

# Motivations and Psychological Impacts of Netflix Binge-Watching Among Egyptian Youth

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## Abstract:

*Video-on-demand streaming services' explosive growth has had a significant impact on how people consume media, especially young people. The practice of "binge-watching"—watching several episodes of a television show in one sitting—is a notable result of this change. While prior research offers conflicting insights—linking binge-watching to both psychological harm and emotional gratification—its impact remains context-dependent and underexplored in non-Western settings.*

*This study investigates the psychological implications of binge-watching among Egyptian youth through a cross-sectional online survey of 234 purposively sampled individuals aged 18–35 who frequently use streaming platforms. Using three psychometrically validated instruments—Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, the Watching TV Series Motives Questionnaire (WTSMQ), and the Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire (BWESQ)—the analysis examines the interplay between binge-watching behavior and mental well-being.*

*Findings reveal a partial negative correlation between psychological well-being and binge-watching engagement and symptoms, indicating that excessive viewing may be associated with reduced well-being. Conversely, positive associations were identified between psychological well-being and certain motivational factors for watching, such as escapism and enrichment. These results underscore the complex psychological dimensions of binge-watching and highlight the importance of understanding viewer motivations in assessing its potential risks and benefits.*

**Keywords:** Binge-watching, Psychological well-being, Digital media consumption, Media psychology, Egyptian youth, Streaming services

## 1. Introduction

The rise of video-on-demand (VoD) streaming services in recent years has drastically changed how people watch television. Digital services like Netflix, Shahid, Amazon Prime, and YouTube are gradually replacing traditional broadcast and cable television because they allow users to watch material on any device, anytime, and from any location. Binge-viewing, the practice of watching several television series episodes in one sitting, is nowadays a standard consuming behavior when watching media brought about by this technological revolution.

This digital transformation of media consumption has vast implications for psychological health, social interaction, and cultural dynamics. As a rapidly growing phenomenon, binge-watching raises questions about how such intensive media engagement shapes mental well-being, especially in non-Western societies where cultural, social, and technological factors differ. Recent studies highlight the need to understand binge-watching as a leisure activity and behavior embedded within larger psychosocial frameworks influencing young people's identity formation and coping strategies (Smith & Johnson, 2023; Lee et al., 2021).

Binge-watching is a global behavior, particularly among younger demographics who frequently use streaming services for entertainment and stress relief. These services are available as mobile applications that can be streamed anywhere. Despite its widespread adoption, the academic community continues to debate its psychological and behavioral effects as the behavior is now becoming normalized and commonly practiced by most mobile users. Although binge-watching is frequently viewed as a recreational pastime that promotes relaxation and escape, questions have been raised concerning its possible effects on social functioning, productivity, and mental health.



This tendency has become more popular throughout the Middle East, particularly in Egypt, in recent years. Streaming services like Netflix and Shahid have gained popularity among Egyptian youth, with localized and international content available from various legal and illicit sources. Nevertheless, there is a gap in the literature because there is still little empirical study on binge-watching behavior in Arab cultural contexts.

Netflix's distinctive method of delivering material spawned a new culture of watching. Netflix satisfies viewers' needs for independence and continuous engagement by enabling them to watch programs quickly by simultaneously releasing whole seasons. (Panda & Pandey, 2017).

Recent research noted that streaming platforms alter media routines and potentially reshape daily habits, psychological states, and interpersonal interactions (Steiner & Xu, 2020; Tolba & Zoghaib, 2022).

Despite the growing body of literature examining binge-watching globally, findings remain inconclusive. According to several studies, binge-watching may be a coping strategy to reduce stress, improve life satisfaction, and develop an emotional bond with characters (Joseph & Varghese, 2025; Raza et al., 2021). On the other hand, some draw attention to its possible drawbacks, such as disturbed sleep, loneliness, guilt, and a decline in psychological health (Sabran & Sokri, 2023; Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020).

The psychological effects of this media phenomenon are further exacerbated by the immersive and interactive nature of streaming platforms, which use AI algorithms to tailor suggestions more and more, enhancing user engagement and possibly encouraging addictive behaviors (Morris & Patel, 2024). Even if binge-watching is becoming more popular worldwide, there is still a noticeable dearth of culturally relevant studies concentrating on Egyptian adolescents. Most of the research done so far has been conducted in Western settings, which leaves a big knowledge vacuum about how these habits appear and impact psychological health in Egypt's distinct social, cultural, and technical environment. To address this gap, this study explores the motivations behind binge-watching and its relationship with psychological well-being among Egyptian youth. This study aims to offer culturally appropriate insights into how digital watching habits and mental health intersect in the Arab setting by utilizing validated psychological scales in conjunction with a strong analytical framework. This will ultimately help to develop more focused and efficient therapies.

