

## Binge Watching and Sleep Quality Among College Students

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### ABSTRACT

The prevalence of binge watching is starting to become a major source of addiction among young adults. The objective of the present research was to investigate the relationship between binge watching and sleep quality among college students in Kerala, India, considering a small sample size. The gender differences in the variables binge watching and sleep quality was also analysed. The study was conducted on a sample of 60 students randomly selected from various colleges in Kerala using the convenient sampling method. The sample consisted of young adults of ages 18 to 25. They were provided with Problematic Series Watching Scale (PSWS) and Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) questionnaires to fill in. Independent sample t-test and Pearson's Correlation Test were used for statistical analysis. Results revealed that There is no significant gender difference in the dimension of binge watching and poor sleep quality. It was also found that there is no statistically significant correlation between binge watching and poor sleep quality.

**Keywords:** *Binge Watching, Sleep Quality*

In today's world people have started to rely on the virtual world of internet for pleasure and relaxation purpose. Especially during the recent pandemic situation people have started to enjoy their solitude and engage in such activities. Platforms such as Netflix, amazon and hot star enables these habits. The major one in this is Binge watching.

Binge watching is the practice of watching multiple episodes of a television programme or series in rapid succession, typically by means of DVDs or digital streaming. Addiction is considered by WHO as dependence/the continuous use of something for the sake of relief or stimulation, which often causes cravings when it is absent. The 2 types of addiction are Substance addiction and Behavioral Addiction such as binge watching. Binge watching can cause mental or behavioral problems, interfere with performance in class or work, reduce real-life social interaction, neglect of private life, mental preoccupation, mood-modifying experiences and can also lead to relationship disorders. Studies have shown that binge watching directly predicted sleep problems especially, by affecting sleep through night time awakenings. Anxiety or dependence led to an increase in daily number of episodes watched and also increased night time awakenings, which, in turn, affects sleep. Thus, it is important to study the effect binge watching can have on sleep quality in today's internet driven population. Problematic internet use has been a controversial topic since the 1990s. some

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researchers even claim that problematic internet use has to be classified as a psychiatric some others claim that those who spend excessive time on internet are not actually addicted to it but rather to specific activities that they can pursue through this medium. Majority of the population that was examined mentioned watching online content as their favoured non-work online activity. The reason might be that online streaming is low cost, accessible to any with a broad band connection and is not exclusive to a certain location or time. These traits are strikingly similar to those described by Cooper (1998) in relation to the Internet and pornography. Based on these considerations and the conclusions of Pontes et al. (2015), it is reasonable to conclude that troublesome series viewing warrants further study. Based on a survey conducted by an internet entertainment organization with over 40 million subscribers, 76 percent of series viewers reported that binge watching is fond way to unwind from their busy lives and 73 percent think that binge watching is good idea (Netflix media centre, 2013). Despite the rise in success, binge watching has gained very little academic recognition. Studies shows that screen exposure has a negative impact on sleep.

**Loneliness** - Students face a variety of obstacles as they adapt to college life and a new world, including behavioral problems and isolation, for which they turn to television to meet their social contact needs (Aherne, 2001; Greenwood & Long, 2009; Hurst et al., 2013). Students develop a sense of identity by substituting TV for real-life companionship and using the medium to identify with others (characters and actors) (Greenwood & Long, 2009). This is aided by the formation of imaginary friendships with actors, known as Para social relationships (Eyal & Cohen, 2006; Greenwood, 2008; Greenwood & Long, 2009). Loneliness is a major indicator of developing PSRs in college students, meaning that when they are depressed, they turn to their favourite shows and report a decrease in those feelings when watching them (Derrick et al., 2009; Eyal & Cohen, 2006).

**Stress** – the calming effect of television was discovered in studies performed by Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (2002), in which they traced the pulse rate, skin resistance and brain waves of viewers. Their findings revealed that audiences felt comfortable while watching tv and that feeling dies out once they stop. As a result it can be assumed that binge viewing is stress reduction strategy among students (Hurst, Baranik and Daniel 2013).

**Social Engagement** - Apart from compensating for a lack of intimate connections, binge watching is regarded as a socially appropriate behavior by college students and young audiences. Binge watching allows and increases their involvement in peer groups and social conversation, and as a result, fans are encouraged to spend increasing amounts of time doing so in order to talk to their peers about the shows they're watching (Matrix, 2014; Panda & Pandey, 2017). FoMo, in particular, influences the viewing rate of drama shows, where fans binge watch to keep up with the new story and therefore enter the public discussion late (Conlin et al., 2016). Other people's recommendations and reviews on TV shows are also social contributing factors, demonstrating the interactional impact involved (Panda & Pandey, 2017).

