

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Pavithra Sankara Subramanian^{1*}, Dr. Kakoli Das²

ABSTRACT

The proliferation of digital streaming platforms has revolutionized the way individuals consume audiovisual content, ushering in a new era of binge-watching culture. This study investigates the potential impact of binge-watching on the mental health of late adolescents and early adults. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, data was collected from a diverse sample of 100 participants aged 16-30 through questionnaire method. In terms of binge-watching performance, the mean score for adolescent subjects stands at 98.72, slightly lower than the mean score for adult subjects, which is 101.3. The standard deviation for both groups is comparable, with adolescent subjects at 15.543 and adult subjects at 15.622, resulting in a t-score of 0.852. Furthermore, when examining mental health scores, the mean for adolescent subjects is 15.02, whereas for adult subjects it is slightly higher at 16.58. The corresponding standard deviations are 6.10951 and 6.44946 for adolescents and adults, respectively, leading to a t-score of 0.514. This indicates that adults exhibit marginally higher mental health symptom scores compared to adolescents. Moreover, the correlation analysis between binge-watching (BW) and mental health (MH) yields a coefficient of 0.408, accompanied by an impressively low p-value of less than 0.001. Significantly, this signifies a moderately positive correlation between binge-watching and mental health. These findings suggest binge-watching may be a risk factor for mental health issues in this demographic, potentially influencing both ways—individuals with existing mental health concerns may be more inclined to binge-watch, or binge-watching may lead to mental health problems.

Keywords: *Binge-Watching, Mental Health, Adolescence, Adulthood, Correlation Analysis*

Binge-watching is the practice of watching multiple episodes of a television series or movie in a row. It has become increasingly popular in recent years, due to the rise of streaming services such as Netflix and Hulu, which make it easy to watch entire seasons of shows at once. World Health Organization defines Mental health as a state of well-being in which an individual realizes their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community (World Health Organization).

¹Master of Science in Psychology, CMR University

²Department of psychology, CMR University, Bangalore, India

*Corresponding Author

Received: December 10, 2023; Revision Received: February 14, 2024; Accepted: February 18, 2024

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Binge-watching has become a popular pastime for people of all ages, but it is especially prevalent among late adolescents and young adults. This is a time of life when people are going through many transitions, such as starting college, entering the workforce, and forming new relationships. It is also a time of life when people are still developing their mental and emotional health.

Binge-watching can be a way to relax and escape from the stresses of everyday life. However, it is important to be aware of the potential negative consequences of binge-watching, especially for late adolescents and young adults. Research has shown that binge-watching can be associated with a number of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, loneliness, social isolation, sleep problems, and addiction (Boudali et al., 2022; Peterson, 2016; Tukachinsky & Eyal, 2018).

One reason why binge-watching may be associated with mental health problems is that it can lead to social isolation. When people spend hours watching TV or movies alone, they are less likely to interact with other people. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and depression. Additionally, binge-watching can interfere with sleep, which can also contribute to mental health problems.

Another reason why binge-watching may be associated with mental health problems is that it can be addictive. When people binge-watch, they are releasing dopamine, which is a neurotransmitter that produces feelings of pleasure. This can lead to people binge-watching more and more, even when it is interfering with their other activities and relationships.

It is important to note that not everyone who binge-watches will experience negative consequences. However, it is important to be aware of the potential risks, especially for late adolescents and young adults.

1.2 NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES ON MENTAL HEALTH

Binge watching, the practice of watching multiple episodes of a television show in a row, has become increasingly popular in recent years (Alimoradi et al, 2022). This is due in part to the rise of streaming services, which make it easy to watch entire seasons of shows at once. However, there is growing concern that binge watching may have negative consequences for mental health, particularly in late adolescence and early adulthood. According to market research firm Nielsen, the total amount of time people spent per week streaming video in 2020 increased by nearly 75% compared with 2019 and currently it is not slowing down (Nielsen, 2020).

There is some evidence to support this concern. For example, a study by Rubenking et al. (2018) found that binge watching was associated with increased symptoms of anxiety and depression in college students. Additionally, a study by Panda and Pandey (2017) found that binge watching was associated with decreased self-esteem and increased social isolation in college students.

While binge-watching can be a fun and enjoyable way to relax, there is some concern that it may have negative effects on mental health. In particular, some studies have found that binge-watching is associated with increased levels of depression, anxiety, and loneliness (Starosta et al 2020). They conducted the study in the University of Chicago and found that binge-watchers were more likely to report feeling lonely, with an odds ratio of 1.43.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Another study by Viola C. Granow et al found out that binge-watching has both positive and negative effects on well-being. It can provide new opportunities for self-determined forms of entertainment consumption and positively influence media enjoyment and well-being through perceived autonomy. However, the new freedom granted by video-on-demand services is a double-edged sword, as it can also lead to goal conflicts between entertainment consumption and other goals and obligations, resulting in feelings of guilt and diminishing the potential positive effects of entertaining media use on well-being (Viola C. Granow et al 2018).

Study by Hongjin Shim et al found that binge-watchers tend to have negative attitudes towards binge-watching, but they still binge-watch anyway. This is especially true for people who are high in impulsivity (immediate gratification). The study also found that people who are high in need for cognition are more likely to binge-watch, regardless of their attitude towards it. The study's authors suggest that binge-watching may be addictive for some people, especially those who are high in impulsivity. They also suggest that binge-watching may be a way for people with high NFC (need for cognition) to satisfy their curiosity about the issue-relevant information they derive from their program contents (Hongjin Shim et al, 2018).

1.3 DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY

A study by the University of Pittsburgh found that binge-watching was associated with an increase of 1.57 points on the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI), a standardized measure of depression (Alimoradi et al, 2022). A study by the University of California, Los Angeles found that binge-watching could disrupt sleep patterns, leading to an increase in sleep latency (the time it takes to fall asleep) of 17 minutes (Costenbader et al 2019).

Research to understand the binge-watching behaviours have been upcoming, study by Sabine Steins-Loeber et al that explored the role of impulsivity and depressive symptoms in binge-watching. The authors found that impulsivity was associated with loss of control and neglect of duties, while depressive symptoms were associated with neglect of duties and social problems (Steins-Loeber et al 2020).

In a study to understand “Anxiety-Depressive Syndrome and Binge-Watching Among Young Adults” by Jolanta Starosta et al, they found, that people with anxiety and depression are more likely to binge-watch and that binge-watching can worsen these conditions. Binge-watching can actually worsen these emotions and make it more difficult to deal with them in a healthy way. The study also found that binge-watching can lead to social isolation and sleep deprivation, which can further contribute to mental health problems. In addition to finding that anxiety and depression are linked to binge-watching, the authors also found that certain motivations for binge-watching are also associated with mental health problems. For example, people who binge-watch to escape from reality, to cope with negative emotions, or to deal with loneliness are more likely to experience anxiety and depression. (Jolanta Starosta et al 2021).

1.4 COVID 19 RELATION WITH BINGE-WATCHING

Binge watching has found massive increase during the covid period. There have been various studies to understand the correlation between Binge-watching and covid. A study by Ayushi Dixit found out that binge-watching was common, with 73.7% of participants reporting an increase in binge-watching during the pandemic. The most common reasons for binge-watching were to pass time and escape boredom (52.6%), relieve stress (25%), and

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

overcome loneliness (15.7%). The authors also found that binge-watching can have negative consequences, such as sleep disturbances, impaired work performance, and conflict with others. Overall, the study suggested that binge-watching is a complex behavior with both positive and negative consequences. It is important to be aware of the potential negative consequences of binge-watching and to take steps to reduce your screen time if necessary (Dixit et al 2020).

Another research by SH Raza et al showed evidence that Binge-watching may be associated with increased levels of depression, anxiety, and loneliness during the COVID-19 pandemic. It discusses the negative mental health effects of binge-watching, such as stress, anxiety, depression, and loneliness. The authors also found that screen time for web series using online streaming services can worsen these effects. They suggest that interventions are needed to help people become more critical of online streaming content. (SH Raza et al 2019).

1.5 SLEEP PATTERNS

Binge watching is done mostly in the night time which can lead to problems in sleep patterns. Study by Alexander Ort et al have found that there is a link between binge-watching and sleep problems. People who binge-watch are more likely to have difficulty falling asleep, stay up later, and get less sleep overall. They are also more likely to report feeling tired and unrested during the day. There are a few reasons why binge-watching might lead to sleep problems. First, the blue light emitted from screens can suppress the production of melatonin, a hormone that helps regulate sleep. Second, the excitement and suspense of binge-watching can make it difficult to wind down before bed. Finally, people who binge-watch often stay up late to finish a show or movie, which can disrupt their circadian rhythm (Alexander Ort et al 2021).

