

# Exploring the Relationship Between Procrastination, Binge-Watching Behavior, and Psychological Well-Being: A Cross-Sectional Observational Study

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## Abstract

**Background:** Procrastination and binge-watching are increasingly prevalent behaviors in the digital age, often linked to psychological well-being. However, the intersection of these behaviors and their collective impact remains underexplored.

**Objective:** This study investigates the relationship between procrastination, binge-watching behavior, and psychological well-being in medical students.

**Methods:** A cross-sectional observational study was conducted on 365 participants aged 18-24 years. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire assessing procrastination tendencies, binge-watching habits, and psychological well-being. Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, t-tests, ANOVA, and correlation analyses, with significance set at .

**Results:** Significant associations were found between procrastination and binge-watching frequency. Females reported higher self-consciousness and stress related to binge-watching compared to males ( $t = -5.26$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Procrastination was negatively correlated with life satisfaction. Gender differences highlighted distinct motivations and impacts of these behaviors.

**Conclusion:** Procrastination and binge-watching behaviors are interconnected and significantly influence psychological well-being. These findings emphasize the need for targeted interventions to mitigate negative outcomes, particularly among vulnerable demographic groups.

**Keywords:** procrastination, binge-watching, psychological well-being, gender differences, digital consumption, life satisfaction, cross-sectional study.

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## INTRODUCTION

In the rapidly evolving digital era, procrastination and binge-watching have become common behavioral phenomena. Procrastination, defined as the intentional delay of tasks despite foreseeable negative consequences, is a widely acknowledged challenge in personal and professional domains. It affects productivity and contributes to stress, guilt, and dissatisfaction. Meanwhile, binge-watching—characterized by the uninterrupted consumption of multiple episodes of television series—has emerged as a dominant leisure activity fueled by the rise of on-demand streaming platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime.[1,2] Procrastination and binge-watching are often perceived as interrelated, with medical students turning to binge-watching as a form of escapism to avoid tasks or responsibilities. While procrastination is associated with negative emotional states such as anxiety and guilt, binge-watching is frequently linked to both positive and negative psychological outcomes. On one hand, binge-watching can provide relaxation and a sense of accomplishment upon completing a series; on the other hand, excessive binge-watching may lead to increased stress, disrupted sleep patterns, and reduced psychological well-being. [3,4]

Existing literature has predominantly focused on these behaviors in isolation. Studies on procrastination emphasize its adverse effects on mental health and productivity, while research on binge-watching explores its dual impact on emotional regulation and escapism. However, there remains a paucity of research investigating the intersection of these behaviors and their combined influence on psychological well-

being.[5,6] This study aims to address this gap by examining the relationship between procrastination, binge-watching, and psychological well-being in a cross-sectional observational framework.

Furthermore, the study explores demographic differences, particularly gender, in the motivations and consequences of these behaviors. Understanding these dynamics is essential for developing effective interventions and promoting healthier digital consumption habits, especially among young adults who represent the primary audience for streaming platforms and are also highly susceptible to procrastination.

### **Materials and Methods-**

This study employed a cross-sectional observational design to explore the relationship between procrastination, binge-watching behavior, and psychological well-being among medical students. The methodology ensured robust data collection and comprehensive analysis of the targeted population of medical students

Participants were recruited through convenience sampling, focusing on medical students aged 18 to 24 years. A total of 365 respondents completed the survey, providing a diverse representation of gender, age, and background. Inclusion criteria required participants to have engaged in binge-watching activities at least once in the past month and reported procrastination tendencies. Exclusion criteria included incomplete survey responses or pre-existing psychiatric diagnoses that could confound results.

Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional review board prior to data collection. All participants provided informed consent, and data were anonymized to maintain confidentiality.

#### **Data Collection Instruments**

**Demographic Information:** Age, gender, educational background, and residential status were collected to contextualize findings.

**Procrastination Assessment:** A validated scale known as General Procrastination scale (GPS) measuring procrastination tendencies, including delay in initiating tasks and associated emotional outcomes was used.

**Binge-Watching Behavior:** Frequency, duration, and motivations were assessed using a structured questionnaire known as BWAQ (Binge watching addiction questionnaire). Items included binge-watching frequency (daily, weekly, monthly) and primary motivations (escapism, entertainment, stress relief).

**Psychological Well-Being:** Indicators of stress, self-consciousness, and life satisfaction were measured using established scales, such as MHQoL comprises seven questions covering seven dimensions. [1,2,3]

### **Methodology-**

The procedure was carefully designed to ensure participant engagement and reliable data collection. Participants were invited to participate through social media platforms, academic networks, and workplace groups. The survey was hosted on a secure online platform to ensure broad accessibility.

