

Binge-Impinge- A Study on Online Binge-Watching, Bedtime Procrastination & Self-Control among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Online binge-watching is quite prevalent among the younger generation today. This often leads to delayed bedtime by a few hours to even binge-watching the entire night. Self-control plays a crucial role whereas the lack of it might interfere with day-to-day activities. Standardized scales were used to study Online Binge-Watching Behavior, Bedtime Procrastination, and Self-Control. The sample consisted of 40 young adults ranging from 18 to 25 years of age. The results found that there is a significant positive correlation between online binge-watching and bedtime procrastination. Also, it was found that there is a significant positive correlation between general self-discipline and online binge-watching. Further, it is revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between general self-discipline and bedtime procrastination. There was no significant relationship between impulse control, online binge-watching, and bedtime procrastination. The negative effects of binge-watching can be reduced by trying to reduce the amount of time spent watching TV, maintaining a tech-life balance & practicing good sleep hygiene.

Keywords: *Online Binge-Watching, Bedtime Procrastination, Self-Control, Young Adults.*

It starts with a single episode, then two, and then a few more and suddenly, it's a whole season or even two seasons in one go and before you realize it's already past midnight or even the next morning. Labeled as a verb, Oxford defined "binge-watch" as "to watch multiple episodes of a television program in rapid succession, typically by means of DVDs or digital streaming" (Oxford Dictionaries, 2013). The expression "binge-watch" was derived from the word "binge", which is commonly described as a short period devoted to indulging in an activity to excess, frequently used in terms binge-drink or binge-eat (Pena, 2015). Binge-watching is a relatively new behavior pattern whose popularity has been increasing since 2013, ultimately to become one of the most popular ways of spending free time, especially among young people (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020).

In an era where individuals have full control over their online activities and are free to watch as many tv shows as they want, new research has recently come up which suggests that extended time involved in binge-watching leads to problematic behavior and has debilitating consequences.

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Bedtime procrastination which is a very common phenomenon in today's age is quite prevalent among the younger generations. After a stressful day at work or the office, individuals tend to engage in late evening online leisure which eventually turns out to delay bedtime by a few hours to typically midnight which interferes with the next day's work and other goals in general.

The term 'bedtime procrastination' has become popular based on a study from the Netherlands in 2014. Bedtime procrastination has become quite common in today's time due to the increasing number of online activities which eventually results in poor sleep quality and can be a sign of a lack of self-control or self-regulation. People who generally have high-stress levels during the daytime are often seen as predisposed to bedtime procrastination. It is most frequently associated with sleep deprivation and lack of self-control.

According to Schwerdtner (2021), a study done on 78 participants, aimed to analyze the association between binge-watching and sleep and the moderation effect of self-control. The results indicated that there was no significant association between binge-watching and sleep in quality and quantity found at the group level. Moreover, there was no significant moderation effect of self-control found concerning the association between binge-watching and sleep. However, it was seen that self-control did show a significant effect direct on sleep duration.

According to Merrill & Rubenking (2019) research was conducted to explore the binge-watching frequency and duration of binge-watching sessions through a survey conducted on college undergraduates. Binge-watching frequency was predicted by low self-regulation, a greater tendency to use binge-watching as both a reward and a form of procrastination, and less regret. Self-control was not a predictor suggesting that alternative theoretical models must be explored.

Online Binge-Watching

The word binge often carries a negative and guilt-ridden connotation, and despite becoming a widespread viewing practice, binge-watching is sometimes regarded as a 'guilty pleasure' (Ramsay, 2013). Many studies have defined binge-watching as watching multiple episodes of TV series in one go. A 2013 Harris Interactive survey conducted on behalf of Netflix found that 73% of TV streamers have positive feelings toward binge-watching (Netflix, 2013).

Oxford Dictionaries (2013) referred to binge-watching as "the practice that freed viewers from the traditional one-episode-per-week schedule of broadcast television, and cited the reason for the recognition was its explosion in mainstream use."

