

## Consequences of Korean Drama on Perceived Stress, Body Image, and Emotional Satisfaction on Female College Students

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### ABSTRACT

The rising popularity of K-dramas among emerging adult women has raised questions about their potential impact on perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image because emerging adults may seek love but K-dramas tend to portray unrealistic relationship and beauty standards which might affect body image and relationship satisfaction of emerging adults, especially if they are women, either negatively or positively, when compared with women of the same age group who do not watch K-dramas. Also, this age group is vulnerable to stress so how K-dramas affect that is also a question when compared with non-watchers. Therefore, this study aims to find out how K-dramas might affect an emerging adult woman's perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image. Data was collected from 204 female college students aged between 18- 25 years using questionnaires. The research results showed that there is a statistically significant difference between K-drama watchers and non-watchers in terms of relationship satisfaction, perceived stress, and body image. K-drama watchers were found to have less perceived stress and more body image dissatisfaction along with relationship dissatisfaction than non-watchers. However, only relationship satisfaction and body image emerged as the significant predictors of watching K-dramas with low body image satisfaction and relationship satisfaction being the likelihood of being a K-drama watcher. The results further revealed that apart from body image, perceived stress, and relationship satisfaction, there could be other factors that might influence the likelihood of being a K-drama watcher, thus, that needs to be researched.

**Keywords:** *Korean Dramas, Perceived Stress, Body Image, Relationship Satisfaction, Emerging Adults*

**S**tress has been defined by the American Psychological Association (APA) Dictionary (2018), as the psychological or physiological response to external or internal stressors. Stress affects almost every important system of our body and influences how we behave and feel. For instance, it may manifest in rapid heartbeats, perspiration, xerostomia, dyspnea, restlessness, fast speaking, increase of negative emotions (if the person already experiences negative emotions), and burnout. By causing all these mind and body changes, stress acts as a catalyst for psychological disorders as well as physiological diseases, affecting one's physical and mental health and reducing life's quality.

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Stress is a process in which environmental causes can burden an individual's adaptive capabilities, developing biological as well as psychological changes that could make a person vulnerable to illnesses (Cohen, Kamarck, & Mermelstein, 1995). According to the World Health Organization (2023), stress can be addressed as a form of mental tension or worry emerging from a strenuous event. Stress is generally a common human response that urges a person to deal with threats and challenges in his/ her life. Everybody experiences stress to a certain extent. However, the coping mechanisms used to deal with stress vary from person to person and can affect their overall well-being.

Stress to some extent is fine and enhances our performance (Eustress). Still, if the stressor continues to stay for a very long period or if the cause of stress is preeminent then it hampers our productivity and leads to physical and mental health issues. According to Sheldon Cohen, "perceived stress" is a cognitively mediated emotional response to a target event. It's a measure of how much stress a person feels in their life situations. Cohen's theory states that the stressor is not necessarily a life event that occurs to an individual, but rather it is their emotional response to the event (Cohen et al., 1983). Therefore, perceived stress can be defined as the thoughts or feelings one has about the quantity of stress he/ she is under at a particular time. Perceived stress is about the feeling of having no control over one's life or feeling that life is unpredictable. It also focuses on how often a person has to negotiate with annoying hassles, how much one's life is changing, and also the confidence a person has in his/ her own abilities to solve their problems and difficulties. Perceived stress does not estimate the frequencies or types of stressful things that have occurred to someone, instead, it measures how someone feels about the general stress in his/ her life and capability to handle that stress. The way people assess and deal with similar negative situations in life depends on coping mechanisms, personality, and social support (Phillips, 2013).

Stress, according to Health Assured (2019), is the body's reaction to change that necessitates an action. These alterations might result from one's surroundings, body, or ideas and can be physical, psychological, or emotional. There are many causes of stress, such as-

1. Big life changes or disruptions.
2. A lack of control over important things.
3. Too much work pressure or no work pressure at all.

Each of these is grounded in fact. Stress perception, however, is not the same. It is less about the real difficulties and more about how one feels about the uncertainty and lack of control. Perceived stress occurs when someone finds himself/ herself thinking about potential outcomes and concludes that bad things are unavoidable.

A few major problems with perceived stress is that it can lead to:

1. Tension, pain, headaches, and fatigue.
2. Digestive stomach problems.
3. Anxiety, anger, and irritability.
4. A lack of motivation and focus.
5. Eating disorders.
6. Depression.
7. Sleep disorders.
8. Substance abuse.

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Some of the causes are direct effects of stress, and some are negative coping mechanisms. Therefore, it is important to be aware of stress and keep it under control.

The engineering community coined the term "stress" to refer to the actual physical strain placed on a structure. But in the middle of the 1930s, research on rats that were induced with "acute non-specific noxious agents," or "stressors," was covered in a study titled "A Syndrome Produced by Diverse Noxious Agents" that was published in *Nature* (Selye, 1936). Surgical trauma, spinal shock, exposure to the cold, intense muscle training, and sub-lethal medication injections were some of these stresses.

In his experiment, Selye (1936) found that the rats, subjected to a stressor, developed a typical "syndrome" that had nothing to do with the physical harm the stressor had caused. Selye discovered that the rats went through two phases following exposure, irrespective of the stressor type: during the first stage, which lasted from 6 to 48 hours following the first injury, the rats had several symptoms, one of which was a significant reduction in the size of the thymus, which is the organ that produces T cells, which are essential for immunity strategies. In stage two, which started 48 hours after the first injury, it appeared that the brain structures in charge of an organism's growth were not functioning properly, sparing the body's resources for other structures that would be more critically required. Selye's study served as a stimulant for stress research in general and proved to be seminal in the investigation of stress biomarkers.

Emerging from the above experiment, Hans Selye in 1936 and 1950s, gave the concept of General Adaptation Syndrome, describing the physiological alterations that a person's body experiences in response to stress. These modifications take place gradually:

- 1. Stage of alarm:** This is how stress first makes the body react. The abrupt release of hormones activates the sympathetic nervous system. Another name for this is the fight-or-flight response. The alarm stage is indicated by symptoms such as sweating, shaking, fast breathing, and elevated heart rate.
- 2. Resistance stage:** Here our body tries to work in response to the stressors. If the stressful situation is dealt with, then the body is restored to homeostasis and if the stress is too difficult to manage then the next stage begins.
- 3. Exhaustion stage:** The final stage is brought on by ongoing or persistent stress. When one doesn't get relief from pressures, their body becomes incapable of handling stress due to a depletion of their mental, emotional, and physical resources. Fatigue, burnout, etc. are indicators that a person is nearing the exhaustion stage. Long-term stress has physical side effects that raise the risk of heart disease, high blood pressure, diabetes, and weakened immune systems.

As per the 2023 Ipsos World Mental Health Day survey, 62% of people in the past year reported that their daily life has been disrupted due to stress and 39% reported that they had to take a break from work in the last 12 months because of stress.

