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Article:	Analyzing the Effects of Binge-Watching on Spousal Relationships
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ABSTRACT

This study analyzed the effect of Binge watching of spousal relationships. For this purpose, young and elder couples were selected to find the time spending in binge watching and degree of satisfaction and bonding among spouses. The results showed that the more time spend on binging series, the more is the degree of satisfaction and bonding which is not supported. Questionnaire was furnished among 150 sample size but 128 responses were collected. Uses and gratification was applied that shows that the spouses gratifying their need from the series but not from the spouses as they spend more time on watching the series. Moreover, spouses fulfill their affective need by binging Netflix series rather than talking or spending time with spouses. It has revealed that spouses are less satisfied and have less bonding among them and cannot fulfill affective need from the spouses. That is why spouses spend more time watching Netflix series.

Keywords: Binge watching, Spousal relationships, Netflix series

Introduction:

The term "binge-watch" was coined from the word "binge," which is usually identified as a brief duration devoted to being involved in an activity to excess (Pena, 2015). According to Oxford Dictionaries Online (2016) the term binge watching, otherwise known as binge viewing, is defined as, "the practice of watching multiple episodes of a television program in rapid succession", typically using DVDs or digital streaming (Jacobs, 2017). Binge-watching is the result of the creation of numerous on-demand video content platforms like Netflix, Hulu, HBO GO, Amazon Prime, Disney+, Crunchyroll, and Apple TV, this behaviour and attitude began to gain popularity (Starosta, 2020). Lotz explained the increase in the popularity of video streaming websites like Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime Video. Instead of waiting week after week for the latest seasons, these websites enable audiences to view a whole season of the series at once (2014).

Binge watching also described as watching several episodes of a TV show consecutively. Over the past few years, the number of video streaming services has rapidly increased on Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime (Woolley, 2022). It is about how people started using media. "Uses and Gratifications Theory" (U&G) looks at how people utilize media to fulfil their needs and desires. In 1974, Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch worked on the usage of media by the audience (1974). According to the Usage & Gratification theory, individuals actively engage with media and select the content they want to watch based on their perceptions of its potential benefits. The uses or gratifications are utilitarian, psychological, or social. One way to think of binge-watching is as a sort of consumption of media that is driven by a variety of different pleasures. For instance, viewers might binge to Escape from reality Binge-watching enables viewers to escape their worries and float into the fantasy. Secondly, it helps to pass the time like after a stressful day, binge-watching can help you rest and unwind. It also helps connect with others like people frequently discuss the episodes they are viewing with friends and family. Binge-watching can be an enjoyable pastime. It also helps acquire new knowledge like learning about different cultures, events in history, and other subjects can be done while binge-watching (Lotz, 2014). The youth of Pakistan is inclined towards Entertainment, Escape, and Excitement (Qayyoom, 2013a).

Problem Statement

The literature review revealed that various studies found the adverse effect of binge-watching on spousal relationships. Effects on life are not limited during binge-watching that is spending more time on Netflix series and spending less time with your spouse and vice versa. Moreover, the focus is only on married couples and the degree of satisfaction, happiness, and spousal bonding. This research examined Southeast Asian countries' binge-watching behaviours. In the previous studies mostly survey is used to find the bingeing behavior of the couple living together or in living relationships and married. Previous studies have explored that there is a relationship between binge watching & spousal relationship disturbance or dissatisfaction. This study aims to find out the bingeing time watching Netflix series, and how much time they spend 6,12,1 hours. And how much time they spent together while watching Netflix and with their spouse simultaneously. What is the degree of satisfaction in their relationship? And also their degree of happiness in their relationship. Do they feel a strong connection or are they only carrying out their relationship?

Objectives of the Study

1. To find the effect of binge-watching of Netflix series on time spent with spouses.
2. To analyze the effect of binge-watching of Netflix series on the degree of satisfaction among married couples.
3. To analyze the effect of binge-watching of Netflix series on the degree of bonding among married couples.
4. To analyze the effect of binge-watching of Netflix series on affective need by Netflix series among spouses.

