

BINGE-WATCHING DURING THE PANDEMIC: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN INDIA

MARATONSKO GLEDANJE TIJEKOM PANDEMIJE: EMPIRIJSKO ISTRAŽIVANJE U INDIJI

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Preliminary communication

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Abstract

Purpose – This study attempts to reveal the motivation of individuals for binge-watching. The motivational factors considered are enjoyment, efficiency, recommendations of others, perceived control, and fandom. The underlying framework used to explore the association of various motivational factors with binge-watching behavior is the Uses and Gratifications theory. The study also aims to contribute additional insight to the current literature on bingewatching by showing the moderating effects that the traits of sensation-seeking and need for cognition have on binge-watching behavior.

Design/Methodology/Approach – Data was collected through a survey of 298 respondents who used online digital video platforms during phase I of the lockdown in India in April 2020. Analysis and testing were performed using Warp PLS 20 in order to understand binge-watching behavior during the pandemic.

Findings and Implications – The study found enjoyment and efficiency to be the most influential predictors of binge-watching motivation, with fandom as the second most influential. Moreover, a major contribution of this study stems from the finding that sensationseeking and binge-watching behavior do not moderate the

Sažetak

Svrha – Istraživanje pokušava otkriti motivaciju pojedinaca za maratonsko gledanje. Motivacijski čimbenici uzeti u obzir jesu: užitak, učinkovitost, preporuke drugih, percipirana kontrola i obožavanje. Teorija upotrebe i zadovoljstva upotrijebljena je kao podloga za ispitivanje povezanosti različitih motivacijskih čimbenika s ponašanjem maratonskog gledanja. Rad također ima za cilj pružiti više uvida u postojeću literaturu o maratonskom gledanju pokazujući moderirajuće učinke osobina traženja senzacije i potrebe za spoznajom na ponašanje maratonskog gledanja.

Metodološki pristup – Podaci su prikupljeni putem anketnog upitnika od 298 ispitanika koji su koristili internetske digitalne video platforme tijekom I. faze lockdowna u Indiji tijekom travnja 2020. godine. Kako bi se razumjelo ponašanje maratonskog gledanja tijekom pandemije, analiza i testiranje provedeni su pomoću WARP PLS-a 20.

Rezultati i implikacije – Rezultati su otkrili da su užitak i učinkovitost najutjecajniji prvi, a obožavanje drugi najutjecajniji prediktor motivacije za maratonsko gledanje. Štoviše, glavni doprinos istraživanja jest taj da traženje senzacije i maratonskog gledanje nisu moderirali pove-

relationship between binge-watching motivation and binge-watching behavior.

Limitations – The sample consisted of individuals from only one country.

Originality – This study focuses on the motivators of binge-watching behavior during the COVID-19 pandemic from the aspect of the Uses and Gratifications theory.

Keywords – binge-watching motivation, Uses and Gratifications theory, pandemic, need for cognition, binge-watching behavior

zanost između motivacije za maratonsko gledanje i ponašanja maratonskog gledanje.

Ograničenja – Uzorak se sastojao od ispitanika iz samo jedne zemlje.

Doprinos – Rad se usredotočuje na motivatore ponašanja maratonskog gledanja tijekom pandemije korona virusa na temelju teorije upotrebe i zadovoljstva.

Gljučne riječi – motivacija za maratonsko gledanje, teorija upotrebe i zadovoljstva, pandemija, potreba za spoznajom, ponašanje maratonskoga gledanja

1. INTRODUCTION

The world today is witnessing a radical shift in media consumption from traditional to digital formats. This change can be attributed to the availability of better networks, digital connectivity, and smartphones, all of which has in turn provided consumers with ample choices of access to the media content they prefer. Traditional media consumption is now challenged by digital media platforms such as Over-The-Top (OTT) applications including YouTube and subscription-based applications like Prime Video, Netflix, etc. In terms of general media consumption, audio and video media are being consumed tremendously. According to a report published by RBSA (Shah, 2021), OTT platforms in India have a user penetration rate of 25.8%, which is expected to reach 32% by 2025. A rapid surge in digital consumption in the country is linked to the fact that India has the lowest mobile data rates whereas the average mobile data download speed has grown to 9.93 Mbps (TRAI, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns acted as a catalyst for the growth of OTT platforms, the corollary of which is an upsurge in binge-watching.