According to Starosta et al. (2019), a study was conducted whose aim was to characterize the frequency and motivation to perform binge-watching in a group of young adults. The results indicated a significant association between a high frequency of binge-watching and escape motivation and motivation to deal with loneliness. There were some relations between various motivations and frequency of binge-watching with risk factors for behavioral addiction.

A cross-sectional online study was conducted on 1488 participants using valid and reliable scales. The results indicated that the score on the problematic binge-watching scale was positively correlated with the score on the depression, social interaction anxiety, and loneliness scales among adults in Taiwan (Sun & Chang, 2021).

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Bedtime Procrastination

“Bedtime procrastination is defined as needlessly and voluntarily delaying going to bed, despite foreseeably being worse off as a result” (Kroese et al., 2016). Being reflective of self-regulatory failure, procrastination as a personality trait has clear associations with conscientiousness (reverse), impulsiveness, and low self-control (Steel, 2007).

Bedtime procrastination is defined as failing to go to bed at the intended time, while no external circumstances prevent a person from doing so (Kroese et al., 2014).

According to Kroese et al. (2014), an online survey study was conducted among a community sample. The relationship between bedtime procrastination and individual difference variables related to self-regulation and general procrastination was assessed. The results indicated that bedtime procrastination was negatively associated with self-regulation. Further, self-reported bedtime procrastination was related to general reports of insufficient sleep above and beyond demographics and self-regulation.

A cross-sectional study was conducted on 355 students studying in different universities in China to study the outcomes of smartphone addiction. The results revealed the positive correlation of smartphone addiction with depression and anxiety through bedtime procrastination. Self-control was found to be playing a moderating role in such a way that the mediated relationships were found to be weak for students high in self-control (Geng et al., 2021).

Self-Control

Self-control is the ability to regulate and alter your responses to avoid undesirable behaviors, increase desirable ones, and achieve long-term goals. Research has shown that possessing self-control can be important for health and well-being (Moffitt et al., 2011). Psychologists typically define self-control as the ability to control behaviors to avoid temptations and achieve goals, the ability to delay gratification and resist unwanted behaviors or urges, and a limited resource that can be depleted (Duckworth et al., 2011).

Self-control is a key variable to better understand the interaction between media use and well-being suggesting that low levels of self-control are associated with high levels of media procrastination (Hofmann et al., 2017).

Researchers have found that people who have better self-control tend to be healthier and happier, both in the short term and in the long term (Hofmann et al., 2013).

According to a study investigating whether self-control explains the valence of binge-watching experiences, the results revealed that participants with higher trait self-control report lower levels of tiredness, guilt, boredom, and sadness when binge-watching as compared to less self-controlled participants. Lower levels of trait self-control are also associated with a stronger increase in happiness on initiating binge-watching which results in increased feelings of guilt after binge-watching. Further, the study suggests that binge-watching seems to be a pleasant experience when it does not interfere with other goals, which is most likely the case for individuals with high trait self-control (Lades et al., 2022).

According to Przepiórka et al., (2019) a study was conducted on 314 young adults aged between 18 and 27 years. The results indicated that the positive predictors of procrastination

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were low self-efficacy, low self-control, and a preference for late hours in the evening. A reciprocal relationship was found to be existing between procrastination and sleep problems.

Purpose

The purpose of the research is to study the associations between binge-watching behavior, bedtime procrastination, and self-control among young adults between the age range of 18-25 years.

Hypothesis

- There will be a significant positive relationship between online binge-watching and bedtime procrastination.
- There will be a significant relationship between general self-discipline and online binge-watching.
- There will be a significant relationship between general self-discipline and bedtime procrastination.
- There will be a significant relationship between impulse control, online binge watching and bedtime procrastination.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

A total of 40 young adults in age 18-25 participated in the research from the city of Dehradun.

