



Relationship of Problematic Binge Viewing with Loneliness

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Abstract

The streaming platforms provide its viewer the facility to consume audio visual content on demand. On one hand it provides the flexibility to the viewers to watch the content as and when they want, thus increasing their autonomy. But on the other hand it increases the tendency of binge watching. It then becomes problematic as it starts affecting the physical and psychological health of the viewers. The present study aims at analyzing the relationship between Problematic Binge Viewing and loneliness of adolescent girls and boys of tricity of Chandigarh. A sample of 131 adolescent girls and boys was taken from the population of adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh. Data was collected by administering the self prepared questionnaire of Problematic Binge Viewing and 6- Item Loneliness scale by de Jong-Gierveld, & van Tilburg (2006). Analysis of the data was done by employing descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlation coefficient and t- ratio. The results of the study show that the Problematic Binge Viewing is in direct correlation with Loneliness. The factors of problematic binge viewing, that is, loss of control and involvement/ engagement have no significant relationship with loneliness, whereas, dependence is in direct correlation with loneliness. Further, both adolescent girls and boys have no significant difference in terms of problematic binge viewing and loneliness.

Key Words: Problematic binge viewing, binge watching, loneliness, loss of control, involvement/ engagement, dependence

I. Introduction

With advancement of technology the modes of entertainment are undergoing major shifts. TV series or movies have always been a popular source of individual entertainment. In the past decade or so the popularity of these series has reached new heights. A major reason behind this can be listed as the streaming platform such as Amazon and

Netflix. These platforms allow the viewers to access the audio visual content on demand in terms of quantity and time. From a viewers perspective such video on demand services are better than the TV series because they increase their personal autonomy to watch the content wherever and whenever. It also increases choice of content and genre which they want to watch. Though it appears that all these facilities have increased the control of viewers over what they watch and for how much time but actually over the time there is huge increase in over consumption behavior of the users. Especially when the content is in the form of a series of episodes available there is a tendency to watch or consume the content in one sitting.

When one watches a number of episodes of a series in one sitting, such behavior is called binge watching. Oxford dictionary (2020) defines binge watching as viewing multiple episodes of a TV program in quick succession. Netflix (2013) defines binge watching as viewing two or more episodes of same series in one sitting. Binge-watching behavior deals with consecutively watching the episodes of shows with continuous content, rather than based on the time spent watching or the number of episodes watched (Chang & Peng, 2022).

Though the definition given by different researchers may differ in terms of number of episodes and time of consumption before it is called binge watching but there is consensus on the fact that there is continuous and excessive consumption of the content by the viewer. There may be different reasons for such behavior. Various researchers have tried to study the factors /motivations which can lead to it.

Series watching is a trouble free mode of entertainment if it is done in a controlled manner. When it shifts to binge watching it becomes problematic. It starts creating physical and psychological health issues. Uncontrolled and excessive consumption of content leads to sedentary lifestyle due to lack of movement, poor sleep quality, procrastination and mental health issues. Starosta, Izydorczyk & Wontorczyk (2021) showed that there could be not only normative binge- watching behavior but also unhealthy and problematic form of this behavior.

One starts losing control over how much and for how long he/she watches the content and slowly it may turn into an addiction. Such behavior reduces the social interaction of viewers and leads to loneliness. Their day to day work and studies suffer and they may start to develop anxiety issues. Extensive binge watching is an antecedent of stress, loneliness, insomnia, depression and anxiety (Raza et al., 2021). Individuals who are unable to control themselves to manage watching time, are unable to stop media consumption. They tend to leave work or lack sleep as a result of problematic binge watching (Flyelle et al.,2019)

Teenagers are generally the ones who are comfortable with the use of technology. With the availability of the internet and devices such as phones and laptops, they have easy access to such web/TV series. Moreover, it is found that binge watching/ excessive series watching is prevalent among teenagers. Millennial generation is the main follower of streaming platforms and has a higher frequency of binge watching (Starosta, Izydorczyk & Wontorczyk, 2021). Binge watching behavior is closely related to young people (Ahmed, 2017). Many researchers have studied the factors which lead the young people to binge watch.

