

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BINGE-WATCHING BEHAVIOR AND PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING IN EARLY ADULTHOOD DURING THE PANDEMIC COVID-19

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## ABSTRACT

This study aims to determine the correlation between binge-watching behaviour and psychological well-being in early adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research approach used is a quantitative approach by distributing questionnaires to 506 respondents with the criteria of an average early adult aged 18-40 years, male or female, domiciled in JABODETABEK and having watched TV series episodes on a regular basis or more intensively (several episodes in one session) on DVD, USB, SVOD, or streaming devices, over the last six months. The research instrument used to measure the binge-watching variable was Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire, while the psychological well-being variable was measured by the Psychological Well-Being Scale. The statistical analysis used to test the hypothesis is the product moment correlation test. The results showed that,  $r_{count} > r_{table}$ ;  $-0.288 > 0.088$  with a significant value of  $p = 0.00 < 0.05$ , which means that there is a correlation between binge-watching behaviour and psychological well-being in early adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Keywords:** Covid-19, Early Adulthood, Binge-Watching, Psychological Well-Being.

## INTRODUCTION

An expert in Political Psychology, Prof. Hamdi Muluk expressed his opinion about the importance of psychological well-being during the pandemic. The current condition is a stressor that can undermine people's psychological health. Disturbed psychological conditions can affect the body's immunity in fighting disease (Puspita, 2020). The government policy that requires people to implement physical distancing is carried out as an effort to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Various activities such as work and learning activities which were initially carried out outside the home, had to be carried out online at home. COVID-19 puts multiple stresses on people's lives. Starting from worries about contracting COVID-19, worries about dying and losing family members and friends to stress due to being laid off and experiencing a decrease in income. On the other hand, media reports that constantly report the number and condition of illnesses and deaths increase feelings of fear and stress (Suriastini, et.al., 2020).

Ryff, (1995) states that psychological well-being can be characterized by achieving happiness, life satisfaction and the absence of depressive symptoms. This is in stark contrast to the situation of Indonesian society, which is experiencing increasing rates of depression during the pandemic. According to news archives reported by Tirto.id, as many as 64.3% of 1,522 respondents had psychological problems of anxiety or depression after carrying out an online self-examination regarding mental health due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic which was carried out on the official website of the Association of Mental Medicine Specialists

Indonesia (Aziz, 2020). In line with the results of an online survey (Suriastini, et.al., 2020) which stated that the level of anxiety and depression among the Indonesian population during the COVID-19 pandemic at the end of May 2020 was high, namely 55% of respondents experienced anxiety disorders and as many as 58% of respondents experienced depressive disorders.

As a result of the government's policy of implementing physical distancing and limiting activities in schools and workplaces, restrictions on religious activities, socio-cultural activities, public transportation operations, and restrictions on activities in public places. According to (Dixit, et.al., 2020) this creates ideal conditions to become increasingly involved in online activities and watching television because recreational resources are limited while the internet/television is very easily accessible, available and affordable; So conditions like this might result in people binge-watching to spend their free time during the pandemic. Binge-watching according to (Flayelle, et.al., (2017) is the behavior of watching several episodes of the same television series in a row.

Binge-watching is a behavior that has existed for a long time, even before the pandemic, but with the COVID-19 pandemic, binge-watching behavior has increased. Ericsson (in Wisesa, 2014) presented the results of research by the Consumer Lab TV & Media Report, stating that there had been an increase in streaming access, accounting for a jump of 25% in two years and the trend of "binge-watching" or more familiarly called marathons, was the biggest contributing factor. NIELSEN Television Audience Measurement (TAM) in Indonesia stated that the COVID-19 pandemic has caused changes in consumer behavior, including in terms of consuming media. The duration of watching TV also experienced a jump of more than 40 minutes, from an average of 4 hours 48 minutes on March 11 to 5 hours 29 minutes on March 18 (Lubis, 2020).