A study conducted by ICICI Lombard General Insurance in 2023 that a whopping 77% of Indians face stress symptoms regularly.

As per the 2018 APA lexicon, body image or identity encompasses one's mental portrayal of the whole body, covering physical attributes (body perception) and attitudes towards these attributes (body concept).

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Defined by Cash, Brown, and Mikulka (1990), "body image" involves emotions regarding physical attractiveness or unattractiveness, as well as satisfaction or dissatisfaction with one's appearance. The concept of body image holds significance in psychology, philosophy, and medicine with roots dating back to the late 1800s when the term first emerged. Collaborative efforts between Gestalt psychologists and neurologists sought to comprehend factors contributing to changes in body perception post-traumatic brain injury. Their research pointed towards an internalized concept of body image, serving as a mental representation of bodily information. Head, one of the leading researchers of the time, developed the idea of body schema. The idea originated with the finding that brain lesions were followed by sensory alterations. Paul Schilder, an Austrian neurologist, coined the phrase "body image" in his 1935 book "The Image and Appearance of the Human Body."

Multiple schools of thought have explored body image in clinical psychology. The psychodynamic school of thinking dominated the conceptualization and investigation of body image for many years. Fisher, a well-known psychodynamic researcher, created the body image boundaries theory. The notion states that the body serves as a wall separating the self from the outside environment. The concept of penetration and barriers, seen as ways to measure the permeability and strength of the body image boundary, were tested using projective methods. Shontz, a key figure in shifting body image research from a psychodynamic approach to a physical viewpoint, suggested using field theory, cognitive theory, and Gestalt psychology as perspectives. Since Shontz's era, the focus of body image research has primarily been on physical aspects of the body. Current research mainly revolves around concerns related to body weight, physical attractiveness, and body shape.

Throughout history, individuals with larger body sizes were viewed as wealthy or powerful. Social status and prosperity were often linked to physical attributes, with cultural values influencing body image perceptions. In ancient China's Han dynasty, characteristics like dark hair and clear skin held high value due to the respect for ancestral traits. Over time, moral and cultural ideals have evolved, influenced by various factors such as media, celebrities, and fashion trends. Today, technology plays a significant role in how individuals interpret messages about their bodies and self-worth. Social media platforms have reshaped the concept of the "ideal body," particularly with the increasing popularity of the "Hallyu wave." The modern beauty standards portrayed on social media present conflicting ideals regarding skin tone, hair texture, and body shape. This has led to a growing obsession with achieving unrealistic Korean beauty standards. Some individuals even resort to cosmetic procedures in pursuit of attaining the perceived "perfect look."

According to Healthy Mind (2024), some of the factors that can cause a negative body image are:

1. Appearance-related bullying or teasing in childhood
2. Close ones who diet and express body dissatisfaction
3. A cultural effect of judging people by their appearance
4. Peer pressure among females to be slim
5. Media and advertising that promote particular appearance ideals
6. People who internalize society's body ideals or appearance
7. A tendency in media targeting females to encourage weight loss and dietary programs.

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A Glob Ment Health (Camb) poll from 2023 indicates that 80% of women have self-identified as obese, and 79% of women have struggled with negative body image. In a study from 2020, it was found that young people in India tend to feel unhappy with their bodies and engage in excessive eating. The research discovered that 34.44% of Indian men surveyed reported experiencing significant dissatisfaction with their bodies (Soohinda, Sampath, Mishra, & Dutta, 2020).

The term "relationship" has its roots in the Latin word "relation" which means a connection or association. This particular word can be linked back to the Middle English terms "relacion" and "relacioun", which have their origins in the Anglo-Norman language as "relacioun" and the Old French language as "relacion". "Relationship" is a continuing and often committed association between two or more individuals, as in a family, partnership, marriage, friendship, or other interpersonal link in which the individuals have some degree of influence on each other's feelings, thoughts, and actions (APA Dictionary, 2018).

According to Hendrick (1988), relationship satisfaction reflects an individual's evaluation of thoughts, feelings, and behaviours associated with a romantic relationship (Hendrick, 1988). "Relationship satisfaction" is the subjective evaluation of a person's relationship; it is an experience and opinion rather than a characteristic of a relationship.

According to Vajda (2015), satisfaction in a relationship relies heavily on four key factors:

- 1. Communication:** the way an individual communicates can greatly impact their satisfaction within the relationship. Negative communication patterns may lead to lower satisfaction for one person but not necessarily for their partner as per Marano (2022).
- 2. Commitment:** it plays a crucial role in relationship satisfaction. It involves the will or intention to maintain an intimate partnership according to Adams and Jones (1997), Rusbult (1980, 1983), Rusbult, Martz, and Agnew (1998), and Stanley & Markman (1992).
- 3. Quality time:** spending quality time together is vital for happiness in a relationship. Studies by Crawford, Houts, Huston, and George (2002), Miller (1976), Orthner & Mancini (1990), and Zuo (1992) have shown that couples who share their free time tend to be happier. The amount of quality time spent together strongly predicts relationship happiness as indicated by Dew (2007) and Kingston and Nock (1987).
- 4. Dominance and aggression:** when it comes to aggression and dominance, research by Bradbury et al. (2000) suggests a negative correlation with relationship satisfaction in partnerships.

Navigating these different factors with one's partner may reveal what it takes for both of them to feel satisfied in their relationship. Emotional satisfaction and relationship satisfaction share a symbiotic bond, each influencing and enriching the other. At the heart of every fulfilling relationship lies emotional connection, a deep reservoir of understanding, empathy, and affection. Feeling happy in a relationship boosts overall satisfaction. Emotional fulfillment builds trust, intimacy, & resilience during tough times. On the flip side, not feeling emotionally satisfied can strain a relationship, causing disconnect & discontent. Therefore, nurturing emotional closeness is vital for long-lasting happiness and mutual joy (Gottman & Levenson, 1992).

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An Ipsos press release in 2023 revealed that 84% of married or partnered individuals in 32 countries are content with their. However, only 63% of adults are satisfied with their romantic or sex lives. As per the same release, 84% of Indians are satisfied with their partner's relationship and personal bond. The release also states that 85% of men and 83% of women are satisfied with their spouses or partners.

Korean dramas (K-dramas) are Korean-language television series made in South Korea. They are translated into several languages and are widely available on streaming platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, YouTube, etc. K-dramas were popularized by the “Hallyu wave” (Korean wave of globalization), which has dramatically risen since the 1990s. The Chinese term "Hallyu" refers to a "Korean wave," which is defined as the global dissemination of Korean popular culture and media.