The average time spent by Indians on OTT platforms daily during the pandemic was over 95 minutes and has shown an increasing trend (OMG, 2020). Moreover, the rate of change in the consumption of social media, as well as in TV streaming, was found to be 75% (Statista, 2021). The major OTT platforms have responded to this shift in consumer behavior by curating language- and region-specific content to appeal to Indian consumers. Leading OTT platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime curated their content, ranging from mythological stories to crime thrillers, for the domestic market. However, very few gained traction among viewers. Researchers and the industry are uncertain whether this surge in bingewatching can be attributed only to the pandemic or will prove to be sustainable. An understanding of bingewatching motivators is imperative in the current situation.

Research in this area in relation to the pandemic is very limited in the global context and has not been conducted at all in the purely Indian context. Thus, it is important to learn what motivated binge-watching among Indian viewers during the pandemic. This study could help reveal the reasons for using OTT applications, which could in turn be used to consider the attention that should be given to the content of such applications and the manner in which marketing can be applied effectively to attract more people.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Binge-watching refers to watching multiple episodes of the same series in a single sitting (Umesh & Bose, 2019). During the COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns, people experienced nervousness and emotional collapse (Lima et al., 2020). The isolation at home triggered an upsurge in binge-watching behavior (Dixit, Marthoenis, Arafat, Sharma & Kar, 2020). The media industry, specifically the television industry, used this situation to its advantage. The number of video-on-demand viewers reached 1,072 million worldwide in 2019, an increase from 972 million in 2017. Globally, the digital TV industry generates \$55 billion in revenue (Statista, 2020). The television industry as it existed in the late 1990s, widely known as TV III, has witnessed a proliferation of digital distribution platforms and audience fragmentation. An extension of this was seen in 2000, with the launch of premium television channels and Netflix.

A change in the media landscape is also evident in India. A study carried out by KPMG (2019) among 1,458 OTT users across 16 Indian states found the penetration to be 2.3 OTT platforms per respondent, with each paying subscriber using 1.05 platforms on average. The number of OTT platforms in India, which stood at 9 in 2012, rose to more than 30 in 2018. OTT TV delivers video or audio content directly to the user via the internet. Rural internet penetration increased from 13% in 2016 to 24% in 2018. In addition, it was observed that adults spent an

average of 1 hour and 29 minutes per day on digital media platforms (eMarketer, 2019). Several statistics on smartphone and internet usage substantiate the growth of the digital platform in India. Moreover, India has the lowest mobile data rates in the world with INR 18.5 per 1 GB. Growth in the average data usage per subscriber has grown from 0.88 GB to 8.7 GB.

Binge-watching can be seen as marathoning on media platforms (Perks, 2015). A study conducted by Brunson (2010) defines binge-watching as domestic viewing of multiple episodes sequentially. Binge-watching motives can be better understood by applying the Uses and Gratifications theory, which enables an analysis of how people binge-watch. Media provide an intrinsically rewarding experience for individuals, resulting in an enjoyable, engaging state of flow (Sherry, 2004).

To understand the motivation behind binge-watching behavior in the context of technology proliferation, this study employs the Uses and Gratifications (U&G) theory. According to this theory, gratification is the satisfaction gained by the user by viewing some media technology content or engaging in such services, etc. (Katz, Blumler & Gurevitch, 1973). Peirce (2007) outlined that U&G theory considers media audiences to be active rather than passive, meaning that they unconsciously try to understand the messages in their own context. Moreover, media choices made by consumers are based on their needs, satisfaction, and motives (Peirce, 2007). Rahman and Arif (2021) added that by watching shows continuously, the consumer feels a sense of gratification, leading to reduced stress and boredom.

Some of the seminal studies in the field have identified motivators or gratifications sought in binge-watching as social interaction or companionship, relaxation, entertainment, information-seeking, and escapism (Greenberg, 1974; Rubin, 1983). In the analysis of binge-watching motivators from the perspective of technology adoption, individuals generally show hedonic

as well as utilitarian motivations (Kim & Sundar, 2014). Hedonic motives include enjoyment and fandom in adopting the technology while utilitarian motives relate to efficiency, perceived control, and recommendations of others.