Literature Review

Elihu Katz and Jay Blumler released foundational work on the Uses and Gratifications in 1974. Katz and Blumler highlighted the usage of media and why people use media. The thesis focused on the U&G (Blumler, 1974). Then Denis McQuail's contributed in 1983, to the Uses and Gratifications Theory. McQuail concentrated on the use of media especially television because it is used for entertainment purposes (Golding, 2017). Rosengren worked on the typologies related to meta needs, individual differences, social factors, motivation and media sought (1974, p.269). Media consumption has become increasingly individualized since the 1980s. With the introduction of the web, media became more personalized (Valkenburg, 2015, p. 2). The new media boundary conditions provide users with unprecedented control in the context of video-on-demand services. Users are liberated from the constraints of traditional TV programmers, and continuous viewing is made possible (Granow, 2018, p. 2). The most important feature of personalized media is binge-watching. Watching TV at any time, from any location, and under any circumstances differs from the traditional TV viewing experience. People find it amusing and refer to television as a leisure activity (Billieux, 2015).

According to U&G, consumers of media have specific goals and needs that they tend to fulfil through various activities (Rosenfeld, 1983). There are assumptions audience is active and seeks specific media to meet their needs. Secondly, the audience is pro self-reports for their desire. Thirdly, media have source competition among themselves to satisfy their needs (Panda, 2017). Due to the social and emotional origin of need, expectations are generated for gratification. Whereas the effects are sometimes unplanned (Katz, 1973). There are five needs gratifications to inform or to educate, to know the media environment, to entertain and to improve social interaction, and to escape from daily stress (Paimre, 2015).

According to Zillmann, the media is used to regulate emotional reactions and end negative moods (2000). Binge-watching can hurt mental health (Jacobs, 2017). Binging is actually, being determined to finish a series without pausing (Mitchell, 2019). Several studies have also indicated that people aged 18 to 39 seem to be more likely to binge-watch than older people (Bernadetta, 2020). A survey reported that 50% of adult viewers aged 45 or younger could binge-watch an entire season of their favourite series in a single sitting (Peng, 2022).

Another study focuses on adolescents, which elaborated that excessive media consumption could impact spousal relationships. If one partner engages in excessive binge-watching, they may become more isolated and less engaged in the relationship, leading to feelings of loneliness and disconnection (Dandamudi, 2018, p.41). Binge-watching makes people isolated (Gabbiadini, 2021). The effect on para-social experiences on social and emotional life (Greenwood, 2023).

In today's digital age, binge-watching has grown into a popular recreational pastime in which people engage themselves in lengthy viewing periods of TV programmes. This behaviour has prompted concerns about how it affects the relationships of couples. Knowing the consequences of binge-watching marital relationships is critical for identifying possible difficulties and devising ways to sustain marital happiness and satisfaction (Coyne, Stockdale, & Busby, 2017).

Media have competition with other types of communication for need gratification like interpersonal (Papacharissi & Rubin, 2000). The hedonic consumption of binge-watching is deriving pleasure from the fantasy and fun leading to healing people (Stafford, *et al.*, 2004). For some, it is related to the guilty feeling and morbid pleasure. Fallon described the gratification through bingeing in terms of pleasure (2014). Ort expressed binge watching is addictive (2020). Skipper expressed that using media for bingeing is related to guilt and shame (2014).

Further studies evaluated that the practice of consuming multiple episodes or seasons of a TV series in a single sitting is getting popular in today's digital era (Singhal, 2017). Finally, Morgan and Shanahan (2017) define binge-watching as consuming a large amount of television programming in a short period, characterized by intense and continuous viewing sessions. These definitions together define binge-watching as watching numerous episodes or seasons of a television show in a single sitting, enabled by digital platforms, and including prolonged and consecutive viewing sessions. The researchers identified binge-watching and its effect on the spousal relationship (Rubenking, & Bracken, 2021).

The development of shared experiences is one of the benefits of binge-watching for married couples. Couples can experience the emotional journey of a TV series as a shared time while binge-watching together and getting pulled into a compelling narrative. As lovers laugh, weep, and debate the program together, this shared experience can promote intimacy and a sense of togetherness. Couples can bond over their favourite characters, surprising plot developments, and memorable moments since it gives them a common topic of discussion (Coyne *et al.*, 2017). The dynamics of a relationship may be affected by the ensuing fatigue and irritation, which could further worsen tensions. It was found that fear of missing out or FOMO and social interaction is priorities of females whereas males are more inclined towards exciting motives. While binge-watching physical health is more disturbed than mental health and productivity (Qayyum *et al.*, 2013b). A fulfilling binge-watching session can build a sense of happiness and fulfilment that is shared by both partners, promoting a positive relationship dynamic (Granow, Reinecke, & Ziegele, 2018).

