

## The Influence of Stress Relief, Escapism, Social Influence, and Accessibility Motives on Binge Watching Intensity

Odie Yohandi<sup>1</sup>, Andrine Prima Afneta Arzil<sup>2\*</sup>

<sup>1,2</sup> Program Studi Ilmu Komunikasi, FISIP, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Indonesia

### Abstract

*The discovery of the latest technology, namely the internet, has created increasingly diverse platforms for people to get information and entertainment (new media). One of the entertainment activities that is popular with people today is watching films and serials or dramas from home. Binge watching is a current trend in watching shows, especially among students. This is evidenced by the fact that 90% of the young generation aged 20-33 years have binge watched, and the age group that binge watches most often are those at university or student level. One of the favorite online streaming services is Netflix. Seeing this phenomenon, researchers wanted to know which motives influenced the intensity of students' binge watching. This research uses an explanatory quantitative analysis method and was conducted at Universitas Sebelas Maret. Population chosen in this research is 46.227 active students in Universitas Sebelas Maret. The Slovin formula was used in determining the sample which resulted in a sample of 99 active students and distributed equally to the 4 selected faculties. The following principal research conclusions are drawn from this study, which examines the relationship between the Intensity of Binge Watching on Netflix and the Motives for Binge Watching on Netflix: (1) Stress Relief Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix; (2) Escapism Motive has no significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix; (3) Social Influence Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix; (4) Accessibility Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix.*

### Keywords:

*Motives, Social Influence, Watching Intensity, Binge, Netflix*

### Introduction

In the digital era, television has also developed towards internet-based television, this internet-based television is usually called Television on the Desktop (TOD), TV Over IP (Television over Internet Protocol) or Internet Protocol Television or called IPTV (Azizurrahim & Hendriyani, 2022). Internet-based television allows people to watch television programs anytime and anywhere using an internet connection. This internet television provides users with the freedom to watch

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\* Corresponding Author: Andrine Prima Afneta Azil, [andrine.prima@staff.uns.ac.id](mailto:andrine.prima@staff.uns.ac.id)

television programs without having to be tied to the television schedule determined by the television station.

However, gradually the power of television seems to be disrupted by new media (Yoedtadi & Hapsari, 2020), namely social media, which is a derivative of the development of internet technology. Even though television has also developed using internet-based television, many television users have turned to social media, especially with the increasing number of internet users in line with the development of cell phone technology which has succeeded in creating smart phones (smartphones) which are much cheaper than PCs or laptops to access the internet. What is even more surprising is that Indonesia, which is not categorized as a developed country, is also one of the countries with the highest internet users in the world.

Even though it is categorized as a developing country with mastery of science and technology which is still considered quite low, it turns out that Indonesia is the fourth largest internet user country in the world (Yonatan, 2023). Data from 2024 states that more than 50% of Indonesia's population has used the internet, 221,563,479 people from a total population of 278,696,200 people in Indonesia (Asosiasi Penyelenggara Jasa Internet Indonesia, 2024). Internet users have also increased drastically by more than 42% since 2015 compared to 2020, this has been exacerbated by the increasing popularity of smartphone users, so that all internet users in Indonesia are smartphone users (Pusparisa, 2020).

As technology develops, television is also starting to be abandoned by its viewers. The discovery of the latest technology, namely the internet, has created increasingly diverse platforms for people to get information and entertainment. This ease in the field of communication is closely related to new media. New media is a form of media convergence. Convergence occurs as a result of technological advances that enable development. Convergence means the intersection of old media and new media. Before stepping into new media, society first experiences its development before finally being abandoned.

Information and entertainment needs can be obtained easily with new media. After digital TV, audio visual content can then be accessed on the internet. These shows can be watched at any time and on any device. This has made innovators discover a new invention called VOD (Video on Demand) as part of new media. This platform is becoming the new "TV" for many young people today. Viewers can choose various shows they want to see by subscribing to the platform.

The presence of new media is now changing audience habits massively. The activities that people can do are increasingly diverse and increasingly entertaining. People today no longer need to leave the house to exercise, shop, or watch films or dramas. All sophisticatedly provided by technology. With this convenience, people can save time without having to give up the activities they want to do. Apart from that, people can also save expenses by carrying out various activities at home.