Wimmer and Dominick (2014) posited that the intensity as well as the pattern of use of any media may be influenced by differences in individual psychological traits. Moreover, traits such as procrastination and impulsiveness, among others, can be linked to the patterns in which individuals use media to gratify their needs, thereby resulting in excessive binge-watching (Shim & Kim, 2018).

Sensation-seeking is the need for diverse, fresh, and complex sensations and experiences as well as the inclination to take risks, both emotional and physical, in order to gain such experience (Zuckerman, 1979). People with such needs and inclinations are prone to binge-watching, which serves to gratify their sensation-seeking desires. A study conducted by Henning and Verderer (2001) focuses specifically on only two psychological traits, namely sensation-seeking and need for cognition. Dai and Wang (2007) found that media consumers with a high need for cognition tend to engage in deep understanding of the content and enjoy the process as a cognitively demanding activity. Individuals who seek high sensation often tend to choose exciting and stimulating, rather than dull or mild media content to increase their arousal level (Zuckerman, 2004). They are found to regularly watch TV for continuous periods of time as they incessantly seek arousing stimuli/content in the shows to satisfy their sensation-seeking desires.

As stated, binge-watching and motivators of binge-watching behavior have been well-researched. A major limitation of previous studies consists in the fact that they were conducted prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. The present study fills this gap in the literature by exploring the motivators of binge-watching behavior during the pandemic. Furthermore, it contributes to the previous literature through

comprehensive research carried out in India as a fast-emerging country.

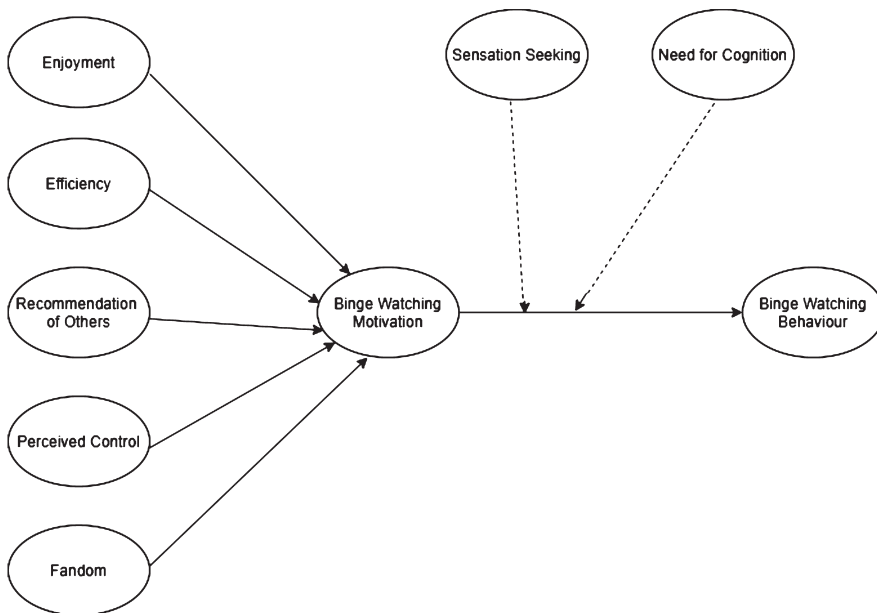
The structure of the paper is as follows. First, the existing literature concerning motivation behind binge-watching behavior is presented. This is followed by the conceptual framework and research hypotheses. The methodology, analysis, and study results are explained in the next section, followed by a discussion of the results. Finally, the conclusions of the study are presented, highlighting its managerial implications.

3. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES DEVELOPMENT

3.1. Conceptual Framework

This study relies on U&G theory (Katz et al., 1973) to gain an understanding of the motivation behind binge-watching behavior in the context of technology proliferation. Plenty of researchers have made use of this theory to explain the adoption of media. The present study intends to expand U&G theory to explore whether traits such as sensation-seeking and need for cognition have a moderating effect on the relationship between binge-watching motivation and binge-watching behavior. The conceptual framework is shown in Figure 1.