## **2. Literature Review: Contemporary Perspectives on Binge-Watching Behavior**

### **2.1 Binge-Watching and the Evolution of Streaming Services**

The global shift from traditional linear television to video-on-demand (VoD) streaming services represents one of the most profound transformations in media consumption in recent decades. Platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, Disney+, and regional services have disrupted established media consumption norms by empowering viewers to watch content on their schedules and across multiple devices (Tolba & Zoghaib, 2022; Asgher & Gohar, 2022). This autonomy enables personalized viewing experiences but raises concerns about excessive consumption and its consequences.

The simultaneous release of whole seasons is a key breakthrough that fuels binge-watching and radically alters how people consume content. In contrast to typical episodic watching, this change encourages viewers to watch for extended periods without interruption (Kim & Choi, 2023; Steiner & Xu, 2020). In order to increase the immersive experience, content producers have responded by modifying narrative structures, using cliffhangers and tighter plot arcs that sustain tension and viewer engagement over several episodes (Sabran & Sokri, 2023). However, other critics contend that "binge-tailored" series may put consuming mechanisms ahead of storytelling depth, raising concerns about narrative quality and viewer agency (Chen et al., 2023).

Algorithmic recommendation systems embedded in these platforms are pivotal in shaping binge-watching behaviors. By reducing friction and leading viewers into "watch loops" with ease, personalized content recommendations powered by advanced artificial intelligence improve engagement (Lau et al., 2021; Morris & Patel, 2024). The moral implications of these systems are debatable, however. Despite convenience and customization, algorithms may limit viewer agency and result in compulsive watching behaviors similar to behavioral addictions (Morris & Patel, 2024; Zhang & Lee, 2023). It is still debatable and requires further study of how empowerment and manipulation conflict.

These worldwide technical developments collide with particular sociocultural dynamics in the Egyptian context. Streaming services have increased due to factors like smartphone penetration, younger, digitally native populations, and easier access to the internet (Tolba & Zoghaib, 2022). However, because of collectivist cultural norms, family-centered social institutions, and media regulation, binge-watching is consumed and interpreted differently than in Western countries (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020). Culturally sensitive studies are possible because there is currently a dearth of region-specific empirical research.

## **2.2 Psychological Effects of Binge-Watching: Motivations and Behavioral Patterns**

Binge-watching is inherently multifaceted, with motivations and effects that span a broad psychological spectrum. The Uses and Gratifications Theory (Katz et al., 1974) conceptualizes binge-watching as a deliberate, goal-directed activity, serving needs like escapism, entertainment, mood management, and social connection (Joseph & Varghese, 2025; Lee et al., 2021). Empirical studies generally converge on escapism and stress relief as primary drivers, particularly among youth confronting academic pressures, social challenges, or emotional distress (Rubenking et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021). However, recent evidence nuances this picture, suggesting that motivations are diverse and culturally modulated (Smith & Johnson, 2023).

Conversely, binge-watching also has a problematic dimension. Behavioral addiction frameworks characterize excessive binge-watching by compulsive use despite negative consequences—loss of control, preoccupation, withdrawal symptoms—and parallels with substance-related and behavioral addictions have been noted in neuropsychological studies (Flayelle et al., 2020; Raza et al., 2021; Martínez-Pecino et al., 2022). The challenge lies in disentangling healthy high engagement from pathological addiction, a distinction complicated by overlapping symptoms and variable individual susceptibilities.

Emerging research distinguishes intentional (planned, controlled) binge-watching from unintentional (compulsive, uncontrolled) forms, which carry markedly different psychological outcomes (Kim et al., 2023; Flayelle et al., 2020). While unintentional binge-watchers are more likely to experience unpleasant emotions, disturbed sleep, and social disengagement, deliberate binge-watchers frequently report positive affect, contentment, and social bonding benefits (Kim et al., 2023). This contradiction encourages more research into the underlying emotional and cognitive processes and cultural modifiers.

