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Binge-watching Serialized Video Content

Published in:
TELEVISION AND NEW MEDIA

DOI:
[10.1177/1527476419848578](https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476419848578)

Published: 01/11/2020

Document Version
Peer-reviewed accepted author manuscript, also known as Final accepted manuscript or Post-print

Please cite the original version:
Merikivi, J., Bragge, J., Scornavacca, E., & Verhagen, T. (2020). Binge-watching Serialized Video Content: A Transdisciplinary Review. *TELEVISION AND NEW MEDIA*, 21(7), 697-711.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476419848578>

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Prepublication manuscript for Merikivi, J., Bragge, J., Scornavacca, E. and Verhagen, T. (2019), "**Binge watching serialized video content: A transdisciplinary review**", *Television & New Media*, First Published May 22, 2019, doi:[10.1177/1527476419848578](https://doi.org/10.1177/1527476419848578).

Abstract

Binge watching serialized video content is a phenomenon that has triggered interest from diverse research fields. Despite the progress researchers have made across different areas, a grounded conceptualization and definition of binge watching is still lacking. In this article, we conduct a transdisciplinary literature review to identify continuity and viewer autonomy as the two fundamental attributes underlying binge watching. Then, using these attributes as conceptual anchors, we offer a convergent definition and categorize the existing binge-watching definitions in the literature. The results of this categorization reveal that the vast majority of the definitions used in the literature fail to distinguish binge watching from other viewing practices such as casual viewing, single-episode appointments, and marathon appointments. We discuss the implications and, to move the binge-watching research forward, conclude with recommendations and an agenda for future research.

Keywords

Binge watching, viewing practices, viewer autonomy, continuity, serialized video content, online television

Introduction

In 2012, Jurgensen from *The Wall Street Journal* declared that binge watching changed the television industry for good. By binge watching, he referred to “gobbling up entire seasons of shows in marathon sessions” (Jurgensen 2012). At that time, very few knew the term though many had already used online television and DVD box sets. As more viewers have subscribed to Netflix, binge watching has become a buzzword to which also researchers refer. Matrix (2014), for instance, has written how Netflix is disrupting linear television because it offers a more autonomous viewership—the ability to binge watch television shows. Besides autonomy, binge watching has since linked to various other attributes. According to Pittman and Sheehan (2015), for example, binge watching adds to relaxation, engagement, and hedonism, whereas Shim and Kim (2018) say it satisfies viewers’ desire for enjoyment, efficiency control, and fandom.

Literature seems to represent binge watching mostly as a hedonic viewing practice, though Silverman and Ryalls (2016) aptly remind us of its utilitarian attributes: it can be used as an analysis method (see also Rubenking et al. 2018). Researchers have also raised concerns that binge watching is not necessarily a positive but a negative practice. This line of research has gained more attention in the binge-watching literature (e.g., Dickinson 2014; Hargraves 2015; Riddle et al. 2018) and made researchers suggest how to tackle it (e.g., Schweidel and Moe 2016).

Despite the stated progress, researchers seem to stand less united in how they define binge watching. Where some definitions build on time (Wagner 2016), others use the number of episodes a viewer consumes of a television show (e.g., Ahmed 2017; Walton-Pattison, Dombrowski, and Presseau 2018). Unfortunately, a clear definition of binge watching is still lacking—as is an explanation of why it should build on time, or why a certain number of episodes constitutes a binge, and in what way these episodes need be consumed (*attributability*). Without a solid definition, it will be difficult not only to distinguish binge watching from other viewing practices but also to produce comparable findings (*comparability*) (see for results with two different binge-watching definitions: Godinho de Matos and Ferreira 2017). In addition, if, by default, the definition excludes certain television shows (e.g., online-only content) from investigation (*coverage*), it will fail to capture its intensional meaning (Copi, Cohen, and McMahon 2014), potentially challenging scholarly progress altogether.

As a result, there is a clear need to scrutinize the scattered scholarly literature. To do this, we opt for a transdisciplinary review, as binge watching has attracted researchers from various disciplines (e.g., information systems, marketing, media, communication, and psychology) covering several television-related debates (e.g., binge watching as an addiction or a viewing pattern, and viewing patterns of serialized video content). We then identify the fundamental attributes that underlie the definitions presented in the binge-watching literature. Based on these fundamental attributes, we propose a convergent

definition and classification framework. With this endeavor, we offer a systematic analysis and synopsis of current knowledge, which aims to make the binge-watching research more commensurate and generalizable in the future. We conclude our article with suggestions for further explorations to move binge watching research forward.

Literature review and analysis

In search for all relevant binge-watching research, we used Elsevier’s Scopus, ResearchGate, and Google Scholar. The search words we employed were “binge watch” and “binge view,” including their conjugations (e.g., binge watching). We then continued with backward search by screening the references for additional relevant publications, as well as with forward search for identifying newer publications. We focused on peer-reviewed publications, both empirical and conceptual. While reviews typically include only articles, we made an exception and extended our analysis to two additional publications, Conlin’s (2015) doctoral thesis and Glebatis Perks’ (2014) book, which we consider are of high quality and relevance to the subject at hand. The search resulted in 29 publications, most of which come from the field of media and communication.

We summarize the statistics in Table 1 and list the publications in detail in Appendix 1.

[INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Fundamental attributes and a convergent definition of binge watching

To develop a convergent definition of binge watching, we followed the approach where one identifies the *intensional meaning*, referring to “the attributes shared by all and only the objects in the class that a given term denotes” (Copi, Cohen, and McMahon 2014, 91). That is, we focused on attributes that distinguish binge watching from other viewing patterns characterized by consuming serialized video content.¹

To identify these attributes, we analyzed the definitions of the listed publications. Since one of them, the publication by Matrix (2014), had neither explicit nor implicit definition, we excluded it from the analysis altogether. The analysis revealed five fundamental attributes to be further scrutinized: viewer autonomy, continuity, completion, addiction, and immoderacy.