Another study by Oberschmidt found out that binge-watching at night was associated with lower sleep quantity. Watching with others, especially a friend or partner, was also associated with lower sleep quality. However, the study did not find a significant relationship between binge-watching frequency and sleep outcome. The authors suggest that more research is needed to determine whether binge-watching is a causal factor in sleep problems (Oberschmidt 2017).

1.6 PSYCHO SOCIAL FACTORS

There are various psycho-social factors that come into effect with binge watching, a study by Dhiman et al on “Psychosocial Impact of Web Series and Streaming Content: A Study on Indian Youth” out that binge watching is associated with a number of psychosocial problems, including addiction, sleep deprivation, academic performance problems, and relationship problems; Addiction: Binge watching can be addictive because it releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter that is associated with pleasure and reward.

This can lead people to binge watch even when they know they should be doing something else; Sleep deprivation: When people stay up late watching TV or streaming shows, they are more likely to experience fatigue, difficulty concentrating, and irritability. This can make it difficult to perform well at work or school, and can also strain relationships; Academic performance problems: When people spend too much time watching TV or streaming shows, they have less time for schoolwork. This can lead to lower grades and academic problems; Relationship problems: Binge watching can also lead to relationship problems. When people spend too much time watching TV or streaming shows, they have less time for

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

their friends and family. This can lead to feelings of loneliness and isolation, and can also strain relationships (Dhiman et al 2021).

1.7 MEDIA AND BINGE WATCHING

Media and binge watching are closely intertwined. The rise of streaming services has made it easier than ever for people to binge watch their favourite TV shows and movies. On the positive side, binge watching can be a relaxing and enjoyable way to escape from the stresses of everyday life. It can also be a way to connect with other people who enjoy the same TV shows.

However, binge watching also has some potential negative consequences. For example, it can lead to sleep deprivation, weight gain, and social isolation. Additionally, binge watching can be addictive, and some people may find themselves unable to control their viewing habits. This can lead to problems at work or school, and it can also damage relationships.

In a study by Bridget Rubenking et al authors found that *serial viewing*, a new type of viewing that is not quite binge watching but not quite traditional TV watching, has become more popular than both binge watching and appointment viewing. Serial viewing is characterized by watching multiple episodes of a TV show in a row over a period of days, weeks, or months, at the viewer's own pace. Binge watching remains more popular than appointment viewing, which has seen the largest declines in frequency and duration. The authors suggest that binge watching has become a new media habit that is intentional and highly involving for most viewers, rather than a problematic experience. They also suggest that future media studies should measure the viewing styles of audiences when investigating media effects (Bridget Rubenking et al 2021).

Another study M Pittman et al found that binge-watching is a new type of viewing that is different from both traditional television watching and Internet usage. It is more engaging than other ways of watching, and individuals are highly involved in the characters and the story lines when they binge watch. The three regression analyses show that engagement is the strongest motivation for binge-watching. The more engaged one feels with the story lines and the characters, the more frequently they will binge watch. The social factor was significant to predict planning ahead to binge watch, which could suggest that binge-watching certain programs might become more of an event like the Super Bowl for some viewers. Finally, there is evidence that people use binge-watching as a type of restorative experience. Binge-watching a whole season in a day or two would certainly contribute to such narrative immersion (M Pittman et al 2015).

1.8 INCLUSION IN DSM AND ICD IN FUTURE

Binge-watching is not currently included as a diagnosis in either the ICD-10 or the DSM-5. However, it has been suggested that it could be classified as a type of impulse control disorder or addictive behavior.

In the ICD-10, impulse control disorders are classified under the code F63. This category includes disorders such as gambling disorder, kleptomania, and pyromania. Binge-watching could potentially be classified as a type of impulse control disorder because it is characterized by a loss of control over behavior, even when there are negative consequences. In the DSM-5, addictive behaviors are classified under the code Z72. This category includes substance use disorders, gambling disorder, and other behavioral addictions, such as internet gaming disorder. Binge-watching could potentially be classified as a type of behavioral

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

addiction because it is characterized by excessive engagement in a pleasurable activity despite negative consequences.

The findings of my study will provide valuable insights into the relationship between binge-watching and mental health. This information can be used to develop interventions to help people who are struggling with binge-watching habits, and to raise awareness of the potential risks of binge-watching.

THEORIES OF BINGE WATCHING

Uses and Gratification Theory by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch: The earliest theories that have talked about binge watching was in 1974, a theory called Uses and Gratification Theory by Elihu Katz, Jay G. Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch. The theory suggested that people use media to satisfy their needs. Some of the needs that people may be trying to satisfy by binge-watching include escapism, relaxation, and social connection. Binge-watching can be a way for people to satisfy a variety of needs, including the need to escape from reality, relax, and connect with others.

A study by Devadas Menon found out that people are more likely to subscribe to OTT video streaming services if they find them easy to use, enjoy binge-watching content, and find them relaxing. They are also more likely to continue subscribing to these services if they find them easy to use, enjoy binge-watching content, and find them entertaining. In other words, the study found that the following uses and gratifications of OTT video streaming services predict purchase intentions: convenient navigability, binge-watching, and relaxation. The same uses and gratifications, plus entertainment, predict continuation intentions. These findings have implications for OTT video streaming service providers. They suggest that these providers should focus on developing platforms that are easy to use, offer a wide variety of content that is suitable for binge-watching, and provide a relaxing and enjoyable viewing experience (Devadas Menon, 2022).

Flow Theory by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi: In 1990, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi gave the Flow Theory which suggested that people are more likely to engage in activities that they find challenging and enjoyable. Binge-watching can provide a sense of flow, especially when people are watching a show that they are really interested in. According to the theory, Binge-watching can be a flow activity, which means that it is challenging and enjoyable enough to keep people engaged for a long period of time. This can make it difficult for people to stop binge-watching, even when they know they should.

A study by Shim H, found that people who scored higher on sensation seeking and need for cognition were more likely to become binge-watching dependent. The study also found that the relationship between sensation seeking/need for cognition and binge-watching dependence was mediated by flow. In other words, people who are more sensation-seeking and have a higher need for cognition are more likely to experience flow while binge-watching, which can lead to binge-watching dependence. The study's findings have implications for the prevention and treatment of binge-watching dependence. They suggest that interventions should focus on reducing sensation seeking and need for cognition, as well as promoting healthy coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and boredom (Shim H, 2022)

Dopamine Theory by Jacques Van Rossum: In 1966, the famous Dopamine theory was given by Jacques Van Rossum. This theory suggests that binge-watching is addictive

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

because it releases dopamine, a neurotransmitter that is associated with pleasure and reward. The more people binge-watch, the more dopamine is released, and the more likely they are to continue binge-watching. Binge-watching can be addictive because it releases dopamine, which makes people feel good. The more people binge-watch, the more dopamine is released, and the more likely they are to continue binge-watching in order to experience that feeling.

Compulsive Behavior Theory

There has been a lot of research on understanding the relation between compulsive behavior and binge watching. This theory suggests that binge-watching can be a form of compulsive behavior. Compulsive behaviours are characterized by the need to engage in a behavior repeatedly, even when it is harmful. People who binge-watch may feel compelled to watch multiple episodes of a show, even when they know that they should be doing something else. Binge-watching can be a compulsive behavior for some people. This means that they feel an irresistible urge to binge-watch, even when it is disrupting their lives.

The authors found out that impulsivity, a personality trait characterized by a lack of forethought and planning and a tendency to act on impulse without considering the consequences, is associated with compulsive binge-watching. They stated that binge-watching can be a compulsive behavior for some people, meaning that they feel an irresistible urge to binge-watch, even when it is disrupting their lives. The authors of the study found that people who scored higher on impulsivity measures were also more likely to binge-watch compulsively. This suggests that impulsivity may play a role in the development of binge-watching dependence. However, the findings of the study suggest that impulsivity may be a risk factor for the development of binge-watching dependence (Sabine Steins-Loeber et al 2020).

Operation definition

Binge watching

Operational definition: Binge watching refers to simultaneous engagement in extended periods of consecutive television or video streaming viewing, typically involving multiple episodes or an entire season of a show, while concurrently consuming food, snacks, or beverages beyond the scope of a regular meal or typical eating pattern. This behavior often occurs in a sedentary setting and may involve mindless or excessive consumption of food items.

