Gender Differences in Binge-Watching by Teenagers: A Uses and Gratification Analysis

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ABSTRACT

The research was aimed at exploring whether there are gender differences in binge-watching patterns of urban-educated youth of Pakistan. Using the Uses and Gratification approach as the theoretical foundation of the research, the research investigated whether the motivations for binge-watching differed between males and females. The research also analyzed differences between genders on the negative impact of binge-watching. The methodology adopted for the research was the quantitative survey method. The purposive sample selected for the study comprised 300 male and female teenagers (13–19 years) who binge-watch online streamed content. The study's findings revealed that Entertainment, Escape, and Excitement were the primary motivations of Pakistani teenagers to resort to binge-watching. However, it was found that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Social Interaction were more important for females, while Excitement was deemed an important motivation by the males. Findings revealed that Sleep Disorder and Obesity were reported to be more of an issue than Depression and Productivity Issues. Furthermore, male binge-watchers reported a reduction in their Productivity, while female binge-watchers reported a disturbance in their sleeping patterns.

Keywords: Binge-watching, gender differences, teenagers, uses and gratification

INTRODUCTION

Streaming services, the most popular of which include Netflix, YouTube, and Amazon Prime, have emerged as major competitors of the traditional suppliers of audiovisual content such as TV and films. These streaming platforms, also known as

Video-on-Demand (VOD) or Over-the-top (OTT), have provided unlimited video-visual entertainment content to viewers in the new millennium. The popularity of these mediums has reached such a level that they have seemingly engulfed the minds of viewers of all age groups. The most significant trend regarding these streaming sites is binge-watching, which refers to watching three to four or more thirty-minute-long episodes of TV series or watching three or more one-hour-long episodes in a single sitting (Rubenking & Bracken, 2018). Although multiple names such as binge-viewing or marathon viewing were coined to express this phenomenon, binge-watching has received the greatest preference in scholarly research and everyday usage (Upreti et al., 2017). According to Pierce-Grove (2016), the literal meaning of the term binge is unlimitedness which truly encapsulates the phenomenon of excessive unlimited viewing.

Streaming video sites are popular amongst all demographics, but literature has indicated that younger audiences, especially teenagers, are keener on binge-watching (A. A. M. Ahmed, 2017; A. Ahmed, 2019; Budzinski et al., 2021; Divya, 2020; Matrix, 2014; Steiner & Xu, 2018). Although binge-watching is a relatively new phenomenon yet it has become so prevalent that there is considerable research about it both globally as well as regionally (Anghelcev et al., 2021; Castro et al., 2019; Fernandes & Pinto, 2020; Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021; Merrill & Rubenking, 2019; Nanda & Banerjee, 2020; Panda & Pandey, 2017;

Pittman & Sheehan, 2015; Rezende & Gomide, 2017; Rubenking et al., 2018). Further, although there is some research about gender differences in binging (Merrill & Rubenking, 2019; Moore, 2015; Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020), most of it is in the western context, while the Asian angle has not been explored very often, so the present research is aimed at filling this gap. From the very beginning, gender differences have been observed in media use (Nathanson et al., 1997), but with the advent of technology, the younger generation is more inclined towards, the newer mediums available to them. Thus, it becomes pertinent that the usage behavior and patterns of the youth be explored in detail to determine the possible outcomes. The study is therefore aimed at examining not just binge-watching patterns but also observing gender differences concerning the gratifications received and investigating the role of gender concerning the negative impacts of binge-watching.

Background

Although many streaming services provide audiovisual content, they are not all the same; there are some differences between them. The main difference between the platforms pertains to the economic model they adopted. The more common format is the subscription model, which is being tried by Netflix, Amazon Prime, and a multitude of others. On the other hand, YouTube has opted for the traditional advertising model. The two most popular streaming platforms worldwide are Netflix and YouTube (Budzinski et al., 2021).