On the other hand, if one or both partners find the binge-watching experience disappointing or frustrating, it could cause tension in the relationship. The duration of the binge-watching session can influence how it affects spousal relationships. Couples' immediate emotions when binge-watching collectively can also lessen the negative effects on their marriages. According to Schoenebeck and Duguay (2018), couples that expressed delight, enthusiasm, or relaxation during their binge-watching sessions showed better relationship results. These favourable feelings can produce a pleasurable and satisfying shared experience, fostering a closer relationship between spouses. However, if couples have unfavourable feelings during their binge-watching sessions (Krcmar, 2018) such as annoyance, impatience, or boredom, it has a detrimental effect on the relationship and perhaps causes arguments or

discontent. A study revealed the frequency of TV bingeing and identified adaptive factors associated with marriage or not being married. According to it, the majority (78%) reported having no children, 64% were single, 19% were married, and 5% were divorced (Walton, 2016).

Research Questions

RQ 1: Whether and to what extent does more binge-watching of Netflix series affect the time spent with spouses?

RQ2: Whether and to what extent does more binge-watching of Netflix series effect degree of satisfaction among married couples?

RQ3: Whether and to what extent does more binge-watching of Netflix series effect degree of bonding between married couples?

RO4: H4: Whether and to what extent does more binge-watching of Netflix series effect Affective need with Netflix series among spouses.

Hypotheses

H1: The more binge-watching Netflix series, more is the time spent with spouses.

H2: The more binge-watching of Netflix series, the more is the degree of satisfaction among married couples.

H3: The more binge-watching of Netflix series, the stronger is the degree of bonding among married couples.

H4: More binge-watching of Netflix series, less is the fulfillment of Affective needs with Netflix series among spouses.

Data Analysis and Results

Method

The quantitative research method is adopted. For the survey convenient sampling is done to study the Demographics of the study Age i.e., Young-aged couple, (Newly married) 18-29, Middle-aged couple, (Elderly) 30-45, Old-age couple (Aged) 46-above. The second variable is gender male and female. The variables of the study are binge-watching time, Effects of lifestyle during binge-watching time spent together, Degree of Happiness, and Degree of bonding. The last is the affective need gratification. The questionnaire was furnished among 150 but fewer Responses were received.

Series Genre selection: Genres selected are Crime, Science fiction, Romantic/comedy and Politics.

Data Analysis

Demographics of the Study

Table 1:

Demographics

Sr. No.	Age	Frequency (%)
1.	Young-aged couple (Newly married) 18-29	92 (71.9%)
2.	Middle-aged couple (Elderly) 30-45	23 (18%)
3.	Old-age couple (Aged) 46-above	13 (10.1%)
	Total	128 (100%)

Results: In the demographics, there are Young-aged couples (Newly married) age range 18-29 92 (71.9%), Middle-aged couples (Elderly) 30-45 23(18%) Old-age couples (Aged) 46-above are 13(10.1%).

Findings: Results revealed that there are Young-aged couples (Newly Married) 18-29 are 71.95% involved in binge-watching.

2. Please indicate the following Demographic.

Table 2

Gender

Sno	Gender	Frequency (%)
1.	Male	68(53%)
2.	Female	60 (47%)
Total		128 (100%)

In the demographics, there are male 68(53%) and female 60(47%).

Table 3

Effect on Life

Variables			Scale				
Time	Spend	on	Completely True	True	Somewhat True	Little True	Not at all True
Binging		1hrs	1(.8%)	2(1.5%)	16(12.5%)	1(.8%)	1(.8%)
		6hrs	1(.8%)	24(19%)	1(.8%)	1(.8%)	1(.8%)
		12hrs	67(52.3%)	1(.8%)	1(.8%)	1(.8%)	1(.8%)
		More than 12 hrs	1(.8%)	1(.8%)	1(.8%)	4(3.1%)	1(.8%)
Time	Spend	with					
Spouses		while					
Binging							
		Less time spend with spouses	85(72.6%)	2(1.5%)	2(1.5%)	3(2.3%)	2(1.5%)
		More Time spend with Spouses	20(19.5%)	3(2.3%)	3(2.3%)	4(3.1%)	3(2.3%)
Degree of Satisfaction Between Couples							
		Not Satisfactory	42 (32.8%)	31 (24.2%)	19 (14.8%)	15 (11.7%)	2(1.5%)
		Satisfactory	3(2.3%)	3(2.3%)	3(2.3%)	3(2.3%)	7(5.5%)
Degree of Bonding between Couples							
		Strong Bonding	6 (4.6%)	2(1.5%)	3(2.3%)	11 (8.5%)	57(44.5%)
							3(2.3%)

	Less Bonding	24(18.7%)	19(15%)	2(1.5%)	1(.8%)	
Degree of Affective need with Netflix Series among spouses						
	Less	15(11.7%)	32 (25.2%)	2(1.5%)	19 (14.8%)	41 (31.8%)
	More	6(4.5%)	4(3.2%)	3(2.3%)	3(2.3%)	3(2.3%)

More binge watching i.e., 12 hours of bingeing Netflix is 67(52.3%) that is completely true. Whereas Less time spend with spouses while bingeing is 85(72.6%) that is completely true. 12 hours of bingeing Netflix is 67(52.3%) whereas more Time spend with Spouses is 20 (19.5%) is completely true. Degree of Affective need with Netflix Series is 41 (31.8) which is not at all true. Whereas 6(4.5%) shared that Degree of Affective need with Netflix Series is completely true.