Mental health

Operational definition: Mental health refers to an individual's psychological well-being and encompasses various dimensions of emotional, cognitive, and social functioning. Assessing mental health involves employing validated measurement tools and psychological assessments that capture these dimensions, such as self-report questionnaires, clinical interviews, behavioural observations, and neuropsychological tests.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This review of literature will provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on the relationship of binge watching and mental health. It will cover topics such as the relationship between binge watching use and depression, anxiety, and loneliness and understand the current state of knowledge on the topic. This is important because it allows the researcher to build on the work of previous researchers and to avoid duplicating research that has already been done.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Review of literature helps to identify gaps in the literature – this can help the researcher to identify new and important research questions to investigate; develop a strong theoretical framework for the research. This will help the researcher to understand the context of the research and to interpret the findings; write a more informed and persuasive research proposal or dissertation. By demonstrating that the researcher has a good understanding of the existing literature, they can show their readers that the research is important and that it will make a significant contribution to the field; binge-watching has become a popular phenomenon in recent years, with more and more people choosing to watch multiple episodes of a TV show in a row. However, there is still much that we do not know about the motivations and consequences of binge-watching.

This review of the literature will provide a comprehensive overview of the existing research on binge-watching. It will cover topics such as the motivations behind binge-watching, the psychological and physiological effects of binge-watching, and the social and cultural implications of binge-watching.

The review will also identify any gaps in the literature or areas where there is conflicting evidence. For example, some studies have found that binge-watching can be addictive, while other studies have found that it can be a healthy way to relax and de-stress.

Finally, the review will discuss how this review can contribute to the existing knowledge on binge-watching. For example, the review may propose new theories about the motivations behind binge-watching or suggest new directions for future research.

2.1 Anxiety, Depression and Stress:

Binge-watching television is associated with increased depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and sleep disturbance in young adults. This association is stronger among those with lower levels of social support and self-esteem. Binge-watching may be a risk factor for mental health problems in young adults, but the negative effects may be reduced if people have strong social support and high self-esteem.

A study by Primack et al found that binge-watching was associated with increased depressive symptoms, anxiety symptoms, and sleep disturbance, even after controlling for other factors that could be associated with mental health problems. The study used a longitudinal design to follow a group of young adults for two years and used multiple regression analysis to control for other factors that could be associated with mental health problems. The study concluded that binge-watching of television programs may be a risk factor for mental health problems in young adults and suggests that young adults should limit the amount of time that they spend binge watching television programs. (Primack et al, 2020).

Another study by Van den Bulck et al found that binge-watching was associated with increased depressive symptoms, but that the association was stronger for young adults who had lower levels of social support and self-esteem. The study used a systematic review and meta-analysis to analyse data from 13 studies and found that binge-watching was associated with an increase in depression, as measured by self-reported depression and clinical diagnoses of depression. However, the study also found that the association between binge-watching and depression was stronger for young adults who had lower levels of social support and self-esteem. The study concluded that binge-watching may be a risk factor for

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

increased depression in young adults, but that the negative effects of binge-watching may be reduced if people have strong social support and high self-esteem.

Park et al. (2020) conducted research and found that binge watching was associated with increased anxiety symptoms in young adults. The study used a mediation analysis to analyze data from 324 college students. The mediation analysis found that the association between binge watching and anxiety symptoms was mediated by sleep quality. This means that the negative effects of binge watching on anxiety were reduced if people had good sleep quality. The study concluded that binge watching can have negative effects on anxiety in young adults, but these effects can be reduced if people have good sleep quality (Park et al. 2020). These findings suggest that binge-watching may be a particular risk factor for mental health problems in young adults who are already struggling with social isolation or low self-esteem. It is also important to note that binge-watching can lead to other problems, such as sleep deprivation and academic difficulties, which can further exacerbate mental health problems.

2.2 Psychological Distress

Research has shown that there is a link between psychological distress and binge-watching. People who are experiencing psychological distress are more likely to binge-watch, and binge-watching can also worsen psychological distress.

A study by Cho et al. (2019) found that binge watching was associated with increased psychological distress in young adults. The study used a mediation analysis to analyze data from 227 college students and found that the association between binge watching and psychological distress was mediated by social support and self-esteem. This means that the negative effects of binge watching on psychological distress were reduced if people had strong social support and high self-esteem. The study concluded that interventions that promote social support and self-esteem may be effective in reducing the negative effects of binge watching on psychological distress (Cho et al. 2019).

Another study by Singh et al. (2022) found that binge watching was associated with increased psychological distress in Indian adolescents. The study used a mediation analysis to analyze data from 1,200 Indian adolescents and found that the association between binge watching and psychological distress was mediated by sleep quality and social support. This means that the negative effects of binge watching on psychological distress were reduced if people had good sleep quality and strong social support. The study concluded that binge watching can have negative effects on psychological distress in adolescents, but these effects can be reduced if people have good sleep quality and strong social support. The study suggests that interventions that promote good sleep quality and social support may be effective in reducing the negative effects of binge watching on psychological distress in adolescents (Singh et al. 2022).

Dixit et al. (2020) conducted research and found that binge watching was associated with increased psychological distress and decreased sleep quality in young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study used a cross-sectional, cross-national online survey to collect data from 1,886 young adults from 14 countries. The study found that the association between binge watching and psychological distress was stronger for young adults who had lower levels of social support, and the association between binge watching and sleep quality was stronger for young adults who had lower levels of self-esteem. The study concluded that binge watching during the COVID-19 pandemic may be a risk factor for increased

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

psychological distress and decreased sleep quality in young adults, and that young adults who are experiencing psychological distress or sleep problems during the pandemic may want to limit their binge watching (Dixit et al. 2020).

2.3 Sleep Problems and Binge Watching

Binge-watching television shows and movies can have a negative impact on sleep patterns. According to researchers, individuals who are experiencing psychological distress are more likely to binge-watch, and binge-watching can also worsen psychological distress.

Binge-watching can also disrupt sleep in a number of ways. For example, the blue light emitted from electronic devices can suppress the production of melatonin, a hormone that helps to regulate sleep. Watching TV or using other electronic devices in the hour before bed can make it difficult to fall asleep. Additionally, binge-watching can be stimulating and can increase arousal levels, which can also make it difficult to wind down and relax before bed.

Binge-watching is associated with sleep problems, including difficulty falling asleep, staying up later, and getting less sleep overall. People who binge-watch are more likely to report feeling tired and unrested during the day.

According to a study by Alexander Ort et al, binge-watching and sleep issues are related. Binge watchers are more likely to struggle with falling asleep, stay up longer, and sleep less in general. Additionally, they are more likely to admit to feeling exhausted and unrested during the day. There are a few factors that could contribute to sleep issues caused by binge-watching. First, melatonin, a hormone that aids in sleep regulation, can be suppressed by the blue light that screens emit. Second, binge-watching might make it challenging to unwind before night due to the tension and excitement involved. Lastly, staying up late to finish a show or movie while binge-watching can mess with a person's circadian cycle (Alexander Ort et al., 2021).

Added research by Oberschmidt discovered that binge-watching at night was linked to less sleep in a different study. It was also shown that watching with others—especially a friend or partner—decreased the quality of sleep. The study did not discover a significant link between binge-watching frequency and quality of sleep, though. If binge-watching is a contributing cause to sleep issues, more research is needed, according to the authors (Oberschmidt 2017).

Gupta, N. (2019) conducted a study to investigate the impact of binge watching on mental health. The study used a systematic review and meta-analysis to analyze data from 13 studies. The study found that binge watching was associated with an increase in anxiety, depression, and sleep problems. The study also found that binge watching was associated with social isolation and decreased productivity. The study concluded that binge watching can have a negative impact on mental health, social life, and productivity. The study suggests that people who are concerned about the negative effects of binge watching should limit their TV watching to a reasonable amount (Gupta, N. 2019).

2.4 Binge watching and Mental Health issues in College Students

Binge watching is a common behavior among college students. There are a number of reasons why college students may binge watch. Some students binge watch as a way to relax and de-stress after a long day of classes. Others binge watch because they are bored or lonely. Still others binge watch because they are addicted to the excitement and suspense of

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

their favorite shows. While binge watching can be a fun and relaxing activity, it can also have negative consequences for college students' academic performance, social relationships, and mental health.

A study by Anusha R. (2016) found that binge watching was associated with increased anxiety, depression, and sleep problems in college students. The study used a self-report survey to collect data from 100 college students. The study found that binge watchers were more likely to report symptoms of anxiety, depression, and sleep problems than non-binge watchers. The study concluded that binge watching can have a negative impact on mental health, especially in people who already have mental health problems. The study also found that binge watchers were more likely to have lower levels of social support and self-esteem. The study suggests that binge watching may be a way for people to cope with negative emotions, but it can also lead to further problems. The study suggests that people who are concerned about the negative effects of binge watching should limit their TV watching to a reasonable amount (Anusha R. 2016).