One of the entertainment activities that is popular with people today is watching films and serials or dramas from home. This happens because a person no longer needs to go to the trouble of buying tickets and traveling to the nearest cinema. It is also able to save energy and save costs. This film can be watched at any time so it is more flexible for the public. People can also watch marathons or what is often called binge watching. Binge watching is a current trend in watching shows, especially among students. This is evidenced by the fact that 90% of the young

generation aged 20-33 years have binge watched, and the age group that binge watches most often are those at university or student level (Kelly Merrill Jr., 2019).

Students often use online streaming services as a platform for binge watching. This is because students are given the freedom to access it anytime and anywhere. One of the favorite online streaming services is Netflix. Data says that 92% of students subscribe to Netflix (Vaterlaus, 2019), without exception, this application is also one of the platforms that is popular with Indonesian. Netflix started entering Indonesia in January 2016 (Sari et al, 2021). Netflix is a media provider providing services for showing films, series, dramas and various shows throughout the world. Netflix also has an automatic next episode feature and provides a recommended film or series column.

As stated by Situmeang (2022), Netflix provides various types of shows or programs. Not only does it show films or series, but they also produce their own films or series with their production team. Many of the shows on this application are fresh and new. Netflix is present in almost all parts of the world, including Indonesia. Netflix is one of the applications that started the streaming media boom and has succeeded in giving rise to other streaming applications. Even now, Netflix is still in a high position as the streaming media that has the biggest influence.

According to Muhamad (2024), the number of Netflix subscribers has reached 269.60 million subscribers globally in the first quarter of 2024. Besides, Netflix subscribers in Indonesia always show improvement which is significant. In 2017, there were 95 thousand Netflix subscribers in Indonesia. Then in 2018, it increased up to 2.5 times to as many as 237.3 thousand. Next in 2019 it increased to 482 thousand, and in 2020 it reached more than 900 thousand Netflix subscribers in Indonesia (Sari et al, 2021).

People's interest in something can be the basis that drives their intention towards something. In this case, a person's intentions influence interest in binge watching. So, the higher a person's intention to binge watch, it will affect the length of time they watch, as well as the frequency of a person's watching.

Seeing this phenomenon, researchers wanted to know which motives influenced the intensity of students' binge watching. Students were chosen considering that students are the group with the highest level of binge watching. The author focuses on binge watching activities on the Netflix platform. This platform was chosen because Netflix is the most widely used online streaming service. So the focus of the research is students who use the Netflix platform.

Research questions posed in this study are: (1) Is there a simultaneous influence of stress relief, escapism, social influence, and accessibility motives on the binge watching intensity of Universitas Sebelas Maret students on Netflix? (2) What is the level of influence of stress relief, escapism, social influence and accessibility motives on the binge watching intensity of Universitas Sebelas Maret students on Netflix?

## Literature Review

Uses and Gratification Theory was first articulated in 1959 by Elihu Katz, although the theory became stated more formally in the 1970s by Katz and his colleagues (Litlejohn, 2017). According to this theory, rather than the media (communicators), the audience (communicants) is the primary focus. Media consumers are viewed as active audiences who utilize media to satisfy their needs for

knowledge, amusement, and education (Humaizi in Efendi et al, 2023). Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch in Morissan (2013) stated that there are five basic assumptions of this theory, including: (1) Active audiences have orientation on goals when using a media; (2) Initiative to obtain media satisfaction is determined by the audience itself; (3) Media competes with other sources of satisfaction; (4) Audience fully conscious about their interest, motive, and media usage; (5) Media content valued by the audience.

Muzafer Sherif, a social psychologist at the University of Oklahoma, proposed the Social Judgment Theory in 1961, according to the University of Kentucky (2001). This theory basically says that an individual's decision to accept or reject a statement or message that he reads or hears depends on the cognitive map that individual possesses. Depending on their level of ego involvement and whether the message is within their comfort zone, an individual will either accept or reject a message. There are three latitudes that are included in social judgment involvement (Larson, 2001): (1) Latitude of acceptance; (2) Latitude of rejection; and (3) Latitude of noncommitment.

According to Morissan (2013), the Belief System Theory is one of the most comprehensive consistency theories put forward by Milton Rokeach. The basic assumption of this theory is that every human being has a highly organized system of beliefs, attitudes and values that guide human behavior. Furthermore, still based on Morissan (2013), someone will always be guided by their needs to be consistent. Now, related to this study, we will see how students believe on how they will cope with their stress in many ways which corresponds to binge watching

Communication psychology, according to George A. Miller in Suparna and Pramana (2023), is a science that aims to characterize, forecast, and regulate mental processes and behavior in communication. While predicting helps us understand that by making certain generalizations of a number of specific behaviors that are connected to certain psychological conditions, we will be able to predict what form of behavior will appear if a stimulus is given to a person with a certain psychological character, description refers to the analysis of why a communication action can occur.