After more than 20 years of development, the Hallyu wave phenomenon has managed to capture the interest of academics worldwide (Lyan, 2019; Masood & Rahim, 2020; Mustikawati, 2020; Ravina, 2009; Yoon, 2020). The characteristics of a regular creative industry development have been included in the Korean Wave, fostering worldwide cooperation with other nations (Moestopo, 2023). The phenomenon of Hallyu is now being discussed and is a developing field as South Korean popular culture continues to expand thanks to the strength of social networking and new media (Ganghariya & Kanozia, 2020).

K-dramas, loved by people of all ages, countries, and cultures (Chung, 2011), hold a special place in the hearts of worldwide. These dramas made a mark across various groups, leaving a lasting impact (Chung, 2011). Japanese perceptions of Korean identity have been positively influenced by these dramas, showcasing the power they hold. With their moving narratives and universal appeal, K-dramas can play a crucial role in social media marketing strategies (Park, Olaisen, Vuong, Rosas, & Cho, 2019). Unlike US television shows that often focus on explicit content, K-dramas stand out for emphasizing Confucian values like respect and responsibility (Hwang, 2010). Korean drama characters are intricately crafted with rich backgrounds, individual goals, and relatable struggles. This depth allows viewers to form strong connections with the characters and become emotionally invested in their journeys. In contrast to Korean dramas' structured storytelling approach, Indian TV dramas tend to meander with open-ended plots (Reddy, 2023). Each Korean drama has a clear beginning, middle, and end, providing viewers with a complete narrative experience, unlike the more flexible Indian counterparts. Women K-drama watchers tend to be more imaginative than men and they are eager to have a relationship similar to the characters in K-dramas especially when they are single but when in a relationship, they tend to be satisfied with their partners (Cheung, 2014). Alada (2023) claims that people first became interested in K-drama genres either by accident, through friends and family, or through social media, including YouTube, Facebook, and TV. Because K-dramas have distinct stories and plots, they are incredibly popular. Even the subplots within the narrative draw viewers' attention to the lesser characters in the dramas as well as the main characters' circling stories. It is because of the characters' diverse intricacies and stories, that the genres become captivating. Dramas from Korea offer a fresh perspective on love that is uncommon in American or local productions. When pure or innocent love is expressed in K-dramas, it changes the perspective of love and encourages sacrifice, self-denial, respect, and self-respect for loved ones.

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In a 2022 survey of twenty-six countries, Statista found that roughly 36% of respondents claimed that K-dramas were highly popular in their country at the time. Overall, 66% of participants stated that K-dramas are generally well-liked, even outside of devoted fan communities.

As per a 2019 survey by Statista, 24.4% of respondents in India considered K-dramas very popular in India. Maximum participants considered K-dramas to be either very popular (33.6%) or only popular among certain people (28%).

In general, college students are classified as "emerging adults." The APA lexicon (2018) defines emerging adulthood as a developmental period that spans from the late teens through the twenties, with a focus on the age range of 18 to 25 years. It is not young adulthood nor adolescence but rather is empirically and theoretically separate from both of them. The relative freedom of emerging adulthood from normative expectations and social roles sets it apart. As they transition from the dependence of childhood and adolescence to the responsibilities of adulthood, emerging adults explore their identities by trying out different aspects of life (like jobs, relationships, and worldviews) and progressively making decisions that will last a lifetime. According to Matud, Díaz, Bethencourt, and Ibáñez (2020), emerging adulthood is a crucial stage of life that involves numerous changes in living arrangements, education, relationships, and jobs. These changes can cause psychological anguish and stress in emerging adults. People regard themselves as neither adults nor adolescents during this time, and they have the highest rates of residential instability (change) of any age group (Arnett, 2000). Because of this, people in this age group are more likely to be exposed to the media, actively pursue love, and may be more susceptible to stress and having a bad body image.

According to a 2023 report by Daehan Drama, over 58% of people between the ages of 16 years and 24 years watch K-dramas, and more than 88% of them are women.

### *Identification of Research Gap*

The rising popularity of K-dramas among emerging adult women has raised questions about their potential impact on perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image because emerging adults may seek love but K-dramas tend to portray unrealistic relationship and beauty standards which might affect body image and relationship satisfaction of emerging adults, especially if they are women, either negatively or positively, when compared with women of the same age group who do not watch K-dramas. Also, this age group is vulnerable to stress so how K-dramas affect that is also a question when compared with non-watchers. However, there doesn't exist any research to date to examine the effects of watching K-dramas on perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image among emerging adults, especially in India. Therefore, this study aims to find out how K-dramas might affect an emerging adult woman's perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The relationships between self-efficacy and perceived stress and between perceived stress and depressive symptoms are moderated by gender, with the effects being more pronounced in women. Academic satisfaction and stress are mediated by the school year. A negative correlation is observed across all peer groups, with the exception of fourth-year students. The negative relationship between perceived stress and self-efficacy is moderated by first-

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generation status, with first-generation college students experiencing higher levels of stress than their classmates. Furthermore, among first-generation students, self-efficacy was positively correlated with academic satisfaction; this relationship did not exist for other students. When Madson, Perrone, Goldstein, and Lee (2022) looked at relationships between self-efficacy and individual adjustment among emerging adults attending college, they discovered these results. Using questionnaires, they gathered information from 683 students attending distinct ethnic colleges. Nonetheless, the majority of study participants were female, and the research was done on Northeastern American public university students. As a result, generalizations could not apply to students who identify as male, students who attend schools in other states or countries, or students who attend private universities.

Nair (2021) studied young adults from Indian institutions to determine the association between gender-specific assertiveness and perceived stress. Scales were used to gather data from 104 college students in the 18–23 years of age range. The results of the study showed that assertiveness and perceived stress are not significantly correlated. Furthermore, among college students, there is no discernible gender difference in how stress is perceived. Nonetheless, compared to men, women felt more stressed. The study's sample size was too small; maybe as a result, no meaningful association was discovered. Consequently, the results cannot be applied to the total population of emerging adults.

In 2021, Fenzel and Richardson carried out a study to investigate emerging adults' coping mechanisms and stress. There were 324 US residents in the 18–30 years of age range that made up the sample. Through TurkPrime, participants who had finished post-secondary education were sought out. They discovered a distinct viewpoint on stress and the coping mechanism among emerging adults, which significantly advanced the knowledge of useful coping mechanisms that enhance life satisfaction and lessen depressive symptoms during the difficult developmental transition. They also discovered that regardless of a person's personality, spirituality, mindfulness, resilience, and self-compassion all significantly contribute to improving life satisfaction and reducing depression symptoms in the face of stressors. To further understand how to maximize human functioning and flourishing for emerging people as they navigate the difficulties of this developmental stage, additional in-depth investigation of the study is necessary.