Viewer autonomy. This attribute underlines binge watching as a product of technological evolution, representing a breakaway from scheduled television to greater *viewer autonomy* (Jenner 2017). It pays attention to medium controllability (Friedman 1996; Friedman and Nissenbaum 1997), not whether binge watching is good or bad, or self-regulated (i.e., doing something they fully endorse, see Ryan and Deci 2006). Simply put, viewer autonomy here is about allowing the users to decide on how to use media.

Following Jenner (2017), binge watching has its origins in DVD box sets, which allow viewers to consume one season or the entire serialized video content. Her notion on viewer autonomy receives support from Kompare (2006, 352) who claims that DVD box

sets make content “accessible at the whim of the viewer, without waiting for a rerun airing or searching through commercial breaks.” Unlike scheduled television, which requires an appointment with their favorite television show,² DVD box sets do allow viewers to consume serialized video content at their own convenience (see Figure 1).

With box sets and their successors, online television streaming services, viewers are like readers who read a book whenever they want and as many chapters as they want. Therefore, linking viewer autonomy to binge watching differentiates it also from television marathons, which refer to broadcasting episodes of the *same* television show back-to-back (Conlin 2015; Fernandez 2017). While television marathons allow viewing multiple episodes in one sitting, they are no more than *extended* viewing appointments, as they are broadcasted at a specified time and date. It is thus not surprising why Jenner (2017, 308) claims binge watching “suggests an entirely different media experience than ‘traditional’, scheduled television can offer.”

[INSERT FIGURE 1 ABOUT HERE]

Continuity and completion. Researchers have also proposed that binge watching relates to *continuity* or *completion*, both attributes that address *how* binge watching occurs in practice.

Continuity refers to consuming episodes of a television show in one sitting without disturbances like commercial breaks during and between the episodes (Steiner and Xu 2018). The attribute puts flesh on the bones on what Pierce-Grove (2017) describes as the

viewers' immediate desire to indulge "in just one more of the same kind." That is, continuity suggests that when viewers are binge watching, they want to consume episodes of a *particular* television show in *continuous flow*. Continuity is also what makes binge watching surpass the "norm" already after the first episode. This may not *feel* excessive, yet it amounts *too much* in relation to the "one episode at a time" standard set by scheduled television (for more about excess, see Abbott 2014). We derive the justification for the comparison from the viewers' desire to break away from scheduled television (Jenner 2017).

Completion (or closure), in turn, stresses a desire for any definite knowledge on how the given television show ends (Kruglanski and Webster 1996). Viewers want to see season and show finales (see also Devasagayam 2014), and, hence, according to Glebatis Perks (2014), completion offers a basis for binge watching (or media marathoning as she terms it).³ Completion does not necessarily require continuity, as long as a season is "consumed within one week" (Glebatis Perks 2014, xxxi). This attribute, however, may sometimes require unnecessarily extreme sittings or sittings that are beyond possible, as is the case with *Days of Our Lives* (1965-), a long-running US soap opera by NBC. Since its single season has over 250 one-hour long episodes, its completion would take more than ten days, non-stop. Replacing continuity with a slightly longer time period is a cold comfort. Even if it did not rule out long-running television shows automatically, viewers would still have to complete them faster than shorter television shows.

Addiction and immoderacy. Two attributes emphasize that binge watching is excessive and harmful (e.g., Devasagayam 2014; Wheeler 2015; Wagner 2016). The focus is either on *immoderacy* (cf., Feeney 2014) or *addiction* (Schweidel and Moe 2016).

As for immoderacy, it is assumed that there is an ideal number of episodes that viewers should not exceed in a single session. If they did, their viewing would be so long that it makes them feel guilt (Wagner 2016),⁴ and for that matter, turn into binge watching (Feeney 2014). Unfortunately, what is “too much” is difficult to pinpoint because it depends on two perceptions: episodes and feelings. Episodes vary in length within and across television shows, and some mini-series may even be too short to make viewers feel immoderate, in which case binge watching does not apply to all serialized video content. Feelings, in turn, vary from viewer to viewer and occasion to occasion (e.g., individuals are likely to allow themselves to consume more media during holidays). More importantly, to the best of our knowledge, there are currently no publications that seek to explain why binge watching must *feel* immoderate.

Concerning addiction, the literature is inharmonious. Where Devasagayam (2014) demonstrated binge watching is an addiction, Flayelle, Maurage, and Billieux (2017, 466) concluded, also based on empirical evidence, that it “should not a priori be analyzed through the lens of the biomedical model of addiction.” Riddle et al. (2018), in turn, give partial support to Flayelle et al. (2017) by reporting that negative effects are less likely to

occur when binge watching is intentional. Given the above, it seems that addiction is a potential outcome of, but not a fundamental attribute to, binge watching.

Convergent definition of binge watching

Based on the previous, we draw on two fundamental attributes, continuity and viewer autonomy (*attributability*). Continuity, which describes binge watching, is about concentrating on a specific television show and consuming its episodes in continuous flow. Viewer autonomy, in turn, captures the self-scheduled nature of binge watching: viewers must be able to binge watch what they want at their own pace and time. This also implies that they can stop whenever they choose (Conlin 2015). Moreover, both the attributes are independent of subjective perceptions (*comparability*), and, perhaps even more importantly, concern all forms of serialized video content (*coverage*) – including long-running soap operas and online-only mini-series (e.g., *The Show About the Show*), whose episodes fail to adhere to the traditional (“hour-long” and “half-hourlong”) broadcast time slots (Volpe 2017). That said, the attribute selection leads us to propose the following convergent definition of binge watching: “*a consumption of more than one episode of the same serialized video content in a single sitting at one’s own time and pace.*”

Categorizing the existing definitions in the literature

To gain an overall view of how researchers currently understand binge watching, we categorized the definitions presented in the literature according to the two fundamental attributes identified above. Together, continuity and viewer autonomy help distinguish binge watching (BW) from self-scheduled single-episode sessions, which we here term as casual viewing (CV), as well as from scheduled single-episode (SEA) and multi-episode appointments (i.e., marathon appointments: MA). We illustrate the four distinct viewing practices in a quadrant framework (see Figure 2).

