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Exploring the Relationship between Binge Watching and Procrastination in Young Adults: A Gender Perspective

Soumitra Walambe[1*], Deepak Kumar[1], Jangjeet Singh[1] and Nidhi Verma[2*]

[1]Amity Institute of Behavioural and Allied Sciences, Amity University, Gwalior – 474005, Madhya Pradesh, India
[2]Amity Institute of Behavioural and Allied Sciences, Amity University, Gurugram, Panchgaon – 122412, Haryana, India; nidhisrividya9@gmail.com

Abstract

Binge-watching may be a relaxing and enjoyable activity but it is also an obsession and a coping mechanism. Binge-watching is becoming a new "norm" for viewers in consuming their favourite TV shows and movies, which increased significantly during the COVID-19 pandemic. Procrastination behaviour is linked to increased stress and anxiety levels, poor impulse control, and a lack of determination. This study aims to assess the relationship between binge-watching and procrastination among young adults, including socio-demographic variables such as gender and area. The sample of N=200 young adults was collected by purposive sampling technique. Two scales used in the study were the Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire developed by Flayelle *et al.* and The General Procrastination Scale developed by Lodha *et al*. The results revealed a positive correlation between Binge-Watching and Procrastination. There are no Gender differences found in Binge-Watching whereas it was found in the case of Procrastination.

Keywords: Binge-Watching, Correlation, Descriptive Statistics, Procrastination Meme, Young Adults

1. Introduction

Broadcast and cable TV have been declining, and more people are gravitating to online streaming services to access entertainment content. It's important to note that the way TV is consumed is rapidly evolving to adapt to changing trends on the platforms. Many TV shows and films can be viewed on online video platforms with no interruptions, and viewers can now watch several episodes of a show at once or an entire season over a few days[1]. Binge-watching is thus becoming a new "norm" for viewers in consuming their favourite TV shows and movies[2]. More than 60% of binge-watchers, particularly young adults and college students, report engaging in such behaviours extensively[3,4]. Binge-watching behaviour has started developing since the emergence of 'Over the Top' (OTT) streaming platforms such as Netflix, HBO, Amazon Prime, Disney+ and Apple TV. The viewing audience has access to a diverse range of options and can stream several episodes of TV shows as they choose. Among people of all ages, binge-watching has become a usual pastime, especially in the subculture of millennials and Gen Z, individuals born between 1981-1996 and 1997-2012, respectively[5].

During the COVID-19 pandemic, binge-watching behaviour has increased significantly[6,7]. The lockdown and restricted behaviour compelled people to engage in binge-watching and consume more screen time. Various research has suggested that this isolation in lockdown has been one of the major causes to engage in binge-watching behaviour, making individuals "hooked" to series/shows[8].

**Author for correspondence*

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Binge-watching was one of the few everyday activities available to people during the pandemic to meet their psychological demands. Additionally, during the isolation of COVID-19, substantial psychological discomfort that may have resulted because of binge-watching has been observed among individuals[6,9], psychological discomfort (such as fear and worry) which was exhibited during the COVID-19 epidemic[10]. Due to people's potential usage of binge-watching to satisfy their psychological necessities to deal with isolation, a vicious cycle may have resulted. As a result, binge-watching may have had negative consequences on certain individuals. Additionally, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the streaming channel services had received significant advertising, which could have encouraged binge-watching and its effects.

According to Merill and Rubenking[11] procrastination tendencies and reward motivation are both significant predictors of binge-watching frequency. Additionally, behavioural addiction shown by binge watchers, exhibits loss of self-control, restlessness, remorse, abandonment of obligations, adverse social and physical implications, lying, or even withdrawal symptoms including worry, nervousness, wrath, and difficulty concentrating. It is linked to feelings of regret or guilt, particularly if binge-watching sessions are typically impulsive and out of control. Moreover, it is also associated with mood disturbances, sleep disturbances, fatiguability and impairment in self-regulation[12]. Furthermore, excessive, or problematic binge-watching may lead to further isolation and a feeling of loneliness[13,14]. The persuasive character of TV shows can be an effective struggle for consumers' self-control, but that does not invalidate the addictive consequences of binge-watching because there is a consensus in the studies that binge-watching has addictive characteristics[15,16].

Procrastination is a common maladaptive trait which may be seen in many facets of life, such as when people put off chores like academics or meetings with a medical professional. According to studies, 15% to 20% of the general population procrastinates on a regular basis[17,18].

The general definition of procrastination is the deliberate delay of an intended action in the face of adverse consequences[18-20]. The coronavirus pandemic has made people more prone to procrastination. The pandemic limitations such as physical distancing and adaptation were demanding for individuals in their academic and work lives. Studies have shown these limitations, adaptations and reduced social engagement have contributed to an increase in procrastination behaviour and psychological distress levels[21,22].