A study was conducted to assess the impact of stress, self-esteem, coping methods, and perceived social backing on the distress levels of emerging adult males and females. The research involved 4816 participants from Spain aged between 18 to 29 years, with half of them being female. The findings displayed that females encountered more significant levels of mental distress, daily challenges, chronic stress, emotional coping mechanisms, and social assistance compared to males. On the contrary, men exhibited more separated and logical self-esteem and coping strategies than women did. However, due to the study's cross-sectional nature, establishing a cause-and-effect relationship among the variables was not feasible (Matud, Díaz, Bethencourt, & Ibáñez, 2020).

Park, Olaisen, Vuong, Rosas, and Cho (2019) suggest that precision mental health has significant promise for enhancing mental health services and decreasing mental illness. They thought Korean dramas might be a useful teaching tool for improving Asian Americans' understanding, attitudes, and behaviors related to precision mental health. Thus, they looked at the participants' opinions of the value of Korean dramas as teaching tools and conducted a study to ascertain whether knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors improved after taking part in

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a Korean drama precision mental health workshop. 122 participants participated in a Korean drama precision mental health program that was conducted in Vietnamese, Korean, and English. Both pre-and post-tests were administered to evaluate knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors concerning precision mental health, specifically focusing on genetics, genetic testing, mental health, and seeking help, along with an assessment regarding the effectiveness of Korean dramas as educational resources. The study revealed a significant variance in knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors before and after the assessments. The workshop conducted in the specified language resulted in marked enhancements in post-test scores across all areas of knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors. Participants generally responded positively to the incorporation of Korean dramas into mental health education. However, since this was only a pilot study using convenience sampling and small sample size, it's possible that the results cannot be applied to all Korean drama viewers. Research on gender, age, and other factors that may have contributed is necessary. Furthermore, because the study was cross-sectional, it was not possible to conduct a follow-up with participants to determine the long-term effects.

Research indicates a positive correlation between weight-related behaviors and body image problems. Adolescents and emerging adults who misinterpreted their weight behaved in ways connected to their weight. Excessive weight-loss behaviors and the formation of eating disorders were significantly correlated with high levels of body dissatisfaction. Weight-related behaviors among emerging adults and adolescents are often influenced by body image issues. These results were from a systematic review conducted by Shagar, Harris, Boddy, and Donovan (2018) to look into the data on the relationship between emerging adults' and adolescents' weight-related behaviors and body image issues. Academic articles from 2005 to 2017 examining weight-related behaviors and body image issues in young adults and teenagers were analyzed. The research included studies from eleven different regions, such as the United States, Asia, Europe, and more. Experimental study methods are essential to determine the cause-and-effect relationship between weight-related behaviors and body image concerns in young adults and adolescents.

A study done by Rodgers, Franko, Donovan, Cousineau, Yates, McGowan, Cook, and Lowy (2017) examined how a person's view of their own looks, comparing them to others' looks, and being overweight are affected by three positive aspects of self-compassion. 232 teenagers aged 13 to 18 shared details comparing looks, feeling good about appearance, seeing themselves as overweight, and self-compassion traits like mindfulness, being kind to oneself, and realizing common humanity. The research discovered that in boys, mindfulness and recognizing shared humanity affected how they saw their weight compared to others' appearance. Guys with more of these self-compassion qualities didn't feel the connection as strongly. Surprisingly, these patterns were different for girls. Furthermore, none of the self-compassion traits moderated the link between comparing looks and feeling good about appearance. The study suggests that self-compassion qualities that reduce self-focus could help reduce concerns about body image, particularly among males. But these results don't apply to young adults over 18 years old.

Zimik (2016) conducted a study to analyze the beauty and body image standards among young Indian women, aiming to identify any differences or similarities with respect to the global community. They revealed that women are significantly affected by the content they consume online, view on TV, and read in foreign magazines. Women show alterations in body weight and awareness of health due to this influence. This transformation is evident in

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the significant rise of dieting clubs and the beauty industry. Indian women typically follow beauty routines and have bodies that are slim, toned, similar to those of Western women but perceive themselves differently based on contemporary ideals. However, modifications made by Indian women vary depending on their economic status and location. Since studies often evaluate body image as a stable trait, it is crucial to also explore women's daily encounters with body image as well as any situational or emotional contexts they may face. The study mainly focused on body image issues among young adult women; older and younger females were not part of the research. Besides, data gathered on eating disorders and body image beliefs only included middle-class urban women from metropolitan areas; rural women's concerns were not thoroughly investigated. Moreover, there is a lack of information in the literature regarding the number of Indian women resorting to cosmetic surgery or other methods to enhance their appearance. Hence, further research is needed for a deeper understanding of Indian women's body image perceptions.

The research conducted by Habibah, Tsani, and DW (2021) aimed to examine the connection between being exposed to Korean pop culture in the media & the chances of experiencing eating disorders & body image concerns among teenage girls in Yogyakarta. They used a quantitative method along with a cross-sectional approach to collect data from 109 female first-year high school students in Yogyak. What they found was that 11% of the participants had some exposure to Korean pop culture, with 88.1% showing negative body images and dissatisfaction with their bodies, and 47.7% were at risk of developing eating disorders. Out of these, 53% were more prone to resorting to dieting behaviors, 21.04% had a higher likelihood of developing bulimia, & 25.96% were more inclined to restrict their food intake. Furthermore, they observed that teenage girls exposed to Korean pop culture tended to have distorted body image perceptions. Additionally, exposure to this cultural phenomenon along with negative body image contributed to eating disorder behaviors among adolescent females. However, due to the small sample size limited only to Yogyakarta, Indonesia, these findings cannot be generalized to all viewers of Korean dramas. Further exploration is necessary to understand better how watching K-dramas influences one's body image perception.

A recent study uncovered a robust connection between trust, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction. Strikingly, there were no notable differences in trust, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction based on gender. The study investigated the correlation between intimacy and relationship satisfaction, trust and relationship satisfaction, as well as intimacy and relationship satisfaction. The research concluded that as levels of intimacy and trust increased, so did relationship satisfaction - forming a closer bond leading to higher overall satisfaction. Interestingly, gender did not influence these findings at all. Data was gathered from 186 young individuals in India aged 18 to 24 years who were engaged, married, living together, or dating at the time through questionnaires. However, different results could emerge with a larger sample size due to the small sample (Jain, 2022).

The level of relationship satisfaction differs based on various love-related factors. In a study by Andrade, Luiz, Rech, Rodrigues, and Carnielli (2015), it was discovered that men are not significantly impacted by commitment, while women consider intimacy, commitment, and passion crucial for relationship happiness. The researchers surveyed 335 young adults in Spain involved in romantic relationships to gauge their levels of happiness. It is important to acknowledge that these findings may not apply universally to young adults worldwide.