**Habit and Addiction** - Binge viewing has become a habitual occurrence for audiences and it has become absorbed into their everyday lives as a cultural tradition (Mikos, 2016). However, the more college students binge watch, the more likely they are to waste more time doing so in the future, leading to dependency (Panda & Pandey, 2017). In reality, 60 percent of binge watchers say they are hooked to the shows they are watching (Devasagayam, 2014). Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) decided to understand television's addictive essence based on viewers' associations with stress relief, which are strengthened in a variety of ways. research

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shows that students who feel nervous or uncomfortable after binge viewing for an extended period of time are more likely to continue doing so.

Impact of Heavy Television Use and Binge Watching are various: 1) Physical Health - The effects of excessive TV viewing on one's physical well being have been thoroughly studied. High exposure to television, as a sedentary practice, is linked to physical inactivity in adults, especially among female college students, whose physical activity is negatively correlated with television viewing (Buckworth & Nigg, 2004; Meyer et al., 2008). Long-term TV use has also been linked to an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and type 2 diabetes in studies (Grntved & Hu, 2011). The impact of television viewing on eating habits has also been recorded in research. Furthermore, excessive TV exposure is linked to sleep disturbances, loss of sleep, and changes in melatonin levels, altering viewers' sleeping habits (Sigman, 2007; Van den Bulck, 2000). Increased nausea, insomnia, and poor sleep quality are all linked to binge viewing, which is induced by cognitive pre-sleep arousal, which may be due to the greater plot interaction and character recognition that occurs when binge watching (Exelmans & Van den Bulck, 2017). 2) Psychological Consequences - Watching tv for extended periods of time has negative effects on memory, emotion, and mental health. Concentration and attention span problems are among the cognitive side effects. Emotional effects are often felt by heavy audiences. They claim that watching TV for an extended amount of time makes them feel the same or worse, and that the feeling is less pleasant (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Binge watchers have expressed feelings of emptiness after the conclusion of a broadcast or a season of a programme (Devasagayam, 2014). Binge watching has also been linked to higher levels of loneliness and depression, as well as anxiety and exhaustion. Finally, as opposed to medium TV audiences, heavy television viewers have poorer life satisfaction. The dependent variable sleep quality is characterized as a person's satisfaction with their sleep experience, which includes aspects such as sleep initiation, sleep maintenance, sleep quantity, and wakefulness. Because of the high prevalence of disrupted sleep and insomnia, as well as the strong connection between sleep quality and optimum health and functioning, physicians and researchers are concerned about sleep quality. Despite its widespread use, "sleep quality" is a word that lacks a precise meaning. (2008) (Krystal and Edinger). Good sleep quality is linked to a variety of beneficial effects, including improved fitness, reduced daytime sleepiness, increased well-being, and improved productivity. One of the distinguishing characteristics of insomnia is poor sleep quality. (1989, Hyypa and Kronholm). Excessive use of visual devices in the dark is linked to sleep deprivation and depression in teenagers. Sleep deprivation can be linked to underlying medical conditions. Excessive daytime sleepiness and insomnia can be caused by chronic disease and its associated stress. Sleep disruption is a significant risk factor for the onset of depression, especially in adolescence.

The aim of this research was to look at the subjective sense of sleep quality in people with and without insomnia. Sleep quality was characterized by tiredness on waking and during the day, feeling refreshed and revived on waking, and the amount of night-time awakenings in both the insomnia and regular sleeper classes. The insomniacs had higher standards for determining whether or not sleep was of sufficient quality. It was discovered that the sense of sleep consistency differed little between insomniacs and normal sleepers. The foregoing hypotheses focused on studies stress the importance of sleep and getting a full night's sleep.