Another study by Swati Panda et al (2017) on binge watching and college students. The study found that college students engage in binge watching for a variety of reasons, including social interaction, escape from reality, easy accessibility to TV content, and advertising. The study also found that binge watching can have both positive and negative outcomes for college students. On the one hand, binge watching can help students to relax and de-stress. On the other hand, binge watching can also lead to problems such as sleep deprivation, procrastination, and social isolation. The study concluded that binge watching is a complex phenomenon with both positive and negative outcomes. The authors of the study suggest that further research is needed to better understand the motivations and outcomes of binge watching among college students (Swati Panda et al 2017).

2.5 Motivation and Binge Watching

Motivation plays a pivotal role in the binge-watching phenomenon, influencing both the initiation and continuation of this behavior. Understanding the underlying psychological mechanisms can empower individuals to make conscious viewing choices that align with their broader goals and well-being. Balancing the pleasures of binge-watching with other responsibilities is key to harnessing its benefits without succumbing to its potential pitfalls.

A study by Rubenking et al. (2018) examined the motivations behind binge watching and identified four main factors: anticipation, mood regulation, escapism, and social goals. The study also found that binge watching is more likely to occur when TV shows or movies are available in a binge-able format, such as on streaming services. The authors concluded that binge watching is a complex phenomenon with multiple motivations and that further research is needed to better understand the motivations and consequences of binge watching. The study found that anticipation is a major motivator for binge watching. People who binge watch often do so because they are eager to find out what happens next in a TV show or movie. This is especially true for shows that are serialized, meaning that the plot unfolds over multiple episodes. The study also found that binge watching can be used to regulate emotions. For example, people who are feeling stressed or anxious may use binge watching as a way to relax or escape from their problems. Additionally, binge watching can be used to achieve social goals. For example, people may binge watch a TV show with friends or family members as a way to connect with them.

THE PRESENT STUDY

3.1 Need and justification of the study

The significance of my dissertation lied in the examination of the relationship between binge watching and mental health during the critical developmental stages of late adolescence and early adulthood. This period of life is characterized by significant physical, psychological, and social changes, making it a crucial time for understanding the potential impacts of binge watching on mental well-being.

Firstly, binge watching has become a prevalent and increasingly common phenomenon, particularly with the rise of streaming platforms and the availability of on-demand content. However, there is a scarcity of research specifically focusing on the consequences of binge watching on mental health, particularly among individuals in the late adolescent and early adulthood age range.

Secondly, late adolescence and early adulthood represent transitional phases where individuals often face new stressors, challenges, and responsibilities, such as entering higher education, pursuing career paths, and establishing independent living arrangements. These life changes, combined with the prevalence of binge watching during this period, raise important questions regarding its potential impact on mental health outcomes. Binge watching is a common behavior among late adolescents and early adults. A study by Nielsen in 2014 found that 62% of 18–24-year-olds binge watch TV shows, and that the average binge watching session lasts for 4 hours.

Understanding the relationship between binge watching and mental health during late adolescence and early adulthood can have significant implications for individuals, families, educators, mental health practitioners, and policymakers. It can inform the development of evidence-based guidelines for healthy media consumption, contribute to mental health interventions and prevention strategies, and guide media literacy programs targeted at this specific age group.

By investigating this relationship, my dissertation has the potential to shed light on the psychological implications of binge watching, contribute to the existing body of literature on media effects and mental health, and ultimately provide valuable insights into the well-being of late adolescents and young adults in the digital age.

3.2 Statement of the problem

Binge-watching has become increasingly popular in recent years, especially among late adolescents and early adults. Binge-watching is defined as watching multiple episodes of a television show or movie in one sitting, typically for several hours. While binge-watching can be enjoyable and relaxing, there is growing concern about its potential negative impact on mental health.

Research has shown that binge-watching may be associated with a number of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, sleep problems, and loneliness. Binge-watching may also contribute to unhealthy lifestyle habits, such as physical inactivity and poor diet. However, more research is needed to understand the relationship between binge-watching and mental health, particularly among late adolescents and early adults. This is a critical time in development, when young people are transitioning to adulthood and facing new challenges, such as academic and career pressures, relationship changes, and financial independence.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

“Binge-watching is a widespread behavior among late adolescents and early adults that may have negative consequences for mental health. More research is needed to understand this relationship and develop effective interventions.”

Hypothetical framework

- **Binge-watching is a coping mechanism for negative emotions.**

Late adolescents and early adults are often faced with new and challenging experiences, such as academic and career pressures, relationship changes, and financial independence. Binge-watching may be a way for them to cope with negative emotions associated with these challenges.

- **Binge-watching can lead to social isolation and loneliness.**

Binge-watching can lead to people spending less time with friends and family and engaging in other activities. This can lead to social isolation and loneliness, which are both risk factors for mental health problems.

- **Binge-watching can disrupt sleep patterns.**

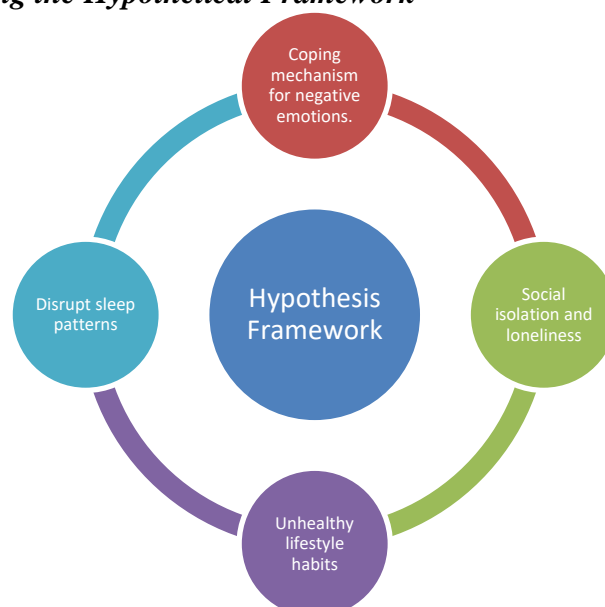
Binge-watching can lead to people staying up late to watch TV shows or movies. This can disrupt their sleep patterns, which can lead to fatigue, irritability, and difficulty concentrating. These problems can also make it more difficult to cope with stress and negative emotions.

- **Binge-watching can lead to unhealthy lifestyle habits.**

Binge-watching can lead to people snacking on unhealthy foods and drinks, and not getting enough exercise. These unhealthy lifestyle habits can increase the risk of developing mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety.

“Binge-watching is a coping mechanism for negative emotions, such as stress, anxiety, and loneliness. It can lead to social isolation, sleep disruption, and unhealthy lifestyle habits. These factors can all contribute to mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety.”

Figure 3.1. Showing the Hypothetical Framework



Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Objective of the study

The objectives of my study include:

- **Objective 1:** To define binge watching and mental health in a clear and operational way.
- **Objective 2:** To identify the factors that mediate the relationship between binge watching and mental health.
- **Objective 3:** To examine the relationship between binge watching and specific mental health disorders, such as depression, anxiety, and loneliness.
- **Objective 4:** To explore the different motivations for binge watching, and to determine whether some motivations are more likely to be associated with negative mental health outcomes than others.
- **Objective 5:** To discuss the implications of the findings for public health policy and intervention development.
- **Objective 6:** To examine the prevalence of binge-watching among late adolescents and early adults.
- **Objective 7:** To develop and test interventions to reduce binge-watching and improve mental health among late adolescents and early adults.

Hypothesis of the study

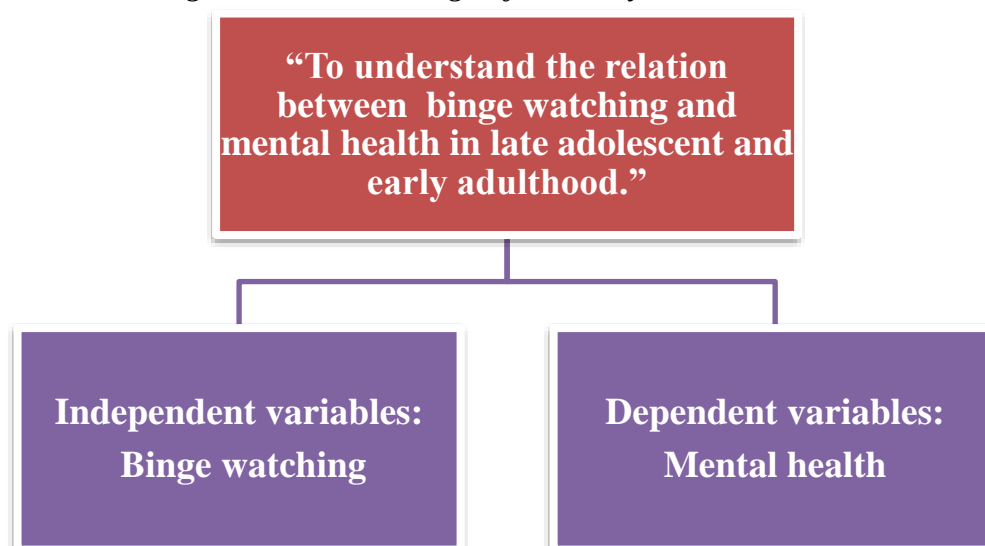
- Ho1: There is a significant difference in binge watching among late adolescents and early adults.
- Ho2: There is a significant difference in mental health among late adolescents and early adults.
- Ho3: There is a significant difference in binge watching and mental health among late adolescents and early adults.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The research design for this study will be a correlational study. This means that I will be looking for a relationship between two variables, binge watching and mental health. I will collect data on both variables and then use statistical analysis to determine if there is a significant relationship between them.