(Dixit, et.al., 2020) conducted descriptive research with a cross-sectional design in the general population of four Southeast Asian countries (Bangladesh, India, Indonesia & Nepal). The results prove that during this pandemic there has been a significant increase in viewing activity. During the lockdown period, 73.7% of participants agreed to a considerable increase in binge-watching with an increase in viewing time from an average of 1-3 hours to 3-5 hours (17.3%) and more than 5 hours (11.5%). According to (Vaterlaus, et.al., 2019) young adults (18-34 years) spend 6 hours and 40 minutes every week with TV-connected devices such as Amazon Fire and Apple TV. Meanwhile, students aged 18-24 years watch more videos on the internet compared to other age groups. Access to a Netflix account is also owned by 92% of students.

Netflix is a pioneer of quality film streaming services. The term binge-watching itself was first introduced in 2013 when Netflix launched the series House of Cards with a viewing system that allowed viewers to continue watching episodes without having to press any buttons on the remote or keyboard. According to the Kompas news archive on April 24 2020, Netflix users increased by 16 million during the four months of the pandemic. This service, which was founded by Marc Randolph and Reed Hastings, provides various genres of shows, both films and series from abroad, which provide all episodes directly without having to wait for the broadcast schedule. Users can also decide for themselves the content they want to enjoy without advertising. With all the advantages that Netflix provides, everyone can easily access as many films as they like at any time and even binge-watch.

According to Rura (2020), in Indonesia itself, there are two platforms that are most often used, namely Iflix and Viu. Varun Mehta, Country Manager of Viu stated that during the pandemic,

there was an increase in the number of active users by 35-40% with the average time watching videos (video watch average time) also increasing by up to 50% per person. Tiara Sugiyono, Head of Marketing at Iflix, stated that there was an increase in the number of users by 25% and the length of use by 35%. This shows a significant increase in viewing activity during the pandemic.

(Granow, et.al., 2018) states that the binge-watching phenomenon can have positive and negative effects on users' well-being. In line with the opinion of (Flayelle, et.al., 2019), who created the binge-watching measuring tool, they argue that the eudemonic theme, namely the sense of satisfaction that arises from achieving one's full potential given by TV shows/movies, is a very strong and consistent predictor of continued engagement. in the TV series. Eudemonic itself is Aristotle's initial concept of happiness which underlies the theory of psychological well-being which was later developed by Ryff. He believes that psychological well-being does not only consist of positive effects, negative effects and life satisfaction, but is a multidimensional construct consisting of life attitudes related to the dimensions of psychological well-being itself. Psychological well-being according to Ryff (1989) is a person's full achievement which is viewed through six aspects, including, self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth.

There are several aspects of binge-watching behavior that are related to aspects of psychological well-being and different points of view. The first is the Autonomy aspect. Autonomy is a person's ability to be independent, control behavior from within and evaluate oneself based on standards developed by oneself (Ryff, 1989). According to (Granow, et.al., 2018) binge-watching behavior provides new opportunities for self-determined forms of entertainment consumption and can positively influence media enjoyment and well-being through perceived autonomy. Apart from that, experiments conducted by Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) (in Dandamudi & Sathiyaseelan, 2018), found a relaxing effect in watching television so that binge-watching was used to reduce stress. But on the other hand, binge-watching can trigger goal conflicts and feelings of guilt that can reduce well-being.

Research (Wulandari, et.al., 2019) on students at the Faculty of Nursing, Ngudi Waluyo University Ungaran, stated that there was a relationship between binge-watching behavior and the incidence of fatigue in students. Other research results suggest that binge-watching can play a role in the development of mental health challenges when binge-watching is used as an escape or as a facilitator of procrastination, exacerbating stress because tasks that must be done are delayed (Vaterlaus, et.al., 2019). Research results (Dixit, et.al., 2020) stated that 39.1% of participants experienced sleep disturbances, 32.3% sometimes missed work and 28.1% reported sometimes having conflicts with other people due to binge-watching. These things happen because of the autonomy of binge-watching behavior which gives the perpetrator the opportunity to choose the type of show they want to watch anywhere and anytime according to their own wishes. When a person cannot properly control the autonomy they obtain, this will cause negative impacts which can cause the individual's level of psychological well-being to decrease.