The evolutionary theory of sleep, also known as the adaptive theory of sleep, claims that we have intervals of inactivity to save energy. According to this hypothesis, both animals adapt to sleeping at times when being awake is dangerous. According to science, animal species with few natural predators sleep 12 to 15 hours a day, and those with more predators sleep 4

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to 5 hours a day. 2011 (Ezenwanne). The Knowledge Consolidation Theory of Sleep is based on cognitive science and proposes that people sleep to filter information they've gathered during the day. This theory also argues that sleep allows the brain to prepare for the day to come. 2012 research studies also suggest that sleep helps cement the things we have learned during the day into Long term memory This is based on a series of sleep deprivation studies that show that not getting enough sleep has a significant effect on one's ability to recall and remember details. Another hypothesis is the Wake-Up Theory of Sleep, which claims that sleep helps the brain to clean itself up. A research discovered that when we are sleeping, the brain cleans itself of chemicals and waste created during the day. When a human rests, the fluid movement into the brain increases, acting like a waste management mechanism, cleaning the brain with waste material. (Xie, Kang, Xu, among others, 2013). As a result, sleep is a vital phase in humans, and a good night's sleep is critical for good health and well-being. Sleep is important for growth, learning, and cognitive development, as well as immunity, and research has linked poor sleep to heart disease in young adults. (Bruce, 10/17/2017).

### **METHODOLOGY**

Method outlines the ways the research problem has been formulated and the procedure adopted to test the stated hypothesis.

#### *Objective:*

- To identify the gender differences in binge watching severities among males and females.
- To identify the gender differences in sleep quality among males and females.
- To investigate the relationship between binge watching and sleep quality in college students.

#### *Hypothesis*

- Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference in binge watching among male and female students
- Hypothesis 2: There is no significant differences in sleep quality among male and female students
- Hypothesis 3: There is no significant relationship between binge watching and sleep quality

#### *Population and Participants*

The sample consists of 60 college students of ages 18 to 25 randomly selected from different districts of Kerala, India. None of the samples were uneducated.

- **Inclusive criteria:** young adults of ages 18 to 25 are selected from colleges in Kerala state.
- **Exclusive criteria:** college students from outside Kerala were not included in the sampling.

#### *Sampling Techniques*

The sampling technique used in the study is Stratified Random Sampling. Stratified Random Sampling is a method of sampling that involves division of population into smaller sub-groups called strata. These strata are formed based on some shared characteristics or attributes of the members such as income, age, gender, etc.

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### *Measures:*

#### **Demographic information:**

Demographic Information collected from the participants, included age, and educational qualification since all these variables have been shown to potentially impact self-objectification and well-being levels.

#### **Problematic Series Watching Scale (PSWS):**

The problematic series watching scale (PSWS) is a 6 item, five- point scale based on binge watching scale and the features of binge watching. It was developed by Griffiths (2005). The options on this scale range from 1 to 5. Higher scores indicate a higher risk of binge-watching addiction. The total score on the scale can vary between 6 and 30. Problematic series watching scale (PSWS) developed by Griffiths (2005), is a revised version of Bergen work addiction scale. It is a 6 item, mono-dimensional, self -administered questionnaire. PSWS examines binge watching and yields a total score that indicates the severity of binge watching. Higher scores indicate more severe addiction. This questionnaire also helps to measure the six core elements of problematic series watching in terms of (a) salience, (b) tolerance, (c) mood modification, (d) relapse, (e) withdrawal, and (f) conflict which are assessed by 6 items. It is based on self- reporting five- point Likert scale. The scores are as follows – 1: “never”, 2: “rarely”, 3: “sometimes”, 4: “often”, 5: “always”.

#### **Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI):**

The Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index (PSQI) was developed by Buses and colleagues (1988), is a self- reported questionnaire that assess sleep quality over a 1-month time interval. The questionnaire consists of 19 items, creating 7 components that produces one global score, and takes 5-10 minutes to complete. The questionnaire is used in research and also in clinical setting, mainly to diagnose sleep related disorders. Although there are two questions that request the evaluation of the client’s bed mate or roommate, these are not scored nor reflected in the attached instrument. If the question 5J is not complete or the value is missing, it now counts as a “0”. The PSQI contains nineteen self-administered items, and five additional items to be rated by a bed partner or roommate, if available. These five items were extraneous to the concerns of the current research. As far as scoring is concerned, responses to only the initial nineteen items are scored, and yield seven scores for the seven different components of sleep quality which are added to get one global score of sleep quality. The components scores may range from 0 to 3, with 0 representing no difficulty in the related domain and 3 representing severe difficulty. This global score, which is the sleep quality index, can range from 0 to 21, with 0, again, showing no difficulty and 21 showing severe difficulty. A global score up to 5 is indicative of good sleep quality, and one above 5, of poor sleep quality.