However, between these two, the most popular medium across the globe is Netflix, so much so that binging on Netflix is referred to as the Netflix effect (Matrix, 2014). It is suggested that this Netflix effect allows users to go on weekend-long binges. The reason Netflix plays such an important role in the binge-watching phenomenon is not only in its structure or current market dominance but also in the affordability and accessibility of this mode of viewing (Jenner, 2019). Netflix was formed in 1997 as a DVD rental by Reed Hastings and Marc Randolph. In 2007, they started streaming services, and by 2013, they were producing original content. By 2021, they were offering content in 190 different countries with 62 languages (Gregory, 2021). The number of worldwide subscribers on Netflix has crossed 203 million, while there are estimated to be around 100 000 subscribers in Pakistan. However, the number of viewers is probably higher as multiple people use each subscription. So far, there is little content of Pakistani origin available on Netflix, but the Pakistani audience has been found to prefer content of Indian origin (Raheel, 2021).

YouTube is not just popular in Pakistan but the world over, as it differs from all other streaming services due to the type of content being offered. YouTube is a social media platform that provides content uploaded by individual users free of charge. Another major difference between YouTube and its competitors pertains to the duration of the content, as YouTube content is usually of shorter duration, although there is now increasingly some serialized content being uploaded (Budzinski et al., 2021). YouTube offers services in 88 countries in 76 languages with more than a billion users. It was launched in 2005 and started taking on in-video advertising from 2007 onwards. The next major evolution was the launching of YouTube TV, a streaming service that allowed major broadcasters and cable networks to show live TV (Vytiaz, 2018).

Other international streaming services, such as Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, and Apple TV+, are not accessible in Pakistan (Raheel, 2021), so they are out of the scope of the study.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Uses and Gratification Approach

The Uses and Gratification Approach is one of the most significant theories in audience research. It primarily focuses on social and psychographic needs gratified through media content (Katz et al., 1973a). The needs were later divided into five main categories: (1) cognitive needs, which refer to the need for information and knowledge, (2) personal integrative needs, which refer to credibility and status, (3) affective needs, which refer to the need for pleasure and feeling, (4) social integrative needs which refer to the relationships with friends and family, and (5) tension release needs which are about escape and diversion (Katz et al., 1973b). Later, many researchers refined the approach and adapted it for multiple applications, such as Greenberg (1974), who created a set of typologies identifying seven motivations: (1) relaxation, (2)

habit, (3) learning, (4) companionship, (5) passing the time, (6) arousal and (7) escape. In another research, Rubin (1983) differentiated between habitual viewers looking for entertainment and non-habitual viewer looking for information.

In the past five decades, the approach has been applied to most traditional mediums popular amongst audiences. With the emergence of computer-mediated technologies, the potential for applying the Uses and Gratification Approach has greatly increased (Ruggiero, 2000). Now the approach is being used to analyze audience perceptions about new media, social media, mobile phones, and of late, the emerging trend of binge-watching content on video-on-demand platforms such as Netflix, among others.

Matrix (2014) pointed out that these long sessions are not due to the need for social exile but rather the need for connection and participation whereby the users connect with other like-minded people by forming groups and having conversations about their favorite content. This phenomenon, also called FOMO or Fear of Missing Out, compels users to indulge in these long binges (Anghelcev et al., 2022; Matrix, 2014). Also, the so-called Netflix effect has ushered in a mediated culture of instant gratification and infinite entertainment choices.

Concerning the gratifications associated with binge viewing, Anghelcev et al. (2021) suggested that binging is a self-reinforcing behavior because of the development of intrinsic motivations. Various gratifications are associated with binge-watching, such as Escape (Castro et al., 2019; Fernandes & Pinto, 2020; Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021; Nanda & Banerjee, 2020; Panda & Pandey, 2017; Rubenking et al., 2018), Entertainment (Castro et al., 2019; Fernandes & Pinto, 2020; Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021; Nanda & Banerjee, 2020), Social Interaction (Fernandes & Pinto, 2020; Panda & Pandey, 2017; Rezende & Gomide, 2017; Rubenking et al., 2018), Relaxation, (Castro et al., 2019; Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021; Pittman & Sheehan, 2015), Procrastination (Merrill & Rubenking, 2019; Rubenking et al., 2018) and Curiosity (Fernandes & Pinto, 2020; Rezende & Gomide, 2017; Rubenking et al., 2018). Some of the less frequently mentioned gratifications are Engagement, Hedonism, Aesthetics (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015), Timepass (Nanda & Banerjee, 2020), and Excitement (Rubenking et al., 2018).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Binge-Watching