[INSERT FIGURE 2 ABOUT HERE]

Concerning the categorization process, three researchers undertook the task of coding the definitions found in the 28 publications. First, the team agreed on the fundamental attributes (continuity and viewer autonomy). Then, each team member coded the listed definitions independently using the quadrant framework presented in Figure 2. Note that each definition presented in the literature could incorporate one or more fundamental attributes. Upon completion of the coding process the team compared the results. With only a few exceptions, the three members agreed on the coding categorizations. When discussing their disagreements, they then reached a consensus concerning all definitions (cf., Krippendorff 2004).

Results

Altogether 18 definitions categorized in our study acknowledged only continuity (64.3 percent: MA and BW). Six definitions were all-inclusive (21.4 percent: SEA, MA, CV, and BW), whereas three acknowledged the mere viewer autonomy (10.7 percent; CV and BW). Only one definition (3.6 percent: Pierce-Grove 2017) distinguished binge watching from other viewing practices (see Figure 3).

[INSERT FIGURE 3 ABOUT HERE]

Continuity only. Definitions acknowledging only the continuity attribute are the most common among the reviewed publications (18 or 64.3 percent). In these definitions, binge watching refers to viewing episodes of the same television show in continuous flow. Interestingly, however, the definitions disagree on when viewing turns into binge watching (see Figure 4). For example, Walton-Pattison et al. (2018, 3) define that consumption of “more than two episodes of the same TV show in one sitting” counts as binge watching (also Silverman and Ryalls 2016; Flayelle, Maurage, and Billieux 2017). Riddle et al. (2018) in turn, state that viewers must consume a minimum of three episodes of the same television show in one sitting (Hargraves 2015).

[INSERT FIGURE 4 ABOUT HERE]

The disagreement is difficult to decode, as the relative standards underlying the definitions are not explicitly addressed (see Walton-Pattison, Dombrowski, and Presseau

2018). Further, the definitions accept binge watching is possible both via self-scheduled and scheduled television, a view that parallels the activity to marathon appointment (MA).

The research objectives covered by the publications of this category concern viewer personalities (Tukachinsky and Eyal 2018), motives (Panda and Pandey 2017), and negative outcomes (Ahmed 2017). Moreover, similar to publications belonging to the other categories, the publications in this category are mostly exploratory in nature (11 or 61.1 percent). Other publications of this group lean on transportation theory (Conlin 2015), addictive spectatorship (Hargraves 2015), and uses and gratifications theory (Pittman and Sheehan 2015; Shim and Kim 2018). The topmost perception is that many of these publications approach binge watching with reservation.

All-inclusive. The second most popular (6, 21.4%) definition type takes no notice of either continuity or viewer autonomy. The publications spread across various disciplines, including marketing, education, communication, and media. One-half of the publications is exploratory in nature, seeking to identify the relationship between binge watching and advertising (Schweidel and Moe 2016) or memory (Horvath et al. 2017). The other half employs either theoretical synthesis or the uses and gratifications theory to investigate motivations (Shim and Kim 2018) or the phenomenon itself (i.e., media marathoning: Glebatis Perks 2014). Similar to the publications of the previous category (continuity only), publications listed in this category approach binge watching with reservation (Devasagayam 2014; Schweidel and Moe 2016).

Autonomy only. Three (10.7 percent) publications advocate nothing but viewer autonomy. Since they mainly compare binge watching to appointment viewing, the definitions do not separate binge watching from casual viewing (i.e., self-scheduled single-episode sessions). The publications belonging to this category are from the media and communication discipline with a focus on the binge-watching phenomenon, viewers, and content. Conlin (2015), for example, investigates the depth with which the viewers transport into the story when binge watching. Jenner (2016; 2017), in turn, explores television industry, fandom, and the quality label given to television shows viewers choose to binge watch. These publications intend not to evaluate binge watching. Rather, they seek to understand the phenomenon and place the activity within the changing media environment.

Binge watching. One publication (Pierce-Grove 2017) in our review introduces a definition of binge watching that builds on both continuity and viewer autonomy. The publication, which examines how journalists frame binge watching, proposes that the activity refers to viewing episodes in continuous flow without constraint.

Pierce-Grove (2017) reminds that while box sets were the originating force, online television makes serialized video content immediately and largely available for binge watching. As viewers are able to easily continue their viewing, even completing the entire television shows to their liking, binge watching gratifies their impulses immediately. In addition, Pierce-Grove (2017) explains that new media platforms have removed

constraints on immediate access, conditions which she highlights apply to binge watching. As such, her definition not only anchors binge watching to continuity and viewer autonomy, but also helps distinguish it from other viewing practices.

Discussion

While research on binge watching is still in its infancy, there appears to be a conceptual puzzle that inspired us to scrutinize the scattered literature and analyze how researchers conceptualize and define binge watching. In our article, we were particularly concerned that binge watching is lacking attributability, comparability, and coverage. Therefore, we conducted a transdisciplinary literature review aimed at identifying the necessary fundamental attributes upon which binge-watching builds, providing a convergent definition of binge watching. To understand the current state of research, we also analyzed and categorized the definitions available in the literature based on the attributes of our definition.