The second aspect of psychological well-being that is related to binge-watching behavior is the aspect of positive relations with others, namely when someone has a warm relationship, strong empathy, has concerns about the welfare of others, understands the concept of receiving and giving in interpersonal relationships (Ryff, 1989). Yoon Hi Sung, Eun Yeon Kang and Wei-Na Lee from the University of Texas at Austin conducted research which stated that binge-watching can cause feelings of loneliness and depression. Victims of binge-watching find it

difficult to resist the urge to watch episodes continuously. So he also started to ignore his work and social relationships with other people. That way, when the film he has watched is finished, he will feel lonely and even depressed (Daugherty, 2015). This shows that uncontrolled binge-watching can reduce positive relationships with other people, which is one aspect of psychological well-being.

In contrast to the previous view which considered binge-watching to have a more negative impact, some of this research actually considers binge-watching as an activity that has a positive impact in increasing aspects of positive relations with others. Based on research results (Flayelle, et.al., 2017), participants did not consider watching TV series as a negative thing, nor did they ever show signs of withdrawal anxiety with its typical physiological symptoms. Participants stated that watching TV series provided topics for discussion, such as sharing reactions, comments and impressions, especially when the first episode was released. Couples also use watching TV series to spend time together. The results of this research are supported by (Vaterlaus, et.al., 2019) who stated that binge-watching can help in making new friends so that there is always lots to talk about with other students.

According to Mikos, (2016) binge-watching is actually a social phenomenon. Even though people watch alone, they feel the need to discuss with friends about the series they are watching. Matrix, 2014; Panda & Pandey, 2017 (in Dandamudi & Sathiyaseelan, 2018) also stated that binge-watching is considered an acceptable behavior that has social value for students and young viewers. Binge-watching can generate and increase interaction within peer groups and participation in social conversations, so that viewers are motivated to spend more time binge-watching to talk with their friends about the series they are watching.

Various studies on binge-watching equate this behavior with addiction, but (Flayelle, et.al., 2017) argue that counting binge-watching as an addiction is not appropriate, even though there are similar aspects. Based on the results of the research, the majority of participants stated that they managed to control and could refrain from watching relatively easily if they could watch it later. This shows that binge-watching does not always make the perpetrators postpone the activities they should be doing. They can still manage their schedules, divide their time well, when to watch and when to carry out their obligations. Alter (2017); in (Flayelle, et.al., 2019) also argue that binge-watching must be seen in the broader context of the current digital era with increasingly sophisticated technology in order to avoid the risk of excessive pathologizing regarding what has actually happened in recent years of entertainment activities this is very popular.

Based on the description presented above, the binge-watching phenomenon has been widely considered in the popular media, but only a few psychological studies have examined this phenomenon with psychological well-being variables, especially in Indonesia. Meanwhile, with the high level of viewing activity during the pandemic and the importance of psychological well-being in facing the COVID-19 pandemic, this research aims to find out whether there is a significant relationship between binge-watching behavior and the psychological well-being felt by early adults during the pandemic COVID-19.

## **RESEARCH METHODS**

The method used in this research is quantitative research with a cross-sectional approach. There are two variables used in this research, namely binge-watching as the independent variable and psychological well-being as the dependent variable.

The population in this study is the population used in this study is early adults with an average age of 18-40 years, male or female, domiciled in Jabodetabek with sample characteristics, namely in the last six months watching several episodes of television series online. successively on various media platforms, including DVD, USB, SVOD or other streaming media. The sampling technique used in this research was purposive sampling with data collection techniques using questionnaires. The research samples obtained were 506 samples.

This research uses two instruments, namely the Psychological Well-Being Scale (PWBS) from Ryff (1989) which has been adapted by Mira Aryani, Ph.D to measure psychological well-being and the Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire (BWESQ) from (Flayelle , et.al., 2019) to measure binge-watching.

The instrument used in this research was the original instrument from the instrument maker, then an adaptation and validation process was carried out and then the instrument was tested. After testing, the final instrument for each instrument was obtained, namely the Psychological Well-Being Scale consisting of 18 items without any items being dropped from the original items. The Binge-Watching Engagement and Symptoms Questionnaire (BWESQ) consists of 46 items which have been developed from the previous 40 items.