### *Statistical Analysis*

The results of the study were derived using the independent samples t-test and Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient procedure. Comparative analysis between genders was carried out by independent sample t-test. The Pearson’s Correlation Coefficient was used to assess the association between binge watching and sleep quality.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation was calculated to find out the relationship among two study variable. The correlation coefficient is a measure of linear association between two variables. Usually, the Karl Pearsons correlation is used. Values of the correlation coefficient are always between -1 and +1. A correlation coefficient of +1 indicates that the two variables

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are perfectly related in a positive linear sense, and a correlation coefficient of 0 indicates that there is no linear relationship between the two variables.

Independent sample 't' test is a parametric test used for judging the significance of mean or judging the significant of differences between means of two samples. It is the ratio of static to its standard error. The statistical significance of t is dependent upon its size and the number of degrees of freedom, or the number of observations minus the number dependent restrictions on the sample. A common used id t is in the determination of the significance of differences between two means.

### RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Through the present study, the investigator has attempted to examine, if there is a significant relationship between binge watching and sleep quality among the sample of 60 college students in Kerala, India. The gender difference in the relationship between binge watching and sleep quality was examined. The data obtained from the participants were scored approximately and analysed using t-test and Pearson's correlation test, and the obtained results are discussed in the following sections.

**Table 1: The 't' values obtained for males and females in the dimensions of Binge Watching**

Variable	Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	N	t-value	Sig
PSWS	Male	15.633	4.99	30	1.411	0.279
	Female	13.966	4.11	30		

From the result obtained in table 1, it is inferred that there is no significant gender difference in the prevalence of binge watching among the male and female college students in the sample taken. Thus, hypothesis 1 is accepted. This result is consistent with the study conducted by Closter and Pie terse (2019) which concluded that there is no significant gender difference in binge watching. It is also consistent with the results study by Starosta (2020) which also reported that there is no significant gender difference in the prevalence of binge watching. However, the study by Ahmed (2017) there is significant gender difference in demographic variables view.

**Table 2: The 't' value obtained for males and females in the dimensions of sleep quality.**

Variable	Gender	Mean	Standard deviation	N	t-value	Sig
PSQI	Male	6.266	3.073	30	-0.530	0.658
	Female	6.7	3.260	30		

Table 2 demonstrate that is there is no significant gender difference in the dimension of sleep quality at 0.01 level. Thus, the hypothesis 2 is accepted. From the result it is inferred that there is no much difference in the sleep quality among males and females.

**Table 3: Correlation between Problematic Series Watching Scale (PSWS) And Pittsburg Sleep Quality Index(PSQI) score.**

Variable	PSWS
PSQI	0.325

P= 0.129

Table 3 shows that there is no statistically significant correlation between binge watching and sleep quality among college students, hence we can say that Hypothesis 3 is accepted. Also,

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there are only few studies that considers a relation between binge watching and sleep quality. One among them is the study conducted by Exelmans and Bulck (2017), which shows that there is a significant relation between binge viewing and poor sleep quality. It is a topic where studies are still going. The lack of significance may be also due factors such as geographical area, culture, resource availability etc.

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present study was used to examine the relationship between binge watching and sleep quality among college students, and also whether there is any gender difference in the above-mentioned variables. It has been concluded that there is no significant gender difference in binge watching and also in sleep quality. There is no relationship between binge watching and sleep quality among college students either.

#### *Major findings*

- There is no significant gender difference in the prevalence of binge watching among male and female college students of Kerala, India.
- There is no significant gender difference in the dimension of sleep quality among male and female college students of Kerala, India.
- There is no statistically significant relation between binge watching and sleep quality, among college students of Kerala, India.

#### *Implications*

The study implies that binge watching cannot lead to poor sleep quality among college students. In this study the sleep is analysed in terms of sleep latency, subjective sleep quality, sleep disturbances, sleep medications and habitual sleep efficiency. Binge watching severity can be determined in terms of physical fatigue, withdrawal, overuse, addiction, negative daily life consequences. As there is no significant relation between binge watching and sleep quality, we can imply that poor sleep quality does not occur due to binge watching, even though binge watching can be also a factor in poor sleep quality we cannot completely assume that poor sleep quality occurs due to binge watching.

#### *Limitations and suggestion*

Like other studies, this study is not free of limitations. It is geographically limited to Kerala state and the sample population taken for the study is also limited. Some suggestions are: The study can also be applied to other people with different age group, The study also helps to other psychological factors also, like family issues, work problems, The study also helps to analyse different physiological factors, like headaches, eye problems.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

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