FIGURE 1: Conceptual framework used in the study



3.2. Hypotheses Development

Binge-watching motivation was used as an independent variable used in this study, with sensationseeking and need for cognition being selected as moderating variables. Binge-watching behavior acts as the dependent variable. Binge behavior is defined as the consumption of an

item in excessive amounts over a short period of time as a means of escaping reality and eliciting psychological comfort (Greene & Maggs, 2017). Binge-watching motivation is measured by enjoyment, efficiency, recommendations of others, perceived control, and fandom.

On the whole, media content is enjoyable, thus triggering binge-watching (Matrix, 2014). Moreover, enjoyment acts as one of the motivators of binge-watching (Rubenking, Campanella Bracken, Sandoval & Rister, 2018). Pittman and Kim (2015) posit that since bingewatching is enjoyable, individuals who engage in such an activity consider it to be a reward. Contrary to the above studies, Nabi, Stitt, Halford, and Finnerty (2006) found that enjoyment does not always act as a motivator of binge-watching. Efficiency relates to the desire for realism when consuming media (Shim & Kim, 2018). The present study relates efficiency to the ease of use and availability of media content for consumption.

Fandom is construed in the current media or social media context as referring to someone showing fanlike behavior towards particular content (Jenner, 2017). Media fandom brings together individuals within the same subculture with shared interests in a product, brand, or media (Tsay-Vogel & Sanders, 2017). Fiske (1992) suggested that fans tend to be active rather than passive when receiving, producing, and consuming media. Moreover, fandom provides a sense of individual identification with a character while consuming certain content (Cohen, 2001).

According to Glicksohn and Zuckerman (2013), sensation-seeking is defined as the need for varied, novel, and complex sensations and experiences and the willingness to take physical and social risks for the sake of such experience. Likewise, the need for cognition is attributed to an individual's tendency to engage in effortful thinking (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982).

H1: Binge-watching motivation has a positive significant relationship with binge-watching behavior.

H2: The relationship between binge-watching motivation and binge-watching behavior is moderated by the sensation-seeking trait.

H3: The relationship between binge-watching motivation and binge-watching behavior is moderated by the need-for-cognition trait.

4. METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS

The objective of this study is to identify the motivational factors driving individuals towards binge-watching. Data was collected from individuals over the age of 15 who used online digital video platforms during phase I of the lockdown in India in April 2020. The respondents considered as binge watchers in the current study were those who spent three or more hours watching any content of their choice. The questionnaire used for the study was adopted from a previous study on binge-watching motivation conducted by Shim and Kim (2018). These structured survey forms were distributed to the respondents via the internet. Out of more than 500 distributed forms, 340 were sent back by the respondents. After eliminating the unfilled or partially filled forms, 298 were found to be suitable for the study. Model and hypothesis testing was done using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), with WarpPLS 20 used to perform the SEM analysis. SPSS was applied in analyzing the demographic variables and descriptive statistics.

4.1. Reliability

Individual factor loadings on the latent constructs were examined to assess individual factor reliability (Hulland, 1999). The greater the loadings, the greater the shared variance between the construct and its measures. In this study, Cronbach's alpha of 0.6 recommended by Malhotra and Peterson (2006) was considered as the criterion for factor retention. In view of this, the variables are acceptable. Factor loadings are shown in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Factor loadings of the reliability test

	BW	EN	EF	RO	PC	FD	SSK	NFC
Composite reliability	0.872	0.883	0.913	0.867	0.852	0.868	0.870	0.852
Cronbach's α	0.779	0.821	0.872	0.795	0.654	0.772	0.829	0.801
Avg var. extracted	0.694	0.654	0.724	0.621	0.743	0.687	0.457	0.423
Full collin. VIF	2.653	3.661	2.179	1.827	1.434	1.697	1.256	1.068
Min	-2.136	-0.320	-2.068	-3.458	-2.524	-2.068	-2.636	-2.995
Max	1.584	1.635	1.897	1.652	1.393	1.921	1.827	2.572
Median	0.046	-0.041	-0.074	0.092	-0.040	-0.074	-0.043	-0.045
Mode	0.654	1.635	-0.085	0.375	0.414	-0.074	-0.563	-0.212
Skewness	-0.305	-0.219	-0.209	-0.582	-0.478	-0.142	-0.071	-0.158
Exc. Kurtosis	-0.723	0.734	-0.476	0.440	-0.115	-0.603	-0.674	-0.037

Source: WarpPLS output

4.2. Validity

A validation test consisting of convergent validity and discriminant validity was performed before the SEM analysis. In order to achieve excellent construct validity, the measurement needed to prove both discriminant and convergent validity.