As for our first goal, we maintained that viewer autonomy and continuity present two necessary and sufficient attributes for defining binge watching. Given these we ruled out appointment viewing in all its different forms (single-episode appointments and marathon appointments) and located binge watching in self-scheduled television (e.g., box sets, online television; see also Jenner 2017; Horeck, Jenner, and Kendall 2018). In addition, we distinguished binge watching from casual viewing (i.e., self-scheduled single episode sessions).

As for our second research goal, we drew upon the fundamental attributes, viewer autonomy and continuity, and defined binge watching as *viewing more than one episode of the same serialized video content in a single sitting with one's own pace and time*. The advantages this definition offers are three-fold. First, it honors the origins of binge watching (Kompare 2006; Jenner 2017), and, as such, compares to viewing scheduled television, offering clarity currently unavailable in the existing literature. Second, as the definition gives credit to self-scheduled television (Jenner 2017), it also recognizes the opportunity to viewing in continuous flow. The one-episode threshold the definition addresses is fixed and independent of subjective perceptions. Third, the definition covers all serialized video content.

As for our third research goal, we formed a quadrant framework based on the two fundamental attributes in order to categorize the definitions that exist in the current literature. We found only *one* (Pierce-Grove 2017) that captured binge watching in its unique autonomous and continuous form. Other definitions addressed a mere continuity, viewer autonomy, or nothing in particular. Overall, our analysis clearly shows that there has been a conceptual puzzle of what binge-watching stands for. We do hope that subsequent studies consider adopting our convergent definition, as we believe it will support further research on binge watching.

Future research

Some publications reviewed in this article have linked binge watching to professionally produced quality television shows available on subscription services (Hargraves 2015; Jenner 2017). Of these television shows, dramas have received the most attention (Upreti et al. 2017) and consuming these hour-long episodes are likely to explain why binge watching seems inherently excessive. Yet, we claim that this is not necessarily the case, as binge watching goes beyond popular content adhering to traditional molds of television (Volpe 2017).

Consider, for example, *The Gay and Wondrous Life of Caleb Gallo* (2016-). It is an online only serial whose episodes last about 15 minutes each. Binge watching the five-episode long first season takes less than an hour and a half, comparing to the average runtime for a movie (Fussell 2016). Now, to put binge watching into better perspective, we recommend researchers to extend their future endeavors beyond dramas offered by popular subscription services. To do this, researchers may utilize real behavior data from transactional log files of video sharing platforms, such as *YouTube (Red)* and *Vimeo*, and study, for example, amateur-made video blogs. The serialized video content these platforms provide are currently under-represented and combining log data for instance with content bundling would enable researchers to analyze their influence on binge watching (see e.g., Godinho de Matos and Ferreira 2017). This, we believe, will throw

more light on content specific motives and outcomes and strengthen binge watching research in general.

While empirical studies on binge watching have focused on viewers, comparative research across viewers from different backgrounds is still lacking. Such a comparison should examine whether there exist any major cultural differences between binge-watching habits. For example, are some cultures more prone to encourage “hyper-bingeing”⁵ (cf., Trouleau et al. 2016), or are there other cultural differences, which, for example, influence the “second-screen” or community behavior (Giglietto and Selva 2014; Pittman and Tefertiller 2015). Besides scrutinizing backgrounds around mere binge watching, we also urge researchers to compare with other viewing practices (e.g., casual viewing, single-episode appointments, and marathon appointments).

Finally, our review reports that media and communication researchers have conducted over 70 percent of the listed publications, and there are only occasional studies from other disciplines, such as psychology and marketing. Given it is likely that binge watching is only going to increase in the future (Warren 2016), we think it is important it will receive more attention in various domains. It is our belief that more versatile research will add to theory development around binge watching. This is because it supports generation and integration of various novel theoretical perspectives drawn from different disciplines (Rosenfield 1996; Stokols et al. 2003). These perspectives could then be analyzed and challenged from several perspectives, promoting quality of findings.

Indeed, 43 percent of the reviewed publications were theory light. Those that had a theory (18 percent) relied most often on the uses and gratifications theory (Katz 1959; Katz, Blumler, and Gurevitch 1974), which attempts to explain why individuals use a specific medium and what are the outcomes of use. While it is an established theory, we believe that binge-watching research could benefit from applying a wider set of theoretical frameworks (see Appendix 1). One potential theory in this area could be the media system dependency theory (Ball-Rokeach and DeFleur 1976) that has recently been applied in predicting the continuance intention to use other ubiquitous media systems (Carillo, Scornavacca, and Za 2017). In addition, the mood management theory (Zillmann 1988) may be useful in analyzing the motivations for and effects of binge watching. Myrick (2015), for instance, has applied it in analyzing people who watch cat videos online, why and to what extent.

More importantly, though, we hope researchers will build new theories and models made specifically for binge watching.

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¹ We take that binge watching “only happens in relation to serialized formats as opposed to films or one-offs” (Horeck, Jenner and Kendall 2018, 499).

² Pingree et al. (2001), who studied television viewing among college students, anchor appointment viewing to consuming particular television shows broadcasted at a specified time and date. In this article, we use the term in the same sense.

³ Similar to Silverman and Ryalls (2016), who adopt the term “marathon viewing” Glebatis Perks (2014) prefers “marathoning” to bingeing. With this, they want to avoid unnecessary stigmatization.

⁴ To the best of our knowledge, the number of episodes has so far been used only as a proxy for an overall session length. Though criticized (see e.g., Pierce-Grove 2017), this is perhaps necessary, when one seeks to amount binge watching relative to a particular subjective feeling.

⁵ By hyper-bingeing, Trouleau et al. (2016) refer to viewers who consume an extreme number of episodes in a session, around seven on average.