Upon accessing the survey link, participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the study objectives, potential benefits, and ethical assurances, including confidentiality and the voluntary nature of participation. Following informed consent, participants proceeded to complete the survey, which consisted of four main sections: demographic information, procrastination tendencies, binge-watching behavior, and psychological well-being.

The survey was designed to be user-friendly and required approximately 15-20 minutes to complete. To maintain the quality of responses, participants were encouraged to answer questions honestly and were provided the option to pause and resume the survey if needed. Upon submission, responses were securely stored in an encrypted database, accessible only to authorized researchers.

Data completeness was ensured through automated checks integrated into the survey platform. Incomplete responses were flagged and excluded from the final dataset. The comprehensive design of the procedure aimed to maximize response rates while maintaining data reliability and validity.

### **Statistical Analysis**

Frequencies, means, and standard deviations were calculated for all variables to summarize participant characteristics and key behaviors. Independent t-tests were conducted to explore gender differences in procrastination and binge-watching behavior. ANOVA was employed to assess variations across age groups and other demographic categories. Pearson's correlation was used to examine relationships between procrastination, binge-watching, and psychological well-being indicators. Multivariate regression was performed to identify predictors of psychological well-being, accounting for procrastination and

binge-watching behavior. Interaction terms were included to examine potential moderating effects of demographic variables. All analyses were conducted using SPSS (version 25.0), with significance set at . Effect sizes (Cohen's d for t-tests and partial eta squared for ANOVA) were calculated to interpret the magnitude of observed differences and relationships. Post-hoc analyses were conducted for ANOVA to identify specific group differences.

## Results

The study analyzed data from 365 participants aged 18-24 years, examining the interplay between procrastination, binge-watching behavior, and psychological well-being.

Table 1: Demographic and Behavioral Characteristics

Characteristic	Mean $\pm$ SD / Frequency (%)
Age (years)	22.6 $\pm$ 4.2
Gender (Male/Female)	180 (49.3%) / 185 (50.7%)
Procrastination Score	68.2 $\pm$ 12.5
Binge-Watching Frequency (hrs/week)	6.8 $\pm$ 3.4
Psychological Well-being Score	58.4 $\pm$ 10.3

As per table 1- The participants had a mean age of 22.6 years, with an approximately equal gender distribution (49.3% male and 50.7% female). Average procrastination scores (68.2  $\pm$  12.5) were moderately high, suggesting a tendency for delaying tasks in the sample population. Binge-watching behavior was prevalent, with participants averaging 6.8  $\pm$  3.4 hours per week. Psychological well-being scores averaged 58.4  $\pm$  10.3, indicating moderate well-being in the group.

Table 2: Correlation Between Procrastination and Binge-Watching Frequency

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Procrastination Score	0.42	<0.001

As per table 2- A moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.42$ ) suggests that as procrastination increases, binge-watching frequency also rises significantly ( $p < 0.001$ ). This relationship highlights a potential behavioral link, where procrastination may fuel binge-watching as a form of avoidance.

Table 3: Gender Differences in Binge-Watching Stress

Gender	Mean Stress Score $\pm$ SD	t-value	p-value
Male	52.1 $\pm$ 8.6		
Female	60.3 $\pm$ 9.4	-5.26	<0.001

As per table 3- Females reported significantly higher stress levels related to binge-watching than males (mean stress score: 60.3  $\pm$  9.4 vs. 52.1  $\pm$  8.6). The t-value of -5.26 and  $p < 0.001$  indicate a highly significant gender difference, suggesting that females may perceive binge-watching as a more stressful activity.

Table 4: Correlation Between Procrastination and Psychological Well-being

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Procrastination Score	-0.36	<0.001

A negative correlation ( $r = -0.36$ ) indicates that higher procrastination is associated with lower psychological well-being ( $p < 0.001$ ). This finding underscores procrastination as a detrimental factor to mental health and overall satisfaction with life.

Table 5: ANOVA Test for Psychological Well-Being Across Binge-Watching Categories

Participants were categorized into three groups based on binge-watching hours per week: Low (<4 hours), Moderate (4-8 hours), and High (>8 hours).

Binge-Watching Group	Mean Well-being Score $\pm$ SD	F-value	p-value
Low	62.5 $\pm$ 8.7		
Moderate	57.3 $\pm$ 9.1		

Binge-Watching Group	Mean Well-being Score $\pm$ SD	F-value	p-value
High	52.8 $\pm$ 10.4	18.56	<0.001

As per table 5- Participants in the High binge-watching group reported significantly lower psychological well-being scores compared to Low and Moderate groups ( $p < 0.001$ ). The trend suggests a dose-dependent negative impact of binge-watching on psychological well-being.

