

EVALUATION OF BINGE WATCHING BEHAVIOUR AMONG TELEVISION VIEWERS IN SOUTH - EAST NIGERIA

OLIMMA, BENEDETTE NGOZI

Department Of Mass Communication,
Faculty Of Social Sciences, Chukwuemeka Odumegwu Ojukwu University, Igbariam Campus

ABSTRACT

Binge watching refers to exposure to multiple consecutive episodes of the same TV-show through a channel which could be television, laptop, computer or tablet computer screen. It has to do with quantity of time spent watching series of programmes or the number of series of a programme watched just in one sitting. This study investigated the motivations for binge viewing among viewers in South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria during the COVID-19 lockdown of 2020. The objectives of this study aimed to ascertain the level of binge watching among viewers (light, medium, heavy) Covid-19 lockdown, and to find out the dominant motivations for binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone of Nigeria during Covid-19 lockdown. The other objectives are to know the type of programme that influenced binge viewing among respondents during Covid-19 lockdown, and to ascertain the extent to which viewer engagement influences binge viewing among respondents. Furthermore, the study also aimed to ascertain whether there is a significant relationship between platform diversity, viewing environment, programme type and binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone. The survey research design was used in the study. Cozby's sample size determination table was used to arrive at a sample size of 384 and the purposive sampling technique was used to identify respondents of the study. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to respondents residing in the capitals of the three states selected for the study which are Enugu in Enugu State, Awka in Anambra State, and Owerri in Imo State Abakiliki in Ebonyi state and umuahia for Abia state. The findings of the study revealed that majority of the respondents were light and medium binge viewers during the Covid-19 lockdown, having 3.9 and 3.6 mean distribution respectively. It was further revealed that the programmes that influenced their binge behaviour were drama, comedy, action thriller, and reality tv shows, and that attachment to the characters or programme plot, also known as viewer engagement, influenced binge viewing. Among the factors that motivated binge viewing were relaxation, escape, to get rid of boredom, and entertainment. The study recommended self-regulation among viewers since this plays an important part in how frequently an individual engages in binge watching. With lower levels of self-regulation, individuals might binge watch without considering the side effects of this behaviour. The study developed the Emotional Gratifications Model (EGM) which says that what viewers actually seek to gratify in movies is emotional involvement, not just mere exposure to the plot of the movie or programme. This serves as the contribution of the study to knowledge in the field of communication and media studies.

Introduction

Technology is changing the way people consume broadcast media content across the world. Digital revolution in the society together with broadband communication is contributing significantly in altering TV-watching patterns. Viewing habits are shifting away from traditional devices with consumer now preferring to pick and choose payment and subscription methods. Some viewers now prefer to watch TV over the Internet through streaming services, using devices while some others still choose to stick to the traditional TV sets (Sung, Kang & Lee, 2018). Among younger viewers, there is a preference of use mobile devices like tablets and smartphones; the younger viewers, the more likely they are to get their programming through the Internet. Smartphones make up a fifth of total viewing by broadcast media

consumers across the world, with approximately six hours per week spent watching TV and video on the device (Ericsson Report, 2017).

During the COVID-19 lockdown phase, people experienced anxiety and emotional break-down (Lima *et al.*, 2020). With extended lockdown periods at home came opportunity to engage in online activities and watching television. Limited recreation sources at home settings could mean more internet/television time where they are easily accessible, affordable and readily available and of course affordable. This could translate to binge-watching of various programmes on regular television or OTT platforms such as Netflix, Iroko tv, Ibaka TV, among others.

What makes television viewers in South–East Nigeria to consider binge watching is yet unknown. What motivates them to stick to particular media contents is not also known.

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance:

HO₁: There is no significant relationship between platform diversity and binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone.

HO₂: There is no significant relationship viewing environment and binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone.

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between programme type and binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone.

Table .1 Webometric Analysis: The Analysis of Empirical Review in a Tabular Form

S/N	Tite	Location	Variables	Method	Major Findings
1.	Viewer Aggression and Homophily, Identification, and Parasocial Relationships with television characters	USA	TV viewing behaviour (such as viewer aggression and homophily)	Quantitative	Viewer aggression predicted identification with aggressive characters, but did not predict homophily and parasocial interaction beyond the variance explained by gender.
2.	An investigation into alternative television viewing habits of college students	USA	Alternative television viewing habits	Quantitative	There is a relationship between binge watching, heavy television use and television addiction, all of which are associated with negative consequences for physical and mental health, social attraction and academics among college students.
3.	How TV “Binge--Viewing” Creates a More Engaged Viewer for Future Seasons	USA	TV binge viewer behaviour	Quantitative	Binge watching is gender neutral with men and women equally likely to have binge viewed television shows
	Television viewing patterns: Implications for learners in Lagos state secondary schools				Students were selective in contents they chose and focused on educational contents which helped discourage bingeing
	Sprinting a media marathon: uses and gratifications of	Lagos	TV viewing		Programme quality and communal aspects were considered before bingeing