Within collectivist societies like Egypt, binge-watching may operate as a social practice that reinforces familial and community ties when done collectively, contrasting with solitary binge-watching that can exacerbate isolation (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020; Sabran & Sokri, 2023). The socio-cultural embeddedness of binge-watching thus complicates its psychological impact and suggests that interventions should be contextually grounded.

## **2.3 Social and Cognitive Dimensions of Binge-Watching**

The literature on binge-watching has given more attention to social motives. Sharing watching experiences can improve social capital by encouraging dialogue and emotional ties between family members and friends, according to Steiner and Xu (2020). However, excessive solo binge-watching is linked to decreased social engagement and increased loneliness, which raises questions regarding the function of digital media in social isolation (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020). People are simultaneously connected and disconnected by digital media, which is reflected in this societal ambivalence.

Cognitively, binge-watching involves deep narrative transportation, whereby viewers become immersed in fictional worlds, which can provide meaningful emotional experiences and temporary respite from real-life stress (Rubenking et al., 2018; Martínez-Pecino et al., 2022). Yet, intense immersion risks detachment and escapism that may impair functioning if it leads to neglect of responsibilities or real-world disengagement (Lee et al., 2021).

Moreover, binge-watching often functions as an emotional regulation strategy. Viewers seek excitement, comfort, or distraction through prolonged viewing sessions (Rubenking et al., 2018; Lee et al., 2021). There is a need for psychological awareness of media consumption patterns, though, as relying on binge-watching to control mood can impede the development of healthier coping strategies (Raza et al., 2021).

## 2.4 The Blurred Boundary Between Passion and Addiction

Distinguishing passionate binge-watching from pathological addiction remains a complex and debated issue. Passionate viewers demonstrate high involvement without significant impairment, whereas addiction entails compulsive behaviors, negative affect, and disruption of daily life (Flayelle et al., 2020; Joseph & Varghese, 2025). This distinction is sensitive for developing nuanced diagnostic criteria and therapeutic approaches, according to (Raza et al., 2021). , self-regulation, and digital media literacy are crucial for reducing the risk of addiction. Educating users to understand their media habits and implementing self-monitoring tools can empower them to maintain balanced consumption and make them more aware of addiction symptoms.

At the same time, recommendation algorithms on streaming platforms may unintentionally promote addictive behaviors by extending engagement past user intent, even though they improve user experience (Morris & Patel, 2024).

## 3. Methodology

In this section, explain how you conducted your research. Start by describing the overall approach or design of your study. Specify the tools and techniques you used for data collection, such as surveys, experiments, or interviews. Detail the process for selecting participants or samples and any criteria you used. Explain how you analyzed the data you collected, including any statistical or computational methods. If relevant, mention any tools or software you used for analysis.

Provide enough detail so that someone else can replicate your study. Highlight any limitations or challenges you faced and how you addressed them. Finally, ensure your methodology aligns with your research objectives and questions.

### 3.1 Sampling and Data Collection

This study targeted users of on-demand streaming services, focusing on Egyptian young adults familiar with Netflix aged between 18 and 35—a critical developmental period characterized by identity formation and cognitive maturation. The sample consisted of 234 purposively selected participants recruited through online surveys, reflecting non-probability sampling techniques standard in behavioral media research. We specifically selected Egyptian young adults who use streaming platforms, mainly Netflix. Since the study needed to focus on that group, while this approach helped in recruiting the right participants for the study, it limits the statistical generalizability of the findings to the broader Egyptian population. Therefore, the results give indications but can't be representative of all Egyptian youth.

This group is uniquely positioned to demonstrate how media engagement is evolving in the Arab world because of the psychological effects of watching television and the revolutionary effects of streaming services, notably Netflix, which provides full-season releases and uninterrupted, ad-free viewing. The accessibility of streaming content and limited institutional guidance from educational and social frameworks raise concerns about potential unmonitored psychological effects among youth.

Previous literature highlights a higher propensity for binge-watching among adults, especially on platforms like Netflix, affirming the selection of this age group and service for investigation.

### 3.2 Measurement Instruments

Three sections comprised the survey instrument's structure: initial general demographic questions, psychometric scales assessing binge-watching behaviors and motivations, and psychological well-being. Key validated scales employed include:

- The Watching TV Series Motives Questionnaire (WTSMQ) measures viewer motivations such as escapism, social connection, and entertainment.
- Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire (BWESQ), assessing behavioral engagement and potential symptoms of problematic viewing.

- Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale measures multiple dimensions of psychological well-being, including autonomy, environmental mastery, and personal growth.

A pilot study was conducted with 40 participants to examine the clarity and discover whether there are any psychometric performances of the scales. We checked exploratory factor analysis and looked at item-total correlations. All items demonstrated acceptable factor loadings ( $\geq 0.40$ ) and satisfactory item-total correlations ( $\geq 0.30$ ). Therefore, there was no need for any item to be removed, and the full-scale structure was retained for the main study.

### 3.3 Factor Analysis and Reliability

We ran an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) to check whether the measurement instruments actually captured what we intended. Using principal component analysis and varimax rotation, every item showed a solid factor loading—each one landed above 0.443 to 0.911. No items were removed following the pilot study, as all met psychometric adequacy criteria. Reliability analyses showed satisfactory internal consistency:

- Binge-watching engagement: Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.825$
- Psychological impact: Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.695$
- BWESQ: Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.739$
- WTSMQ: Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.771$
- Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale: Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.873$

Despite its Western origins, the Ryff scale's cross-cultural adaptability was supported by its strong reliability and validity in the Egyptian context.

### 3.4 Ethical Considerations

This study was conducted by ethical principles for research involving human participants. At the beginning of the survey, all participants received an online consent statement explaining that participation was completely voluntary and that their information would be used solely for research purposes. Participants provided their informed consent electronically by continuing with the survey. Considering that the study was done online, no official paper consent forms were gathered. All participant confidentiality and anonymity were rigorously upheld during the data collecting and analysis process. The research protocol adhered to standard ethical criteria for minimal-risk survey research.

## 4. Result Discussion

### Demographic Characteristics

The study's sample consisted predominantly of young adults between 18 and 26 (77.8%), with the remainder between 27 and 35 (22.2%). This age distribution is consistent with global research indicating that binge-watching is primarily a behavior exhibited by younger populations who have grown up with digital media as a fundamental part of their existence (Kim & Choi, 2023; Steiner & Xu, 2020). Younger adults tend to have more discretionary time and higher digital literacy, facilitating extended engagement with streaming platforms (Smith & Johnson, 2023).

Females constituted the majority of respondents (73.9%), aligning with previous studies that identify women as more frequent binge-watchers. This is potentially due to gendered differences in media consumption preferences, leisure time availability, and social patterns of media use (Merrill & Rubenking, 2019; Sun & Chang, 2021). This gender disparity may also be influenced by cultural norms specific to Egypt and the broader Middle East, where media use can be shaped by societal expectations and gender roles (Ahmed, 2019).

Marital status data showed that 92.7% of participants were single, which corresponds with the youth-focused nature of the sample and resonates with findings that single individuals typically have fewer familial obligations,

allowing for greater engagement in leisure activities like binge-watching (Rubenking et al., 2018). Educational attainment data indicated that 39.3% held graduate degrees, and 33.8% had undergraduate qualifications. This level of educational attainment suggests a sample with high cognitive engagement and access to digital resources, factors positively correlated with media consumption intensity (Tolba & Zoghaib, 2022).

### **Binge-Watching Frequency and Duration**

In examining binge-watching session durations, 47.8% of respondents reported watching content for 4 to 6 hours in a single sitting, 32.1% watched for 1 to 3 hours, and 20.1% exceeded 6 hours per session. These findings mirror international data indicating that binge-watching sessions typically extend well beyond a single episode or two, driven by streaming platforms' designs that facilitate continuous play (Kim & Choi, 2023; Martínez-Pecino et al., 2022). The significant portion of participants engaging in marathon viewing sessions highlights the depth of immersion and narrative engagement characteristic of modern media consumption patterns.

Frequency analysis revealed that 29.1% of participants binge-watched regularly, with 23.2% engaging in binge sessions twice or more per week and 20.5% once per week. This habitual viewing pattern aligns with research identifying binge-watching as a recurrent behavior among young adults, often integrated into daily or weekly leisure routines for relaxation and social connection (Petersen, 2016; Raza et al., 2021). The regularity of binge-watching suggests it is not merely an occasional indulgence but a sustained behavioral pattern with potential implications for psychological health and lifestyle management.