Lev Manovich in Utami (2018), in his book entitled *The New Media Reader* says that new media is a cultural object in a new paradigm of the world of mass media in society. New media allows for the dissemination of computer technology and digital data controlled by application models. According to Luik (2020), new media changes the process of meaningful human communication with the presence of new media, the communication process through media can change from one-way flow to two-way flow, even multi-way flow.

According to UU No. 32 Tahun 2002 tentang Penyiaran, subscription broadcasting institutions are broadcasting institutions in the form of Indonesian legal entities whose business field is only providing subscription broadcasting services and must first obtain a license to operate subscription broadcasting. This institution broadcasts or distributes its broadcast material specifically to customers via radio, television, multimedia or other information media. The financing comes from two sources, including subscription fees; and other legitimate businesses related to broadcasting operations.

According to the Oxford English Dictionary (2022), stress relief is an activity, substance, etc., which alleviates (or is intended to alleviate) emotional or physiological stress. According to Crum (2000), stress relief is the process of studying the process of describing feelings which can be very subjective and provide an intellectual experience. This could be one of the highest combined achievements of the human heart and mind.

Escapism is a person's motivation to escape from reality into a fantasy world (Henning & Vorderer, 2001). Escapism also shows that escape from the self by means of activity engagement is pleasurable (Stenseng et al, 2014). From the explanation above, we can conclude that there are several instruments that form escapism, including: a) run away from reality, b) daydreaming (to jump into a fantasy world), and c) social isolation (avoiding surroundings).

According to Kotler and Keller (2016) that Social Influence can be influenced by social factors: small groups, families, the role, and social status of consumers. According to Heinzen and Goodfriend (2019), social influence is divided into 2 sections that are: implicit expectations and explicit expectations. Furthermore, implicit expectations explain conformity and social roles, as well as explicit expectations about compliance and obedience. In this research conformity is represented by social contagion, the spontaneous distribution of ideas, attitudes, and behaviors among larger groups of people which in this research is related to how people get spoiler and easily infected to watch the same things.

Technological advances have brought new habits in enjoying shows. Accessibility is something that is easy to achieve. This means that accessibility is not just the availability of everything, but also the availability of things that are easily achieved (Kansil, 2000). Regarding to this research there are three components that we can measure which are: a) Netflix's convenience itself that provided to users in terms of effort scoop, b) variety of shows that inline with the cost users spent, and c) comfort that is related to how long users will spend their time on this platform.

According to Ameri (2024), intensity of watching is average hours watched each day of the focal media product (given that the focal media product has been finished watching). Intensity of binge watching is the level and strength of a person's support for binge watching. When someone intends to binge watch, they feel they will benefit from this activity. A person's intentions can be seen from how often or interested he is in using something. How often this is used is then called intensity.

## **Research Method**

This research uses an explanatory quantitative analysis method. Explanatory research was carried out on the samples and research results can be generalized to the population. This research was conducted at Universitas Sebelas Maret. Population chosen in this research is 46.227 active students in Universitas Sebelas Maret. In determining the sample, researchers used the Slovin formula which resulted in a sample of 99 active students and distributed equally to the 4 selected faculties: Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, and Faculty of Art and Design. This research uses a sampling technique in the form of probability sampling in the form of double-stratified random sampling.

## Findings and Discussion

In this hypothesis test, there are 3 points that must be considered in the structural test, namely the Original Sample, T-statistics, and P-Values. With their respective uses, namely the Original Sample (O) to see the direction of the influence of the relationship between constructs, T-statistics are used to measure the level of significance in the hypothesis, and P-Values are used to measure the level of significance of the hypothesis at different levels. The hypothesis test in this study was conducted based on the data by looking at T-statistic and P-Value. If the P-value of the research hypothesis is less than 0.05 or the T statistic is greater than the T table, which is 1.290161, the study can be considered acceptable. The Path Coefficients table of the structural model can be seen as follows:

Table 1. Results of Original Sample, T-statistics, and P-Values

Relationships	Original Sample	T-statistics	P-Values
Stress Relief Motive (X1) → Binge Watching (Y)	0,400	4,231	0,000
Escapism Motive (X2) → Binge Watching (Y)	0,019	0,203	0,839
Social Influence Motive (X3) → Binge Watching (Y)	0,287	3,431	0,001
Accessibility Motive (X4) → Binge Watching (Y)	0,232	2,326	0,020

Source: Primary Data.

