

# Examining the Association Between Binge-Watching Habit and Social Apathy Among School Students

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## Abstract

This study looked at how Binge-watching connects to social apathy in teenager aged 13 to 18. Information came from 200 young people who filled out two tools: one measuring binge-watching patterns, another checking motivation around social contact. On average, bingeing showed up at medium levels score averaging 40.42, spread across responses varied quite a bit. The emotional pull toward others landed near 30.73, also differing widely per person. When comparing numbers closely, heavier viewing linked clearly to lower drive being part of group moments a steep downward trend stood out sharply in results. It turns out heavy binge-watching links to less emotional detachment in teens, which contradicts earlier guesses. Instead of pulling away from others, some might turn to shows when they feel low almost like a quiet reset. This pattern breaks the idea that long viewing sessions only cause isolation. Rather than shutting people out, screens may help certain ones manage how they feel. What looks like escape could actually be coping. The data leans toward that shift in meaning. Not every late-night episode fuel disconnection. Sometimes it does the opposite.

**Keywords:** binge-watching, social apathy, adolescents, school students, social motivation

## 1. Introduction

The people keep chatting about how streaming apps have exploded lately, because of this shift, adults now vibe with TV content differently. These sites release entire seasons together. Some even keep episodes rolling without stopping them. Therefore, watching stretches became something totally normal. Most of the time, they referred to it as binge watching. This entails going through each episode consecutively in a single session. Teenagers and young adults get into this habit more than anyone else. They blend easy access to these apps with schedules that fit their lives. Social media chats also fit right in. Recent studies and expert opinions have shown clear links. Binge-watching is associated with problems such as difficulty sleeping at night. It is also connected to signs of depression. These issues worry people a lot during school years. This time is crucial for developing social skills. Peer relationships were formed in important ways.

The theoretical frameworks linking with binge- watching and social apathy Some ideas explain why watching many shows in one go could make students care less about social stuff. It also reduces the development of active social coping strategies. The Displacement Hypothesis is another explanation.

Time spent in prolonged viewing displaces time otherwise available for face-to-face interactions. It displaces extracurricular and family conversations. These activities maintain social motivation and relational skills. Over time, displacement may erode both opportunities and the motivation to socialize in person. Behavioral Conditioning and Habit Formation theory also fit here. Auto-play features and narrative cliffhangers create reinforcement schedules. This encourages automatic and prolonged viewing. Habitual engagement reduces the cognitive and affective salience of initiating in-person social interactions. It increases passivity toward social interactions. Emotional Numbing or Affective Blunting is yet another idea. Repeated passive consumption as a mood regulator may blunt emotional reactivity in real life. This lowers the rewarding value of direct social interactions. It produces apathy. Systematic reviews have linked heavy binge-watching with depressive symptoms and emotional issues. These factors could mediate social withdrawal. Together, these frameworks suggest a plausible causal pathway. Motives lead to habitual binge eating. This leads to displacement and affective changes. This results in reduced social motivation or social apathy. Testing these links in student samples is necessary.

**Definition:**

- **Daniel L. Perks (2015)**- Defined binge-watching as “watching multiple episodes of the same television program in one sitting.”
- **John De Feijter, Margot Khan Vulpinari & Mats Verlegh (2016)**-Described binge-watching as watching several episodes of a TV series consecutively via digital streaming platforms in a single session. They emphasized technological affordances like autoplay.
- **Alejandro Cortés et al. (2019)**-Defined binge-watching as consuming multiple episodes in a single sitting, often driven by immersion, narrative engagement, and emotional involvement.

**2. Literature review**

**Özkent et al., (2025)** The study examined how binge-watching is tied to things like feeling left out, fear of talking with people, being lonely, sad mood, nervousness, and tension among people in Türkiye. A total of 894 people participated including - 498 women and, the rest men. Watching more shows is closely tied to feeling sadder, tenser, or anxious – as well as dealing with greater unease around people while often sensing loneliness. These results point to possible emotional downsides from heavy screen time, suggesting that we should dig deeper into how media habits affect our inner world.