The convergent validity test was carried out to determine whether the responses to the survey

questions correlated to its latent variables. In the case of convergent validity, two values measuring the same construct were used in the study and found to be related. As shown in Table 2, p values for all indicators were found to be lower than 0.05, and the loadings for the indicators of each latent variable to be well above 0.5. Hence, it can be concluded that the measurement model has convergent validity.

TABLE 2: Indicator loadings and cross loadings of convergent validity

	BW	EN	EF	RO	PC	FD	SSK	NFC	P value
BW1	(0.882)	0.041	-0.018	0.051	-0.095	0.068	-0.078	0.034	<0.001
BW2	(0.807)	-0.030	-0.156	-0.123	0.130	-0.022	0.044	0.000	<0.001
BW3	(0.810)	-0.01	0.175	0.066	-0.025	-0.052	0.041	-0.038	<0.001
EN1	0.100	(0.72)	-0.062	0.131	0.092	-0.032	-0.053	-0.003	<0.001
EN2	0.012	(0.84)	-0.080	-0.134	-0.026	0.000	0.038	0.023	<0.001
EN3	-0.022	(0.87)	0.117	-0.06	-0.082	0.012	0.028	-0.025	<0.001
EN4	-0.082	(0.78)	0.014	0.095	0.035	0.017	-0.023	0.006	<0.001
EF1	0.020	0.044	(0.800)	-0.162	0.188	-0.092	0.054	0.034	<0.001
EF2	-0.030	0.015	(0.890)	0.033	-0.125	-0.028	-0.011	0.055	<0.001
EF3	0.003	-0.079	(0.895)	0.084	-0.063	0.005	-0.002	-0.077	<0.001
EF4	0.010	0.028	(0.813)	0.030	0.021	0.116	-0.039	-0.009	<0.001
RO1	0.117	-0.179	0.206	(0.778)	-0.107	-0.016	-0.099	-0.031	<0.001
RO2	0.166	0.125	-0.012	(0.840)	0.117	-0.094	-0.019	0.075	<0.001
RO3	0.092	-0.14	-0.163	(0.826)	-0.049	-0.019	0.126	-0.042	<0.001
RO4	-0.038	0.222	0.111	(0.702)	0.037	0.154	-0.016	-0.006	<0.001

	BW	EN	EF	RO	PC	FD	SSK	NFC	P value
PC1	-0.022	-0.012	-0.027	0.128	(0.862)	0.013	0.061	-0.077	<0.001
PC2	0.022	0.012	0.027	-0.128	(0.862)	-0.013	-0.061	0.077	<0.001
FD1	-0.206	0.299	0.044	-0.054	0.031	(0.839)	-0.017	-0.004	<0.001
FD2	0.031	-0.150	-0.014	0.068	-0.014	(0.805)	0.034	-0.019	<0.001
FD3	0.175	-0.16	-0.030	-0.011	-0.018	(0.842)	-0.015	0.022	<0.001
SSK1	-0.036	0.036	-0.123	0.242	0.053	-0.004	(0.790)	-0.094	<0.001
SSK2	-0.187	0.115	-0.154	0.101	0.098	-0.035	(0.702)	-0.106	<0.001
SSK3	0.356	-0.459	0.290	0.095	-0.169	-0.057	(0.791)	0.116	<0.001
SSK4	-0.137	0.297	-0.019	-0.048	0.081	-0.086	(0.701)	0.020	<0.001
SSK5	0.008	-0.080	0.038	0.006	-0.030	0.147	(0.733)	-0.037	<0.001
SSK6	-0.128	0.145	-0.089	0.161	-0.013	0.013	(0.792)	-0.089	<0.001
SSK7	0.053	0.005	0.006	-0.205	-0.080	-0.009	(0.721)	0.120	<0.001
SSK8	0.124	-0.129	0.078	-0.307	0.047	-0.002	(0.763)	0.093	<0.001
NFC1	-0.212	0.417	-0.181	0.000	0.118	-0.022	0.033	(0.714)	<0.001
NFC3	0.124	-0.284	0.113	-0.032	-0.180	0.112	0.073	(0.729)	<0.001
NFC4	-0.499	0.573	-0.279	0.131	0.292	0.045	0.094	(0.755)	<0.001
NFC5	-0.049	-0.178	-0.072	0.112	-0.015	0.249	-0.128	(0.719)	<0.001
NFC7	0.153	-0.148	-0.059	0.031	0.058	-0.055	-0.029	(0.753)	<0.001
NFC8	-0.157	0.055	0.000	0.164	0.171	-0.175	-0.057	(0.717)	<0.001
NFC9	0.229	-0.136	0.280	-0.254	-0.228	-0.067	0.016	(0.717)	<0.001
NFC10	0.242	-0.150	0.122	-0.101	-0.136	-0.042	-0.017	(0.757)	<0.001