Numerous academics have noted that academic procrastination is connected to adverse results like uncomfortable feelings, stress, and guilty emotions[19]. According to Rebetez *et al.*[23], procrastinating students act in ways that are inconsistent with their moral principles and may postpone a significant objective. Their data also demonstrate that procrastination is associated with insufficient self-control and extrinsic motivation as well as issues with negative feelings. Chronic procrastination is linked to increased stress and anxiety levels, poor impulse control, a lack of determination, a lack of job discipline, a lack of time management capabilities, and an inability to work methodically[24-27].

Present Bias is a human behaviour phenomenon that has been linked to procrastination. Because of the present bias, we are more likely to be driven by short-term gains or rewards than by long-term ones. This explains why procrastination seems nice at the time. For instance, the short-term benefit of watching TV while in bed is more intriguing than the long-term benefit of writing a blog article, which would take a lot longer to complete[28].

Depression is additionally susceptible to procrastination. The most basic tasks can be challenging to begin and complete when one is feeling depressed, insignificant, and drained of energy. Self-doubt might also result from depression. It may be simpler to put off a project if you are unsure of how to approach it or feel uneasy about your skills. Obsessive-compulsive disorder sufferers also frequently procrastinate. One explanation is that OCD is frequently associated with pathological perfectionism, which results in worries about other people's expectations of you, uncertainties about whether or not you are performing something perfectly, and concerns about creating new mistakes. OCD sufferers also frequently struggle with indecisiveness which leads them to put things off instead of making a choice[29,30].

Procrastination is a problem for many adults with Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). It might be challenging to start a work while you're preoccupied with both internal and external distractions, particularly if the activity is challenging or uninteresting. As a phenomenon itself, procrastination is not a mental disease. However, in certain instances, it could be a sign of an underlying mental illness like ADHD, OCD, or depression[31].

Procrastinators can be divided into two categories by some researchers: passive and active. People who are passive procrastinators put off tasks because they struggle to make decisions and follow through on them. Deliberately postpone the assignment because active procrastinators "feel challenged and motivated" when working under pressure[32].

According to the American Psychological Association characteristics non-procrastinators are more likely to concentrate on the work at hand, they are more focused on their perception of themselves than on how others perceive them. Conscientiousness is one of the broad dispositions defined by the Big Five personality theory, and those who don't procrastinate also tend to have high levels of this personality trait. Individuals who exhibit high conscientiousness also frequently exhibit strong levels of self-discipline, perseverance, and personal accountability[33-35].

The main reasons for wanting to spend additional time binge-watching include social involvement, getaway, marketing impact, and availability. Interestingly, the researchers found that people are more inclined to engage in binge-watching for longer periods and develop a greater dependence on it if they feel apprehensive or uneasy afterward[36]. People who are motivated by enjoyment and obsession are likely to seek out immediate satisfaction. Individuals end up watching to form social bonds, fit into a club or fandom, and experience peer acceptance. Furthermore, researchers indicate that consumers are more likely to binge-watch a TV show if it has been strongly regarded by them[37]. Moreover, research confirmed that binge-watching is a coping method used by young adults to avoid problems or unpleasant emotions such as loneliness and hopelessness as well as to escape reality, which may result in a decline in other, more effective methods of managing unpleasant emotions. Thus, imaginary characters on shows serve as the company of viewers when they are alone themselves[38].

2. Objectives

The main objectives are:

i. To explore the gender differences in binge-watching and procrastination among young adults.

ii. To investigate the impact of binge-watching and procrastination among young adults.

The main hypotheses formulated are written below:

i. There will be no significant relationship between binge-watching and procrastination among young adults.

ii. There will be no significant difference in binge-watching in males and females.

iii. There will be no significant difference in procrastination in males and females.

3. Sample

A total of N = 200 young adults aged between 18 and 26 years were included in this study. The mean age of the participants was 22 years. There were 94 male young adults and 106 female young adults. The participants were selected without any bias through purposive sampling from the survey method.

4. Tools

Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire developed by Flayelle *et al*[39]. This scale measures eight dimensions of binge-watching. The eight dimensions are engagement, positive emotions, desire, pleasure preservation, binge-watching, dependency and loss of control. The scale has 40 items. Each item is measured on a four-point Likert scale. The General Procrastination Scale: The scale has been developed by Lodha *et al*[40]. This scale measures four domains of procrastination. The four domains are *academic, workplace, medical and civic*-related procrastination. The scale has 23 items. Each item is measured on a five-point Likert scale.

5. Procedure

The sampling was done by distributing the Google form online and collecting the samples. The questionnaire consisted of three sections where the first section took the online consent and asked for the general details of the participant, the second section administered the 'Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire' and the third section administered the 'The General Procrastination Scale'.

