

Undergraduate Honours Thesis Summary

The Relationships Among Binge-Watching, Loneliness, Parasocial Relationships and Mood

Due to the noticeable increase in the use of streaming platforms in recent years, this study was interested in observing the relationships between binge-watching and individual difference factors. Specifically, loneliness, parasocial (imaginary) relationships and mood were examined as the individual difference factors. Binge-watching has been defined as the act of watching two or more episodes of the same show in a single sitting. The definition of a parasocial relationship is a relationship that develops between an individual and their favorite television/media character. In the present research, the relationships among duration and frequency of binge-watching were assessed in relation to loneliness, parasocial relationships and mood. The possibility of parasocial relationships and loneliness being predictors of binge-watching and mood was also examined. Past research suggested a relationship between binge-watching and loneliness, such that lonely viewers spend more time watching their favorite shows. Previous research also indicated a relationship between excessive binge-watching and strength of parasocial relationships. This study was able to expand upon some of the ideas outlined in past research, and addressed the need for further research in this subject. The results of this study revealed that binge-watching was significantly correlated with both positive and negative moods. High scores in loneliness were also found to be correlated with negative mood. Further, the results indicated that parasocial relationships were related to positive mood. Additionally, the results suggested that stronger parasocial relationships were related to higher scores in loneliness. Finally, loneliness and parasocial relationships were found to predict mood. As binge-watching continues to be one of the most popular forms of television viewing, researchers need to understand the reasoning behind these viewing behaviours. This study provided a starting

point for future research in the area of binge-watching and its relationship with various individual difference factors. A continuation in this research could bring about valuable information and understanding into the relationships between various viewing behaviours and individual difference factors. Some viewing behaviours and moods were related to loneliness and the development of parasocial relationships. Additional information in this area could bring to light how different television viewing behaviours affect, and are affected by our moods and mental health. This could eventually lead to more beneficial forms of television viewing.