Kumar et al. (2021) studied various factors which motivate the adolescents to binge watch. These factors include social and psychological factors. Social acceptance among peers, coping with loneliness, fear of missing out,

escapism and relief from boredom, increases the binge watching phenomenon to an extent that it becomes problematic.

II. Review of related literature

Gabbiadini, Baldissarri, Valtorta, Durante, & Mari (2021) explored the psychological factors behind binge-watching tendency among TV series viewers. It found that loneliness is strong predictor of binge watching. Further it found that identification with fictitious media characters increase the tendency to binge-watch. The viewers try to escape the reality and cope with their loneliness by identifying with fictitious characters of the series and thus it lead to increased binge watching of the series.

Narain & Sahi (2021) studied the relationship of binge watching with loneliness and well being among 100 Indian college students in the age group of 18-21 years. It found that over indulgence in online content can induce loneliness and impact psychological well being. The result showed positive correlation between binge watching and loneliness and negative correlation between binge watching and well being.

Sun & Chang (2021) studied associations of problematic binge-watching with depression, social interaction anxiety, and loneliness among adults in Taiwan. A cross-sectional survey was conducted on 1488 adult participants using four scales related to depression (CES-D), Social Interaction Anxiety (SIAS-C), Loneliness (UCLA-version 3), and the Problematic Series Watching (PSWS). The results indicated positive association of problematic binge-watching with depression, social interaction anxiety, and loneliness risks among adults.

Alimoradi, Jafari, Potenza, Lin, Wu, & Pakpour (2022) did a systematic review and meta analysis of binge watching and mental health problems. Articles from various online Academic databases were studied and analysed. The results indicated that binge-watching was significantly associated with mental health concerns such as stress and anxiety. The association between binge-watching and mental health concerns was significant and positive. It suggested that programs and interventions to reduce binge-watching should be considered and tested.

Singh & Singh (2022) studied relationship between binge watching on OTT platforms and loneliness in adolescents in the age group of 10-19 years. Self prepared questionnaires related to binge watching and loneliness were administered on the sample and data were collected. A significant correlation was found between binge watching and loneliness among adolescents.

III. Objectives of the study

1. To study the correlation between problematic binge viewing and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh.
2. To study the correlation between loss of control and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh.
3. To study the correlation between involvement/ engagement and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh.
4. To study the correlation between dependency and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh.

5. To study the difference in mean value of problematic binge viewing between adolescent girls and boys of tricity of Chandigarh.
6. To study the difference in mean value of loneliness between adolescent girls and boys of tricity of Chandigarh.

IV. Hypotheses

1. There is no significant correlation between problematic binge viewing and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh.
2. There is no significant correlation between loss of control and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh.
3. There is no significant correlation between involvement/ engagement and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh.
4. There is no significant correlation between dependency and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh.
5. There is no significant difference in mean value of problematic binge viewing between adolescent girls and boys of tricity of Chandigarh.
6. There is no significant difference in mean value of loneliness between adolescent girls and boys of tricity of Chandigarh.

V. Methodology

Sample of the study

The population of the study was the adolescents studying in schools of tricity of Chandigarh. A sample of 131 adolescent girls and boys was selected from the said population.

Delimitation of the study

1. The study was delimited to adolescent girls and boys of Chandigarh.
2. The adolescents were taken from private schools of tricity of Chandigarh.

Tools used

Following tools were used to collect the data:

1. Problematic Binge Viewing questionnaire developed by the investigators themselves.
2. 6-Item Loneliness scale by de Jong-Gierveld, & van Tilburg (2006).

Procedure

A descriptive survey method was used to study the problem in hand. Population was identified from schools of tricity of Chandigarh. After selecting the sample from the said population problematic binge viewing questionnaire and loneliness scale were administered on the sample students. Raw data was tabulated. Statistical tools were employed to analyse the data. Finally interpretation was done.