The newly coined term binge-watching refers to consuming serial narratives with the help of digital technologies; interestingly, it has also become a frequently used verb in a very short period (Pierce-Grove, 2016). It has also been observed that this practice of viewing content over an extended time has become more popular than the previous practice of appointment viewing (Krstić, 2018; Merrill & Rubenking, 2019; Rubenking & Bracken, 2021). Matrix (2014) has referred to binge-watching as an all-you-can-eat-in-one-sitting phenomenon and suggests that the idea is situated in

limitlessness. Binge-watching is not an entirely new phenomenon, but its popularity has recently increased mainly due to the availability and advancement of digital technology (Krstić, 2018; Rezende & Gomide, 2017).

According to Castro et al. (2019), these binge sessions generally last over two hours on average, and often, the viewers watch longer than originally intended. Also, viewers tend to watch additional episodes of the same series or season (Schweidel & Moe, 2016). Binge-watching has become more prevalent with the simultaneous release of all episodes of a TV show which inspire viewers to participate in marathon viewing sessions (Matrix, 2014). Another important aspect of the popularity of this practice is the ability for self-scheduling, which allows the viewers to binge-watch any preferred selected content, thereby generating a more immersive experience for themselves (Jenner, 2019).

The advent of new digital technologies has allowed for a situation whereby viewers can watch any program of their choice at any time. However, some patterns have emerged, such as the fact that the preferred medium for viewing content is smartphones, laptops, or tablets (A. A. M. Ahmed, 2017; A. Ahmed, 2019; Fernandes & Pinto, 2020; Trouleau, 2016) but the digitization of the traditional television set has allowed for the prevalence of binging on the living room TV (Rubenking & Bracken, 2021). It has also been found that viewers binge-watch content mostly in their bedrooms or living room (Castro et al., 2019).

It has been observed that younger individuals, especially between the ages of 15 and 30, tend to opt for binge-watching more often than older individuals (A. A. M. Ahmed, 2017; A. Ahmed, 2019; Budzinski et al., 2021; Divya, 2020; Matrix, 2014; Steiner & Xu, 2018). Also, as this age group mostly comprises college and university students, it was also observed that binge-viewing is part of their weekly routine (Dandamudi & Sathiyaseelan, 2018; Fernandes & Pinto, 2020).

There is contrary information regarding the influence of gender on the practice of binge viewing. For example, some researchers (Merrill & Rubenking, 2019; Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020) believe that gender plays a significant role in making female viewers binge-watch more often. On the other hand, some other research (A. A. M. Ahmed, 2017; Moore, 2015) has indicated that binge-watching is a gender-neutral phenomenon, and the differences between men and women only manifest themselves in their TV show preferences. Also, these VOD platforms use data analysis to identify and reproduce content preferences based on reductive assumptions about gender (Horeck et al., 2018).

Impact of Binge-Watching

It has been found that binge-watching can negatively and positively affect viewers (Granow et al., 2018). The main advantage of binge-watching is the opportunities it provides for entertainment, especially through a perception of autonomy (De Keere et al., 2020; Granow et al., 2018;

Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021). It has also been observed that binge-watching helps in reducing the levels of anxiety while at the same time increasing the feeling of relaxation among the viewers (Cabral et al., 2020; Panda & Pandey, 2017). Other gratifications from the activity include social influence and escape from reality (Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021; Panda & Pandey, 2017).

