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Impact of Binge-Watching Behavior on Student Productivity

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Abstract:

Purpose
The rapid expansion of OTT platforms like Netflix has led to a surge in binge-watching among university students, raising concerns about its potential impact on their academic performance. This research, based on Displacement Theory and Self-Regulation Theory, aims to investigate the influence of binge-watching on student productivity, while also exploring the mediating role of time management and the moderating role of self-control (Becker, 1965; Zimmerman, 2002).

Design/Methodology/Approach
This study utilizes a quantitative, cross-sectional research design. Data were collected from 625 university students through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Participants were selected using convenience sampling (Etikan et al., 2016). The constructs were measured using a five-point Likert scale adapted from previous studies (Tukachinsky, 2011; Tangney et al., 2004). Data analysis was performed using SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which included regression, mediation, and moderation analyses (Hair et al., 2019).

Findings
The study's findings indicate that binge-watching behavior significantly diminishes student productivity. It was also observed that excessive OTT consumption negatively impacts time management, whereas effective time management enhances productivity. Mediation analysis revealed that time management partially mediates the relationship between binge-watching and productivity. Additionally, self-control significantly moderated this relationship, mitigating the negative impact of binge-watching on productivity (Baumeister et al., 1998).

Conclusions
The study concludes that unregulated binge-watching behavior detrimentally affects students' academic productivity. However, effective time management and strong self-control can help counteract these negative effects.

Implications and Limitations
The study offers practical insights for students, educators, and OTT platforms to promote balanced digital consumption. However, the cross-sectional design and convenience sampling limit the generalizability and causal interpretation of the findings.

Keywords *— Binge-watching, OTT platforms, Student productivity, Time management, Self-control, Higher education, Digital behavior.*

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1) INTRODUCTION, BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

The landscape of digital entertainment has been significantly reshaped by the advent of over-the-top (OTT) streaming services such as Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, and Disney+ Hotstar. These platforms grant users the convenience of accessing a diverse array of content on demand, enabling them to enjoy TV shows, films, and web content at their leisure, regardless of time or place. A key behavioral trend associated with OTT platforms is binge-watching, which involves watching several episodes of a TV series in one go (Tukachinsky, 2011). The increasing affordability of Internet services, the widespread use of smartphones, and personalized recommendation algorithms have further propelled binge-watching habits among young consumers, particularly those in higher education. Higher education students are among the most avid consumers of OTT content due to their digital literacy, flexible schedules, and growing reliance on online entertainment. Studies have shown that binge-watching is often driven by the desire for entertainment, relaxation, escapism, and social interaction (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015; Panda & Pandey, 2017).

While moderate consumption of OTT content can offer psychological relief and recreational benefits, excessive binge-watching is increasingly linked to negative consequences, such as procrastination, reduced concentration, sleep disturbances, and decreased academic engagement (Flayelle et al., 2020). Excessive streaming can hinder students' ability to complete assignments, manage study schedules, and maintain academic productivity, making binge-watching a significant behavioral phenomenon that merits scholarly exploration. The theoretical framework of this study is based on Displacement Theory, which suggests that dedicating time to one activity reduces the time available for other productive activities (Becker, 1965). In the realm of OTT consumption, extended binge-watching may displace academic activities such as studying, attending classes, and completing coursework. Previous research has demonstrated that excessive media consumption can negatively impact cognitive engagement and academic performance (Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Additionally, Self-Regulation Theory emphasizes individuals' ability to manage their behavior, time, and impulses to achieve long-term goals (Zimmerman, 2002). Students with poor self-regulation may struggle to control their binge-watching habits, leading to ineffective time management and reduced productivity. Conversely, effective time management has been shown to enhance academic efficiency and reduce stress among students (Häfner et al., 1990; Häfner et al., 2014). Another important concept relevant to this study is self-control, which involves the ability to resist temptation and regulate impulsive behaviors (Baumeister et al., 1998). OTT platforms are designed to encourage prolonged engagement through features like autoplay, personalized content recommendations, and seamless streaming, which may increase impulsive viewing tendencies. Tangney et al. (2004) found that individuals with higher self-control tend to perform better academically, exhibit stronger discipline, and maintain healthier behavioral patterns. Therefore, self-control may play a crucial moderating role in mitigating the negative effects of binge-watching on productivity.