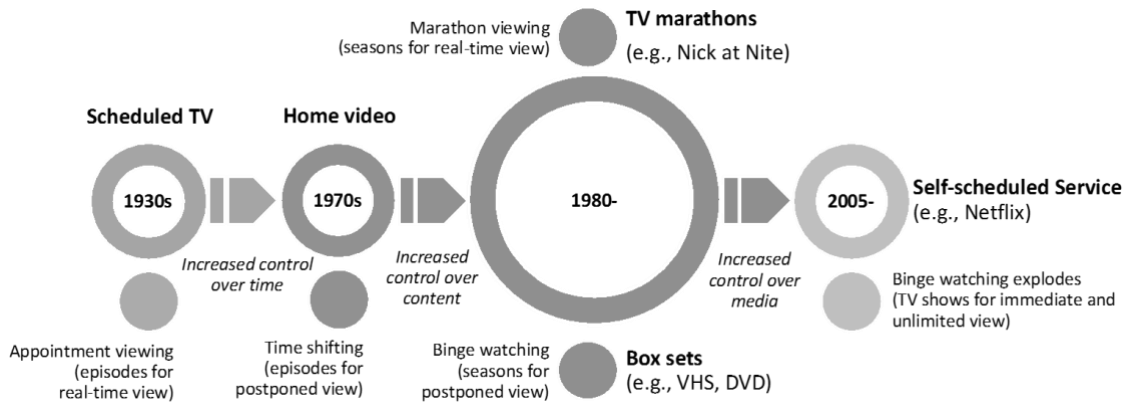


Figure 1 Historical continuum of viewer autonomy

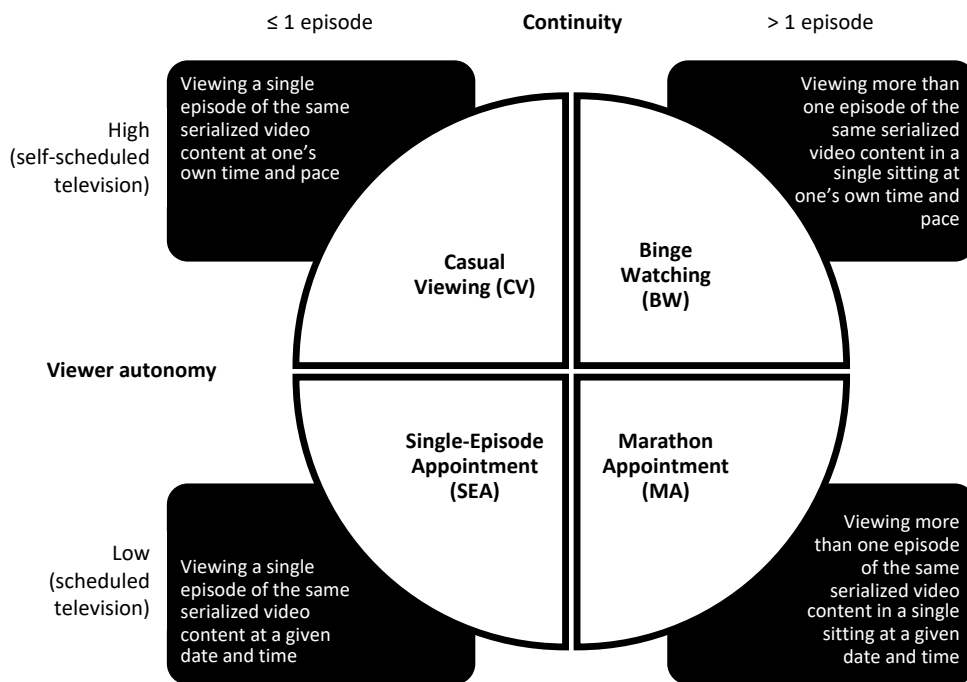


Figure 2 Quadrant framework of viewing practices

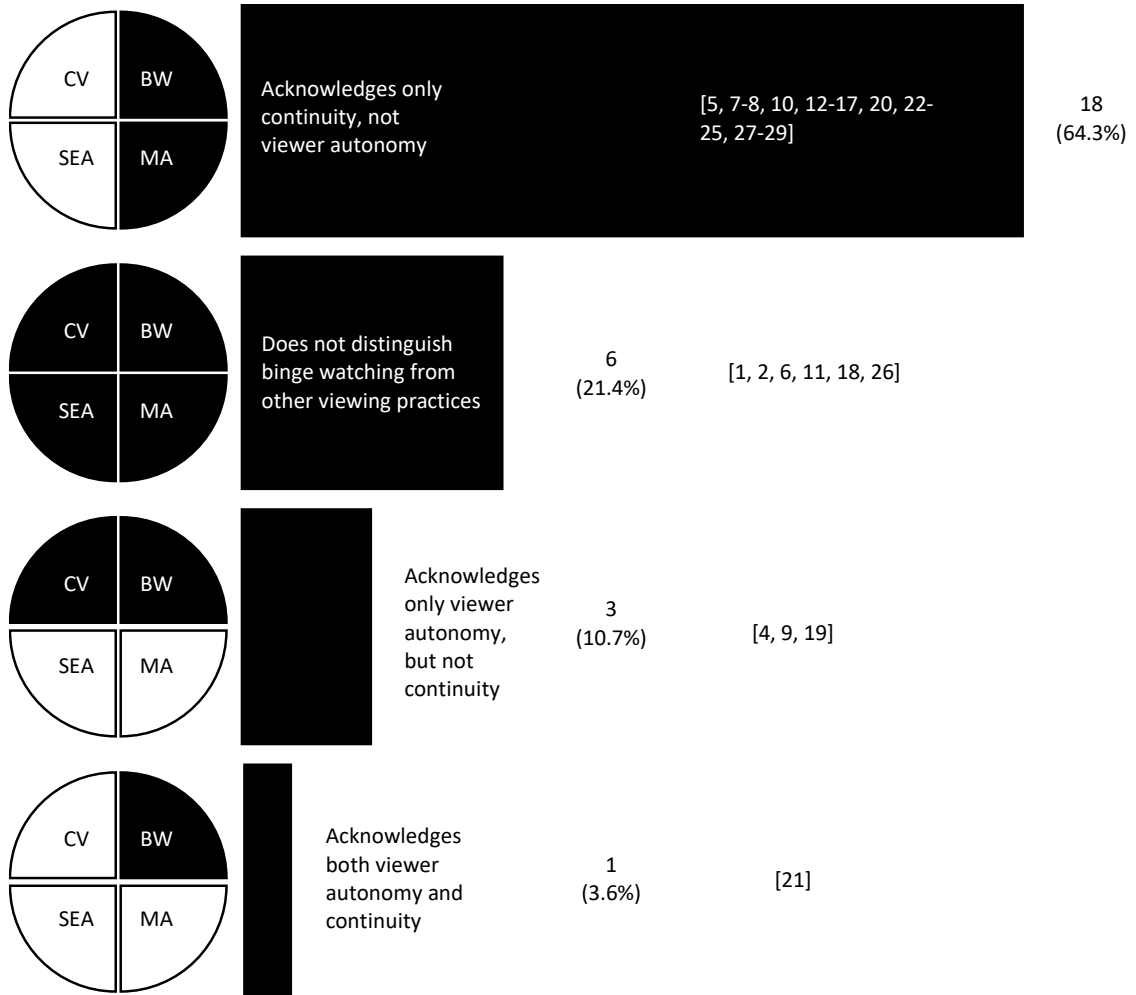


Figure 3 Categorization of definition types. The publication numbers refer to the publications as listed in Appendix 1.

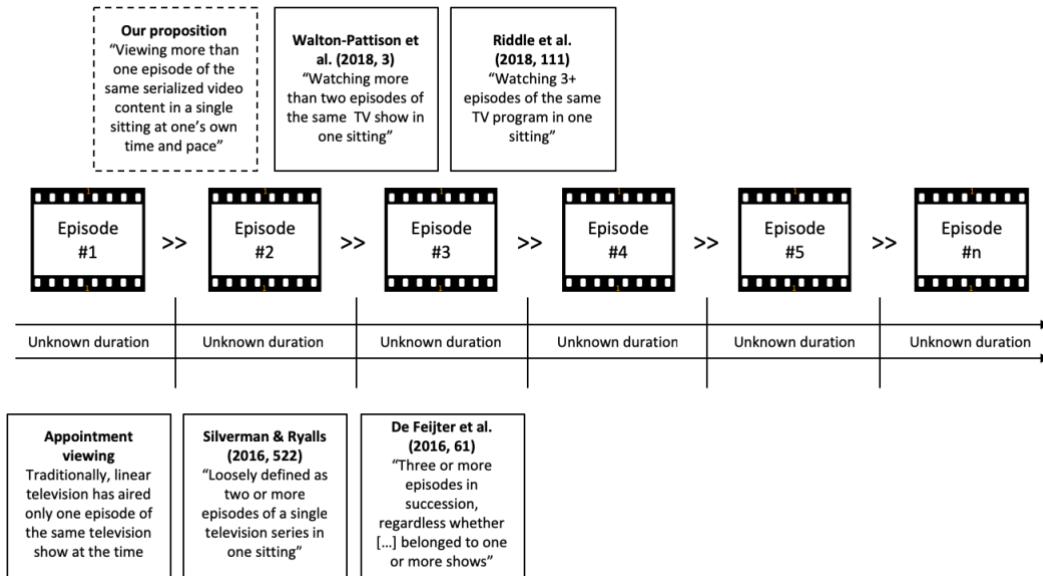


Figure 4 Various thresholds for binge watching proposed in the listed publications

Table 1 Descriptive statistics of binge-watching literature

Year	No. of publications	Media & Communication	Psychology	Others
2014	3 (10%)	2 (67%)	0 (0%)	1 (33%)
2015	3 (10%)	3 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)
2016	7 (24%)	6 (87%)	0 (0%)	1 (13%)
2017	10 (35%)	5 (50%)	1 (10%)	4 (40%)
2018*	6 (21%)	4 (60%)	1 (20%)	1 (20%)
Total	29 (100%)	20 (70%)	2 (7%)	7 (23%)

* the first half

Appendix I Reviewed publications

No	Author(s) & Year	Study goal	BW Definition (code)	Theory	Method	Outcome
1	Devasagayam (2014)	Seeks to understand the motives underlying binge watching.	“A rapid consumption of large amount of substance in a short time period.” (p. 40)	Explorative	Focus group discussions and a survey to the same participants (30/20 respondents)	Binge watching is an addiction. Viewers form one-sided, unconscious bonds to television characters, which influences bingeing. The study found preliminary support for theories of partner-like relationships, addiction, and dependence on media stimulation.
2	Glebatis Perks (2014)	Explores the media marathoning concept.	“Any television series season consumed within one week counts as a marathon [...]” (p. xxxi)	Theoretical synthesis (theory of literature as equipment for living)	Online surveys, interviews, focus group discussions, and media diaries (116/32/17/11, altogether 176 respondents)	Marathoning allows for increased engagement with a story world and narrative mastery. Most of the viewers are emotionally connected “resident” marathoners instead of “tourist” marathoners, who just watch to “see what happened”.
3	Matrix (2014)	Analyzes the significance of emerging digital media use trends	N/A	Explorative	Literature study with discourse analysis	Young generations enjoy personalized yet socially connected media diet. They are

such as the Netflix effect

active in content discovery and curation. “Netflix effect that enables weekend-long binges on *Arrested Development* is not just about convenience and customization (although those are important) but also about connection and community.”