4.	binge watching TV through Netflix Binge-watching: Video-on-demand, quality TV and mainstream-ming fandom	USA	patterns Binge watching	Quantitative	The result showed that factors such as technological developments, fans discourses and practices made binge alternative to TV viewing.
5.	Breaking binge: Exploring the effects of binge watching on television viewer Reception A bad habit for your health? An exploration of psychological factors for binge-watch-ing behaviour	USA	Binge watching behaviour	Quantitative	Binge watching better delivers an escape gratification for viewers than appointment viewing
6.	Time-shifting vs. appointment viewing: the role of fear of missing out within TV consumption behaviors	USA	Binge watching, viewer reception	Quantitative	The study found evidence of a correlation between depression and a desire to binge-watch as distraction or escape. Results indicated that FoMO predicts the pace at which people choose to watch TV
7.	Toward a qualitative understand-ing of binge-watching behaviours: A focus group approach	USA	Binge watching behaviour	Quantitative	Respondents agreed that TV series watching can become addictive but they all agreed having trouble recognizing themselves as truly being an “addict.”
8.	Binge watching and college students: Motivations and outcomes	USA	Time shifting, appointment viewing	Quantitative	The more students binge watch, the higher their propensity to spend more time doing so.
9.	Binge-watching and psychological well being: Media use between lack of control and perceived autonomy Binge-watching motivates change: Uses and gratifications of streaming video viewers challenge traditional TV research	Belgium	Binge watching behaviour	Qualitative	Well-being is positively affected by binge-watching-induced increases in perceived autonomy.
10.	The psychology of marathon television		Binge watching motivation, binge watching outcomes	Mixed method (qualitative and	Catching up, relaxation, a

	viewing: Antecedents and viewer involvement.	USA	Binge watching, psychology-cal well-being	quantita-tive) Quantitative	sense of completion, cultural inclusion, and improved viewing experience are the binge-watchers' main motivations for bingeing.
11.	Conceptua-lizing television viewing in the digital age: Patterns of exposure and the cultivation process.	USA	Binge watching motives, streaming video viewing behaviour	Quantitative	Marathon television viewers are active both cognitively and emotionally during and after the media exposure, thus alleviating some concerns about the "problematic" nature of the "binge" viewing phenomenon.
12.	Mapping the extended frontiers of escapism: binge-watching and hyperdiegetic exploration.	USA	Viewing antecedents, viewer involve-ments	Qualitative	Diversity in television set viewing is also significantly associated with age and gender, and these associations are positive.
13.	An exploration of the motivations for binge-watching and the role of individual differences.	USA	Television exposure, cultivation process	Quantitative	Service providers like Netflix encourage bingeing in a way that catalyses individuals' imaginative expansion of worlds in a variety of endless directions ultimately.
	Depression, emotional states, and the experience of binge-watching narrative television	USA	Binge watching behaviour, hyperdieg-etic exploration	Quantitative	Viewers perceived binge-watching as a way of satisfying their desires for enjoyment, and respondents were more likely to engage in binge-watching based on recommendation by others.
14.	Binge Watching: Why are College Students glued to their Screens?	USA	Motivations for binge watching, individual differences	Qualitative	Emotional states which viewers experienced after binge-watching had implications for entertainment gratifications
	Binge TV viewing on mobile devices: Assessing the role of mobile devices in binge television viewing	USA		Qualitative	Binge watching was motivated by certain factors among which are boredom, stress, loneliness, social engagement and addiction deriving from habit.
15.	College student television binge watching: Conceptuali-zation, gratifications, and perceived consequences	USA			Negative attitudes about binge viewing were related to watching too much television in general, and binge affinity predicted psychological effects of binge watching.