Source: WarpPLS output

The discriminant validity test served to check whether or not the responses received correlated with other latent variables. To assess the reliability of the variables, Fornell and Larcker's (1981) measure of composite reliability was used in addition to Cronbach's alpha. Since this value provides a better estimate of the variance shared by

the respective indicators, it was preferred over Cronbach's alpha. Moreover, the loadings used by this measure were obtained within the nomological network (Hair, Black, Babin & Anderson, 2006). In Table 3, the diagonal values represent the square root of the AVE extracted for each latent variable.

TABLE 3: Correlations among latent variables with square roots of AVEs

	BW	EN	EF	RO	PC	FD	SSK	NFC
BW	(0.833)	0.772	0.572	0.564	0.364	0.058	0.284	0.084
EN	0.772	(0.809)	0.692	0.610	0.298	0.507	0.361	0.032
EF	0.572	0.692	(0.851)	0.493	0.387	0.535	0.257	0.063
RO	0.564	0.610	0.493	(0.788)	0.403	0.431	0.322	0.120
PC	0.364	0.298	0.387	0.403	(0.862)	0.428	0.066	0.160
FD	0.458	0.507	0.535	0.431	0.428	(0.829)	0.334	0.158
SSK	0.284	0.361	0.257	0.322	0.066	0.334	(0.776)	0.151
NFC	0.084	0.032	0.063	0.120	0.160	0.158	0.151	(0.751)

Source: WarpPLS

4.3. Correlations

Table 4 shows that, among the variables studied, binge-watching motivation and bingewatching are highly correlated. Binge-watching and need

for cognition exhibit minimum correlation with each other. However, there exists a positive co-relation between the constructs.

TABLE 4: Correlation results among latent variables

		SSK	NFC	BWM	BW
SSK	Pearson Correlation	1	.230**	.342**	.284**
NFC	Pearson Correlation	.230**	1	.212**	.133*
BWM	Pearson Correlation	.342**	.212**	1	.713**
BW	Pearson Correlation	.284**	.133*	.713**	1

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Source: WarpPLS output

4.4. Descriptive Statistics

As shown in Table 5, the mean values of the indicators of binge-watching motivation – enjoyment, efficiency, recommendations of others, perceived control, and fandom – are 3.29, 3.33, 3.08, 3.7, 3.5, and 3.08, respectively. This suggests a tendency of the respondents towards high

motivation. A mean of 3.2 for binge-watching behavior, on the other hand, indicates that the responses provided by all participants tend to suggest strong binge behavior. The fact that NFC and SSK have mean values of 3.4 and 3.2, respectively, supports this.

TABLE 5: Descriptive statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
BW	298	1.00	5.00	3.2964	1.07367	-.307	.141	-.708	.281
EN	298	1.00	5.00	3.3331	1.01691	-.209	.141	-.749	.281
EF	298	1.00	5.00	3.0872	1.00668	-.206	.141	-.461	.281
RO	298	1.00	5.00	3.7005	.78084	-.573	.141	.472	.281
PC	298	1.00	5.00	3.5705	1.02744	-.463	.141	-.163	.281
FD	298	1.00	5.00	3.0783	1.00384	-.153	.141	-.598	.281
SSK	298	1.25	5.00	3.4530	.84056	-.050	.141	-.680	.281
NFC	298	1.30	5.00	3.2174	.60154	.099	.141	.305	.281
Valid N (listwise)	298								