It has also been found that binge-watching can also have some detrimental influences on the viewers, such as depression (A. A. M. Ahmed, 2017; Raza et al., 2021; Rosen et al., 2012; Sun & Chang, 2021), anxiety (Raza et al., 2021; Rosen et al., 2012), stress (Peper & Harvey, 2018), obesity and cardiac problems (Dandamudi & Sathiyaseelan, 2018; Divya, 2020; Karim et al., 2020; Kroese et al., 2016), reduced abilities for social interaction (Dandamudi & Sathiyaseelan, 2018; Divya, 2020; Kroese et al., 2016; Sun & Chang, 2021), loneliness (Sun & Chang, 2021; Wagner, 2016) dependence and even addiction on media stimulation (Divya, 2020; Flayelle et al., 2019), decrease in productivity (Anghelcev et al., 2022; Dandamudi & Sathiyaseelan, 2018; Kroese et al., 2016) loss of sleep (Anghelcev et al., 2022; Karim et al., 2020; Kroese et al., 2016; Raza et al., 2021) obsessive-compulsive disorder (Rosen et al., 2012). Another major drawback of binging is the risk of goal conflict, resulting in the viewers feeling guilt and shame for having missed their time (Granow et al., 2018; Riddle et al., 2017).

Halder et al. (2021) observed that viewers binge more often to forget the stress in their everyday lives, and they did find correlations between binging and depression though they could not establish whether depressed people tend to binge-watch more or that binge-watching leads to depression. However, there is some other research suggesting the complete opposite. For example, A. A. M. Ahmed (2017) found no correlation between binge TV watching and loneliness. In a later study, A. Ahmed (2019) observed that binge-watching does not create problems. However, the presence of pre-existing psychological or sociological disorders leads to increased feelings of loneliness. Erickson et al. (2019) found that binge-watching strengthened social interaction by allowing greater opportunities for engagement with other viewers. It is also linked to the Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), whereby binge-watchers were mostly the opinion leaders in their social circles with higher levels of social engagement (Anghelcev et al., 2022). Similarly, Castro et al. (2019) found that binge-watching did not increase the feelings of guilt in the audience. Flayelle et al. (2019) believe that not all binging sessions can be problematic as it varies from person to person, and the current narratives about binge-watching have led to their over-pathologization and misconceptions being created, which is not a true picture of reality. Concerning addiction, Ort et al. (2020) found no indication that the practice of binge-watching was addictive.

Based on the literature, the following research questions are proposed:

RQ1: Is there a significant difference between males and females with regard to the gratification received from binge-watching?

RQ2: Is there a significant difference between males and females with regard to the negative impacts of binge-watching?

METHODOLOGY

Literature suggested that the preferred method to conduct audience research on binge-watching was the quantitative survey method (Anghelcev et al., 2021; Rubenking & Bracken, 2021; Sun & Chang, 2021). The survey instrument developed for the study comprised 28 close-ended questions, out of which the first four pertained to demographic characteristics. The gratifications from binge-watching comprised seven indicators: Escape, Entertainment, Social Interaction, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Relaxation, Timepass, and Excitement. These indicators were measured via 15 questions that had Likert-based response categories. The indicators for the negative impacts of binge-watching were Depression, Obesity, Productivity Issues, and Sleep Disorder, which were measured via nine questions also with Likert-based response categories. The survey instrument was first pretested on a sample comprising 30 respondents who were not made a part of the final analysis. The reliability test revealed that the final draft of the instrument had a Cronbach's Alpha of .797.

Many researchers (A. A. M. Ahmed, 2017; A. Ahmed, 2019; Divya, 2020; Matrix, 2014) have observed that younger individuals binge-watch more often than older individuals. Further, specifically, teenagers between the ages of 13 and 19 are the greatest binge watchers (Matrix, 2014; Steiner & Xu, 2018); therefore, the present research focused specifically on teenagers. The sample was purposively selected from two leading secondary and higher secondary academic institutions based in Pakistan's capital, Islamabad. The survey was administered to 150 male and 150 female binge viewers. The data were entered into the SPSS program, and relevant tests were applied.