### **Binge Racing Behavior**

The percentage of those who experienced binge racing—watching a whole season of a show in one sitting—was a startling 74.8%. This high frequency highlights how binge racing has become commonplace in modern viewing cultures, especially among young digital natives and used to full-season releases being available on-demand (Sabran & Sokri, 2023). Among binge racers, 51.5% binge-raced occasionally, while 21.1% did so frequently, suggesting variability in how binge racing fits into individual viewing habits, with some treating it as an occasional event and others as a regular activity.

The phenomenon of binge racing is closely tied to the structural affordances of streaming platforms like Netflix, which enable uninterrupted consumption without temporal constraints. However, excessive binge racing raises concerns about potential adverse effects on sleep patterns, physical health, and social functioning, as corroborated by neuropsychological studies linking prolonged screen time with impaired cognitive and emotional regulation (Martínez-Pecino et al., 2022).

### **Platform Preferences and Motivations**

According to 92.3% of respondents, Netflix was the most popular streaming service, demonstrating its global dominance in influencing binge-watching habits (Steiner & Xu, 2020; Tolba & Zoghaib, 2022). With 60.3% of the market, YouTube is a secondary platform, demonstrating the popularity of free and user-generated content and subscription-based services. Regional platforms Shahid and Watch It accounted for 33.8% and 30.8% of preference, respectively, reflecting localized content availability and cultural relevance for Egyptian viewers (Ahmed, 2019).

The primary motivation for selecting Netflix was its content variety, reported by 82.9% of participants. This finding is consistent with research showing that diversity and content quality are important elements that affect long-term engagement and platform loyalty (Rubenking et al., 2018; Sabran & Sokri, 2023). The platform's investment further enhances viewer retention in original series, which provides unique stories not seen elsewhere (Kooijman, 2016). Additionally, the ad-free experience was cited as a significant motivator, aligning with studies demonstrating that uninterrupted viewing enhances immersion and satisfaction (Lobato, 2019).

### **Motivations for Watching TV Series**

The majority of participants (74.8%) expressed moderate motivations for binge-watching. Escapism was identified as a moderate or high motivation by nearly 94% of respondents (56.4% moderate, 37.6% high), reaffirming its

central role in binge-watching behavior (Joseph & Varghese, 2025). This motivation reflects the psychological function of media as a refuge from stress and a means of mood regulation (Rubenking et al., 2018).

Passing time, boredom, and alleviation were highly endorsed motives (77.8% and 75%, respectively), echoing the uses and gratifications theory, which posits that media serves as a time-filling activity and emotional distraction (Flayelle et al., 2020). Learning new languages or gaining more knowledge are examples of enrichment goals that demonstrated significant relevance (42.7% high, 41.5% moderate), indicating that binge-watching is not just an escapist activity but can also include cognitive involvement. This result indicates cultural heterogeneity and contrasts with Western-centric research (Sabran & Sokri, 2023).

Emotional enhancement motives were relevant for 59% of participants, indicating that viewers seek emotional stimulation and connection through storylines and characters (Rubenking & Bracken, 2018). However, social motives for binge-watching were generally low (59.4% low engagement), potentially reflecting cultural norms around solitary media consumption or social restrictions during the data collection period (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020).

### Hypotheses Testing

- H1: Increased binge-watching engagement correlates with lower psychological well-being.

**Table1:** Correlation between binge-watching engagement and psychological well-being

Variables		Loss of control	Engagement	Dependency	Desire Savoring	Positive Emotions	Binge watching	Pleasure Preservation
Psychological Well Being	R	0.098	-0.212**	-0.232**	0.122	-0.208**	-0.136*	0.056
	Sig.	0.135	0.001	0.000	0.063	0.001	0.037	0.396

\* Correlation is significant at the 0 05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0 01 level

Pearson correlation analyses revealed weak but statistically significant negative correlations between binge-watching engagement, dependency, positive emotions, and psychological well-being ( $r_s = -0.212, -0.232, -0.208,$  and  $-0.136,$  respectively;  $p < 0.01$ ). The theory and the complex nature of binge-watching's psychological effects are partially supported by the fact that characteristics including loss of control, desire to savor, and pleasure preservation did not significantly correlate with well-being (Joseph & Varghese, 2025; Raza et al., 2021).

- H2: Increased binge-watching motivations correlate with lower psychological well-being.