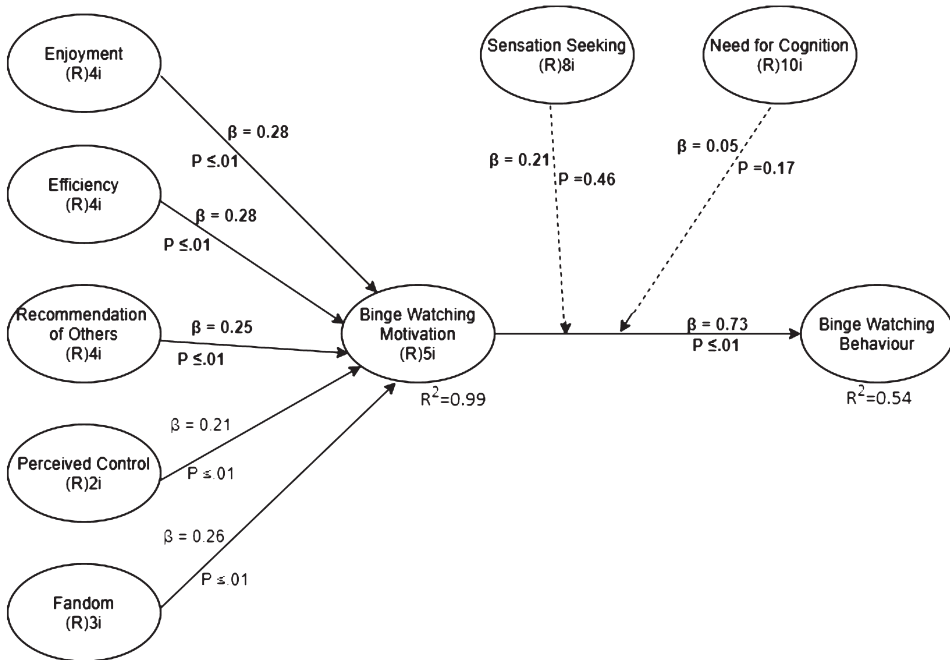
Source: WarpPLS output

4.5. Research Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model, as shown in Figure 2, has been developed using WarpPLS software. The software was used for variance-based and factor-based structural equation modeling apply-

ing different techniques to analyze the data collected through questionnaires. It was also used to test the hypothesized relationships. The results of hypothesis testing are shown in Table 6.

FIGURE 2: Structural model with factor loadings



The results of the hypothesis testing are shown in the table below. Out of the three hypotheses tested, only hypothesis H₁ was accepted, while H₂ and H₃ were rejected. Therefore, we can conclude that binge-watching behavior can be

affected by binge-watching motivation; sensation-seeking and need for cognition showed no moderating effects on the relationship between binge-watching motivation and behavior.

TABLE 6: Results of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Beta value	p value	Result
H ₁ : BWM -----> BW	0.73	<0.01	Accepted
H ₂ : The relationship between binge-watching motivation and binge-watching behavior is moderated by the sensation-seeking trait	0.01	0.46	Rejected
H ₃ : The relationship between binge-watching motivation and binge-watching behavior is moderated by the need-for-cognition trait	0.05	0.17	Rejected

Source: WarpPLS output

5. DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS

In hypothesizing that binge-watching motivation and bingewatching behavior are positively related to one other, a β coefficient of -0.73 and $p \leq 0.01$ were obtained (Table 6), confirming that binge-watching motivation has a direct, positive and significant influence on bingewatching behavior. Hence, hypothesis H_1 is accepted. This suggests that bingewatching behavior always relies on the degree of motivation shown by the consumer with respect to binge-watching.

The study found that binge-watching behavior in individuals is triggered by motivational factors such as enjoyment ($\beta = 0.28$, $p \leq .01$), efficiency ($\beta = 0.28$, $p \leq .01$), recommendations of others ($\beta = 0.25$, $p \leq .01$), control perceived by the individual ($\beta = 0.21$, $p \leq .01$), and fandom ($\beta = 0.26$, $p \leq .01$). These binge-watching motivators, which were put forward by Shim and Kim (2018), are consistent even in the pandemic. It can be inferred from such findings that the hedonic motive of enjoyment and the utilitarian motive of efficiency are the most influential predictors of binge-watching motivation. Moreover, fandom with a β value of 0.26 is the second most influential predictor, which implies that individuals tend to form relationships to their preferred characters and thereby engage in binge-watching behavior. This is in line with the studies carried out by Shim and Kim (2018), Coppa (2006), and Devasagayam (2014), which identified fandom as the primary cause of binge-watching behavior.