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According to a study conducted by Demir (2009), the satisfaction of single individuals seemed to be influenced by their relationships with both their mothers and best friends. Conversely, those in relationships tied their happiness to factors such as the quality of their romantic bond, the interaction between mother and child, and conflicts. The study posited that a strong romantic relationship could act as a buffer against conflicts within best friendships; however, the opposite did not hold true - the quality of best friendships did not mitigate the detrimental impacts of conflicts in romantic relationships on happiness. This suggests that friends may play a smaller role in happiness when young adults are in romantic relationships. The results point towards the need for further research using experimental methods to confirm these findings. While the study primarily aimed to explore how intimate relationships (parents, best friend, romantic partner) affect happiness in young adults with or without a romantic partner, it only delved into the outcomes based on existing literature reviews.

Alada (2023) disclosed various reasons for the surge in popularity of K-drama genres. These include recommendations from friends and family, stumbling upon them accidentally, and exposure on social media platforms like Facebook YouTube, and TV. The allure of K-dramas lies in their unique tales and intricate side stories that captivate viewers alongside the main plotline. The notion of seeking life partners and upholding relationships with grace despite hardships is heavily influenced by K-dramas. K-dramas introduced a new ideal of the perfect partner characterized by refinement, charm, wealth, gentlemanly conduct, and humor. With their attractive actors and actresses delivering stellar performances, fans often find themselves daydreaming about them, fostering a deep admiration for their idols. Watching K-dramas together strengthens family bonds as parents, children, and other relatives come together to enjoy the shows. Furthermore, the theme of parental love resonates across different genres within K-dramas, transcending historical dramas to comedies and even horror. This strategy not only expands the global fan base but also nurtures friendships and parental affection among viewers. Moreover, K-dramas serve as a motivating factor for diligent study by acting as a reward. These findings emerged from a study focused on understanding how active consumption of K-dramas influences study habits and perceptions of love among female college students in the Philippines. Through hour-long audio-visual interviews with five participants to collect qualitative data, these conclusions may lack precision due to their basis on subjective accounts from a small sample group.

In 2017, Nguyen conducted research to investigate the link between Vietnamese single women's viewing of South Korean dramas and their dedication and happiness in relationships. A survey involving 61 participants produced data that was analyzed. The results revealed a noticeable connection between commitment and satisfaction levels among Vietnamese single women who watched K-dramas. This suggests that single Vietnamese women tended to feel less dedicated and content in their relationships the more time they spent watching South Korean dramas. However, due to the limited sample size and the inability to apply the findings beyond Vietnam, further data collection is necessary for thorough analysis.

A study on the impact of K-dramas revealed interesting findings. 49 participants shared their experiences, shedding light on both the positive and negative effects of shows in Malaysia. The consensus among viewers is that K-dramas foster appreciation for family values while also increasing cultural awareness. Many find them soothing and even learn new phrases

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from watching. On the downside, a significant number feel inadequate compared to the attractive actors and actresses, developing a dependency on these dramas that leads to binge-watching sessions. Concerns also arise about the influence of explicit scenes on young audiences, prompting some to emulate Korean fashion trends and purchase related products. While insightful, it's crucial to note that these findings are limited in scope due to the small sample size. With more research, we can gain deeper insights into how K-dramas shape perceptions and behaviors among the youth in Malaysia (Yoke & Jamil, 2022).

A study was conducted to examine the impact of Korean dramas on college students' emotional maturity, responsibility, and intellectual maturity. The research revealed that students who watch and enjoy Korean dramas tend to show moderate adjustments in these areas. The study, which included 102 participants, focused on the emotional maturity, social maturity, intellectual maturity, and responsibility levels of college students. However, it was found that social maturity adjustments were on the lower end of the spectrum. The research was carried out at Riau University's Department of Teacher Training and Education using a quantitative descriptive design. It is essential to note that data was collected solely from one university and department, the findings may not be generalizable to other institutions (Yakub, Umari, & Munawir, 2023).

In 2022, Soman and Jaggi conducted a study on the impact of K-dramas on the viewing behavior of Indian youth. Through interviews with fifteen Indian youths, they gained valuable insights into how viewing experiences connect with Indian culture. The participants highlighted the ease of binge-watching, the attraction of specific genres, and the importance of delving deeper into Korean society beyond just watching dramas and purchasing Korean products. However, it's essential to note that this research is qualitative and limited in terms of participants.

To further explore the Hallyu wave and its related areas, Ganghariya and Kanozia (2020) conducted a systematic review of 100 research articles from 2000 to 2019. They identified several research gaps, including a focus on East Asia and the Pacific in Hallyu studies, neglecting low-income countries in research, and a lack of conceptual and comparative studies on Hallyu. Despite its limitations, their investigation shed light on Hallyu trends and gaps in previous studies.

Krishnamurthy and Chukkali (2021) observed that higher levels of body satisfaction are linked to individuals who feel secure in their relationship and content with relationships. This insight stemmed from a study involving 170 emerging adults in India exploring the correlation between body image satisfaction and romantic attachment. However, it's essential to note that same-sex partnerships were not considered, and the sample size was rather limited.

Irrespective of how one's partner genuinely perceives them, individuals dissatisfied with their bodies tend to believe that their partners hold negative views about them as well. A study by Lee (2016) revealed that reduced sexual satisfaction resulted from the perceived unhappiness of a partner with the individual's physique, subsequently leading to diminished relationship contentment. This discovery emerged from an examination of mediating tactics in the association between relationship satisfaction and body image within heterosexual relationships involving 251 participants in Canada. Hence, caution must be exercised when attempting to generalize these findings to gay couples or couples residing outside of Canada.

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There is no significant correlation between perceived stress and relationship satisfaction, according to a study that looked at it. However, statistical analysis revealed that participants did perceive a correlation, and qualitative evidence points to the existence of a significant relationship. The study looked at graduate students in psychology who were in intimate partner relationships. But since the study was conducted in the US, its findings might not apply to other countries (Bowlin, 2013).

In a study by Asberg and Wagaman (2010), 95 emerging adults from a Southeastern US regional university were analyzed. The research explored the links between various factors like negative body image cognitions, maladaptive eating behaviors, social support perception, overall stress, and emotion regulation capabilities. A strong positive association was found between stress levels and negative body image cognitions. This connection suggests that as stress levels increase, so does dissatisfaction with body image. However, data collection relied on self-reported measures with sensitive questions, raising concerns about the accuracy of responses.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### *Objectives*

- To find out the characteristics of the sample.
- To find out whether there is a significant difference between K-drama watchers and non-watchers in terms of perceived stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships.
- To find out if the likelihood of being a K-Drama watcher is influenced by perceived stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships.

#### *Hypotheses*

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between K-drama watchers and non-watchers in terms of perceived stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships.
- H<sub>a1</sub>: There is a significant difference between K-drama watchers and non-watchers in terms of perceived stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant relationship between perceived stress, body image, and relationship satisfaction, and the likelihood of being a K-Drama watcher.
- H<sub>a2</sub>: There is a significant relationship between at least one of the predictor variables (perceived stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships) and the likelihood of being a K-Drama watcher.