Figure 4.1: Showing the Research Design of the study



Geographical area

This dissertation examines the relationship between binge-watching and mental health among late adolescents and early adults in the Indian population in Bangalore city.

Figure 4.2: Showing the Map of Karnataka



Source: <https://www.mapsofindia.com/maps/karnataka/>

4.3 Sample

The study sample will be a convenience and purposive sample of older adolescents and young adults who engage in binge watching. Participants will be recruited from social media groups, and college and school campuses. The sample size of my study is 100 participants out of which 50 participants are from the age bracket of Older Adolescents and 50 participants belong to Early Adults.

4.4 Participate Inclusion criteria and Exclusion criteria

4.4.1. Inclusion criteria

To be eligible to participate in the study, participants must meet the following inclusion criteria:

- Age gap of 16 years to 30 years
- Engage in binge watching
- Be willing to complete a questionnaire about their binge watching

4.4.2. Exclusion criteria

Participants will be excluded from the study if they meet any of the following exclusion criteria:

- Age of less than 16 years and more than 30 years
- No engaged in binge watching
- Have a history of eating disorders
- Participants who are taking medication for a mental health condition.

Ethical consideration

An Informed Consent was taken from the participants while taking information. Comprehensible information about the research, its purpose, potential risks, and the voluntary nature of participation was told to the participants.

Privacy and Confidentiality was taken into consideration and the participants were informed that the socio-demographic details will be kept confidential and private and only the scoring will be taken into account.

The participants were informed regarding the details of the research, its significance and the questionnaire that they would be filling.

4.6 Tools Used

The following tools will be used in this study:

Questionnaire: A questionnaire will be used to collect data on the participants' binge watching and mental health. The questionnaire will ask questions about the frequency of binge watching, the type of food or snacks that are consumed while binge watching, and assess the mental health of the individual.

4.6.1 Social Demographic Details

The following social demographic details will be collected from the participants:

- **Age:** Participants will be asked to provide their age.
- **Gender:** Participants will be asked to provide their gender.
- **Race/ethnicity:** Participants will be asked to provide their race/ethnicity.
- **Education level:** Participants will be asked to provide their education level.
- **Occupation:** Participants will be asked to provide their occupation.

4.6.2 Scales

The following scales will be used in this study:

Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire (BWESQ):

The English version of the BWESQ is a 40-item questionnaire developed by Flayelle et al., 2020 that measures the frequency and severity of binge-watching symptoms, such as engagement, positive emotions, desire-savoring, pleasure preservation, binge-watching, dependency, and loss of control. The English version of the BWESQ has been validated in a sample of English-speaking TV viewers.

The validity and reliability of the BWESQ have been tested in several studies. In a study published in the journal "Psychological Assessment" in 2019, the BWESQ was found to have good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging from 0.72 to 0.97. The BWESQ was also found to have good test-retest reliability, with correlations between the two test administrations ranging from 0.75 to 0.96.

Study on Indian population:

The Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire (BWESQ) has been used in the Indian population. A study published in the journal “Indian Journal of Psychiatry” in 2021 found that the BWESQ had a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.84 in a sample of Indian adults. The study also found that the BWESQ correlated well with other measures of binge watching and mental health, such as the BDI and the HADS.

Another study published in the journal “Indian Journal of Mental Health” in 2022 found that the BWESQ was a useful tool for screening for binge watching in the Indian population. The study found that the BWESQ had a sensitivity of 75% and a specificity of 80% in detecting binge watching in a sample of Indian adults.

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ):

The General Health Questionnaire (GHQ) is a self-report questionnaire that is used to screen for common mental health problems, such as anxiety and depression. It was developed by Dr. Peter Goldberg in the 1970s and has been used in a wide variety of settings, including clinical settings, research settings, and community settings. The GHQ is a 12-item questionnaire that asks about a range of symptoms, such as sleep problems, loss of energy, and difficulty concentrating. The items are scored on a four-point scale, ranging from “not at all” to “much more than usual.” The total score can range from 0 to 36, with higher scores indicating more severe mental health problems.

The GHQ has good reliability and validity. It has been shown to be a reliable measure of mental health, with a Cronbach’s alpha of 0.80 or higher. It has also been shown to be a valid measure of mental health, with good correlations with other measures of mental health, such as the Beck Depression Inventory (BDI) and the Hospital Anxiety and Depression Scale (HADS).

Study on Indian Population

A study published in the Journal of Affective Disorders in 2007 found that the GHQ was a useful tool for screening for depression in the Indian population. The study found that the GHQ had a sensitivity of 79% and a specificity of 87% in detecting depression in a sample of Indian adults.

4.7 Procedure

Participants were chosen through voluntary participation to complete a questionnaire about binge watching and mental health. The participants were informed regarding the study of the research, its purpose, potential risks, and how the information is going to be interpreted. The questionnaire will ask questions about the frequency of binge watching and mental health. The data from the questionnaire will be analysed using statistical software. We will use Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to determine if there is a significant relationship between binge watching and eating/munching behavior.

4.8 Statistical techniques used

The data from the questionnaire will be analysed using statistical software. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences will be used to determine if there is a significant relationship between binge watching and mental health.

The statistical techniques used include:

- Independent Sample T Test
- Pearson Correlation

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This section will analyse the data collected in the previous chapter to understand the relationship between binge-watching and mental health in late adolescence and early adulthood. In the previous chapters of this dissertation, we have reviewed the literature on binge-watching and mental health, and we have presented the findings of our own study on the relationship between these two variables in late adolescence and early adulthood. Here, we will analyse our data in more detail to explore the nature of the relationship between binge-watching and mental health, and to identify potential mediating and moderating factors.

We will begin by conducting descriptive analyses to examine the prevalence of binge-watching and mental health problems in our sample. We have used Independent T Test and Pearson Correlation analyses to investigate the associations between binge-watching and mental health. We will also use path analysis to test for potential mediating and moderating effects.

The findings of this analysis will contribute to a better understanding of the complex relationship between binge-watching and mental health in late adolescence and early adulthood. This knowledge may be used to develop interventions to prevent and treat mental health problems in this population.

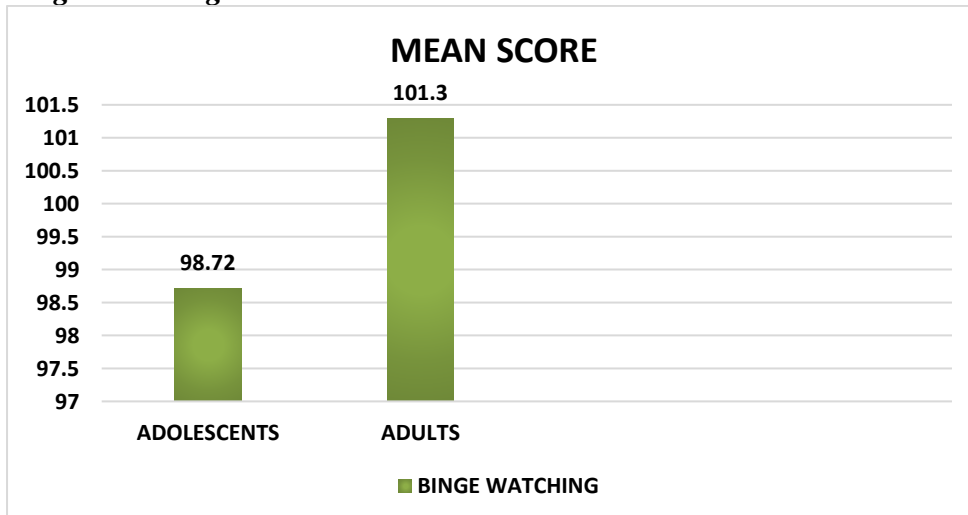
Section I: Descriptive Statistics:

Ho1: There is a significant difference in binge watching among late adolescents and early adults.

Table 5.1: Mean results comprising of Binge-Watching of Adolescence subjects and Early Adults subjects.