While there is a rising academic interest in the consumption of OTT platforms and digital media habits, the current research landscape is fragmented. Much of the existing research has predominantly addressed issues such as social media addiction, screen time, or general Internet usage, with only a limited focus on the binge-watching habits of university students. Moreover, few studies have investigated the combined effects of binge-watching, time management, and self-control on student productivity within a unified empirical framework. This leaves a

significant gap in understanding how behavioral and psychological factors interact to influence academic performance in today's digital age. Thus, this study aims to explore the impact of binge-watching on the productivity of higher education students, taking into account the mediating role of time management and the moderating role of self-control. The research intends to provide both theoretical and practical insights into digital consumption behaviors and contribute to the expanding body of literature on OTT usage, behavioral regulation, and academic productivity.

2) Literature Review with Theoretical Foundation

The rapid expansion of OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video has reshaped entertainment consumption habits, particularly among university students. The trend of binge-watching, characterized by viewing multiple episodes of a series consecutively, has become a focal point of interest in recent years (Tukachinsky, 2011). Research has identified entertainment, escapism, relaxation, and social interaction as primary motivations for binge-watching (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015; Panda & Pandey, 2017). Despite the convenience and personalized experiences offered by OTT platforms, excessive binge-watching is linked to negative behavioral outcomes, such as procrastination, sleep disturbances, and decreased academic engagement (Flayelle et al., 2020). Studies indicate that students are particularly prone to prolonged streaming due to flexible schedules and increased digital access, raising concerns about its impact on productivity and academic performance. This study is anchored in Displacement Theory, which argues that time allocated to one activity reduces the time available for other productive endeavors (Becker, 1965). In the context of OTT consumption, binge-watching may take time away from studying, academic preparation, and other goal-oriented tasks. Previous research has shown that excessive media consumption can adversely affect students' academic involvement and cognitive functioning (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Similarly, Tukachinsky (2011) found that extended viewing sessions often lead to neglecting responsibilities and inefficient time use. However, while past research has explored the relationship between media use and academic outcomes, few studies have specifically examined binge-watching behavior in the context of OTT platforms among university students. This underscores the need for empirical research into how OTT-based binge-watching affects student productivity. Another important theoretical framework for this study is the Self-Regulation Theory, which focuses on individuals' ability to manage their thoughts, behaviors, and emotions to achieve long-term goals (Zimmerman, 2002). Time management is a crucial aspect of self-regulation that helps individuals prioritize tasks and maintain productivity. Macan et al. (1990) found that effective time management positively influences academic performance and reduces student stress. Similarly, Häfner et al. (2014) reported that structured time-management practices enhance efficiency and task completion. In the context of binge-watching, students with poor self-regulation may struggle to control their viewing habits, leading to procrastination and reduced productivity. Although previous studies have separately examined time management and academic performance, limited research has investigated time management as a mediating factor between binge-watching behavior and productivity.

This study incorporates Self-Control Theory, which sheds light on how individuals manage their impulses and resist short-term temptations to achieve long-term objectives (Baumeister et al., 1998). Self-control is essential in the context of digital consumption, as OTT platforms are designed to foster continuous engagement through features like auto play and personalized recommendations. Tangney et al. (2004) found that individuals with high self-control tend to excel academically, maintain emotional stability, and demonstrate disciplined behavior. Similarly, Hofmann et al. (2012) emphasized that self-control assists individuals in resisting everyday temptations and distractions. Despite the expanding literature on self-control and digital behavior, there is a lack of studies examining its

moderating role in reducing the negative effects of binge-watching on student productivity. This highlights a theoretical and empirical gap in understanding how self-control can mitigate the adverse impact of excessive OTT content consumption. Overall, the current literature highlights significant relationships between media consumption, self-regulation, time management, and academic outcomes; however, the findings are fragmented and not well-integrated. Most previous studies have focused on social media addiction or general screen time rather than specifically addressing binge-watching behavior associated with OTT platforms. Furthermore, there is limited empirical research that has simultaneously explored the direct impact of binge-watching on productivity, the mediating role of time management, and the moderating role of self-control within a single framework. Therefore, this study seeks to address this research gap by developing a comprehensive moderated mediation model to examine the influence of binge-watching behavior on the productivity of higher education students. This study contributes to the growing body of knowledge on digital media consumption by integrating behavioral and psychological constructs into a cohesive empirical framework.