#### *Description of the tools*

One of the traditional tools for assessing stress is the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS). Even though Cohen, Kamarch, and Mermelstein created the tool initially in 1983, it is now a well-liked option for assisting individuals in comprehending how various circumstances impact their emotions and reported stress. The 10-item scale uses a 5-point Likert scale to gauge participants' answers (0 being never, 1 being virtually never, 2 being occasionally, 3 being pretty often, and 4 being very often). For items 4, 5, 7, and 8, there is reverse scoring: "very often" would be represented by "0," "fairly often" by "1," "sometimes" by "2," "never" by "4," and "almost never" by "3." Each person's score ranges from 0 to 40, and all scores must be totaled. Low stress was denoted by a score of 0- 13, moderate stress by 14–26, and high stress by 27–40. The PSS-10's Cronbach's alpha was assessed to be more than .70. Four studies evaluated the PSS-10's test-retest reliability, and all of them found that it met the

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>.70 threshold (Lee, 2012). There was good concurrent validity for the PSS-10. In both adult university students and teenagers, it showed a positive correlation with sadness and anxiety measures (Steele, 2023).

Cash developed the multidimensional appearance judgment subscale for the body self-relations questionnaire in 2000. It measured how satisfied or dissatisfied one was with one's physical appearance, as well as how pretty or ugly one felt. Participants' responses are recorded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 being certainly disagree, 2 being mainly disagree, 3 being neither agree nor disagree, 4 being mostly agree, and 5 being absolutely agree) for each of the seven questions on the scale. The scoring for items six and seven were reversed, so that "definitely agree" would earn a score of 1, "mostly agree" would receive a score of 2, "neither agree nor disagree" would stay the same, "mostly disagree" would receive a score of 4, and "definitely disagree" would receive a score of 5. Low scorers typically exhibit a general dissatisfaction with their physical appearance, whilst high scorers are generally positive and content with their looks. Test-retest reliability was found to be .81 and Cronbach's alpha was found to be .88 for participants who were male. Test-retest reliability for female participants was found to be .91, while Cronbach's alpha was found to be .88 (Cash, 2000). Numerous instruments, including the General Health Questionnaire (GHQ), the life event scale, the depression and anxiety scales, the Impact of Event Scale, and the depression scale, were used to examine the concurrent validity of the PSS-10. The results showed a moderate to strong connection overall (Mozumder, 2022).

Hendrick's 1988 relationship assessment scale included seven measures intended to gauge overall relationship satisfaction. A five-point Likert scale, with 1 denoting low satisfaction and 5 denoting high satisfaction, was used by participants to answer each question. The scoring for items 4 and 7 should be inverted, with a score of "5" denoting "low satisfaction" and a score of "1" denoting "high satisfaction." A higher score indicates a respondent's greater level of satisfaction with their relationship. The scoring system is ongoing. The scale's internal consistency was determined to be high, with interitem correlations averaging 0.80 and a coefficient alpha of .91. Strong convergent validity was suggested by the 0.84 zero-order correlation between the Relationship Assessment Scale and Dyadic Adjustment Scale scores (Vaughn & Baier, 1999).

### ***Sample***

Data was collected from 204 emerging adult (aged between 18- 25 years) female college students from India, involved in a heterosexual romantic relationship, using the convenience sampling technique because convenience sampling involves selecting individuals who are easy to reach.

### ***Inclusion criteria***

- Indian women aged between 18 to 25 years, who are college goers
- Individuals who were involved in some kind of heterosexual romantic relationship
- Individuals who do not watch K-dramas
- Individuals who watch K-dramas for at least 1 to 2 hours a week
- Individuals who knew and understood the English language

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### *Exclusion criteria*

- Individuals aged below 18 and above 25 years
- Individuals who were not Indians and non-college goers
- Individuals who identified something other than women
- Individuals who watched less than 1 hour of K-drama in a week
- Individuals with diagnosed physical and psychological disorders
- Individuals who were not involved in any kind of romantic relationships
- Individuals who did not understand English.

### **Demographic details**

*Table 1: The table depicts the demographic details of the sample*

<b>Demographic Data</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>		
18- 20	72	35.3
21- 23	86	42.2
24- 25	46	22.5
<b>Location</b>		
Urban	163	79.9
Rural	41	20.0
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Secondary	33	16.5
Higher Secondary	41	20.0
Bachelor's	66	32.3
Master's	64	31.5
<b>Work Status</b>		
Full-time	21	10.3
Part-time	34	16.7
Temporary	19	9.3
Not working	102	50.0
Self-employed	28	13.7

### *Statistical analysis*

- Descriptive statistics (mean, median, mode, SD) would be used to identify the characteristics of the sample.
- Student t-test will be used to analyse whether there is any significant difference between K-drama watchers and non-watchers in terms of perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image.
- Logistic regression would be used to see if there is any significant likelihood of being a K-drama watcher based on the predictor variables (perceived stress, body image, and relationship satisfaction).

### *Procedure*

Twenty-two literature were reviewed from the past fifteen years to gain a better understanding of variables, and the topic, and identify the research gaps. Based on that, objectives and hypotheses were formulated. Proper standardized tools were used for data collection. Data was collected from two hundred and four Indian college-going female students (aged 18- 25 years) using a Google form over the span of three months. The Google

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form consisted of proper instructions on inclusion criteria, a consent form, the perceived stress scale, the multidimensional body self-relations questionnaire appearance evaluation subscale, and the relationship assessment scale (attached in the Appendix), which was circulated on social media platforms and also posted on the SurveyCircle website. The collected data was then checked following the inclusion and exclusion criteria and all two hundred and four data met the research criteria. After that, statistical analysis (descriptives, t-test, and logistic regression) was done on the data using Jamovi software. The results were then interpreted and concluded accordingly, rejecting the hypotheses that didn't meet the results and accepting those which met the results. The findings were backed up by previous research work with proper referencing. Limitations and future implications of the research were also discussed for the benefit of future researchers.