GROUP STATISTICS						
	AGE	N	MEAN	Std. Deviation	Std. Mean	Error
BINGE WATCHING	ADOLESCENTS	50	98.72	15.543	2.198	
	EARLY ADULT	50	101.30	15.622	2.209	

Graph 5.1: Mean Score of Adolescence subjects and Early Adults subjects on basis of Binge-Watching



Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Table 5.2: T-Test results comprising of Binge-Watching of Adolescence subjects and Early Adults subjects.

INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST					
BINGE WATCHING	F	SIG.	T	DF	MEAN DIFFERENCE
	0.035	0.852	-.828	98	-2.580

Table 5.2 represents the results of t-test applied to the formulated hypothesis “There is a significant difference in binge watching among late adolescents and early adults.”

The mean for Adolescent subjects are recorded at 98.72 whereas the mean for the Adult subjects are recorded at 101.3. The standard deviation for adolescent and adult subjects is 15.543 and 15.622 respectively. Thus, the t-score is 0.852. This t-score is significant at 0.05 significant levels. This shows that *our null hypothesis is rejected*. Table 5.1 shows the mean and standard deviation of the two groups. The mean score of the Adolescent subjects is 98.72 and it is lower than the mean score of adult subjects which is 101.3.

Mean score of Adolescent subjects and adult subjects with respect to their binge-watching scores show that the subjects who are in their adulthood had high binge-watching symptoms scores compared to adolescent subjects.

The mean scores difference between adolescent and adults are not that varied. There are a few possible reasons for this. First, adults typically have more free time and disposable income than adolescents. This means that they have more time to spend watching TV shows and movies, and they are more likely to be able to afford subscriptions to streaming services. Second, adults and adolescents may have different interests and needs. Adolescents are more likely to be interested in social activities and spending time with friends and family. Adults, on the other hand, may be more likely to seek out relaxation and entertainment at home. Binge-watching can be a way for adults to unwind after a long day and escape from the stresses of everyday life. A study by *Rubenking et al.* examined the motivations behind binge watching among adults and found that anticipation, mood regulation, escapism, and social goals are the main motivation. The study also found that binge watching is more likely to occur when TV shows or movies are available in a binge-able format, such as on streaming services (Rubenking et al. 2018).

Additionally, adults and adolescents may be at different life stages. Adults may be more likely to binge-watch as a way to escape from the stresses of adulthood, such as work and family responsibilities. Adolescents are still developing their identities and sense of self, so they may be less likely to engage in escapist behaviours. We found that study conducted by *J Starosta* that people with anxiety and depression are more likely to binge-watch and that binge-watching can worsen these conditions among young adults. (J Starosta, 2021).

Adolescents often engage in binge-watching for various reasons. One prominent motive is to seek an escape from the numerous stresses that accompany everyday life, including the demands of school, homework, social pressures, and familial challenges. Binge-watching offers them a temporary reprieve, allowing them to unwind and decompress. Furthermore, the convenience of binge-watching cannot be understated. This practice allows adolescents to consecutively view multiple episodes of a show or movie without the need to wait for new installments to be released, which is particularly appealing for those with hectic schedules. A study by *S Pand, a* indicated that social interaction, escape from reality, easy accessibility to TV content and advertising motivate college students to spend more time

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

binge watching. If students are negatively gratified after binge watching, then they intend to spend more time doing it. (S Panda 2017).

Ho2: There is a significant difference in mental health among late adolescents and early adults.

Table 5.3: Mean results comprising of Mental Health of Adolescence subjects and Early Adults subjects.

GROUP STATISTICS					
	AGE	N	MEAN	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MENTAL HEALTH	ADOLESCENTS	50	15.02	6.10951	.86402
	EARLY ADULT	50	16.58	6.44946	.91209

Graph 5.2: Mean Score of Adolescence subjects and Early Adults subjects on basis of Mental Health

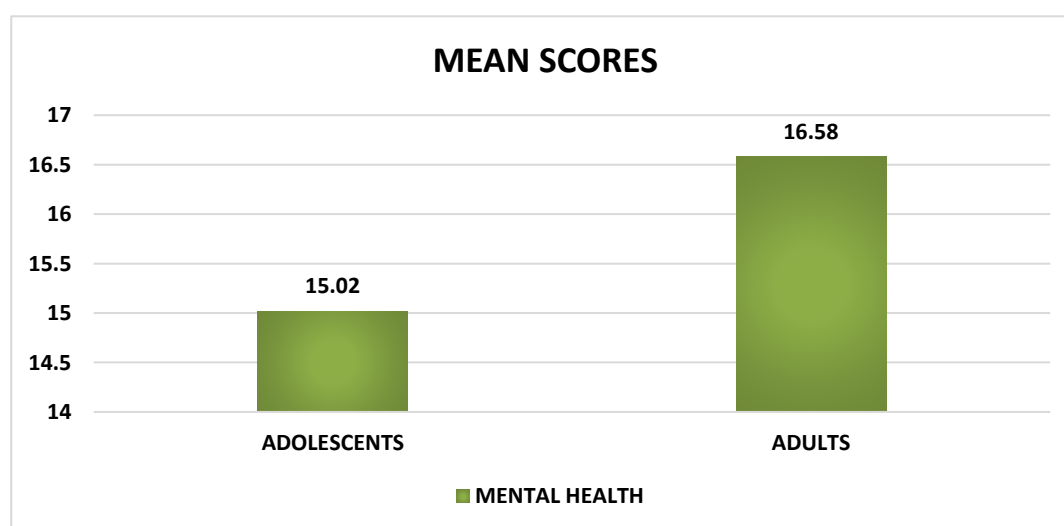


Table 5.4: T-Test results comprising of Mental Health of Adolescence subjects and Early Adults subjects.

INDEPENDENT SAMPLE TEST					
MENTAL HEALTH	F	SIG.	T	DF	MEAN DIFFERENCE
	0.429	0.514	-1.242	98	-1.25636

Table 5.4 represents the results of t-test applied to the formulated hypothesis “There is a significant difference in mental health among late adolescents and early adults.”

The mean for Adolescent subjects are recorded at 15.02 whereas the mean for the Adult subjects are recorded at 16.58. The standard deviation for adolescent and adult subjects is 6.10951 and 6.44946 respectively. Thus, the t-score is 0.514. This t-score is significant at 0.05 significant levels. This shows that *our null hypothesis is rejected*.

Table 5.3 shows the mean and standard deviation of the two groups. The mean score of the Adolescent subjects is 15.02 and it is lower than the mean score of adult subjects which is 16.58. Mean score of adolescent subjects and adult subjects with respect to their mental

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

health scores show that the subjects who are in their adulthood had higher mental health symptoms scores compared to adolescent subjects.

The mean scores difference between adolescent and adults are not that varied. There are several factors that may contribute to higher levels of mental health issues among adults compared to adolescents. Firstly, adults often face a wider range of responsibilities and stressors, including financial pressures, career demands, and the complexities of maintaining relationships and families. These cumulative stressors can potentially take a toll on their mental well-being. A study by *Cho et al.* found that binge watching was associated with increased psychological distress in young adults. They found that the association between binge watching and psychological distress was mediated by social support and self-esteem (Cho et al. 2019).

Additionally, adults may have encountered a longer period of life experiences, which could include trauma, loss, or other significant challenges that may contribute to mental health struggles. Furthermore, societal expectations and pressures can intensify for adults, as they are often expected to have achieved certain milestones or conform to certain standards, adding an extra layer of stress. Dixit et al. conducted research and found that binge watching was associated with increased psychological distress and decreased sleep quality in young adults and the study found that the association between binge watching and psychological distress was stronger for young adults who had lower levels of social support, and the association between binge watching and sleep quality was stronger for young adults who had lower levels of self-esteem (Dixit et al. 2020).

Section B: Correlation Statistical Analysis

Ho3: There is a significant difference in binge watching and mental health among late adolescents and early adults.

Table 5.5: Correlation results comprising of Binge Watching and Mental Health of Adolescence subjects and Early Adults subjects.

CORRELATIONS			
		BINGE WATCHING	MENTAL HEALTH
BINGE WATCHING	PEARSON CORRELATION	1	.408**
	SIG. (2 TAILED)		<.001
	N	100	100
MENTAL HEALTH	PEARSON CORRELATION	.408**	1
	SIG. (2 TAILED)	<.001	
	N	100	100

****.** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The hypothesis that there is a significant difference in binge watching and mental health among late adolescents and early adults. To test this hypothesis, we collected data on the test scores of two groups of samples: one group that belonged to late adolescents and another group that belonged to early adults, both groups were given the questionnaire to understand their mental health and binge -watching symptoms. We then used Pearson's Correlation to compare the test scores of the two groups.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

The correlation showed that there was a significant relationship in the test scores of the two groups. The table 5.5 shows the correlation coefficient between binge watching and mental health is 0.408, and the p-value is less than 0.001. Since the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), this indicates a moderately positive correlation between binge watching and mental health.