6. Statistical Techniques and Analysis of Data

The study involved collecting and reviewing the necessary data for each test utilized. The obtained results were organized in tabular form to examine the test outcomes for each variable. The descriptive statistics for procrastination and binge-watching among young adults, both male and female, are shown in Table 2. Males (M = 94.12, SD = 24.137) and females (M = 93.15, SD = 24.594) reported similar degrees of binge-watching behaviour. With the overall sample's mean binge-watching score being 93.84 (SD = 24.293).

Table 1. Descriptive statistics for binge-watching and procrastination among male and female young adults.

Variables		N	Mean	SD
Binge-Watching		200	93.84	24.293
	Male	106	94.12	24.137
	Female	94	93.15	24.594
Procrastination		200	66.15	11.125
	Male	106	67.81	10.733
	Female	94	64.27	11.316

Table 2. Correlation coefficients for binge-watching and procrastination among young adults

Variables	Correlation coefficient (r)	p-value	Level of significance
Binge-watching and Procrastination	0.52	0.00001	0.01

Table 3. Mean, standard deviation, standard error mean and t-value of Binge-watching in male and female young adults

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	t-value
Binge-watching	Male	94	94.12	24.137	2.344	0.177^{NS}
	Female	106	93.51	24.594	2.537	

NS - Not Significant

Likewise, 66.15 (SD = 11.125) was the average procrastination score for the whole sample. Procrastination was considerably more common among men (M = 67.81, SD = 10.733) than women (M = 64.27, SD = 11.316), but the difference was not statistically significant.

The descriptive statistics for procrastination and binge-watching among participants from both urban and rural areas are shown in Table 3. The mean score for binge-watching was 94.25 (SD = 22.576) for urban participants and 91.38 (SD = 33.055) for rural participants. The urban individual's mean score was marginally higher, but there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

Likewise, the mean score for procrastination was 66.32 (SD = 10.889) for urban individuals and 65.10 (SD = 12.846) for rural participants. The difference between the two groups was not statistically significant.

A correlational design was employed in this study to investigate the association between binge-watching and procrastination among young adults. Additionally, a t-test was also employed to examine the differences between binge-watching and procrastination in terms of gender and area, the location being the Gwalior district.

7. Results

The present study has been undertaken to assess the impact between binge-watching and procrastination among young adults. Descriptive statistics were calculated for binge-watching and procrastination in male and female young adults, with the results presented in Tables.

Descriptive statistics indicate that the mean level of binge-watching in young adults was 93.84 (SD = 24.293) and the mean level of procrastination was 66.15 (SD = 11.125). When comparing with gender, the mean levels of binge-watching in males was 94.12 (SD = 24.137) and in females was 93.15 (SD = 24.594). The mean levels of procrastination in males were 67.81 (SD = 10.733) and in females, it was 64.27 (SD = 11.316).

A correlation analysis was conducted to examine the impact of binge-watching and procrastination among

Table 4. Mean, standard deviation, standard error mean and t-value of procrastination in male and female young adults

Variable	Group	N	Mean	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	t-value
Procrastination	Male	94	67.81	10.733	1.043	2.273^{*}
	Female	106	64.27	11.316	1.167	

* - Significant

male and female young adults with the results presented in the further Table 2.

With reference to Table 2, it is interpreted that the correlation coefficient between the two variables was calculated to be r = 0.52 ($p<0.01$), indicating a statistically significant positive moderate correlation, the substantial but small relationship between binge-watching and procrastination indicating that higher levels of binge-watching are associated with higher levels of procrastination. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected. This suggests that binge-watching may have a positive impact on procrastination among young adults, indicating that higher levels of binge-watching are associated with higher levels of procrastination among young adults.

A t-test was conducted to examine the relationship between binge-watching and procrastination among male and female young adults, with the results presented in Tables 3 and 4. With the df = 198, with the critical t value at 0.05 level of significance is 1.97 and at 0.01 level of significance is 2.60.

With the reference to table 3, the obtained C_r-value is 0.177 which is less than the C_r-value at 0.05 and 0.01 level of significance for df = 198. The results indicate there is no significant difference between the two groups. Therefore, the results of the statistical analysis did not provide significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{02}). Therefore, the null hypothesis was not rejected, indicating that there was no statistically significant difference between the two groups.

With the reference to table 4, the obtained C_r-value is 2.273 which is more than the C_r-value at 0.05 level of significance for df = 198. The results indicate there is a significant difference between the two groups. The mean scores for males and females are 67.81 and 64.27 respectively, which indicates that male students have a higher level of procrastination than females Therefore, the results of the statistical analysis did provide significant evidence to reject the null hypothesis (H_{03}). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

5. Discussion

This study examined the relationship between binge-watching on procrastination levels among young adults and assessed the relationship between socio-demographic variables such as male and female young adults.