Even though sensation-seekers engage more in binge-watching, no effect on the relationship between binge-watching behavior and binge-watching motivation has been found ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = 0.46$). Therefore, hypothesis H_2 is rejected. This is contrary to earlier studies (Shim & Kim, 2018; Lin & Tsai, 2002; Zuckerman, 2004), which identified a moderating effect of sensation-seeking on the relationship between binge-watching behavior and bingewatching motivation. As regards the moderating effect

of the need for cognition ($\beta = 0.05$, $p = 0.17$), the current study found the relationship to be insignificant, suggesting that the need for cognition has no effect on the relationship between binge-watching motivation and binge-watching behavior. Hence, hypothesis H_3 is rejected. This finding too is at odds with the findings of previous studies (Shim & Kim, 2018; Zuckerman, 2004).

The study indicates that most binge-watchers are female, which is consistent with the KPMG report published in 2019. Binge-watching is exhibited even by individuals who have completed postgraduate or more advanced education. Specifically, 40.9% of respondents spent 1-2 hours binge-watching, 33.6% spent 1 hour and 25.5% of them more than 2 hours binge-watching.

This research aimed to understand binge-watching behavior during the pandemic. Moreover, it determined that sensation-seeking and need for cognition do not moderate the relationship between binge-watching motivation and binge-watching behavior. By doing so, this study has filled the relevant gap in the literature.

By analyzing the managerial implications of this research, OTT and other content developers may gain some relevant insights. Firstly, the research suggests that developers concentrate on factors such as enjoyment, efficiency, and fandom when developing new content for their users. Hence, developing realistic content with favorable characters could gain more traction among consumers. Secondly, even though the influence of behavioral control is the least influential predictor, its impact cannot be trivialized. Curators must ensure content that enables users to pause watching the content at any time and resume later. Thirdly, since this study found there to be more female than male individuals exhibiting binge-watching behavior, content developers must provide some content to cater specifically to female consumers so as to ensure greater acceptance.

6. CONCLUSION

Binge-watching behavior is a phenomenon with deep penetration which is intertwined with various individual psychological traits and social systems. Young individuals find online platforms more attractive. The efficiency of such platforms, in the sense that they enable a non-linear pattern of viewing at any time and anywhere, encourages their binge-watching. The control that individuals perceive to have while binge-watching is another driver to be taken into account. These platforms enable their users to save the content they like for later use or even to skip certain content they find not to be enjoyable, thus providing considerable flexibility. Word-of-mouth communication about various content streamed on such platforms is one of the major driving factors of the non-linear viewing phenomenon. Also, all the viewers may not access all the content but only a particular series or other content they like, or may prefer a particular artist that can act as a driving factor. On the other hand, some binge-watch for the sheer enjoyment of it. All such motivation leads to binge behavior. It is also important to note that each individual has different psychological traits. Those who love excitement and adventure in life are more likely to

develop binge behavior and spend more time binge-watching. A similar argument holds true for individuals who need and enjoy cognition. However, as has been found in India, the traits of sensation-seeking and need for cognition do not influence the motivational factors that trigger binge-watching. Neither sensation-seeking nor the need for cognition increase enjoyment, efficiency, recommendations, perceived control, or fandom. Streaming companies should keep this in mind when designing various programs for online consumption.

The objective of this research was to explore the binge-watching behavior of consumers in India during the pandemic. Firstly, restricting the study to one geographical area can be considered as one of its limitations. Hence, this research could be extended to other geographical areas to gain a broader insight into binge-watching behavior during the pandemic. Secondly, the research focused on binge-watching behavior during phase I of the lockdown in India, but did not consider subsequent lockdowns. Thirdly, as the study did not consider the influence of culture on binge-watching behavior, further research is recommended to analyze the impact of culture on such behavior during the pandemic.

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