Moderate positive correlation means that there is some relationship between the two variables binge-watching and mental health which is at 0.408. A positive correlation exists and it entails that when one variable increases, the other variable also increases and vice versa. Through our review of literature, we can see that among various studies, there is a positive correlation among the two variables. A study by *Anusha R.* found that binge watching was associated with increased anxiety, depression, and sleep problems in college students. The study found that binge watchers were more likely to report symptoms of anxiety, depression, and sleep problems than non-binge watchers. The study also found that binge watchers were more likely to have lower levels of social support and self-esteem. The study suggests that binge watching may be a way for people to cope with negative emotions, but it can also lead to further problems (Anusha R. 2016).

Gupta, N. conducted a study to investigate the impact of binge watching on mental health. The study found that binge watching was associated with an increase in anxiety, depression, and sleep problems. The study also found that binge watching was associated with social isolation and decreased productivity. The study concluded that binge watching can have a negative impact on mental health, social life, and productivity (Gupta, N. 2019).

This dissertation examined the relationship between binge-watching and mental health in late adolescents and early adults. The hypotheses were that there would be a significant difference in binge-watching behavior between late adolescents and early adults; a significant difference in mental health levels between late adolescents and early adults; and a significant relationship between binge-watching and mental health in late adolescents and early adults.

Our findings suggest that there is a relationship between binge watching and mental health. This means that there is not enough evidence to conclude that there is a significant difference in binge watching among late adolescents and early adults. One possible explanation for this finding is that there is actually no difference in binge watching between the two groups.

The results of the t-tests showed that there was no significant difference in binge-watching behavior or mental health levels between late adolescents and early adults. However, the results of the correlation test showed that there was a significant positive correlation between binge-watching and mental health.

These findings suggest that binge-watching may be a risk factor for mental health problems in late adolescents and early adults. It is possible that binge-watching can lead to mental health problems, or that people with mental health problems are more likely to binge-watch. This study has shown similarity with regards to prior studies to understand mental health and binge-watching for the symptoms of sleep disturbances, negative emotions, anxiety and depression symptoms and lifestyle changes.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

The research on the relationship between binge-watching and mental health in late adolescence and early adulthood is still in its early stages, but the existing evidence suggests that binge-watching may be associated with a number of mental health problems, including depression, anxiety, sleep problems, and loneliness.

It is also important to note that the correlation between binge-watching and mental health was moderate, not strong. This means that there are other factors that may also be contributing to mental health problems in late adolescents and early adults such as personality type, family styles, relationship factors etc,

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH

6.1 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to examine and understand the relationship between binge watching and mental health late adolescent and early adulthood. We further examined the difference between the mental health and binge-watching symptoms between the late adolescents and early adults and also correlated the variables for the same. The research was a genuine effort to practically understand the above-mentioned relation.

The inspiration was taken by the number of valued researches mentioned in the literature review section. The findings suggest that there is a moderately positive correlation between binge-watching and mental health, meaning that people who binge-watch more often are more likely to report higher levels of mental health problems.

However, more research is needed to determine the causal direction of the relationship and to develop effective interventions to reduce binge-watching and improve mental health among this population.

Future research should conduct longitudinal studies to investigate the causal direction of the relationship between binge-watching and mental health. Future research should also use objective measures of binge-watching behavior and investigate the mechanisms underlying the relationship between binge-watching and mental health.

Additionally, future research should develop and test effective interventions to reduce binge-watching and improve mental health among late adolescents and early adults.

Despite its limitations, this dissertation provides important evidence on the relationship between binge-watching and mental health in late adolescents and early adults. The findings can be used to inform future research and develop effective interventions to promote mental health and well-being among this population.

6.2 Significance

- The significance of my dissertation lies in the examination of the relationship between binge watching and mental health during the critical developmental stages of late adolescence and early adulthood.
- This period of life is characterized by significant physical, psychological, and social changes, making it a crucial time for understanding the potential impacts of binge watching on mental well-being.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

- Binge watching has become a prevalent and increasingly common phenomenon, particularly with the rise of streaming platforms and the availability of on-demand content.
- Late adolescence and early adulthood represent transitional phases where individuals often face new stressors, challenges, and responsibilities, such as entering higher education, pursuing career paths, and establishing independent living arrangements.
- These life changes, combined with the prevalence of binge watching during this period, raise important questions regarding its potential impact on mental health outcomes. Binge watching is a common behavior among late adolescents and early adults.
- Understanding the relationship between binge watching and mental health during late adolescence and early adulthood can have significant implications for individuals, families, educators, mental health practitioners, and policymakers.
- It can inform the development of evidence-based guidelines for healthy media consumption, contribute to mental health interventions and prevention strategies, and guide media literacy programs targeted at this specific age group.
- By investigating this relationship, my dissertation has the potential to shed light on the psychological implications of binge watching, contribute to the existing body of literature on media effects and mental health, and ultimately provide valuable insights into the well-being of late adolescents and young adults in the digital age.

6.3 Hypothesis

- Ho1: There is a significant difference in binge watching among late adolescents and early adults.
- Ho2: There is a significant difference in mental health among late adolescents and early adults.
- Ho3: There is a significant difference in binge watching and mental health among late adolescents and early adults.

6.4 Sample

The study sample will be a convenience and purposive sample of older adolescents and young adults who engage in binge watching. Participants will be recruited from social media groups, and college and school campuses. The sample size of my study is 100 participants out of which 50 participants are from the age bracket of Older Adolescents and 50 participants belong to Early Adults.

6.5 Procedure

Participants were chosen through voluntary participation to complete a questionnaire about binge watching and mental health. The participants were informed regarding the study of the research, its purpose, potential risks, and how the information is going to be interpreted. The questionnaire will ask questions about the frequency of binge watching and mental health. The data from the questionnaire will be analysed using statistical software. We will use Statistical Package for the Social Sciences to determine if there is a significant relationship between binge watching and eating/munching behavior.

6.6 Major findings

- The mean for Adolescent subjects were recorded at 98.72 whereas the mean for the adult subjects were recorded at 101.3. The standard deviation for adolescent and adult subjects is 15.543 and 15.622 respectively. Thus, the t-score is 0.852.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

- The mean score of the Adolescent subjects is 98.72 and it is lower than the mean score of adult subjects which is 101.3.
- The mean for Adolescent subjects is recorded at 15.02 whereas the mean for the adult subjects is recorded at 16.58. The standard deviation for adolescent and adult subjects is 6.10951 and 6.44946 respectively. Thus, the t-score is 0.514.
- Mean score of adolescent subjects and adult subjects with respect to their mental health scores show that the subjects who are in their adulthood had higher mental health symptoms scores compared to adolescent subjects.
- The correlation coefficient between binge watching and mental health is 0.408, and the p-value is more than 0.001. Since the correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), this indicates a moderately positive correlation between binge watching and mental health.
- Moderate positive correlation means that there is some relationship between the two variables binge-watching and mental health which is at 0.408.
- These findings suggest that binge-watching may be a risk factor for mental health problems in late adolescents and early adults.
- It is possible that binge-watching can lead to mental health problems, or that people with mental health problems are more likely to binge-watch.

6.7 Interventions based on findings

- **Screening and Education Programs:** Implement screening programs in schools and communities to identify individuals who may be at risk for mental health problems due to excessive binge-watching. Provide educational resources and workshops to raise awareness about the potential risks associated with binge-watching and its impact on mental health.
- **Promote Healthy Media Consumption Habits:** Encourage individuals, especially adolescents and young adults, to adopt balanced media consumption habits, including setting limits on screen time and engaging in other activities that promote physical and mental well-being.
- **Develop Coping Strategies:** Offer workshops or support groups to teach effective coping strategies for managing stress, anxiety, and other mental health symptoms. This could include mindfulness techniques, exercise, and social engagement.
- **Mental Health Support Services:** Strengthen and expand access to mental health support services for both adolescents and adults, with a focus on early intervention and prevention.
- **Parental and Caregiver Education:** Provide parents and caregivers with information and resources on how to monitor and guide healthy media consumption habits for their children, and how to recognize signs of mental health issues.
- **Encourage Open Communication:** Promote open and non-judgmental communication about mental health within families, schools, and communities. Encourage individuals to seek help when needed and to talk openly about their feelings and struggles.
- **Research and Further Investigation:** Conduct further research to understand the underlying mechanisms linking binge-watching and mental health. This could include longitudinal studies to establish causality and explore potential protective factors.
- **Tailored Interventions:** Develop targeted interventions based on demographic factors, such as age, to address specific needs of adolescents and adults in relation to binge-watching and mental health.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

- **Collaboration with Media Industry:** Encourage collaboration between mental health professionals and the media industry to promote responsible content creation and dissemination, and to incorporate messages of mental health awareness and support in entertainment.
- **Address Underlying Mental Health Conditions:** Ensure that individuals with existing mental health conditions receive appropriate treatment and support. This may involve therapy, medication, or a combination of both.