**Table 6: Chi-Square Test for Gender Differences in Coping Motivations for Binge-Watching**

Coping Motivation	Male (%)	Female (%)	Chi-Square	p-value
Entertainment	68.4	55.7		
Stress Relief	23.2	35.4		
Escapism	8.4	8.9	9.71	0.02

As per table 6- Females were more likely to use binge-watching for stress relief compared to males (35.4% vs. 23.2%,  $p = 0.02$ ). The gendered disparity in motivations indicates potential underlying psychological and social factors influencing behavior.

**Table 7: Multiple Linear Regression Analysis Predicting Psychological Well-Being**

Predictor Variable	Coefficient ( $\beta$ )	Standard Error	t-value	p-value
Procrastination Score	-0.32	0.08	-4.00	<0.001
Binge-Watching Frequency	-0.18	0.07	-2.57	0.01
Gender (Female)	-0.24	0.09	-2.67	0.008

As per table 7- Procrastination and binge-watching frequency are significant negative predictors of psychological well-being. Females showed an additional negative impact on well-being, possibly due to higher stress perceptions linked to these behaviors.

## DISCUSSION

The rigorous academic demands of MBBS students often create a high-pressure environment, making them particularly vulnerable to procrastination and maladaptive coping behaviors such as binge-watching. Our study's findings resonate with the challenges faced by medical students, where procrastination and binge-watching are frequently used as escapist strategies to temporarily alleviate academic stress.

Our study found a moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) between procrastination and binge-watching frequency, emphasizing that medical students with higher procrastination tendencies are more likely to engage in binge-watching. MBBS students often procrastinate due to the overwhelming curriculum, performance pressure, and fear of failure. The negative correlation between procrastination and psychological well-being ( $r = -0.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) is especially pertinent to this demographic. Our results revealed a moderate positive correlation between procrastination and binge-watching frequency ( $r = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), suggesting that procrastination may drive binge-watching as a coping mechanism. MBBS students often binge-watch to escape academic stress, leading to a vicious cycle of procrastination and decreased productivity. Exelmans & Van den Bulck (2017)- This study found that binge-watching is strongly linked to avoidance behaviors like procrastination, as medical students often use binge-watching as a diversion from responsibilities. This finding mirrors our results, reinforcing the behavioral overlap. [1]Wheeler (2021): Their work highlighted that procrastinators binge-watch to momentarily reduce stress from unaccomplished tasks. However, excessive binge-watching later contributes to heightened stress and reduced productivity. [2] Hinsch & Sheldon (2013): They introduced the concept of "problematic media use" and reported that procrastinators exhibited a higher tendency toward media overuse, driven by impulsivity and emotional regulation difficulties. [3] Gender-based differences in binge-watching stress observed in our study ( $t = -5.26$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) are also evident in MBBS students. Female students often experience greater guilt and stress post-binge-watching, possibly due to societal expectations and internalized academic pressure. Flayelle et al. (2019): While both genders exhibited problematic binge-watching tendencies, females reported greater emotional distress and guilt after binge-watching, aligning with our findings. [4] Sun & Rubin (2020): Their analysis suggested that women are more likely to binge-