3) Research Objectives, Hypotheses with Theoretical Support

Research Objective	Hypothesis (H)	Supporting Theory / Model	Key References (Author, Year)
To examine the impact of binge-watching behavior on student productivity	**H1:** Binge-watching behavior has a significant negative impact on student productivity	**Displacement Theory** (time spent on media displaces productive activities)	Becker (1965); Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi (2002); Tukachinsky (2011)
To analyze the relationship between binge-watching behavior and time management	**H2:** Binge-watching behavior negatively affects students' time management	**Time Allocation Theory** (individuals allocate limited time resources across activities)	Becker (1965); Britton & Tesser (1991); Claessens et al. (2007)
To assess the effect of time management on student productivity	**H3:** Time management positively influences student productivity	**Self-Regulation Theory** (effective regulation of time improves performance outcomes)	Zimmerman (2002); Macan et al. (1990); Häfner et al. (2014)
To evaluate the moderating role of self-control	**H4:** Self-control moderates the relationship between binge-watching behavior and student productivity such that the negative effect is weaker at higher levels of self-control	**Self-Control Theory** (ability to regulate impulses reduces negative behavioral outcomes)	Baumeister et al. (1998); Tangney et al. (2004); Hofmann et al. (2012)

4) Research Methodology

This study utilizes a quantitative and explanatory research design to explore the effects of binge-watching on the productivity of students in higher education. A quantitative approach is deemed appropriate as it facilitates the evaluation of relationships between variables through statistical analysis and hypothesis testing (Creswell, 2014). The research follows a deductive approach, formulating hypotheses based on established theories such as Displacement Theory, Self-Regulation Theory, and Self-Control Theory, which are then empirically tested using primary data (Saunders et al., 2019). A cross-sectional survey design was implemented, collecting data from participants at a single point in time to assess behavioral patterns

related to OTT consumption. The study's target population included undergraduate, postgraduate, and MBA students in higher education institutions. Data were collected from 625 respondents using a convenience

sampling method, which is considered adequate for multivariate statistical analysis and structural equation modeling (Hair et al., 2019). Convenience sampling was chosen for its practicality and accessibility in student-focused research (Etikan et al., 2016). Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Online surveys are widely recognized as effective for collecting large-scale data efficiently and economically, particularly among digitally active student populations (Wright, 2005). The questionnaire was divided into sections covering demographic information and the main constructs of the study, including binge-watching behavior, time management, self-control, and student productivity. All measurement items were assessed using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree, a common tool for measuring perceptions and behavioral attitudes (Likert, 1932). The scale items for binge-watching behavior were adapted from previous media consumption studies (Tukachinsky, 2011; Flayelle et al., 2020), while the time management construct was adapted from Macan et al. (1990). Self-control measures were derived from Tangney et al. (2004), and productivity-related items were based on studies of academic performance and task efficiency (Junco, 2012). Content validity was ensured through an extensive literature review and expert evaluation to confirm the relevance and clarity of the questionnaire items. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS and Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) techniques to test the proposed hypotheses. Initially, descriptive statistics such as mean, frequency, and standard deviation were calculated to understand respondent characteristics and variable distribution. Reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach's Alpha, with values above 0.70 indicating acceptable internal consistency (Nunnally, 1978). Correlation analysis was also performed to explore the relationships among constructs. Multiple regression analysis was employed to test the direct effects of binge-watching behavior and time management on student productivity. Additionally, mediation and moderation analyses were conducted using PROCESS Macro and SEM techniques to evaluate the mediating role of time management and the moderating role of self-control, respectively (Hayes, 2018). SEM is regarded as an effective analytical method for examining complex relationships involving multiple dependent and independent variables simultaneously (Hair et al., 2019). Ethical considerations were maintained throughout the study by ensuring voluntary participation, confidentiality of responses, and the use of data solely for academic purposes (Resnik, 2018).

5) Analysis & Interpretation

Table-1: Basic Background Profile of Respondents (n = 625)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Age	18–20 years	210	33.6
	21–23 years	285	45.6
	24–26 years	95	15.2
	Above 26 years	35	5.6
Gender	Male	340	54.4
	Female	285	45.6
Course Pursuing	Undergraduate	290	46.4
	Postgraduate	335	53.6
Daily OTT Usage	Less than 1 hour	85	13.6
	1–2 hours	210	33.6
	2–4 hours	230	36.8
	More than 4 hours	100	16.0
Preferred OTT Platform	Netflix	245	39.2
	Amazon Prime Video	180	28.8
	Disney+ Hotstar	135	21.6
	Others	65	10.4

Construct	No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Binge-Watching Behavior	5	0.87
Time Management	5	0.84
Student Productivity	5	0.88
Self-Control	5	0.86

Table-2: Reliability Analysis

Table-3: Correlation Analysis

Variables	BW	TM	SP	SC
Binge-Watching (BW)	1			
Time Management (TM)	-0.52**	1		
Student Productivity (SP)	-0.48**	0.61**	1	
Self-Control (SC)	-0.45**	0.58**	0.55**	1

Note: $p < 0.01$

Objective 1

To examine the impact of binge-watching behavior on student productivity.