The findings revealed a statistically significant positive moderate correlation, substantial but small relationship between binge-watching and procrastination indicating that higher levels of binge-watching are associated with higher levels of procrastination. This suggests that binge-watching may have a positive impact on procrastination among young adults. A study conducted by Merrill *et al.*[41] examined the 'Influences on Binge Watching Frequency and Duration among College Students'.

This research also revealed a significant positive moderate correlation, substantial but small relationship between binge-watching and procrastination for both male and female young adults and that the relationship is stronger for females than for males. Studies conducted by Merrill *et al.*[41] and Seifert and Wahl[42] stated that males and females do not differ to a greater extent in terms of watching but females tend to binge-watch more hours than males. Women, in contrast to men, have a higher requirement for cognition, which may explain why they are more engaged in binge-watching[43]. Additionally, Reinecke and Hofmann[44], studied that individuals frequently engage in instant gratification to procrastinate. As a result, people may regularly binge-watch to avoid completing other activities.

The study also revealed a significant positive high correlation, which marked the relationship between binge-watching and procrastination among young adults. A study conducted by Kaur[45] examined binge-watching in rural areas with special reference to the Jagtial District of Telangana, the findings stated that Rural areas are experiencing an exponential rise in binge-watching.

This supports the current finding of the study, but it is important to note that the research was specifically conducted in a particular rural area of Telangana. The study also stated that rural people are lonely and moderately influenced by family and friends.

Furthermore, the research found no statistically significant difference between the means of binge-watching and male and female young adults. Therefore, the results of the statistical analysis did not provide significant evidence indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups. The study conducted by Qayyoum *et al.*[46] found no statistically significant relationship between binging patterns in males and females, these findings are consistent with the current findings of the study.

The findings revealed a significant difference between the means of procrastination in males and females. The

mean scores for males and females are 67.81 and 64.27 respectively, which indicates that male students have a higher level of procrastination than females. According to Steel[18] in his meta-analysis study it was concluded that men procrastinate more frequently than women in everyday affairs. Therefore, the results of the statistical analysis did provide significant evidence indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups. A further research study by Steel and Ferrari[47] discovered that men procrastinate more than women. These findings are consistent with the current findings of the study.

The research found no statistically significant difference between the means of binge-watching in rural and urban areas. Therefore, the results of the statistical analysis did not provide significant evidence indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups.

The research found no statistically significant difference between the means of procrastination in demographic areas. Therefore, the results of the statistical analysis did not provide significant evidence indicating that there was a statistically significant difference between the two groups. A study conducted by Manichander[48] on academic procrastination among graduate students found there is a statistically significant difference in the academic procrastination of graduate students in rural and urban areas, another study conducted by Ram *et al.*[49], found a significant difference in academic procrastination between rural and urban students.

Although, it is important to note that the current study does not examine academic procrastination and solely focuses on general procrastination, However, the present study contradicted these findings, revealing no significant difference between procrastination and the two groups.

In addition to the findings presented in this study, it is important to acknowledge the existing research gaps in the field. Limited research has been conducted specifically examining the impact between binge-watching and procrastination. The current study contributes to filling this gap by shedding light on this construct among young adults.

Furthermore, another notable research gap pertains to the examination of binge-watching in relation to rural and urban areas, as no prior studies have investigated it before. Therefore, further research is warranted to explore and understand potential differences in binge-watching behaviour between the rural and urban population groups. Additionally, procrastination in relation to rural and urban areas also requires in-depth research to establish significant relationships and distinguish between procrastination and rural and urban population groups. The result demonstrates a substantial gap in the literature that demands more research and understanding. Bridging these research gaps will advance our understanding of the complex dynamics between binge-watching and procrastination among young adults.

6. Conclusion

The study aimed to examine the relationship between binge-watching and procrastination among young adults, evaluate the levels of these behaviours, and analyse gender differences in binge-watching and procrastination. The findings revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between binge-watching and procrastination, indicating that higher levels of binge-watching are associated with increased procrastination. This suggests that binge-watching may contribute positively to procrastination levels in young adults.

When analysing the relationship separately for males and females, a moderate positive correlation was found, with the effect being stronger in females. This indicates that females experience a more pronounced impact of binge-watching on procrastination compared to males. Additionally, the study identified a statistically significant difference in procrastination levels between male and female young adults.

Future research should explore these relationships further, considering diverse populations and sociodemographic factors. By addressing these gaps, researchers can develop effective interventions and strategies to mitigate the negative outcomes of excessive binge-watching and procrastination, while also examining their potential similarities with other behavioural addictions. It is also crucial to differentiate between healthy and excessive levels of binge-watching and procrastination, as these behaviours are becoming increasingly prevalent, particularly among young people.

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