The data analysis techniques used in this research are descriptive statistical analysis, normality test, linearity test and correlation test to determine the relationship between two variables in terms of the magnitude of the correlation coefficient and the direction of the correlation.

## RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The research results show that there is a significant relationship between binge-watching behavior and psychological well-being in early adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic. The correlation between the two variables is negative, which means that if the level of binge-watching is lower, the level of psychological well-being will be higher and vice versa.

**Table.1: Hypothesis Test Results with Correlation Analysis**

Variable	r count	r table (N = 506)	Interpretation
<i>Binge-Watching</i> <i>Psychological Well-Being</i>	-0,288	0,088	H0 is rejected, Ha is accepted



Individuals with low levels of binge-watching have high levels of psychological well-being. The individual can know and accept all positive aspects of himself at present and in his past positively, has warm relationships and strong empathy, can control his own behavior independently, is able to master and control the environment around him, can know what is good and bad for himself, seeing that he continues to grow and develop so that he will be open to various new experiences or things.

Meanwhile, individuals with high levels of binge-watching have low levels of psychological well-being, so these individuals will experience deficiencies in self-acceptance, positive relationships with others, autonomy, mastery over the external environment, purpose in life and less effort to develop themselves to the maximum, so that individuals with a low level of psychological well-being will find it difficult to face various challenges that occur in their lives optimistically and positively. Apart from that, a low level of psychological well-being will affect the body's immunity in fighting disease, which is the most important thing needed during this pandemic, based on the opinion of a Political Psychology expert, Prof. Hamdi Muluk (in Puspita, 2020).

The hypothesis in this study is also in line with the results of research by the University of Michigan and Belgium's University of Leuven which states that binge-watching can cause sleep disorders (Exelmans & Bulck, 2017). Research (Wulandari, et.al., 2019) on students at the Faculty of Nursing.

Ngudi Waluyo Ungaran University also stated that there was a relationship between binge-watching behavior and the incidence of fatigue in students. Other research results suggest that binge-watching can play a role in the development of mental health challenges when binge-watching is used as an escape or as a facilitator of procrastination, exacerbating stress because tasks that must be done are delayed (Vaterlaus, et.al., 2019).

Most respondents in this study were in the high psychological well-being category at 92.1% and the high binge-watching category at 53.6%. This is supported by the results of the correlation analysis between the two variables which are relatively low. Apart from that, because the majority of respondents are students with a high school or bachelor's degree, their level of psychological well-being tends to be high in accordance with data obtained from the Wisconsin Longitudinal Study; (in Rahayu, 2008) shows that higher education and employment status increase psychological well-being, especially in the self-acceptance dimension and purpose in life dimension. Those who occupy a high social class have more positive feelings about themselves and their past, and have a greater sense of direction in life compared to those in a lower social class.

In line with research by Ryff & Keyes, (1995) which found that the environmental mastery dimension and autonomy dimension increased with age, especially from young adults to middle adults. The dimension of positive relations with others also increases with age. On the other hand, the dimensions of purpose in life and personal growth show a decline with increasing age, this decline mainly occurs in middle to late adulthood. This research also shows that there are no significant differences in the dimensions of self-acceptance during young adulthood to late adulthood.

The limitation of this research is that the data collection process can only be done online via social media such as Instagram, Line, Whatsapp, LinkedIn and Twitter.

## CONCLUSION

This research examines the relationship between binge-watching behavior and psychological well-being in early adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the research results that have been described, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between binge-watching behavior and psychological well-being in early adulthood during the COVID-19 pandemic, including in the low relationship category.

Based on the results of this research, it is known that there is a significant relationship in a negative direction, which means that if the level of binge-watching is lower, the level of psychological well-being will be higher. This research has implications for early adults who binge-watching so they can pay more attention to the number of episodes, duration and timing used in watching TV series, so that if binge-watching is done to fill free time during the pandemic, individuals can still have a level of psychological well-being. Good being is the full achievement of one's psychological potential, where the individual can accept one's strengths and weaknesses as they are, have a purpose in life, develop positive relationships with other people, become an independent person, be able to control the environment and become an individual who continues to grow consistently. personal in facing the COVID-19 pandemic.

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