- | | | | | | | |
|---|------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| 4 | Conlin (2015)* | Investigates the effects of binge watching on the outcomes of media consumption, especially transportation into the narrative, enjoyment, narrative engagement, and identification with the characters. | The practice of watching many episodes of a given TV show in rapid succession, with the ability to start and stop whenever wanted. | Transportation theory (explains viewers “being swept up into the world of a story so completely that they forget the world around them”) | Online survey (379 respondents) | Binge watching offers an increased opportunity to people (especially with transportability and fantasy-empathy personality traits) who want to transport into a narrative world. |
| 5 | Hargraves (2015) | Proposes a model of addictive spectatorship for understanding | “Any instance in which more than three episodes of an hour-long drama or six episodes of a half-hour comedy are consumed at one sitting.” (p. 74) | Theory of addictive spectatorship | Narcoanalysis (the critical approach to culture from the perspective of its articulation with and by drugs.) | Audiences will not binge on reality television but will binge on quality programming. |

		the popularity of reality television	(Originally: McNamara 2012)			
6	Pittman and Sheehan (2015)	Examines why people select to binge watch.	“Television binge-watching can be defined as watching two or more episodes of the same series in a single sitting, or watching one or more episodes of the same series for several consecutive days.” (p. 5)	Uses and gratifications theory	Online survey (263 respondents)	Engagement as motivation predicts the frequency of viewing: the more engaged one feels, the more frequently one will binge watch. Compared to other viewing behavior types, bingeing could be more involved and interactive.
7	Conlin et al. (2016)	Investigates the role that Fear-of-missing-out has on TV viewing habits.	“The act of consuming multiple episodes of the same TV show in one sitting.” (p. 152)	Fear-of-missing-out FoMO (pervasive apprehension that others might be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent).	Online survey in MTurk (160 respondents)	FoMO predicts the speed at which people watch TV, use the “second screen” and the propensity to watch one-time TV shows such as the Super Bowl.
8	De Feijter et al. (2016)	Investigates context factors related to binge watching and well-being.	Viewing “three or more episodes in succession, regardless whether the episodes belonged to one or more shows.” (p. 61)	Explorative	In-situ, smartphone monitoring survey (18 respondents), interviews (5 respondents), 18-33 years.	Binge watching is mainly a solitary activity. Over 75% binge watch alone. Optimal watching experience is 3 to 5 episodes. Exceeding that decreases pleasure, increases guilt

						and leads to passive leisure activities such as eating. Many viewers lack both awareness of their viewing behavior and control over viewing time, leading to longer viewing than planned.
9	Jenner (2016)	Explores the relationship between television and video-on-demand VOD (focusing especially on Netflix, and its move to produce and distribute original serialized drama).	"The practice of binge-watching implies not only viewers' desire for autonomy in scheduling when they want to watch what, but also a wish for 'pure' text (as Jacobs terms it) that is distinctively not part of the television flow." (p. 266)	Postmodern capitalism	Discourse analysis	Netflix links binge watching to quality television.
10	Mikos (2016)	Examines the use of video-on-demand (VoD) and focuses on binge watching	"The term 'binge watching' is a metaphor to describe an intensive form of consumption of television series. There is no precise definition. [...] In general we can say that binge watching occurs when a viewer watches two or more episodes of a series in one session". (p. 157)	Exploratory	A review of two studies	Viewers use VoD as it offers them greater autonomy than linear television. They also encourage binge watching by providing an access to complete seasons of novel television shows

11	Schweidel and Moe (2016)	Examines the drivers of binge watching behavior and viewers' response to advertisements.	"Consumption of multiple episodes of a television series in a short period of time." (p. 1)	Explorative	Analysis of real-world VOD record data (a time span of four months in 2009)	People, whose binge sessions are long, are likely to return quickly to continue their viewing (esp. of the same series). Long sessions decrease responsiveness to advertisements.
12	Silverman and Ryalls (2016)	Examines representations of elderly women in Orange Is the New Black	"Loosely defined as consuming two or more episodes of a single television series in one sitting." (p. 522)	Stigma of temporality	Binge watching (marathon viewing) as a method of analysis	Marathon viewing is a product of media convergence
13	Trouleau et al. (2016)	Models and characterizes different binge watching habits, especially abnormal consumption pattern.	Consumption where an individual consumes more than two episodes of a TV show in one session.	Explorative	Analysis of real-world VOD record data (a time span of 16 months in 2014-15)	Reveals that binge watching behavior is not uniform (variety due to day-of-week, device and genre), and that viewers binge watch content also out-of-order.
14	Ahmed (2017)	Investigates how binge-watching correlates with depression and loneliness	"It refers to the behavior of watching more than one episode from the same TV content consecutively in the same session." (p.198)	Exploratory	Sample of 260 Arab residents living in Abu Dhabi	Binge watching correlates significantly with depression, but not with loneliness
15	Exelmans and van den Bulck (2017)	Investigates the influence of binge watching on sleeping	"Binge watching, defined as watching multiple episodes of the same series in one sitting." (p. 1001)	Exploratory	A convenience sample of 423 respondents aged 18-25	Due to cognitive arousal, binge watching may pose a threat to sleep

16	Flayelle et al. (2017)**	Explores the psychological factors underlying binge watching behavior	“Watching more than two consecutive episodes of the same TV show in one go.” (p. 457)	Exploratory	A focus group of seven regular television show viewers	Binge watching concerns TV series watching motivations, TV series watching engagement, and structural characteristics of TV series
17	Godinho de Matos and Ferreira (2017)	Studies the effect of binge watching on the subscription of Video-on-Demand (SVoD)	Definition 1: “binge as watching 2 or more episodes of the same show in a row” (Spangler 2013); definition 2: “binge as watching 3 or more episodes of the same show in one sitting” (TiVo 2015).	Exploratory	A random sample of 50,000 households, of which 30,000 received SVoD subscription for three consecutive months (control group of 20,000 households). A follow-up survey of 296 respondents	Binge watching makes viewers consume content faster, and, therefore, it reduces viewers’ short-term willingness to pay to access SVoDs
18	Horvath et al. (2017)	Explores the impact of binge watching on the enjoyment of and memory for viewed content	“Viewing of three or more hours of programming within a single sitting.” (p. 1)	Exploratory	Experiment of 51 university students	Binge watching does not benefit sustained memory of viewed content. Also, participants in the binge-watching condition reported significantly less show enjoyment than participants in the scheduled condition
19	Jenner (2017)	Explores the concept of binge watching as a viewing protocol associated with	“A binge is largely defined by being autonomously scheduled and only excessive relative to a norm that	Explorative	Discourse analysis	Technology, fan discourses and practices construct the binge-watching concept.