FINDINGS

The respondents ranged in age from 13 to 19 while most respondents fell in the age group 15–16 (36.7%), 36% were in the age group of 17–18 years, 16.4% were in the age group of 13–14% while 11% were in the age group of 19 years (See Table 1).

The survey respondents were first asked which device was used more often for binge viewing. Findings (Table 2) indicated that

Table 1
Demographic details of the sample

	Males 150 (50%)	Females 150 (50%)	Total 300 (100%)
13–14 years	23 (7.7%)	26 (8.7 %)	49 (16.4%)
15–16 years	59 (19.7%)	51 (17%)	110 (36.7%)
17–18 years	53 (17.7%)	55 (18.3%)	108 (36%)
19 years	15 (5%)	18 (6%)	33 (11%)

male and female teenagers preferred laptops for bingeing sessions, followed by tablets, smartphones, and TV screens.

The respondents were also asked how long their binging sessions lasted and where they preferred to conduct their binging sessions. Findings (Table 3) revealed that an average binging session lasted for 8–10 hours (60%), followed by 5–7 hours (20.6%), 2–4 hours (18%), while very rarely the session could last for more than 10 hours (1.3%). There was no particular difference between the viewing duration of males and females.

RQ1: Is There a Significant Difference Between Males and Females with Regard to the Gratification Received from Binge-Watching?

The first research question pertained to the gratifications being received by the viewers from binging sessions. First, the

instrument questions catering to each indicator were computed to form the variables: Entertainment, Escape, Social Interaction, Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Relaxation, Timepass, and Excitement.

Findings (Table 4) showed that the most important gratifications being received by the respondents were Entertainment (M= 3.95, SD=0.76), Relaxation (M= 3.83, SD=0.626), Time Pass (M= 3.56, SD=0.89), Escape (M= 3.55, SD=0.958), Excitement

Table 4
Descriptive statistics of computed variables

	M	**SD**
Entertainment	3.95	0.76
Escape	3.55	0.96
Excitement	3.48	1.62
FOMO	3.20	0.80
Relaxation	3.83	0.63
Social Interaction	3.36	0.78
Timepass	3.56	0.89

Table 2
Preferred devices for binge-watching

	Males 150 (50%)	Females 150 (50%)	Total 300 (100%)
Laptop	58 (19.4%)	54 (18%)	112 (37.3%)
Tablet	54 (18%)	52 (17.4%)	106 (35.3%)
Smartphones	24 (8%)	26 (8.6%)	50 (16.6%)
TV Screen	14 (4.6%)	18 (6%)	32 (10.6)

Table 3
Average binging duration

	Males 150 (50%)	Females 150 (50%)	Total 300 (100%)
2–4 hours	26 (8.7%)	28 (9.3%)	54 (18%)
5–7 hours	32 (10.6%)	30 (10%)	62 (20.6%)
8–10 hours	90 (30%)	90 (30%)	180 (60%)
More than 10 hours	2 (0.6%)	2 (0.6%)	4 (1.3%)

(M= 3.48, SD=1.62), Social Interaction (M= 3.36, SD=0.78) and Fear of Missing Out (M= 3.20, SD=0.80).

However, the main part of the research on gender differences regarding these variables, the independent sample T-tests (Table 5), was applied, showing significant differences only in a few gratifications. Regarding Fear of Missing Out, it was revealed (t (294) = -5.024, p= .000) that there were significant differences between males (M=2.94, SD= .85) and females (M=3.46, SD=0.73) such that females were more likely to be concerned about FOMO than males. Another indicator in which differences were observed was that of Social Interaction (t (188.4) = -5.3.918, p= .000); in this regard, it was found that females (M=3.55, SD= .86) were more like to be concerned about it in comparison to males (M=3.16, SD= .69). Another indicator where differences were revealed was that of Excitement (t (299) = 3.22, p= .02); however, in this case, males (M=3.65, SD= 1.42) were more concerned in comparison to females (M=3.31, SD= 1.82). No differences between males and females could be found regarding Entertainment, Escape, Relaxation, and Time Pass.