Table 4
Degree of Satisfaction and Bonding Vs Binge Watching

Variables	Time Spend with Spouses While Binging					
	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-Tailed)	Sig P Value	Significant/Not Significant	Hypothesis Supported/ Not Supported
Time on Binging	28.211	1	.015	0.9	Not Significant	Not Supported
Degree of Satisfaction Between Married Couples	30.457	1	2.766	0.1	Not Significant	Not Supported
Degree of Bonding Among Married Couples	26.543	1	0.003	0.95	Not Significant	Not Supported
Fulfillment of Affective need with Netflix Series	31.245	1	.0922	0.71	Not Significant	Not Supported

12 hours of bingeing Netflix is 67(52.3%) which is Not Satisfactory is completely true and Less time spent with spouses 85(72.6%) is completely true. Time spent together while bingeing chi-square: 28.211, $p=0.9$. Therefore, H1: More binge-watching of Netflix series, and more time spent with spouses is not substantiated.

H2: The more binge-watching of Netflix series, the more the degree of satisfaction between couples.

12 hours of bingeing Netflix is 67(52.3%) which is Not Satisfactory is completely true i.e., 42 (32.8%), true is 31(24.2%) and somewhat true is 19(14.8%). 12 hours of bingeing Netflix is 67(52.3%) that is Not Satisfactory is completely true. The degree of satisfaction is Chi-Square: 30.457, $p=0.1$. Therefore, H2: The more binge-watching of Netflix series, the more the degree of satisfaction, is not supported.

H3: More binge-watching of Netflix series, more strong bonding among couples.

The analysis of more binge-watching of Netflix series, 12 hours of bingeing Netflix is 67(52.3%) is Not Satisfactory is completely true with the bonding among couples. The degree of bonding is Chi-Square: 26.543, $p=.95$. Hence, the H3: More binge-watching of Netflix series, more strong bonding among couples, is not supported.

H4: More binge-watching of Netflix series, less is the fulfillment of Affective needs.

The analysis of more binge-watching of Netflix series i.e., 12 hours of bingeing Netflix is 67(52.3%) is not true is with degree of fulfillment of Affective needs with Netflix among spouses is Chi-Square: 31.245, $p=0.71$. Therefore, more binge-watching of Netflix series, less is the fulfillment of the Affective needs with Netflix Series, is also not supported.

Discussion

The effects of lifestyle explained by Alimoradi about the physiological effects that is fear of missing out, escaping from reality, and social engagement and personality features (e.g., neurotic, less agreeable, less openness to new experiences) were linked to binge-watching (2022). According to some People also feel happy, relaxed, and entertained while Binge-watching is the immediate feeling while bingeing (Starosta, 2020). This study expressed that spouse bonding together has various effects on their marriage and the degree of satisfaction and bonding among them (Proulx, Helms, & Buehler, 2007). Married couples with children with one spouse activities cause the symptoms of depression in the other spouse (Beach et al., 2003), whereas there is no effect on newly married couples' spouses (Fincham et al., 1997). This study has refuted that the more time spent together more is the degree of satisfaction and bonding among spouses. There are lots of reasons as discussed before that spouses have various engagements to fulfill that is why time is not spent together and if the time is spent together then satisfaction is not the common ground or bonding is not affected by bingeing. It has been examined that the more spouses are bingeing series more they are gratifying their need from the watching and less from the spouses. Therefore, it is also revealed that spouses fulfill their need through bingeing. It is the main source of gratification of their need satisfaction and bonding with the series rather than the spouses. The Affective need fulfillment is done by binge watching Netflix series. Affective need includes personal needs like pleasure and or emotional needs like getting satisfaction from Netflix series. The result showed that affective need is fulfilled by bingeing more to satisfy emotional and feelings of pleasure. Spouses feel comfort and also satisfied for fulling the affective need as they seek pleasure and personal satisfaction from bingeing.

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