**Rahimpoor et al., (2025)** It looked at how social ties, cultural background, but also indifference connects among new high school teachers in Lali town. A survey method was used, and information was obtained from 193 educators using tools based on Bourdieu’s ideas about social and cultural assets. The results showed a clear pattern those with tighter relationships or deeper cultural knowledge tended to feel less socially detached. Instead of just focusing on scores, this study stresses that backing from schools, skill-building opportunities, and real access to materials can help keep teachers involved while boosting their role in community life.

**Joseph.D (2025)** looked closely at binge-watching, treating it like a habit that can get out of control. Instead of just summarizing past work, this analysis focused on what drives people to do it, such as wanting to escape reality or dealing with feelings of isolation and nervousness around others. While bingeing shows can seem fun at first giving you a sense of ease or chat topics with pals going hard on it often wrecks your sleep routine.

### 3. Research Methodology

#### 3.1. Objectives

- To quantify patterns of binge-watching in school-aged adolescents using the validated Binge-Watching Addiction Questionnaire.
- To assess levels of social apathy (social motivation) in the same student group using the Social Motivation subscale of the Apathy Motivation Index–Child Version.
- To analyze the association between binge-watching intensity and social apathy in this adolescent sample using quantitative correlational analysis.

#### 3.2. Hypothesis:

H<sub>0</sub>: There is no significant relationship between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students.

#### 3.3 Research design:

The study uses quantitative correlational research design to explore how strongly binge-watching links to social apathy in students. It measures these factors through numbers, allowing comparison via statistics rather than direct influence on outcomes. With established instruments and neutral evaluation methods, it detects trends while preserving accuracy. This way, findings remain consistent, avoiding changes to natural behaviors during observation.

### 4. Sample size and Sampling technique:

This study includes 300 students between 13 and 18 years old. Selection will rely on simple random sampling method, so each qualified student gets the same likelihood of participation. For this research, individuals will be chosen deliberately which purposive sampling is, focusing on learners fitting specific requirements to explore connections between prolonged screen use and emotional detachment in school settings.

#### 4.1. Inclusion criteria:

- The participants in the age range of 13-18 years were selected.
- Reasonableness to participant.
- The sample will involve school student.
- Students who voluntarily consent to participate in the study.

#### 4.2 Exclusion Criteria

- The students below 13 years and above 18 years of age.
- The individuals who are not enrolled as school students.
- The students with diagnosed severe psychiatric, neurological, or developmental disorders that may affect study responses.
- The students unwilling to participate or whose parents/guardians do not provide informed consent.

#### 4.3. Tool Used and Description:

- **Binge-Watching Addiction Questionnaire (BWAQ)**- Developed by Forte, Favieri, Tedeschi, and Casagrande (2021), The measures compulsive viewing habits through self-assessment. Comprising 24 statements scored via Likert-type responses, and it captures behavioral patterns linked to excessive screen use. Subscales cover aspects like priority given to watching, increasing need for duration, emotional shifts, discomfort when stopped, returning to old habits, along with social or

personal strain. Evidence supports its reliability Cronbach’s alpha exceeds .80 and confirms alignment with related psychological constructs.

- **Apathy Motivation Index–Child Version (AMI-CV): Social Motivation Subscale** -Developed by Hewitt et al. (2023), measures lack of motivation in kids; specifically, the Social Motivation part looks at how interested or involved they are socially. Items here gauge willingness to start social contact - also reactions during such exchanges - with responses given on a Likert-type scale. Internal consistency reaches acceptable levels ( $\alpha > .75$ ), while stability over time appears strong. Evidence for validity comes from factor structure checks along with links to observable behaviors.

**4.4. Statistical analysis:**

Statistical evaluation will rely on SPSS software. To outline student traits, measures like averages, standard deviations, frequency, or proportions will describe patterns in binge-watching and social apathy. A Pearson correlation test will check how strongly binge-watching links to reduced social interest.

**5. Result**

This chapter discusses the results and interpretation of the analysis done to understand the relationship between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students.