RQ2: Is There a Significant Difference Between Males and Females with Regard to the Negative Impacts of Binge-Watching?

The second research question pertained to the differences in the negative impacts of binging on teenage male and female viewers.

First, the instrument questions catering to each of the indicators were computed to form the variables (Table 6) Sleep Disorder (M= 3.01, SD=1.1), Obesity (M= 2.76, SD=1.01), Depression (M= 2.65, SD=0.90), Productivity Issues (M= 2.56, SD=1.04).

Table 5
Gender differences in gratification from binge

		n	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig
Entertainment	Males	150	3.94	.71	-.191	296.5	.849
	Females	150	3.96	.82			
Escape	Males	150	3.28	1.00	-1.404	298.4	.161
	Females	150	3.46	.92			
Excitement	Males	150	3.65	1.42	3.221	299	.024
	Females	150	3.31	1.82			
FOMO	Males	150	2.94	.85	-5.024	294	.000
	Females	150	3.46	.73			
Relaxation	Males	150	3.83	.69	-.066	297	.947
	Females	150	3.84	.56			
Social Interaction	Males	150	3.17	.69	-3.918	188.4	.000
	Females	150	3.56	.86			
Timepass	Males	150	3.59	1.04	-1.849	299.2	.068
	Females	150	3.54	.75			

Table 6
Descriptive statistics of computed variables

	M	SD
Sleep Disorder	3.01	1.1
Obesity	2.76	1.01
Depression	2.65	0.90
Productivity Issues	2.56	1.04

However, the main part of the research is on gender differences in the impact of binging-watching. Literature had particularly indicated the prevalence of four negative outcomes: (1) Depression, (2) Obesity, (3) Productivity Issues, and (4) Sleep Disorder. Therefore, independent sample T-tests (Table 7) were applied, showing significant differences between males and females in productivity and sleep disorder. Findings (t (270.5) = 2.058, p= .041) showed that there were significant differences between males (M=2.69, SD= 1.18) and females (M=2.44, SD= .90) on Productivity such that males believed their work output is more negatively influenced in comparison to females. Another difference was found in Sleep Disorder (t (294) = 2.771, p= .036) such that females (M=3.2, SD= 1.17) reported more sleep-related

issues than males (M=2.81, SD= .94). However, no differences could be observed on depression and obesity.

DISCUSSION

The research aimed to explore whether there are gender differences in the gratifications received from binge-watching as well as its negative impacts. In recent times, binge-watching has become a popular trend worldwide, especially with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic (Raza et al., 2021). The research focused primarily on youth, as previous literature had suggested that teenagers are particularly prone to binge-watching (Matrix, 2014; Steiner & Xu, 2018).

The study's findings revealed that Entertainment, Escape, and Excitement are the primary motivations of Pakistani teenagers to resort to binge-watching. Previous literature has suggested that Entertainment (Castro et al., 2019; De Keere et al., 2020; Fernandes & Pinto, 2020; Granow et al., 2018; Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021; Nanda & Banerjee, 2020) and Escape (Castro et al., 2019; Fernandes

Table 7
Gender differences in negative impacts of binge-watching

		N	Mean	SD	T	Df	Sig
Depression	Males	150	2.60	.75	.948	261.5	.344
	Females	150	2.70	1.05			
Obesity	Males	150	2.78	1.14	.191	294.38	.849
	Females	150	2.75	.83			
Productivity Issues	Males	150	2.70	1.19	2.058	270.5	.041
	Females	150	2.44	.90			
Sleep Disorder	Males	150	2.82	.94	2.771	294	.0368
	Females	150	3.20	1.17			

& Pinto, 2020; Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021; Nanda & Banerjee, 2020; Panda & Pandey, 2017; Rubenking et al., 2018) are very important for indulging in binging, a phenomenon which was reinforced by the findings of the present research. Although excitement did not emerge as a major variable in previous literature, as only Rubenking et al. (2018) had discussed it, the present research findings showed that it was an important motivation for the youth. It was also revealed that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Relaxation, Timepass, and Social Interaction were relatively less important motivations though previous literature had suggested otherwise.