In addition, the researcher inserted the Spearman Correlation Test to analyze how strong the association between Variables, the closer to 1 or -1 the stronger the association is, meanwhile, the closer to 0 the weaker the association is (Priyatno, 2013). The basis for making decisions regarding the Spearman Rank correlation test is on table below and referring to Correlation Coefficient Interpretation by de Vaus (2002).

Table 2. Results of Spearman Correlation

Variables	rs Value	Sig. (2 tailed)
Stress Relief Motive (X1) → Binge Watching (Y)	0.593	.000
Escapism Motive (X2) → Binge Watching (Y)	0.188	.063
Social Influence Motive (X3) → Binge Watching (Y)	0.522	.000
Accessibility Motive (X4) → Binge Watching (Y)	0.599	.000

Source: Primary Data.

Based on the Original Sample (O) value, T-statistics, P-Values, and Spearman Correlation the test results for each hypothesis are as follows:

1. The results of the Smart-PLS calculation show that Stress Relief Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix attitudes with an original sample value of 0,400, then this test is supported by a T-statistics value of 4,231 which can be categorized as  $> 1,290161$  and a P-value of 0,000 which means it is less than 0,05.
2. According to previous evaluation, Stress Relief Motive has an effect to influence the Binge Watching Intensity and if we are looking at the correlation value on

table IV.37, Stress Relief got 0,593 points that are categorized as substantial to very strong regarding de Vaus interpretation.

3. The results of the Smart-PLS calculation show that Escapism Motive has a positive, but no significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix attitudes with an original sample value of 0,019, then this test is supported by a T-statistics value of 0,203 which can be categorized as  $< 1.290161$  and a P-value of 0,839 which means it is more than 0.05.
4. According to previous evaluation, Escapism Motive has an effect to influence the Binge Watching Intensity and if we are looking at the correlation value on table IV.37, Escapism got 0,188 points that are categorized as low regarding de Vaus interpretation and based on previous proof, it can be interpreted that the second motive hypothesis is rejected.
5. The results of the Smart-PLS calculation show that Social Influence Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix attitudes with an original sample value of 0,287, then this test is supported by a T-statistics value of 3,431 which can be categorized as  $> 1,290161$  and a P-value of 0,001 which means it is less than 0,05. So, it can be interpreted that the first motive hypothesis is rejected.
  - a. According to previous evaluation, Social Influence Motive has an effect to influence the Binge Watching Intensity and if we are looking at the correlation value on table IV.37, Social Influence got 0,522 points that are categorized as substantial to very strong regarding de Vaus interpretation. So, it can be interpreted that the third motive hypothesis is accepted.
6. The results of the Smart-PLS calculation show that Accessibility Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix attitudes with an original sample value of 0,232, then this test is supported by a T-statistics value of 2,326 which can be categorized as  $> 1,290161$  and a P-value of 0,020 which means it is less than 0,05. So, it can be interpreted that the first motive hypothesis is accepted.
7. According to previous evaluation, Accessibility Motive has an effect to influence the Binge Watching Intensity and if we are looking at the correlation value on table IV.37, Accessibility got 0,599 points that are categorized as substantial to very strong regarding de Vaus interpretation. So, it can be interpreted that the fourth motive hypothesis is accepted.

## Conclusions

The following principal research conclusions are drawn from this study, which examines the relationship between the Intensity of Binge Watching on Netflix and the Motives for Binge Watching on Netflix: (1) Stress Relief Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix; (2) Escapism Motive has a positive, but no significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix; (3) Social Influence Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix; (4) Accessibility Motive has a positive and significant effect on Binge Watching Intensity on Netflix.

Through the results of this research data which have been presented in detail in the previous sections, the researcher will provide suggestions that can be used for further research, including: (1) This research is limited only to Universitas Sebelas Maret students, therefore, further research is expected to involve a wider

community; (2) This research is limited only to discuss a certain platform which is Netflix among many on demand media out there, therefore, further research is expected to involve a wider spectrum of platform so that the future research can provide a wider results and interpretations; (3) This study found quite unusual results, namely that Escapism Motive does not affect Binge Watching Intensity, when many other studies have found that Escapism affects the fulfillment of satisfaction in accessing various media.

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