**Table2:** Correlation between binge-watching motivations and psychological well being

Variables		Coping Escapism	Enrichment	Emotional enhancement	Social	Watching TV Series Motives
Psychological Well Being	R	0.015	0.207**	0.038	0.160*	0.149*
	Sig.	0.819	0.001	0.558	0.014	0.023

\* Correlation is significant at the 0 05 level

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

Contrary to expectations, enrichment and social motivations correlated positively with psychological well-being ( $r = 0.207, p < 0.01$ ;  $r = 0.16, p < 0.05$ ), suggesting these factors may be protective against adverse psychological outcomes. Coping escapism and emotional enhancement did not show significant correlations, indicating that not all motivations detrimentally affect well-being (Flayelle et al., 2020).

- H3: Demographic differences influence binge-watching behavior.

**Table 3:** Differences among youth according to the demographic variables (age, gender, social level, income) in binge watching

Variables		N	Mean	SD.	Test of Stat.	df	Sig.
Age	18-26	182	4.98	2.574	T=	232	0.092
	27-35	52	4.31	2.430	1.690		
Gender	Female	173	5.05	2.709	T=	232	0.027
	Male	61	4.21	1.933	-2.22		
Marital status	Not married	217	4.85	2.600	T=	232	0.755
	Married	17	4.65	1.902	-0.31		
Educational Background	Graduate	92	4.93	2.862	F=	3	0.662
	Undergraduate	79	4.96	2.599			
	Post- Grad	53	4.60	1.994			
Employment Status	High School	10	4.10	1.792	T=	232	0.542
	Employed	133	4.74	2.392			
The total family income per month	Unemployed	101	4.95	2.758	-0.61	2	0.943
	Over 10,000 LE	119	4.86	2.868	F=		
	5,000 -10,000 LE	85	4.76	2.186	0.058		
	Under 5,000 LE	30	4.93	2.243			

The only demographic factor that significantly predicted binge-watching frequency was that females engaged more than males ( $t = -2.22, p = 0.05$ ). Other variables—age, marital status, education, and income—did not exhibit significant effects, corroborating international research on demographic influences in media consumption (Rubenking et al., 2018).

### 5. Discussion

The study results advance our understanding of binge-watching habits and how they affect young Egyptians psychologically. This group is experiencing a major cultural shift and is rapidly embracing technology. Global

consumption patterns are reflected in the prevalence of binge-watching among younger persons (18–26 years old) (Kim & Choi, 2023; Steiner & Xu, 2020). However, Egypt's sociocultural peculiarities complicate how these behaviors are experienced and articulated, highlighting the necessity of a localized media psychology study.

The high frequency of binge-watching activities involving watching complete seasons in one sitting suggests that intense media consumption has become more commonplace in the digital age. It is made possible by several structural affordances offered by streaming platforms, including autoplay capabilities, full-season releases, and highly customized recommendation algorithms. These mechanisms collectively encourage prolonged engagement, reinforcing theories of media consumption such as the Uses and Gratifications framework, which posits that viewers actively seek media to fulfill emotional, cognitive, and social needs (Rubenking et al., 2018; Flayelle et al., 2020).

The study found a positive correlation between enrichment, social incentives, and psychological well-being, indicating that binge-watching is not always harmful. This bolsters the claim made by Steiner and Xu (2020) that media consumption can promote learning, cultural inquiry, and social connection only if users make it with awareness and motivation, highlighting the importance of raising awareness regarding managing binge-watching habits and gaining a more profound understanding of it. Similarly, Sabran and Sokri (2023) emphasize the potential for streaming media to serve as a platform for cognitive enrichment and emotional support when integrated into balanced lifestyles. Such motivations may act as protective buffers against risks commonly associated with excessive screen time, such as social isolation or emotional dysregulation (Joseph & Varghese, 2025).

However, despite being widespread, our study found no significant correlation between psychological well-being and drives for emotional improvement and escape, highlighting this component's complex and sometimes contradictory character. Escapism can offer short-term stress relief, according to dual-process theories of media usage, which recognize both adaptive and maladaptive routes. However, excessive use may promote maladaptive coping (Raza et al., 2021; Kim et al., 2023). The significance of assessing viewers' intentions and level of control when assessing the psychological impacts of binge-watching is underscored by this discrepancy.

Gender differences were noticeable, with women reporting more binge-watching episodes. This is consistent with other studies showing that binge-watching enables women to consume media more relationally and emotionally (Merrill & Rubenking, 2019; Sun & Chang, 2021). This pattern emphasizes the necessity of gender-sensitive mental health therapies and media literacy programs that focus on particular consumption vulnerabilities and motivations.