**Table 1- Descriptive statistics showing the mean and standard deviation of between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students.**

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	N
Binge watching	40.42	20.419	200
Social Apathy	30.73	15.148	200

The descriptive table shows the men and standard deviation for the variables. The variable IV- Binge-watching habit has a sample N=200, mean= 40.42 and standard deviation=20.419 and DV- social apathy has a sample N=200, mean= 30.73 and standard deviation=15.148

**Table 2- Correlational analysis showing the relationship between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students.**

Variables	Pearson’s correlation	r value	Decision
PPUS	1	-.858**	Rejecting(H <sub>0</sub> )
IA			

**\*Correlation is significant at 0.01 level (2-tailed)**

Table shows the values of Pearson's correlation among the two variables. There appears to be a correlation of 1 and a significance of-.858\*\* ( $p < 0.01$ ). There is significance at .001 level and a negative correlation between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students. It implies that the higher the binge-watching habit, the lower will be the level of social apathy the significant relationship is noticed between the two variables, there is a relationship between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students. Therefore, the null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>: There is no relationship between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students.) is rejected. This study examined the association between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students.

## 6. Discussion

The main aim of the research was to find the relationship between binge-watching habit and social apathy among school students. The findings revealed a significant negative correlation ( $r = -0.858$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between the two variables. Data showed a strong inverse pattern emerged higher immersion tied to less emotional distancing. With rising hours spent on continuous streaming, signs of retreat from real-world contact grew fewer. Rather than pulling away, those deeply involved in series marathons displayed stronger inclination toward peer connection. Contrary to some established theories and past observations those suggesting long hours of streaming replace face-to-face interaction a different pattern appears. What looks like withdrawal may instead reflect emotional recalibration through screen time. When academic stress mounts, or friendships strain, repeated episodes offer steady ground, a quiet rhythm amid turbulence. Instead of deepening isolation, these pauses might ease inner friction enough to allow reconnection later. The relief found in familiar storylines does not erase social capacity; it may briefly sustain it. Distance from people then becomes less absolute, more cyclical, shaped by moments of retreat that precede return. Overall results, today's outcome questions the common belief that constant series watching always pulls teens away from peers. Rather, patterns suggest a subtler link where heavy viewing might actually help certain students stay connected under specific conditions. What stands out is how research moving forward should track reasons behind screen time, kinds of shows chosen, shared viewing habits, along with changes over time, so we better understand which young people gain social stability through such behaviour instead of losing touch.

## 7. Summary

The present study examined the association between binge – watching habit and social apathy among school students between ages thirteen and eighteen. Information came from two hundred learners, gathered through established methods: The Binge-Watching Addiction Questionnaire along with the Social Motivation section of the Apathy Motivation Index made for children. The descriptive statistics values shows moderate levels of binge-watching ( $M = 40.42$ ,  $SD = 20.419$ ) and social apathy ( $M = 30.73$ ,  $SD = 15.148$ ). Pearson correlation analysis indicated a strong significant negative relationship ( $r = -0.858$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) between the two variables. The findings suggest that higher binge-watching behavior is associated with lower levels of social apathy. The null hypothesis stating no relationship between binge-watching habit and social apathy was rejected. Results challenge the common assumption that excessive streaming always promotes social withdrawal and point toward possible compensatory or mood-regulatory functions of binge-watching in certain adolescents.

## 8. Conclusion

The present study shows the significant correlation between the scores obtained using the said questionnaires and indicates a negative correlation between the 2 variables, therefore binge-watching habit that must be high in order for teen to experiences a low level of social apathy among school students.

## 9. Limitations

- A cross-sectional approach restricts causal relationships between binge-watching and social apathy.
- The Self-report measures may lead to bias toward social desire or inaccurate recollection.

- The group was drawn from a specific geographic/school setting, restricting its applicability to larger populations.
- The study did not account for potential confounding factors such as personality traits, family environment, and content type.

## 10. Recommendations

- A future study will also explore how binge-watching has a time element and how it relates to the cause of some social impacts on adolescents.
- Qualitative research studies will be done on adolescents' motivations for binge-watching, what types of content they prefer, and whether or not they feel that binge-watching gives them some social benefits.
- Investigate moderating factors such as shared viewing, genre kind, academic stress, and peer group dynamics.

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