Statistical Tools used

Descriptive statistics mean, standard deviation, and standard error of mean were calculated. Pearson's correlation technique was used to study the correlation between the variables. T-ratio was also computed to study the significant difference between the mean values of the variables under study for adolescent girls and boys.

VI. Analysis and Interpretation

Raw data were analyzed using statistical tools.

Problematic Binge Viewing questionnaire by the adolescents was studied by taking their views relating to parameters of the questionnaire, that is, loss of control, involvement/ engagement and dependency.

Table 1: Problematic Binge Viewing by adolescents

S.No.	Parameters	Statements	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1	Loss of control	I watch more web series than I should.	7.6	19.8	34.4	28.2	9.9
2.		I occasionally feel regretful after watching a number of episodes.	9.9	34.4	22.1	20.6	13
3.		I sometimes try not to spend as much time watching web series but I fail.	14.5	22.1	19.8	27.5	16
4.		I get so absorbed in the series that I lose track of time.	19.8	32.1	15.3	22.9	9.9
5.		I often compromise my sleep due to binge watching.	19.8	29	13.7	16	21
		Average	14.32	27.48	21.06	23.04	13.96
6.	Involvement / Engagement	I keep looking for new web series to watch.	16.8	38.2	25.2	9.9	9.9
7.		Watching web series is my favourite hobby.	6.1	13.7	26	29.8	24.4
8.		I watch episodes of a web series till I get hooked on it.	6.9	22.1	32.1	26	13

9.		I feel that web series are a part of my life.	5.3	19.8	26.7	25.2	22.9
		Average	8.78	23.45	27.5	22.725	17.55
10.	Dependency	I get irritated due to any reason if I am not able to watch a web series.	4.6	13	16	31.3	35.1
11.		I get annoyed if someone disturbs/interrupts me while watching a series.	11.5	27.5	23.7	19.1	18.3
12.		I am always worried about technical problems that may occur while watching the series.	8.4	10.7	19.1	29	32.8
13.		I tend to watch more episodes to feel satisfied.	12.2	26.7	24.4	19.8	16.8
14.		I tend to priorities binge watching over my studies.	8.4	16	22.1	25.2	28.2
		Average	9.02	18.78	21.06	24.88	26.24

Table 1 shows three major parameters- loss of control, involvement/ engagement and dependency on the scale of which problematic binge watching was studied among adolescents in the tricity region. In the first statement, “I watch more web series than I should” under loss of control, it was observed that 27.4% adolescents agreed with the statement, 34.4% were neutral while 38.1% disagreed with it. Moving on, the next statement, “I occasionally feel regretful after watching a number of episodes” was agreed upon by 44.3% (9.9+34.4) of adolescents, 22.1% were neutral while 33.6% (20.6+13) disagreed with it. 14.5% of teenagers strongly agreed with the next statement which said, “I sometimes try not to spend as much time watching web series but I fail” 22.1% agreed with it, 19.8% had no opinion regarding this statement, 27.5% disagreed with it and 16% were strongly opposed to it. The following statement, “I get so absorbed in the series that I lose track of time” was favored upon by 51.9% of adolescents, 15.3% were neutral while 32.8% did not agree with the statement. The last statement under loss of control, “I often compromise my sleep due to binge watching” was agreed upon by 48.8% (19.8+29) of teenagers, 13.7% had no views about it and 37% (16+21) disagreed with the statement. Thus, on average around 41.8% of adolescents agreed to the fact that they lose control over themselves while binge-watching, 21.06% were neutral while 37% disagreed to having lost control over them.

The next parameter mentioned in the table is involvement/ engagement. The first sentence under this, “I keep looking for new web series to watch” was agreed upon by 55% adolescents, 25.2% were neutral and 19.8% disagreed to it. 6.1% teenagers strongly agreed with the statement, “Watching web series is my favourite hobby.” 13.7% agreed with it, 26% had no opinion regarding this, 29.8% disagreed with this statement and 24.4% teenagers were strongly opposed to this. The next statement, “I watch episodes of a web series till I get hooked on It” was favored by 29% (6.9+22.1) adolescents, 32.1% were neutral while 39% (26+13) disagreed with it. The last statement under this parameter, “I feel that web series are a part of my life” was agreed upon by 25.1% adolescents, 26.7% had no view regarding this and 48.1% teenagers disagreed with it. On an average, 32.23% teenagers agreed to involvement/ engagement while binge-watching, 27.5% were neutral and 40.28% adolescents disagreed to get involved during binge watching the series.