The identified partial inverse relationship between psychological well-being and binge-watching symptom dimensions emphasizes how important self-control and balance are when using media. At the same time, moderate binge-watching may yield positive outcomes and compulsive or uncontrolled viewing risks to mental health, consistent with behavioral addiction frameworks (Flayelle et al., 2020).

It is important to draw a clear line between binge-watching engagement and actual addiction-like symptoms. Engagement means the users are into a show or series, but this doesn't always mean they aren't in control; in other words, it's not automatically a problem. In contrast, symptoms such as loss of control and dependency indicate the existence of a problem that requires solving. Our findings show that some of these addiction-like symptoms are associated with lower psychological well-being, but just being highly engaged doesn't always mean the user is struggling. Recognizing this difference matters. It keeps us from labeling intense but controlled media use as a problem when it isn't.

Concerns regarding possible cognitive and emotional repercussions are raised by recent neuropsychological findings showing that binge-watching can activate reward-related neural pathways, similar to other behavioral addictions. (Martínez-Pecino et al., 2022).

Beyond individual behavior, this study emphasizes the influential role of the digital media environment. Streaming services increasingly use AI-driven customization, which increases user engagement but may inadvertently encourage excessive usage. Mental health professionals, educators, and well-being professionals should collaborate to integrate digital media literacy into juvenile well-being programs. This would enable users to control

their consumption habits critically and maximize the positive effects of media while minimizing its adverse effects (Morris & Patel, 2024).

### **Implications for Theory, Policy, and Practice**

The findings extend the Uses and Gratifications theory by contextualizing viewer motivations within a culturally specific environment marked by unique social and technological factors. They also lend empirical support to behavioral addiction models in understanding when binge-watching crosses from passionate engagement into problematic territory.

These findings support creating culturally appropriate media literacy programs that teach young viewers about the dangers of compulsive viewing and balanced intake. Streaming services should also apply ethical design principles by offering clear, user-controlled suggestion options to reduce unwanted addictive habits.

Practitioners in mental health should consider binge-watching behaviors in assessments, distinguishing between adaptive media use and potential addictive symptoms, with gender-sensitive approaches given the observed differences.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

The purposive sample used in this study was restricted to young Egyptians familiar with Netflix, limiting its applicability to other age groups, cultural situations, or streaming services. The cross-sectional design restricts the ability to conclude the relationship between binge-watching and mental health.

Future studies should use longitudinal approaches to monitor the evolution of binge-watching behaviors and mental health outcomes over time. Comparative studies across cultures would clarify sociocultural moderators of binge-watching impacts. Experimental designs could investigate causal pathways linking media consumption, emotional regulation, and addiction. Qualitative research may also provide a deeper understanding of subjective experiences and motives.

There is still room for more research on algorithmic transparency and its psychological impacts, mainly on how tailored recommendations affect viewer autonomy and possible compulsivity.

## **6. Conclusion**

This study explores the binge-watching behaviors of young Egyptians, illuminating the intricate relationship between their psychological health, media engagement levels, and viewing intentions. By doing this, the study adds to the expanding corpus of Research on the consumption of digital media while providing a viewpoint that captures the experiences of a group often overlooked in the literature: young, educated Egyptian women. Global binge-watching tendencies frequently take center stage in discussions, but they fail to consider the socioeconomic factors and cultural quirks particular to non-Western settings.

The study emphasizes the significance of establishing media research in localized realities by placing the analysis within Egypt's changing digital landscape, which is characterized by growing internet connectivity and the emergence of regionally competitive, low-cost streaming platforms like Yango and Viu. These environmental factors affect how prolonged viewing is viewed psychologically, affecting how much is consumed. The study's emphasis on this point of view addresses a glaring gap in literature, which mostly neglects the complex behaviors emerging in the Global South to focus on Westerners.

Binge-watching behavior could be a psychological reward for oneself, but users should be aware of its risks. While high dependency and compulsive binge-watching patterns are associated with diminished psychological well-being, specific motivations such as cognitive enrichment and social connection are linked to positive mental health outcomes. This contradiction supports the notion that binge-watching is not inherently bad but that its psychological impacts vary depending on whether it reflects high but regulated engagement or maladaptive, addiction-like symptom. So, to appropriately frame binge-watching within more thorough models of media psychology and addiction.