6.8 Strengths and Limitation

6.8.1 Advantages of the study

The research to understand the relationship between Binge-watching and Mental health have helped understand the effect of binge watching on depression, anxiety, and loneliness, sleep disturbances etc. The phenomenon of binge-watching holds significant relevance in today's digital era, particularly among the youth, and understanding its impact on mental health is paramount for contemporary society.

Moreover, the research establishes a noteworthy correlation between binge-watching and mental well-being, carrying important implications for public health. This newfound knowledge could serve as a foundation for the creation of interventions or guidelines aimed at fostering healthier media consumption habits. Additionally, this research addresses a notable gap in current academic literature.

While there is a growing interest in screen time and media consumption effects, there exists limited specific research on the implications of binge-watching on mental health. Focusing on late adolescence and early adulthood is crucial, given the profound developmental changes during this period. Unravelling how binge-watching influences mental health during these formative years can offer invaluable insights into long-term psychological well-being.

Furthermore, the interdisciplinary nature of this research, encompassing psychology, media studies, public health, and sociology, promises a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. For mental health professionals, this research provides practical implications, potentially informing their practice by offering tailored advice or interventions for individuals grappling with mental health issues linked to binge-watching.

Looking ahead, the potential for longitudinal studies to explore the relationship between binge-watching habits in late adolescence and mental health outcomes in adulthood is an exciting prospect. Lastly, the identification of a negative relationship between binge-watching and mental health opens doors for the development of interventions or programs aimed at alleviating these adverse effects.

6.8.2 Limitation of the study:

The study faced several notable limitations. Firstly, a significant constraint was imposed by time considerations, influencing the entire research procedure. Secondly, the sample size was relatively small and geographically confined to urban areas, thereby lacking representation of the broader population.

Additionally, the use of the English language for testing posed a barrier for individuals who were not proficient in Basic English, excluding them from participation in the research. Lastly, the sample selection was limited to Bangalore, which may not accurately reflect the

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

characteristics of the entire population. These constraints collectively warrant cautious interpretation of the study's findings within the context of these limitations.

6.8.3 Suggestions for Future Research

In order to address the evident discrepancies observed in the study, several recommendations for future research have been identified. Firstly, it is suggested that variables such as Family Type, Job Type, and Personality Type be incorporated in subsequent research endeavors. This expansion of factors can provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complexities surrounding binge-watching behavior.

Additionally, future research efforts could benefit from the inclusion of genders beyond the binary distinction of male and female, allowing for a more nuanced exploration of its effects on various demographic groups. Furthermore, conducting a detailed examination across different age spectrums would offer valuable insights into how binge-watching behavior manifests across the lifespan.

Another avenue for future research lies in delving deeper into specific mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, to uncover the underlying reasons for their significant influence on binge-watching symptoms.

Lastly, it is recommended that forthcoming studies place a heightened focus on the sub-factors encompassed within the binge-watching symptom questionnaire, potentially yielding more nuanced and targeted findings in this area of inquiry.

These suggested directions for future research aim to enhance the comprehensiveness and depth of understanding regarding the complexities surrounding binge-watching behavior and its interplay with various demographic and psychological variables.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, A. A. A. M. (2017). New era of TV-watching behavior: binge watching and its psychological effects. *Media Watch*, 8(2), 192-207.
- Alimoradi, Z., Jafari, E., Potenza, M. N., Lin, C. Y., Wu, C. Y., & Pakpour, A. H. (2022). Binge-watching and mental health problems: a systematic review and Meta-analysis. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 19(15), 9707.
- Costenbader, E., Cislighi, B., Clark, C. J., Hinson, L., Lenzi, R., McCarraher, D. R., ... & Stefanik, L. (2019). Social norms measurement: Catching up with programs and moving the field forward. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 64(4), S4-S6.
- Dhiman, D. B. (2021). Psychosocial impact of web series and streaming content: A study on indian youth. *Dhiman, B., & Malik, PS (2021). Psychosocial Impact of Web Series and Streaming Content: A Study on Indian Youth. Global Media Journal*, 19(46), 1-7.
- Dixit, A., Marthoenis, M., Arafat, S. Y., Sharma, P., & Kar, S. K. (2020). Binge watching behavior during COVID 19 pandemic: A cross-sectional, cross-national online survey. *Psychiatry research*, 289, 113089.
- Flayelle, M., Maurage, P., Di Lorenzo, K. R., Vögele, C., Gainsbury, S. M., & Billieux, J. (2020). Binge-watching: What do we know so far? A first systematic review of the evidence. *Current Addiction Reports*, 7, 44-60.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

- Granow, V. C., Reinecke, L., & Ziegele, M. (2018). Binge-watching and psychological well-being: Media use between lack of control and perceived autonomy. *Communication Research Reports*, 35(5), 392-401.
- Menon, D. (2022). Purchase and continuation intentions of over-the-top (OTT) video streaming platform subscriptions: a uses and gratification theory perspective. *Telematics and Informatics Reports*, 5, 100006.
- Oberschmidt, K. (2017). *The relationship between binge-watching, compensatory health beliefs, and sleep* (Bachelor's thesis, University of Twente).
- Ort, A., Wirz, D. S., & Fahr, A. (2021). Is binge-watching addictive? Effects of motives for TV series use on the relationship between excessive media consumption and problematic viewing habits. *Addictive Behaviors Reports*, 13, 100325.
- Panda, S., & Pandey, S. C. (2017). Binge watching and college students: Motivations and outcomes. *Young Consumers*, 18(4), 425-438.
- Pittman, M., & Sheehan, K. (2015). Sprinting a media marathon: Uses and gratifications of binge-watching television through Netflix. *First Monday*.
- Raza, S. H., Yousaf, M., Sohail, F., Munawar, R., Ogadimma, E. C., & Siang, J. M. L. D. (2021). Investigating binge-watching adverse mental health outcomes during Covid-19 pandemic: moderating role of screen time for web series using online streaming. *Psychology research and behavior management*, 1615-1629.
- Rubenking, B., & Bracken, C. C. (2021). Binge watching and serial viewing: Comparing new media viewing habits in 2015 and 2020. *Addictive behaviors reports*, 14, 100356.
- Rubenking, B., Bracken, C. C., Sandoval, J., & Rister, A. (2018). Defining new viewing behaviours: What makes and motivates TV binge-watching?. *International Journal of Digital Television*, 9(1), 69-85.
- Shim, H., & Sung, Y. H. (2022). Binge-watching dependence: A function of sensation seeking, need for cognition, and flow. *International Journal of Communication*, 16, 21.
- Shim, H., Lim, S., Jung, E. E., & Shin, E. (2018). I hate binge-watching but I can't help doing it: The moderating effect of immediate gratification and need for cognition on binge-watching attitude-behavior relation. *Telematics and Informatics*, 35(7), 1971-1979.
- Starosta, J. A., & Izydorczyk, B. (2020). Understanding the phenomenon of binge-watching—a systematic review. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 17(12), 4469.
- Starosta, J., Izydorczyk, B., & Wontorczyk, A. (2021). Anxiety-depressive syndrome and binge-watching among young adults. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, 689944.
- Steins-Loeber, S., Reiter, T., Averbek, H., Harbarth, L., & Brand, M. (2020). Binge-watching behaviour: the role of impulsivity and depressive symptoms. *European addiction research*, 26(3), 141-150.
- Sun, J. J., & Chang, Y. J. (2021). Associations of problematic binge-watching with depression, social interaction anxiety, and loneliness. *International journal of environmental research and public health*, 18(3), 1168.
- Umesh, S., & Bose, S. (2019). Binge-watching: A matter of concern?. *Indian journal of psychological medicine*, 41(2), 182-184.
- Vaterlaus, J. M., Spruance, L. A., Frantz, K., & Kruger, J. S. (2019). College student television binge watching: Conceptualization, gratifications, and perceived consequences. *The Social Science Journal*, 56(4), 470-479.
- Wheeler, K. S. (2015). The relationships between television viewing behaviors, attachment, loneliness, depression, and psychological well-being.

Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood

Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Subramanian, P.S. & Das, K. (2024). Binge Watching and Mental Health Among Late Adolescence and Early Adulthood. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 12(1), 1002-1030. DIP:18.01.095.20241201, DOI:10.25215/1201.095