The last parameter is dependency under which the first statement, “I get irritated due to any reason if I am not able to watch a web series” was agreed upon by 17.6% adolescents, 16% were neutral and 66.4% disagreed to it. 11.5% adolescents strongly agreed with the following statement, “I get annoyed if someone disturbs/interrupts me while watching a series” 27.5% agreed to it, 23.7% were neutral, 19.1% disagreed and 18.3% were strongly opposed to it. The next statement, “I am always worried about technical problems that may occur while watching the series” was favoured by 19.1% (8.4+10.7) teenagers, 19.1% were neutral while 61.8% (29+32.8) adolescents opposed this statement. The following statement, “I tend to watch more episodes to feel satisfied” was favoured upon by 38.9% teenagers, 24.4% had no opinion regarding this while 36.6% adolescents disagreed with it. The last statement, “I tend to prioritise binge watching over my studies” was agreed upon by 24.4% teenagers, 22.1% were neutral and 53.4% disagreed to it. Therefore, on average, 27.8% teenagers agreed that they are dependent on binge-viewing, 21.06% were neutral and 51.12% disagreed on being dependent on binge -watching.

Table 2: Coefficient of correlation value between Problematic Binge Viewing and Loneliness

S.No.	Variable	N	M	SD	R	Level of significance
1.	Problematic binge viewing	131	39.55	11.56	.197	.05
2.	Loneliness	131	17.68	4.88		

Table 2 shows the coefficient of correlation value between problematic binge viewing and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh. The mean values for problematic binge viewing and loneliness experienced by adolescents are 39.55 and 17.68 respectively, whereas, standard deviation values are 11.56 and 4.88 respectively. The coefficient of correlation has been found to be .197, which is significant at .05 levels. Hence the hypothesis, “there is no significant correlation between problematic binge viewing and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh,” may not be accepted. The positive value of coefficient of correlation reflects a direct

correlation between the two variables. Thus, as the problematic binge viewing by the adolescents increases, loneliness experienced by them also increases. The result is supported by the earlier studies done by Gabbiadini et al.(2021), Narain & Sahi (2021), Alimoradi et al. (2022), Singh, & Singh (2022).

Table 3: Coefficient of correlation value between loss of control and loneliness

S.No.	Variable	N	M	SD	R	Level of significance
3.	Loss of control	131	15.25	4.65	.159	NS
2.	Loneliness	131	17.68	4.88		

Table 3 shows the coefficient of correlation value between loss of control and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh. The mean values for loss of control and loneliness experienced by adolescents are 15.25 and 17.68 respectively, whereas, standard deviation values are 4.65 and 4.88 respectively. The coefficient of correlation has been found to be .159, which is not significant at .05 levels. Hence the hypothesis, “there is no significant correlation between loss of control and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh,” may be accepted.

Table 4: Coefficient of correlation value between involvement/ engagement and loneliness

S.No.	Variable	N	M	SD	R	Level of significance
4.	Involvement/ Engagement	131	11.33	3.82	.130	NS
2.	Loneliness	131	17.68	4.88		

Table 4 shows the coefficient of correlation value between involvement/ engagement and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh. The mean values for involvement/ engagement and loneliness experienced by adolescents are 11.33 and 17.68 respectively, whereas, standard deviation values are 3.82 and 4.88 respectively. The coefficient of correlation has been found to be .130, which is not significant at .05 levels. Hence the hypothesis, “there is no significant correlation between involvement/ engagement and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh,” may be accepted.