Measures

- **Binge Watching Addiction Questionnaire (BWAQ):** developed by Forte et al. (2021), consists of 20 questions, each rated on a five-point scale from 'never' to 'always'. The questionnaire was used to measure online binge-watching behavior.
- **Bedtime procrastination scale:** developed by Kroese et al. (2016). It consists of 9 items and each question is rated on a scale from 1 (almost) never to 5 (almost) always.
- **Brief Self-Control scale:** developed by Tangney et al. (2004) consists of 13 items. Each statement has a rating on a five-point scale ranging from 1 (not like me at all) to 5 (very much like me).

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms shared on social media platforms among young adults ranging from 18-25 years of age. Individuals were given instructions regarding the study and were thanked for their participation in the research. Standardized scales were used for the administration of tests.

Analysis of Data

The responses of the participants were analyzed by correlation to see the association among the variables. In Table 1, the mean and standard deviation is presented. In Table 2, the correlation between online binge-watching, bedtime procrastination, and self-control is shown.

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RESULTS

Table 1. Shows the mean and standard deviation of the sample.

	Online Binge Watching	Bedtime Procrastination	Self-Control-General factor	Impulse factor
N	40	40	40	40
Mean	27.3	26.7	26.6	13.9
Standard deviation	14.4	6.44	6.46	2.93

Table 2. Shows the correlation between online binge-watching, bedtime procrastination, and self-control.

	Online watching	Binge	Bedtime procrastination	Self-Control-General factor	Impulse factor
Online watching	—				
Binge		—			
Bedtime procrastination	0.674***		—		
Self-Control General self-discipline	0.386*		0.362*	—	
Impulse control	-0.278		-0.206	-0.293	—

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

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The results found that there is a significant positive correlation between online binge-watching and bedtime procrastination ($r=0.674$, $p<.001$), hence the hypothesis that there will be a significant positive relationship between online binge-watching and bedtime procrastination has been accepted. The results also found that there is a significant positive correlation between general self-discipline and online binge-watching ($r=0.386$, $p<.05$). Thus, the hypothesis that there will be a significant correlation between general self-discipline and online binge-watching has been accepted. Further, it is revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between general self-discipline and bedtime procrastination ($r=0.362$, $p<.05$). Hence, it can be concluded that the hypothesis stating that there will be a significant correlation between general self-discipline and bedtime procrastination has been accepted. The results found that there was no significant relationship between impulse control, online binge-watching, and bedtime procrastination.

According to Exelmans & Bulck (2017), a study was conducted on 821 adults in face-to-face interviews using standardized scales. The results indicated that self-regulatory failure over television can explain the struggle with bedtime, and strong viewing habits can inhibit bedtime procrastination.

CONCLUSION

The study comprehends the relationship between online binge-watching, bedtime procrastination and self-control. The results found that there was a significant positive correlation between online binge-watching and bedtime procrastination. Also, it was found

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that there is a significant positive correlation between general self-discipline and online binge-watching. Further, it was revealed that there is a significant positive correlation between general self-discipline and bedtime procrastination. There was no significant relationship between impulse control, online binge-watching, and bedtime procrastination.

The new-age streaming era has changed the way we view the digital world. Binge-watching as cool as it sounds has debilitating effects on physical and mental health if not done under control. Experts suggest that people are now more into binge-watching shows all night rather than socializing or sleeping on time. The act of bedtime procrastination which comes hand in hand with online binge-watching can affect the circadian rhythm which in turn affects sleep leading to long-term health issues including mental health issues and behavioral addictions. In order to reduce this habit, one might limit oneself to a certain number of episodes of a series, keep the gadgets away after 9 pm, have a sleep hygiene routine, read a few pages of a book before bedtime or balance the time spent on watching series with exercising or practicing mindfulness instead of mindlessly getting hooked on to TV series. Building a routine is an essential part of sustaining and setting fixed hours for both work and leisure keeps balance in life.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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