The phenomenon of binge-watching streamed video content differs from the usage patterns of traditional mass media outlets in many respects. Katz et al. (1973a) identified five categories of needs that mass media outlets fulfill: (1) cognitive, (2) personal integrative, (3) affective, (4) social integrative, and (5) tension release, but in the case of binge-watching, only the last three: affective, social integrative and tension release, play a role. The framework of uses and gratification is continuously evolving with the advent of each new technology as well as the nature of the audience. Motivations such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) have only recently been added (Anghelcev et al., 2022; Matrix, 2014), but they have become important gratifications being received by the audience.

However, the main objective of the research was to explore whether there were any differences between males and females

regarding the motivations for binging. Although there were no differences in the binging patterns between males and females, the motivations for binging were not the same. Literature (Anghelcev et al., 2022; Matrix, 2014) suggested that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) is a major motivation, but the study's findings revealed that it is a more important motivation for females in comparison to males. Previous literature (Fernandes & Pinto, 2020; Panda & Pandey, 2017; Rezende & Gomide, 2017; Rubenking et al., 2018) had suggested that the need for social interaction is very important though no gender differences were reported; the present study showed that females are more likely to be influenced by this motivation than males. Another indicator where differences were revealed was that of Excitement. However, in this case, males were more concerned than females, which goes on to show that the primary motivations of the genders differ significantly. No differences between males and females could be found regarding entertainment, escape, relaxation, and timepass.

Although previous studies had pointed out multiple drawbacks of binge-watching, such as depression, anxiety, stress, obesity, reduced social interaction, loneliness, decrease in productivity, loss of sleep, and obsessive-compulsive disorder, among others, the research focused on only four primary issues as there were some overlapping between the different constructs. The four variables chosen for the present research were Sleep Disorder, Obesity, Depression, and Productivity

Issues. Findings revealed that Sleep Disorder and Obesity were reported to be more of an issue than depression and productivity issues. Considerable literature has suggested that Depression (A. A. M. Ahmed, 2017; Raza et al., 2021; Rosen et al., 2012; Sun & Chang, 2021) and a decrease in Productivity (Anghelcev et al., 2022; Dandamudi & Sathiyaseelan, 2018; Kroese et al., 2016) are serious negative outcomes of binge-watching but the findings of the present research did not corroborate this. On the other hand, findings concerning Obesity (Dandamudi & Sathiyaseelan, 2018; Divya, 2020; Karim et al., 2020; Kroese et al., 2016) and sleep-related problems (Anghelcev et al., 2022; Karim et al., 2020; Kroese et al., 2016; Raza et al., 2021) were supported by the findings of the research.

Keeping in view the main objectives of the study, when differences were explored, it was revealed that there were significant differences between males and females in productivity, such that males believed their work output was more negatively influenced than females. Another difference was found in Sleep Disorder; females reported more sleep-related issues than males. However, no differences could be observed regarding Depression and Obesity.

CONCLUSION

Binge-watching is an emerging phenomenon of modern digital society, which needs to be investigated deeply to determine its impact on society. Most users of streamed content are the youth, who are vulnerable to a larger extent compared to the older generations.

The present study thus focused on the youth alone to find out how they used these streaming sites and how they influenced them. Findings based on the responses of 300 male and female teenagers revealed that Entertainment, Escape, and Excitement was the primary gratifications for binge-watching. However, it was found that Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and Social Interaction were more important for females, while Excitement was deemed an important motivation by the males. The research also aimed to examine the negative outcomes of binge-watching, such as Sleep Disorders, Obesity, Depression, and Productivity related problems. Findings revealed that Sleep Disorder and Obesity were reported to be more of an issue than depression and productivity issues. However, regarding gender differences, it was found that male binge-watchers reported a reduction in their productivity while female binge-watchers reported a disturbance in their sleeping patterns, thus showing that binge-watching has different types of impacts on males and females.

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