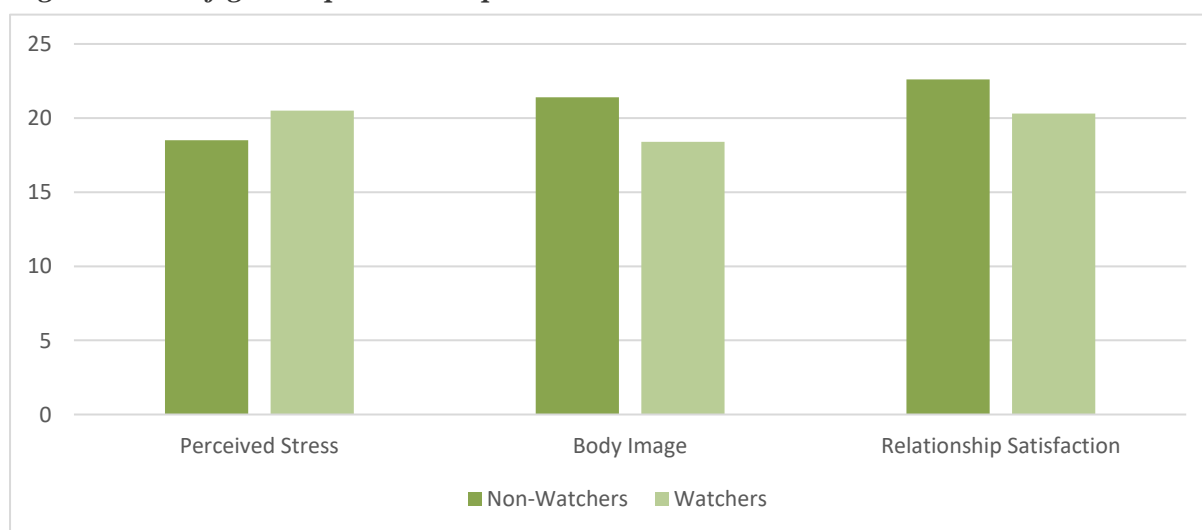
### RESULT ANALYSIS

**Table 2: The descriptive statistics of the sample**

	K-Drama watcher/ Non Watcher	Perceived Stress	Body Image	Relationship Satisfaction
<b>N</b>	Non-Watcher	98	98	98
	Watcher	106	106	106
<b>Mean</b>	Non-Watcher	18.5	21.4	22.6
	Watcher	20.5	18.4	20.3
<b>Median</b>	Non-Watcher	19.0	23.0	24.0
	Watcher	20.0	19.5	21.0
<b>Mode</b>	Non-Watcher	18.0 <sup>a</sup>	28.0	27.0
	Watcher	20.0	20.0	21.0
<b>Standard deviation</b>	Non-Watcher	6.92	7.21	5.48
	Watcher	6.36	7.64	6.07

*Note.* <sup>a</sup> More than one mode exists, only the first is reported

**Figure 1: This figure depicts Participant Mean Scores**



From Table 2 and Figure 1, it can be seen that K-drama non-watchers had less perceived stress (mean= 18.5) and more body image (mean= 21.4) and relationship satisfaction (mean= 22.6) on average when compared with watchers (mean= 20.5, 18.4, and 20.3 respectively). In terms of perceived stress, watchers had more consistent scores (SD= 6.36)

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than non-watchers (SD= 6.92). In terms of body image (SD= 7.21) and relationship satisfaction (SD= 5.48), non-watchers had more consistent scores than watchers (SD= 7.64 and 6.07 respectively).

**Table 3: This table depicts Independent Samples t-test**

		Statistic	df	p
<b>Perceived Stress</b>	Student's t	-2.14	202	0.034
<b>Body Image</b>	Student's t	2.93	202	0.004
<b>Relationship Satisfaction</b>	Student's t	2.82	202	0.005

From Table 3, it can be seen that there is a significant difference (because the “p” value is less than 0.05) in perceived stress between watchers and non-watchers ( $t = -2.14$ ,  $p = 0.034$ ). The negative sign of the t-statistic indicates that, on average, non-watchers have higher perceived stress than watchers. There is also a significant difference in body image ( $t = 2.93$ ,  $p = 0.004$ ) and relationship satisfaction ( $t = 2.82$ ,  $p = 0.005$ ) between watchers and non-watchers but in both cases, non-watchers have higher body image and satisfaction in relationships than watchers. Therefore hypothesis “H<sub>a1</sub>” is accepted and hypothesis “H<sub>01</sub>” is rejected.

**Table 4: This table depicts the model fit measures of the present sample**

*Model Fit Measures*

Model	Deviance	AIC	R <sup>2</sup> <sub>McF</sub>
1	265	273	0.0627

**Table 5: This table depicts the Model Coefficients - K-Drama watcher/ Non Watcher**

Predictor	Estimate	SE	Z	p
<b>Intercept</b>	1.7713	0.8793	2.01	0.044
<b>Perceived Stress</b>	0.0339	0.0230	1.48	0.140
<b>Body Image</b>	-0.0506	0.0201	-2.52	0.012
<b>Relationship Satisfaction</b>	-0.0627	0.0262	-2.39	0.017

*Note.* Estimates represent the log odds of "K-Drama watcher/ Non Watcher = Watcher" vs. "K-Drama watcher/ Non Watcher = Non-Watcher"

From Table 4 and Table 5, the intercept represents the log odds of being a K-Drama watcher when all predictor variables are zero. A significant p-value ( $p = 0.044$ ) indicates that the intercept is statistically significant (because it is less than 0.05), suggesting that the likelihood of being a K-Drama watcher differs significantly from zero. The estimate for Perceived Stress is 0.0339, with a p-value of 0.140. This suggests that Perceived Stress is not statistically significant in predicting the odds of being a K-Drama Watcher. The estimate for Body Image is -0.0506, and its p-value is 0.012. This indicates that Body Image is statistically significant in predicting the odds of being a K-Drama Watcher. The negative sign of the estimate suggests that as Body Image increases, the odds of being a K-Drama Watcher decrease. The estimate for Relationship Satisfaction is -0.0627, with a p-value of 0.017. Similar to Body Image, Relationship Satisfaction is statistically significant in predicting the odds of being a K-Drama Watcher. The negative sign suggests that as Relationship Satisfaction increases, the odds of being a K-drama watcher decrease. Therefore, “H<sub>a2</sub>” is accepted and “H<sub>02</sub>” is rejected.

## DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that individuals who do not watch K-Dramas tend to report lower levels of perceived stress compared to those people who are regular viewers. This suggests a potential link between Korean drama consumption and heightened stress levels. While the mean difference between the two groups is relatively small (18.5 for non-watchers versus 20.5 for watchers), it is notable. Additionally, the findings also suggest that while K-Drama watchers ( $SD= 6.36$ ) exhibit higher perceived stress levels, they demonstrate more consistent scores in this regard compared to non-watchers ( $SD= 6.92$ ). This could indicate that K-Drama consumption may serve as a source of stress relief or coping. To further prove that, t-test results suggested that there is a statistically significant difference in perceived stress between watchers and non-watchers ( $t = -2.14, p = 0.034$ ), with a negative t-statistic indicating that, on average, non-watchers experience higher perceived stress than watchers. The findings also point out that K-Dramas can have a potential stress-relief effect. These findings align with the study results of previous research by Park et. al., (2019), where they reported that participants' mental health, knowledge, attitudes, and behaviour changed in a positive way after they attended a mental health workshop where K-Drama was used as a psychodrama. Another study by Yoke and Jamil (2022) mentioned that K-drama watchers reported that watching K-dramas is relaxing and distressing.