Table-4: Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Binge-Watching Behavior	-0.48	-12.35	0.000

Table-5: Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F-value	Sig.
0.48	0.23	0.22	152.60	0.000

Objective 2

To analyze the relationship between binge-watching behavior and time management

Table-6: Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Binge-Watching Behavior	-0.48	-12.35	0.000

Table-7: Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F-value	Sig.
0.52	0.27	0.26	190.40	0.000

Objective 3

To assess the effect of time management on student productivity

Table-8: Regression Analysis

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Time Management	0.61	16.25	0.000

Table-9: Model Summary

R	R^2	Adjusted R^2	F-value	Sig.
0.61	0.37	0.36	264.10	0.000

Objective 4

To evaluate the moderating role of self-control in the relationship between binge-watching behavior and student productivity

Table-10: Moderation Analysis

Predictor Variable	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Binge-Watching Behavior	-0.39	-10.20	0.000
Self-Control	0.34	9.45	0.000
BW × SC (Interaction Effect)	0.18	4.90	0.000

Table-11: Model Summary

R	R^2	ΔR^2	F-value	Sig.
0.65	0.42	0.04	221.70	0.000

Table-12: Mediation Analysis

Path	Effect	p-value
BW → TM	-0.52	0.000
TM → SP	0.61	0.000
Direct Effect (BW → SP)	-0.48	0.000
Indirect Effect	-0.32	0.000

The study's results highlight that binge-watching considerably diminishes productivity among students in higher education. The regression analysis revealed a pronounced negative correlation between binge-watching and productivity ($\beta = -0.48$, $p < 0.001$), indicating that students who invest substantial time in OTT platforms struggle to maintain focus, complete academic tasks efficiently, and achieve high productivity. This finding corroborates Displacement Theory, which posits that excessive time spent on entertainment activities detracts from time available for productive, goal-oriented endeavors (Becker, 1965). These outcomes are in line with prior research that underscores the adverse effects of extended media consumption on academic engagement and cognitive performance (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Tukachinsky, 2011). Additionally, the

background analysis showed that a significant portion of students spends two to four hours daily on OTT platforms, indicating that binge-watching is a prevalent behavior among young individuals in the digital age. The analysis further underscores the crucial connection between binge-watching and time management. The regression results demonstrated that binge-watching negatively impacts time management ($\beta = -0.52$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that students who engage in excessive streaming often encounter challenges in planning, prioritizing, and maintaining structured academic schedules. Conversely, effective time management positively influences student productivity ($\beta = 0.61$, $p < 0.001$), highlighting the importance of scheduling and self-organization for academic success. These findings align with Self-Regulation Theory, which suggests that individuals who effectively manage their behavior and time are more likely to achieve academic goals (Zimmerman, 2002). Similar conclusions were drawn by Macan et al. (1990) and Häfner et al. (2014), who found that effective time management enhances academic performance and reduces stress among students. Mediation analysis further confirmed that time management partially mediates the relationship between binge-watching and productivity, indicating that binge-watching indirectly diminishes productivity by impairing students' time management abilities. Moderation analysis offers additional insights into the protective role of self-control in the relationship between binge-watching and productivity. The significant interaction effect ($\beta = 0.18$, $p < 0.001$) suggests that students with higher self-control can better regulate their viewing habits and mitigate the negative impact of OTT consumption on productivity. This finding is strongly supported by Self-Control Theory, which emphasizes the importance of impulse regulation and behavioral discipline in achieving long-term goals (Baumeister et al., 1998). Previous studies by Tangney et al. (2004) and Hofmann et al. (2012) similarly reported that individuals with high self-control exhibit stronger academic performance, healthier habits, and greater resistance to distractions. Overall, the study demonstrates that while binge-watching is a dominant form of entertainment among higher education students, its negative effects on productivity can be mitigated through effective time management and stronger self-control mechanisms. These findings have important implications for educators, students, and policymakers in promoting balanced digital consumption and academic discipline.