Table 5: Coefficient of correlation value between dependency and loneliness

S.No.	Variable	N	M	SD	R	Level of significance
5.	Dependency	131	12.97	4.83	.216	.01
2.	Loneliness	131	17.68	4.88		

Table 5 shows the coefficient of correlation value between dependency and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh. The mean values for dependency and loneliness experienced by adolescents are 12.97 and 17.68 respectively, whereas, standard deviation values are 4.83 and 4.88 respectively. The coefficient of correlation has been found to be .216, which is significant at .01 levels. Hence the hypothesis, “there is no significant correlation between dependency and loneliness experienced by adolescents of tricity of Chandigarh,” may not be accepted.

Table 6: t-ratio value showing difference in mean value of Problematic Binge Viewing between adolescent girls and boys

Gender	N	M	SD	SEm	Df	t-ratio	Level of significance
Girls	92	40.8	10.07	1.05	129	1.928	NS
Boys	39	36.59	14.19	2.27			

Table 6 shows t-ratio value for the difference in mean value of problematic binge viewing between adolescent girls and boys. The mean values for problematic binge viewing between adolescent girls and boys have been found to be 40.8 and 36.59 respectively and standard deviation values are 10.07 and 14.17 respectively. The t- ratio value is 1.928 for 129 degree of freedom which is not significant at .05 levels of significance. Hence the hypothesis, “there is no significant difference in mean value of problematic binge viewing between adolescent girls and boys of tricity of Chandigarh,” may be accepted. This means that both adolescent girls and boys experience equally the problematic binge viewing.

Table 7: t-ratio value showing difference in mean value of Loneliness between girls and boys

Gender	N	M	SD	SEm	Df	t-ratio	Level of significance
Girls	92	18.17	4.61	.48	129	1.795	NS
Boys	39	16.51	5.37	.86			

Table 7 shows t-ratio value for the difference in mean value of Loneliness between adolescent girls and boys. The mean values for loneliness between adolescent girls and boys have been found to be 18.17 and 16.51 respectively and standard deviation values are 4.61 and 5.37 respectively. The t-ratio value is 1.795 for 129 degree of freedom which is not significant at .05 levels of significance. Hence the hypothesis, “there is no significant difference in mean value of loneliness between adolescent girls and boys of tricity of Chandigarh,” may be accepted. This means that both adolescent girls and boys experience equally the loneliness.

Discussion of the results

The present study focuses on problematic binge watching in relation to loneliness among adolescents. This age group of urban children has convenient access to devices and internet to watch various series on different platforms. Though it generally starts with entertainment but slowly this series watching becomes problematic when they start getting hooked and addicted to it continuously for longer period of time. There may be different reasons or motivations behind watching but it leads to spending more time alone watching the series. It may slowly become their comfort zone and they may not want to come out of it. Then it starts affecting their social interaction skills and they feel state of loneliness. On the other hand those who feel more lonely may find solace in watching series on various OTT platforms and thus slowly they get addicted to it. The results of the present study show that the problematic binge watching and loneliness are positively correlated. Similar results were found by Gabbiadini et al.(2021), Narain & Sahi (2021), Alimoradi et al. (2022), Singh, & Singh (2022).

The relation between engagement component and loss of control components of binge watching with loneliness have not found to be significant but loneliness is found to be significantly related to addiction or dependency. This shows that those who experience loneliness get addicted to binge watching easily. Those who are addicted to binge watching, have more tendency to feel lonely. There is no difference found between boys and girls for binge watching and loneliness as the data is collected mainly from the urban population. Urban girls and boys have the same facilities and freedom at their homes due to which they respond in the same manner.

VII. Conclusion

Streaming platforms facilitate autonomy among the viewers so these have become very popular especially among the teenagers. But the availability of on demand content has increased the tendency of binge watching. Consuming the content for long duration in one sitting is causing number of physical and psychological health issues. The present study has found that problematic binge watching is related to loneliness. Higher is the score of binge watching ,more they experience loneliness. More such researches should be conducted for problematic binge watching with different psychological variables. This can help in establishing the impact of highly prevalent binge watching phenomenon on viewers especially young people.

VIII. References

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