Regarding body image, the results show that non-watchers appear to have a more positive perception of their bodies than watchers. The mean score for body image among non-watchers (21.4) exceeds that of watchers (18.4), indicating a notable difference in body image perception between K-drama watchers and non-watchers. In terms of SD, non-watchers ( $SD= 7.21$ ) tend to have more consistent body image perceptions compared to watchers ( $SD= 7.64$ ). The t-test results show that there is a statistically significant difference in body image ( $t = 2.93, p = 0.004$ ) between K-drama watchers and non-watchers. Non-watchers exhibit higher levels of body image satisfaction compared to watchers, as evidenced by the positive t-statistic. This suggests that exposure to K-Dramas may influence individuals' body image perceptions, potentially through the portrayal of idealized body types or beauty standards within the media content. This also aligns with previous findings where K-drama watchers mentioned that they don't feel pretty after watching beautiful actresses and actors in K-dramas (Yoke & Jamil, 2022). Another research by Habibah et. al. (2021), also revealed that K-Drama watchers have negative body image perception.

The data also revealed that non-watchers reported higher mean scores for relationship satisfaction (mean=22.6) compared to watchers (mean=20.3). This can be due to the unrealistic relationship standards portrayed in K-dramas. In terms of SD, non-watchers ( $SD= 5.48$ ) tend to have more consistent relationship satisfaction perceptions compared to watchers ( $SD= 6.07$ ). Furthermore, the t-test results show a statistically significant difference in relationship satisfaction ( $t = 2.82, p = 0.005$ ) between watchers and non-watchers with non-watchers reporting higher levels of relationship satisfaction compared to watchers, indicating that K-Drama consumption may impact individuals' romantic connections. These findings also align with previous research done by Nguyen (2017) where the results indicated that K-drama watchers tend to report low levels of relationship satisfaction.

The intercept in Table 5 represents the log odds of being a K-Drama watcher when all predictor variables are zero. The significant p-value ( $p = 0.044$ ) indicates that the intercept is statistically significant, implying that the likelihood of being a K-Drama watcher differs

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significantly from zero. This finding suggests that there are other unmeasured factors or latent variables that contribute to individuals' inclination toward K-Drama consumption beyond the variables included in the model. These findings are supported by previous research by Yoke and Jamil (2022) and Yakub et. al., (2023) where they mentioned that watching K-dramas can be influenced by various factors such as food, fashion, being a fan, emotional intelligence and maturity, etc.

Moving on to the predictor variables, the estimate for perceived stress is 0.0339 with a non-significant p-value of 0.140. This suggests that perceived stress is not a significant predictor of individuals' likelihood to be K-Drama watchers. However, the estimate indicates a positive association between perceived stress and being a watcher, indicating if perceived stress increases, the odds of being a K-drama watcher would increase too as K-dramas might act as a relaxation mechanism as mentioned in previous research (Yoke & Jamil, 2022; Park et. al., 2019).

On the other hand, the results also suggest that an individual's chance of watching K-Drama is significantly influenced by their body image and level of relationship happiness. The negative estimates for both variables— -0.0506 for body image and -0.0627 for relationship satisfaction—show that the likelihood of watching K-Drama drops as these variables rise. Furthermore, the p-values for both predictors (0.012 for body image and 0.017 for relationship satisfaction) are statistically significant, indicating their significance in predicting people's media consumption patterns. These results corroborate those of earlier studies conducted by Nguyen (2017) and Yoke and Jamil (2022).

These results support the alternative hypotheses, which stated that "at least one of the predictor variables (perceived stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships) and the likelihood of being a K-Drama watcher" and "there is a significant difference between K-drama watchers and non-watchers in terms of perceived stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships."

The rising popularity of K-dramas among college-going women has raised questions about their potential impact on perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image because emerging adults may seek love but K-dramas tend to portray unrealistic relationship and beauty standards which might affect body image and relationship satisfaction of emerging adults, especially if they are women, either negatively or positively, when compared with women of the same age group who do not watch K-dramas. Also, this age group is vulnerable to stress so how K-dramas affect that is also a question when compared with non-watchers. However, there doesn't exist any research till date to examine the effects of watching K-dramas on perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image among emerging adults, especially in India. Therefore, this study aimed to find out how K-dramas might affect an emerging adult woman's perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image. The results revealed that K-dramas can act as a stress-relief mechanism because K-dramas often tend to portray soothing aesthetics and cinematography and can act as an emotional catharsis, allowing viewers to feel and express their emotions better (Ghosh, 2023). Therefore, certain K-dramas can act as psychodramas as a form of expressive art therapy (Park et. al., 2019). However, it also impacts a person's body image and relationship satisfaction negatively because K-dramas tend to portray unrealistic beauty and relationship standards. K-drama watchers have reported that they want to buy Korean cosmetics, and clothes, and get cosmetic procedures done to look pretty like the actresses (Yoke & Jamil,

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2022). K-drama watchers also reported that they want to have relationships similar to what the dramas show (Cheung, 2017). Therefore, K-dramas have both positive and negative impacts and binge-watching K-dramas can have more negative impacts than positive (Yoke & Jamil, 2022).

### CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research was to investigate the potential effects of K-dramas on perceived stress, relationship satisfaction, and body image of college women. Data was collected from a total of 204 female college students, ranging in age from 18 to 25 years. The research findings indicated that there is a significant difference in perceived stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships between K-drama watchers and non-watchers, with watchers reporting higher levels of relationship unhappiness and less perceived stress. Only body image and satisfaction in relationships, on the other hand, proved to be as significant predictors of K-drama watching, with low body image and low relationship satisfaction associated with a higher likelihood of watching K-drama. The results further revealed that apart from body image, perceived stress, and relationship satisfaction, there could be other factors that might influence the likelihood of being a K-drama watcher. Therefore, K-dramas have both negative and positive effects and can influence an individual negatively if they are binge-watching them. Also, genres play an important role, certain genres of K-drams can be healing while others can be more stressful.

### Limitations

The study only considered female K-drama watchers so how K-dramas influence male watchers is a question. Participants were recruited online using Google Forms and no face-to-face interactions were done so whether or not they filled out the forms with genuine data is not verifiable. Data was only collected from Indians so results may vary culturally and ethnically, therefore, generalization is not possible. The likelihood of being a K-drama watcher and a person's perceived stress, body image, and relationship satisfaction can be influenced by various other extraneous variables. Only heterosexual relationships were considered in this research so how homosexual relationships are getting affected is also a question. The study also only considered the emerging adult age group so how other age groups are affected is also not verifiable.

### Scope of future research

The study contributes to the understanding of how K-dramas affect female college students' perceptions of stress, body image, and satisfaction in relationships. For future research, studies can be done outside India to understand the effects of K-drama in various cultures and ethnicities. Studies can be done on other age groups, on males, and on homosexual relationships. A study is also recommended to understand which genres of K-dramas act as psychodramas and which genres affect people negatively.

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