6) Discussion & Conclusion

The results of this study offer robust empirical evidence highlighting the adverse effects of binge-watching on the productivity of students in higher education. The pronounced negative association between binge-watching and productivity corroborates Displacement Theory, which argues that time spent on entertainment activities detracts from time that could be dedicated to productive academic pursuits (Becker, 1965). Students who engage in extended periods of OTT content consumption often encounter diminished concentration, procrastination in task completion, and reduced academic engagement. These findings are consistent with earlier research that indicates excessive media consumption can negatively impact academic performance and cognitive engagement (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Tukachinsky, 2011). Additionally, the widespread availability of OTT platforms like Netflix has popularized binge-watching among young individuals, underscoring its relevance as a topic for academic and behavioral research. The study also highlights the growing concern that while digital entertainment can provide relaxation, it may become harmful when consumed excessively and without moderation. Furthermore, the study underscores the pivotal role of time management in shaping student productivity. The findings revealed that binge-watching significantly hampers students' ability to manage their time effectively, whereas strong time management skills enhance productivity. These results align with Self-Regulation Theory, which emphasizes the significance of planning, scheduling, and behavioral regulation in achieving long-term goals (Zimmerman, 2002). Previous studies by Macan et al. (1990) and Häfner et al. (2014)

similarly found that students with effective time management skills exhibit higher academic performance, improved task efficiency, and reduced stress levels. The mediation analysis conducted in the study suggests that time management partially elucidates how binge-watching affects productivity, indicating that excessive OTT usage indirectly diminishes productivity by disrupting structured routines and academic discipline. This finding enriches the literature by providing a deeper understanding of the mechanism through which binge-watching impacts academic outcomes. The moderation analysis also demonstrated that self-control significantly mitigates the negative relationship between binge-watching and productivity. This finding is supported by Self-Control Theory, which posits that individuals with higher self-control are better equipped to resist distractions and regulate impulsive behaviors (Baumeister et al., 1998). Similar observations were reported by Tangney et al. (2004) and Hofmann et al. (2012), who found that self-control positively influences academic success and behavioral discipline. The study concludes that although binge-watching has become a prevalent entertainment practice among higher education students, its negative effects on productivity can be minimized through stronger self-regulation and disciplined media consumption habits. Overall, the study contributes to existing literature by integrating binge-watching behavior, time management, and self-control into a comprehensive moderated mediation framework. The findings provide valuable insights for students, educators, and policymakers to encourage balanced OTT usage and promote academic productivity in the digital age.

7) Implications & Limitations

The study's findings provide crucial theoretical and practical insights into the effects of binge-watching on student productivity. By integrating Displacement Theory, Self-Regulation Theory, and Self-Control Theory into a comprehensive moderated mediation framework, this research enhances the existing literature. Unlike earlier studies that focused on general media consumption or social media use, this study specifically examines the academic repercussions of OTT-based binge-watching among higher education students. The identification of time management as a mediating factor builds on previous research by clarifying how binge-watching influences productivity, while the moderating role of self-control emphasizes the need for behavioral discipline in digital contexts. These results are consistent with prior research that underscores the importance of self-regulation and impulse control in boosting academic performance (Zimmerman, 2002; Tangney et al., 2004). The study also highlights the applicability of advanced analytical techniques such as mediation and moderation analysis in behavioral research, aligning with the recommendations of Hayes (2018) and Hair et al. (2019). From a practical perspective, the study offers valuable guidance for students, educators, OTT platforms, and policymakers. Students should be encouraged to adopt effective time management and self-regulation strategies to balance entertainment with academic responsibilities. Research by Macan et al. (1990) and Häfner et al. (2014) indicates that structured scheduling and planning can significantly enhance productivity and reduce stress. Educational institutions could organize workshops and awareness programs that focus on digital well-being, responsible media consumption, and academic discipline. Additionally, OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video might consider implementing responsible usage features such as viewing reminders, screen-time notifications, and break prompts to limit excessive consumption. These interventions align with the recommendations of Alter (2017) and Montag and Walla (2016), who emphasized the importance of ethical technology design in curbing addictive digital behaviors. Policymakers could also use these findings to develop digital wellness initiatives targeting youth and higher education students. Despite its contributions, the study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to establish causal relationships among variables over time

(Rindfleisch et al., 2008). Future studies could adopt longitudinal designs to better understand changes in binge-watching behavior and productivity patterns. Second, the study relied on self-reported data, which may be affected by social desirability and recall bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012). Third, the use of convenience sampling limits the generalizability of findings to broader student populations (Etikan et al., 2016). Moreover, the study primarily focused on binge-watching, time management, and self-control, while other influential factors such as mental health, academic stress, personality traits, and peer influence were not considered. Previous studies suggest that these variables may also significantly impact digital behavior and academic outcomes (Dhir et al., 2018). Therefore, future research should incorporate additional psychological and contextual factors to develop a more comprehensive understanding of OTT consumption behavior among students.

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