		fan practices, industry practice and linked to 'cult' and 'quality' serialized content.	is difficult to pin down.” (p. 307)			
20	Panda and Pandey (2017)	Explores various motivations that influence college students to increase time spent on binge watching	“Watching between 2 and 6 episodes of the same TV show in one sitting.” (p. 425)	Uses and gratifications theory	Interviews of 60 and a convenience sample of 229 students at a large university in southwestern USA	Social interaction, escape from reality easy accessibility to television content, and advertising motivate college students to spend more time binge watching
21	Pierce-Grove (2017)	Tracks the normalization of the binge-watching term in the press.	“The binge is not about time, but about immersion in seriality — indulging in just one more of the same kind of thing, whatever is perceived to be the same kind by the user, in order to continue or complete a series without constraint.” (p. 4)	Exploratory	Literature analysis of New York Times, Atlantic, Wall Street Journal, Daily News, New York Post, Slate, and prominent journalists’ criticism from 1980s to 2016.	The fundamental unit of the binge watch is not the hour, but the episode. Journalists were an important part in constructing the binge watching as an “all-consuming experience that takes place at the expense of daily life.”
22	Upreti et al. (2017)	Explores the effects of technology on binge watching and marathon viewing	“Watch episodes of a television show back-to-back.” (p. 3)	Uses and gratifications theory, user autonomy	Automated textual analysis of around 700,000 tweets from Twitter	Technology separates marathon viewing from binge watching and influences viewers’ autonomy over time and content

23	Yengin and Kinay (2017)	Examines binge watching as a new viewing habit	“Binge watching can be defined as watching videos or television shows in one sitting. [...] Instead of waiting for the episode of a television show to come out every week, they prefer watching the episodes in one sitting. This viewing method is called “binge watching”, where viewers sit down and watch a couple or all the episodes of a television show in one go.” (p. 7)	Uses and gratifications theory	A sample of 441 respondents	Binge watching allows viewer to be more in control of their viewing experience, concentrate more easily on the topic of the television show
24	Merikivi et al. (2018)	Conceptualizes binge watching as a usage practice and explores its effect on user satisfaction.	“We define binge watching as consuming more than one episode of the same television show in one sitting.” (p. 111)	Satisfaction, system usage	Survey (227 respondents)	Binge watching explains user satisfaction poorly.
25	Riddle et al. (2018)**	Proposes that viewers engage in two types of binge watching behavior, intentional and unintentional	“Watching 3+ episodes of the same TV program in one sitting.” (p. 594)	Sensitivity theory uses and gratifications theory	A sample of 171 undergraduates studying at Midwestern University	The findings verify that viewers binge watch intentionally and unintentionally. Addiction symptoms were more common after unintentional binges, and impulsivity, which increases unintentional binge watching, exerts an indirect effect on addiction

26	Shim and Kim (2018)**	Identifies motivations for binge watching television drama	“The consumption of an item in excessive amounts over a short period of time as a way to escape from reality and to elicit psychological comfort.” (p. 4)	Uses and gratifications theory	A survey of 785 South Korean binge watchers	Binge watching satisfies viewers’ desires for enjoyment, efficiency control, and fandom.
27	Steiner and Xu (2018)**	Explores how binge-watching culture changes the ways viewers understand and interact with television	“The quantity of time or episodes constituting a ‘binge’ may vary, but the defining action of binge watching appears to be a consistent and sequential viewing of at least two episodes of a show in succession.” (p. 3)	Uses and gratifications theory	36 qualitative interviews with open-ended questions	Viewers’ primary motivations are catching up, relaxation, sense of completion, cultural inclusion, and improved viewing experience. The findings also indicate that the portability and navigability of streaming video technology influences binge watching rituals and that viewers are ambivalent about their binge watching
28	Tukachinsky and Eyal (2018)**	Studies the personality antecedents of binge watching and the psychological experiences of the viewers relative to the narrative and its characters.	“Binge watching refers to ‘watching two to six episodes of the same television show in one sitting’ (Netflix 2013), but Tukachinsky and Eyal (2018) promoted a broader consideration of ‘high-dosage,’ continuous media consumption (p. 6).” “Students ... who have engaged in marathon	Media use and involvement, media addiction.	In a two-part survey (173+92 participants), the media theories were applied to predict the extent of binge watching and to compare it with “traditional” viewing.	The results increased understanding of enjoyment and involvement theory and supported cognitive theories of media addiction. Moreover, binge watchers are active both cognitively and emotionally during and after the media exposure, thus

			viewing (i.e., those who watched at least three episodes of a program in one sitting) during the last week were invited to complete an online survey reflecting about this most recent marathon viewing experience.” (p. 7)			relieving some of the concerns about the phenomenon.
29	Walton-Pattisen et al. (2018)	Estimates the frequency of binge watching and identifies factors associated with it.	“We defined binge watching as ‘watching more than two episodes of the same TV show in one sitting’.” (p. 3)	Social cognitive theory	Online survey (86 respondents)	Viewers binge watch 1.42 days/week on average. Anticipated regret, automaticity, and goal conflict links to binge watching.

* Doctoral thesis

** Online first version