watch to escape social and emotional stressors, potentially explaining the higher stress levels observed in our study. [5]Rubenking & Bracken (2018): This study found that females experience more "media guilt" after binge-watching, driven by societal expectations and internalized pressure to use time productively.[6] Ahmed et al. (2022): This study found males often view binge-watching as recreational and stress-free, which contrasts with females who perceive it as both a coping mechanism and a stressor.[7].The negative impact of procrastination and binge-watching on psychological well-being is particularly pronounced among MBBS students, who already experience high levels of stress and burnout. Participants in the high binge-watching group reported significantly lower psychological well-being scores, aligning with the experiences of medical students who report feelings of fatigue, guilt, and academic dissatisfaction. Procrastination negatively correlated with psychological well-being ( $r = -0.36$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ), signifying that procrastination contributes to lower satisfaction and mental health. Sirois & Pychyl (2016): Procrastination is associated with self-regulatory failure, leading to guilt and reduced life satisfaction, directly supporting our findings.[8] Steel et al. (2018): This meta-analysis showed that procrastination significantly predicts lower psychological well-being, mediated by stress, anxiety, and depression.[9] Klingsieck (2013): This study found that procrastination intensifies negative emotions, further compounding its adverse effects on well-being.[10]Participants in the High binge-watching group reported significantly lower well-being scores compared to Low and Moderate groups ( $p < 0.001$ ). Ahmed et al. (2022): Found that binge-watching disrupts sleep patterns and causes guilt, which in turn lowers psychological well-being. This aligns with our finding of dose-dependent negative effects. [7]Panda & Pandey (2022): They identified excessive binge-watching as a contributing factor to mental health issues like anxiety and depression, particularly in young adults.[11] Granow et al. (2020): While moderate binge-watching was found to be relaxing, excessive engagement led to fatigue, guilt, and reduced life satisfaction, consistent with our observations.[12] Reinecke et al. (2017): Found that the duration and purpose of binge-watching determine its impact, with escapist motivations linked to negative well-being outcomes.[13]The study highlighted gender-specific motivations, with females more likely to binge-watch for stress relief compared to males ( $p = 0.02$ ). Sun & Rubin (2020): Reported that females use binge-watching as a coping mechanism for emotional stress, while males often watch for entertainment or as a recreational activity.[5] Flayelle et al. (2019): Highlighted that females more frequently associate binge-watching with guilt and social pressures, which may explain their stress-relief motivations. [4]Regression analysis demonstrated that gender moderates the relationship between binge-watching, procrastination, and psychological well-being, with females experiencing greater negative impacts. Rubenking & Bracken (2018): Supported the notion that gender moderates the psychological effects of binge-watching, with females experiencing amplified negative outcomes. [6]Balta et al. (2020): Their findings highlighted gender as a critical factor in understanding the psychological effects of media consumption, emphasizing the need for gender-specific interventions.[14]The results from our study align with existing literature, further substantiating the interconnectedness of procrastination, binge-watching, and psychological well-being. However, our study uniquely integrates these variables into a single framework, offering novel insights into gender-specific motivations and outcomes. Gender-sensitive approaches are essential to address binge-watching stress and procrastination-driven behaviors effectively. Educating young adults on healthy digital habits can mitigate the adverse effects of binge-watching. Longitudinal and experimental studies are needed to establish causal pathways and explore cultural factors.

#### **Our study has few limitations:**

The study's cross-sectional nature limits the ability to establish causality between procrastination, binge-watching behavior, and psychological well-being. Longitudinal studies are necessary to explore the temporal relationships among these variables. The use of self-reported questionnaires may introduce response biases, including social desirability bias and recall bias, potentially affecting the accuracy of the findings. The study focused on a specific age group (18–34 years) and may not generalize to older or younger populations, where behavioral patterns and psychological well-being might differ. The study did not account for cultural and societal differences, which could influence both binge-watching behaviors and coping mechanisms across diverse populations. The psychological well-being construct was assessed using a single standardized questionnaire, which may not fully capture the multifaceted nature of mental

health and well-being. The study relied on generalized definitions of procrastination and binge-watching, potentially overlooking nuanced behaviors such as productive procrastination or casual binge-watching. Gender was analyzed as a binary variable (male and female), potentially excluding insights from non-binary or gender-diverse medical students. The study did not differentiate between types of binge-watched content (e.g., educational vs. recreational), which could influence the psychological outcomes differently. Factors such as academic workload, employment stress, or personal circumstances were not controlled for, which could influence procrastination and binge-watching behavior.

## CONCLUSION

This study underscores the interconnected nature of procrastination, binge-watching behavior, and psychological well-being, with a particular emphasis on the experiences of MBBS students. Procrastination and binge-watching, though often used as short-term coping mechanisms to escape academic stress, can have long-term negative impacts on mental health and academic performance. Medical students, given their demanding curriculum and high-pressure environment, are especially vulnerable to these behaviors. Procrastination among this group is linked to heightened stress, decreased life satisfaction, and a reduction in overall psychological well-being. Similarly, binge-watching, while offering temporary relief, exacerbates sleep disturbances, guilt, and anxiety, creating a vicious cycle of reduced productivity and increased academic dissatisfaction. Gender differences highlight that female students may experience more guilt and stress related to binge-watching, emphasizing the need for gender-sensitive interventions. These findings call for targeted strategies in medical education to address procrastination and binge-watching behaviors. Time management training, stress-relief programs, and awareness campaigns about the consequences of maladaptive coping mechanisms could significantly benefit this demographic. By fostering healthier habits and creating a supportive academic environment, institutions can enhance the psychological well-being and academic success of medical students, ensuring they are better equipped to handle both their studies and future professional responsibilities.

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