16.	An experimental examination of binge watching and narrative engagement		Emotional states, binge watching behaviour	Quantitative	College context was perceived to facilitate the practice of binge watching, participants perceived that binge watching could have adverse physical and mental health consequences.
17.	The binge-watcher's journey: Investigating motivations, contexts, and affective states surrounding Netflix viewing	Korea	Binge watching motivations	Quantitative	Binge watching increases the strength of para-social relationships and the intensity of narrative participation
18.	Sprinting a media marathon: Uses and gratifications of binge-watching television through Netflix	USA	Binge TV viewing behaviour	Qualitative	Binge-watching is an individual activity mainly performed at the end of the day to relax, for boredom relief purposes, or for escapism
19.	Go Long or Go Often: Influences on Binge Watching Frequency and Duration among College Students.	India	Binge watching conceptual-lization, gratification, perceived consequences	Quantitative	The degree to which an individual pays attention to a show may either increase or decrease subsequent regret, depending on the motivation for binge-watching.
20.	Marathon watching among Emiratis in the interactive media environment. Arab Media & Society	USA	Binge watching, narrative engagement	Qualitative	Frequency and duration of binge watching are predicted by two non-overlapping sets of variables.
21.	Effects of emotion on binge-watching.	USA	Motivations, contexts, affective states	Quantitative	A positive significant correlation between expected outcomes, self-regulation deficiency, anticipating regret, and binge-watching.
	Understand-ing the Phenomenon of Binge-Watching - A Systematic Review	USA	Binge watching	Quantitative	People who binge-watched more experienced negative emotions such as loss of control and dependency, while those who did less of binge watching experienced more positive emotions.
					That binge watching had positive sides among which are entertainment and positive emotions, cognition and spending free time.

22.		USA	Binge watching frequency, and duration	Quantitative	
23.		Portugal	Binge watching behaviour	Quantitative	
24.		USA	Emotions, Binge watching	Quantitative	
25.		USA	Binge watching trends	Quantitative	
26.		Abu Dhabi		Quantitative	
27.		USA		Qualitative	

28.		USA			
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For this study, since the population is unknown, the Topman’s formula (Owuamalam, 2012) for determining sample size where population is unknown was used. Below is the formula;

$$n = \frac{Z^2 Pq}{E^2}$$

Where

n= Sample size

z= Standard deviation for desired level of confidence
(1.96)

p= probability of positive response

q= probability of negative response

e= 5%, the limit of tolerable error

A pilot survey was conducted by the researcher in order to get the sample size, using 20 copies of a questionnaire. The copies were distributed and out of which 20 were correctly filled, returned and regarded as positive responses. The remaining 10 were not returned. This gives 66% for the returned questionnaire copies and 34% for the rejected ones.

The sample size was arrived at as follows:

Therefore:

$$\begin{aligned} n &= \frac{Z^2 Pq}{E^2} \\ &= \frac{1.96^2 (.66 \times .34)}{0.05^2} \\ &= \frac{3.8416 \times 0.2244}{0.0025} \\ &= \frac{0.86205504}{0.0025} \\ &= 344.822 \\ &= 345 \end{aligned}$$

The sample size for the study, therefore, is 345

The purposive sampling technique was used in selecting the actual samples for the survey method. This technique was used to ensure that only binge viewers residing in the three states were selected for the study. The number of sample elements that were studied in each state from the sample size of 345 was allocated based on researcher’s discretion. The reason for this discretion is that since there was no finite population of viewers in any of the states studied, the researcher had to administer equal number of questionnaire copies to the three states, except in Anambra state where the researcher gave a few more copies based on convenience (that is where the researcher resides). The allocation was done as follows: Anambra – 125, Enugu – 110, Imo Copies of a questionnaire were distributed to respondents residing in the capitals of the three states selected for the study (Enugu, Awka and Owerri). The screener questionnaire was used to select respondents that participated in the study.

Table .1: Questionnaire Distribution

State	Sample size
Anambra	125
Enugu	110
Imo	110
Total	345

The researcher gave copies of a questionnaire to them to ascertain content reliability. A total of 20 copies of a questionnaire were administered in the pilot study. A Cronbach Alpha coefficient was generated for the pilot study using SPSS package version 23. The researcher used Cronbach Alpha value of the instrument for the test to ascertain the reliability of instrument.

Table .2 Reliability of Instrument

Reliability statistics		
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	No of Items
.645	.727	27

The reliability coefficient was 0.645 or 64.5%. This showed there was a high reliability of the instrument of study. The researcher then considered the instrument positively reliable for the study.

Calculation of Cut-off Point

To realize the cut-off point for the mean, the study will add the norminal values and calculate the mean score:

$$\bar{X} = \frac{5 + 4 + 3 + 2 + 1}{5} = \frac{15}{5} = 3$$

Decision Rule

The decision point for the study was 3.00. When calculated values for mean scores are exactly 3.00 or above, they are regarded as accepted or agreed. Once the value of a mean score falls below 3.00 it is regarded as disagreed or rejected score.

The formula for the simple percentage is:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{X \times 100}{N}$$

Where X = Individual sum in the group or responses

N = Total response

The formula for the Chi-Square (X²) Goodness of Fit is:

$$x^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where X² = Calculated chi-square value.

