


Chapter 11

The Effect of Digital Streaming Platforms on Visual Media Consumption Within the Framework of Binge-Watching Concept

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ABSTRACT

Increasing spread of digitization has transformed many fields, one of which has been in the consumption of visual media products. The growth in the use of digital streaming platforms, which emerged from the development in Internet technologies, has shifted the viewing practices of the mainstream media viewers significantly. The scope of this study is a discussion on the viewing experiences during the activity named Binge-watching, which has been shaped by the new-normal of the digital era. The paper first presents the definition of the concept of Binge-watching. Next, an analysis of the interviews with 16 participants is presented. The analysis of these interviews indicated that Binge-watching promises freedom to individuals as they manage their time and taste accompanied by a considerable number of negative

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consequences. The interviewees reported such physical effects as loneliness, sleep deprivation, headaches, bad posture, and nausea as well as fear of exclusion from social communities and exposure to a spoiler as related to Binge-watching.

INTRODUCTION

Digital streaming platforms are gradually occupying a more central place in our lives, transforming media product consumption and purchasing processes as such platforms promise to their viewers what may be coined as *plastic* viewing processes. Viewers who has the comfort of accessing any content in any location through any device they wish have been further liberated to manage and stretch their viewing experiences at any rate. Particularly the Covid-19 pandemic acted as a catalyzer in the adoption of digital viewing culture. For the viewers who were locked down at home due to the pandemic, the content presented by digital platforms has presented an alternative visual media consumption method to prefer over the mainstream television channels and the cinema in time.

Digital platforms pioneered great changes in widespread viewing practices besides viewing experiences at home. It has reached a point where viewers have the power over deciding on the kind of content to consume as well as when, how much, and with what device to consume it. This has proven to be very attractive to the mainstream media viewers who had to wait a week to watch the next episode of the content that they followed. Moreover, such digital platforms as Netflix share with their viewers all the episodes of a season at the same time to strengthen their subscribers' loyalty. This promised viewers liberty, leading to a novel type of viewing called *Binge-watching*. The Oxford English Dictionary defines *binge-watching* as “*The practice of watching several episodes of a TV Show on one occasion, usually by means of DVDs or digital streaming*” (Oxford English Dictionary, 2014). We can understand from this definition that waiting for the next part of the content that one follows and consuming the content by watching the content episode by episode is gradually becoming old-fashioned. This new type of viewing culture is termed in the literature as “*watching without breaks, watching non-stop, excessive watching, serial watching, binge-watching, watching like binge-eating, watching spree, series marathon, over-watching, serial viewing*” (Terzi, 2021, p. 82), and it has shifted the traditional television viewing behavior, bringing about a serious transformation in the means of production, distribution and consumption of media products.

This new viewing culture has ignited discussion in a wide range of topics from health to communication sciences. The common motive in these disciplines is the attempts to define *Binge-watching* and understand/discuss its physiological and psychological impact on humans. The main aim of this study is to discuss the effects of

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