessments.

## RESULTS

Mean, Standard Deviation & Correlations were worked out to find out the relation between all the variables.

**Table 1: Showing Mean & Standard Deviation of all variables. N=60**

	Gender	Well-being total	Autonomy	Environment mastery	Personal Growth	Positive relations	Purpose in Life	Self-acceptance	Binge-Watching
N	F	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
	M	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30
Mean	F	91.2	15.2	14.2	17.2	14.3	15.0	15.3	55.3
	M	92.8	15.3	15.4	18.4	13.3	14.1	16.3	48.6
Standard deviation	F	11.0	2.77	2.88	3.05	3.88	4.03	4.10	15.0
	M	13.5	2.82	2.83	2.63	4.05	3.11	3.71	13.3

**Table 2: Showing correlations**

	Well-being total	Autonomy	environment mastery	Personal growth	Positive relations	Purpose in life	Self-acceptance	Binge-Watching
Well-being total	—							
Autonomy	0.538 ***	—						
Environment Mastery	0.560 ***	0.244	—					
Personal growth	0.614 ***	0.096	0.271 *	—				
Positive relations	0.669 ***	0.184	0.278 *	0.198	—			
Purpose in Life	0.450 ***	0.168	-0.157	0.318 *	0.172	—		
Self-acceptance	0.787 ***	0.379 **	0.500 ***	0.419 ***	0.438 ***	0.074	—	
Binge-watching	-0.121	0.053	-0.208	-0.123	-0.023	-0.087	-0.067	—

Note. \* p < .05, \*\* p < .01, \*\*\* p < .001

## DISCUSSION

The result found out that there is no significant correlation between binge-watching and well-being. The hypothesis stated is thus accepted.

Study shows that Binge-watching is perceived as recreational as long as goal conflicts and feelings of guilt are often avoided. Well-being, on the opposite hand, is completely tormented by binge-watching-induced will increase in perceived autonomy. The findings indicate that self-determination is a key factor in media reception, satisfaction, and psychological well-being. (Granow et al, 2018)

Another investigation was carried out. Binge-watching habits were also positively correlated with television affinity, instrumental TV viewing motives, and ritualistic TV viewing motives, according to the findings. These findings add to our awareness of the psychological factors that affect television viewing patterns and are important in today's world, considering the increased use of television and movie streaming services. (Wheeler, 2015)

## CONCLUSION

It was speculated that psychological well-being and binge-watching will have a major connection. The research aimed to see how binge-watching influenced young adults aged 20 to 30 years old's psychological well-being. The study made use of standardized scales. A total of 60 participants' data was gathered. The study's results showed that there is no correlation between psychological well-being and binge-watching activity. People should spend less time on online services and more time on online courses that help them acquire various skills such as learning new languages, online courses that help them advance in their careers, and so on.

The demand for such OTT channels has risen as a result of market demand, as half of the population is forced to stay at home due to the Covid-19 lockdown. Bored people prefer to spend a lot of time using such services because many shows pique an individual's interest due to developments in the television industry, where the quality of shows has been improving day by day.

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