O = Observed Frequency.

E = Expected Frequency.

Σ = Sum of values.

The formula for Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PMMCC) is:

$$r = \frac{n(\Sigma xy) - (\Sigma x)(\Sigma y)}{\sqrt{[n\Sigma x^2 - (\Sigma x)^2][n\Sigma y^2 - (\Sigma y)^2]}}$$

Where x and y are original scores

N = number of pairs of scores

Σ = summation of symbol

Σxy sum of the product of each x and y.

The data were presented and analysed using frequency tables, simple percentages, and mean scores. Copies of a questionnaire were administered to 345 respondents. A total of 337 copies were returned and found usable, representing 97.6% return rate.

Table .1: Questionnaire Distribution and Return

LGA	No. Distributed	No. Returned
Enugu	110	105
Anambra	125	125
Imo	110	107
Total	345	337

Source: *Field work, 2020*

Table .1 above shows that all the questionnaire copies distributed in Anambra State (n=125) were returned, out of 105 out of 110 copies distributed in Enugu state were returned, while 107 out 110 copies distributed in Imo state were returned and found useable.

Demographic Data

This section contains relevant demographic details of the 337 respondents that participated in th study. The demographic factors considered relevant for this study are Age, gender, marital status and educational level of respondents. These data which are presented here provided detailed description of respondents.

Table .2: Demographic Distribution of Respondents

Age (yrs)	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	68	20
26-35	95	28
36-45	86	26
46-55	64	19
56 and above	24	7
Total	337	100
Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	124	37
Female	213	63
Total	337	100
Educational Attainment	Frequency	Percentage
No Formal education	29	9
Primary	38	11
Secondary	119	35
Tertiary	151	44
Total	337	100
Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage
Single	225	34
Married	112	66
Total	337	100

Source: *Field Work 2020*

Table .2 shows that 68 respondents (20%) 95 of them (28%) were aged 26-35, 86 of them (26%) were between 36-45 years, 64 (19%) between 46-55 years old, while 24 (7%) were 56years and above. This shows the age range of respondents was evenly spread to accommodate different categories of people in terms of age.

The table also shows that 124 of the respondent (37%) are male while 213 (63%) are female. It further shows that 29 respondents (9%) had no formal education, 38 (11%) had primary education, 119 (35%) had secondary education, while 151 (44%) had tertiary education. In terms of marital status, 225 (34%) of respondents are single while 112 (66%) are married.

Hypothesis 2

HO₂: There is no significant relationship viewing environment and binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone.

Test Statistics	
Chi-Square	66.026 ^b
Df	5
Asymp. Sig.	. 1.21

Application

$$df = 5, X^2 = 66.026, P > 0.05$$

Decision

From the result it could be seen that the Chi Square test for hypothesis 2 has a P value is 1.21. The P value is greater than the critical value of 0.05. It follows that the null hypothesis which states that “There is no significant relationship viewing environment and binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone.” is accepted.

Hypothesis 3

HO₃: There is no significant relationship between programme type and binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone.

Test Statistics

Chi-Square	427.772 ^b
Df	5
Asymp. Sig.	1.64

Application

$$df = 6, X^2 = 427.772, P > 0.05$$

Decision

Chi Square test for hypothesis 3 has a P value is 1.64 and this P value is greater than the critical value of 0.05. It follows that the null hypothesis which states that “There is no significant relationship between programme type and binge watching among viewers in the South East geopolitical zone” is accepted.

Conclusion

Data gathered from the field was used to draw conclusions based on the questions posed by the study on binge watching behaviour of viewers in the Southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria during the Covid-19 lockdown of 2020. The following conclusions were drawn after the study;

Most respondents were light and medium binge viewers during the Covid-19 lock down. They could spend between two to six hours watching one television series or multiple movies in one sitting but they couldnt do that for more than six hours.

Recommendations

The study recommends the following.

1. Self-regulation is encouraged among viewers since this plays an important part in how frequently an individual engages in binge watching. With lower levels of self-regulation, individuals might binge watch without considering the side effects of this behaviour.
2. Future research should expand the study on binge watching behaviour to Nigerians in other parts of the country, not just Southeast geopolitical zone as was done in this work. Also, such variables as level of education, economic status/occupation, gender, and marital status should be studied to know whether they are potential predictors of binge watching behaviour among viewers.
3. Though this study investigated motivations for binge-watching, there is still opportunity to learn why viewers choose certain television options over others when they binge-watch. This could programme further explanations on the influence of programme type on binge watching behaviour.

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