The study showed that women binge-watched more often than men, which is consistent with patterns in media studies and emphasizes how media literacy and mental health promotion programs must employ gender-sensitive tactics. Participants' high-frequency and prolonged binge sessions indicate that the public needs to be made more aware of the dangers of compulsive viewing and other possible health effects.

From the media industry's standpoint, streaming services like Netflix impact user behavior using content strategies like autoplay, full-season releases, and algorithm-driven recommendations. These features improve the user experience while putting more pressure on service providers to encourage healthy viewing habits by giving users control over their consumption and offering recommendation systems.

This study highlights the critical need for culturally sensitive, multidisciplinary approaches incorporating digital media literacy, psychological assistance, and public health education for mental health specialists and policymakers. Such approaches equip youth with critical skills to navigate the digital media landscape thoughtfully and foster mental well-being in an increasingly mediated environment.

Future Research should work on longitudinal designs to explore the long-term psychological effects of binge-watching and investigate effective, culturally sensitive interventions tailored to diverse populations. Further inquiry into the interaction between digital algorithms and viewer autonomy will also be critical in understanding and mitigating the risks of addictive media behaviors.

This study contributes significantly to the discussion around youth culture, mental health, and digital media use in Egypt. It provides a fundamental framework that connects empirical findings with real-world applications, directing future studies, the creation of policies, and the operations of the media sector to encourage media participation that is both balanced and psychologically sound.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was conducted in accordance with ethical standards for research involving human participants. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained electronically from all respondents prior to data collection. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and all data were used solely for academic research purposes.

### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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## دوافع وآثار المشاهدة المفرطة لمنصة نتفليكس على الصحة النفسية لدى الشباب المصري

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### المخلص:

أدى النمو المتسارع لخدمات البث عبر الإنترنت عند الطلب إلى إحداث تحول جوهري في أنماط استهلاك الوسائط، لا سيما بين فئة الشباب. وتعد ظاهرة "المشاهدة المفرطة"—والمتمثلة في مشاهدة عدة حلقات متتالية من مسلسل تلفزيوني في جلسة واحدة—إحدى أبرز نتائج هذا التحول. ورغم أن الدراسات السابقة قدمت نتائج متباينة تربط بين المشاهدة المفرطة من جهة، وكلٍّ من الأضرار النفسية والإشباع العاطفي من جهة أخرى، فإن آثارها النفسية تظل مرهونة بالسياق الثقافي والاجتماعي، ولا تزال غير مستكشفة بشكل كافٍ في البيئات غير الغربية.

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء الآثار النفسية للمشاهدة المفرطة بين الشباب المصري من خلال مسح إلكتروني مقطعي شمل عينة قصدية قوامها ٢٣٤ مشاركاً تتراوح أعمارهم بين ١٨ و٣٥ عامًا، ممن يستخدمون منصات البث الرقمي بشكل منتظم. واعتمدت الدراسة على ثلاثة مقاييس نفسية معتمدة علمياً، هي: مقياس رايف للرفاه النفسي، واستبيان دوافع مشاهدة المسلسلات التلفزيونية (WTSMQ)، واستبيان التفاعل مع المشاهدة المفرطة وأعراضها (BWESQ)، وذلك لتحليل العلاقة بين أنماط المشاهدة المفرطة ومستويات الرفاه النفسي.

وأظهرت النتائج وجود علاقة ارتباط سلبية جزئية بين الرفاه النفسي ومستويات التفاعل مع المشاهدة المفرطة وأعراضها، بما يشير إلى أن الإفراط في المشاهدة قد يرتبط بتراجع في الصحة النفسية. في المقابل، كشفت النتائج عن علاقات إيجابية بين الرفاه النفسي وبعض الدوافع المرتبطة بالمشاهدة، مثل الهروب النفسي والإثراء المعرفي. وتعكس هذه النتائج الطابع النفسي المعقد لظاهرة المشاهدة المفرطة، وتؤكد أهمية فهم دوافع المشاهدين عند تقييم المخاطر والفوائد النفسية المحتملة لهذا النمط من استهلاك الوسائط.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المشاهدة المفرطة، الرفاه النفسي، استهلاك الوسائط الرقمية، علم نفس الإعلام، الشباب المصري، منصات البث الرقمي