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### THE INTENTION OF ESCAPISM ON BINGE-WATCHING AMONG PENANGITES

<sup>1</sup>Ooi Kay Qi, <sup>2</sup>Mohd Hanafi Jumrah, & <sup>3</sup>Muhammad Su'ud Zhariff Zaharin

<sup>1,2,3</sup>School of Communication and Media, Han Chiang University College of Communication

Corresponding author: [hanafi@hju.edu.my](mailto:hanafi@hju.edu.my)

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### ABSTRACT

In this advanced society, people are inseparable from technology. Smartphones, tablets, computers, TVS have all become necessities for modern people. The way we use media has recently changed dramatically. The purpose of this research is to study the intention of escapism on binge-watching among Penangites. Video on demand allows viewers to watch anytime and anywhere because of modern technology breakthroughs. More and more viewers are choosing to enjoy the video by subscribing to streaming services or online rather than on conventional broadcast networks. The rise of binge-watching is a result of technological advancement which has resulted in a shift away from routine programming and towards more flexible viewership. Despite the fact that there are several researchers who have performed in diverse contexts, only a few studies have focused on the intention of binge-watching among Malaysians, particularly Penangites. This conceptual study examines previous research and aims to study the intention of escapism binge-watching among Penangites. There were 200 respondents from Penang using the Raosoft sample size calculator and they were given online survey questionnaires as part of a quantitative research project. The acquired data were then examined in SPSS to determine the correlations (Pearson's coefficient) and reliability (Cronbach's Alpha). The result of the study indicates that most of the respondents show a positive view of the factor of escapism affecting their desire to binge-watch. It can be seen that the majority of the respondents agree that binge-watching may help them to escape from everyday life, seek relief from the unpleasant reality of everyday life, help them to temporarily get away from the grind, immerse themselves in the unreal world as well as give them more pleasure than other activities. Other than that, this research may help in showing that new advancements in media entertainment and the ensuing alterations in usage patterns bring opportunities as well as obstacles to media consumers. In addition, it may also help in future research to gain a deeper understanding of binge-watching as a novel form of media enjoyment as well as fresh perspectives on the intricate relationship between well-being and media use in general.

**Keywords:** Binge-Watching, Escapism, Intention, Penangites, Uses and Gratification.

## INTRODUCTION

In this advanced society, people are inseparable from technology. Smartphones, tablets, computers, TVs have all become necessities for modern people. The way we use media has recently changed dramatically. Traditional media have been gradually eliminated by this society. Viewers are increasingly choosing to watch videos on the internet rather than on traditional television networks (Panda & Pandey, 2017). Back then, audiences were accustomed to watching programs according to the broadcaster's schedule and order, with one series airing each week. Now that technology has advanced, online movie platforms provide audiences with more freedom by enabling them to make their own schedules using Video-On Demand (Susanno, Phedra & Murwani, 2019). The use of television in society has changed recently, especially in favor of online video streaming services. Additionally, the number of people watching traditional TV has clearly declined, while the number of people using internet streaming services is rapidly rising (Mikos, 2016). The patterns of media consumption have evolved to meet consumer demands as a result of the new trends. The main goal of the binge-watching phenomenon is to give viewers complete control over their viewing behavior (Susanno et al., 2019).

Even though many studies define binge-watching in terms of the quantity of episodes watched, no precise definition of binge-watching has emerged. For viewers, the binge-watching phenomenon offers several benefits and disadvantages. According to several types of research, binge-watching can be harmful to an individual's general well-being because it has a tendency to be addictive (Chaudhary, 2014).

### Research Objective

This research investigates the relationship between escapism and the intention of binge-watching among Penangites.

### Research Problem

On-demand platforms had been popular and had been introduced throughout the years and as a result, led to the emergence of binge-watching habits. When people spend too much time relaxing while binge-watching, it may cause health problems. According to previous studies, binge-watching may be an addictive disorder (Rahman & Arif, 2021). In research by Vaterlaus, Spruance, Frantz, & Kruger (2018), who also looked into binge-watching through an online survey study, binge-watching may have further detrimental effects on overall well-being. According to another research by Exelmans and Bulck (2017), it is further elaborated that binge-watchers also reported higher goal conflicts, addiction symptoms, and sleep issues, including symptoms of insomnia. Besides that, in the analyzed research, depressed symptoms, as well as tension, guilt sentiments, and generally bad feelings or affect, were reported (Flayelle, Canale, Vögele, Karila, Maurage, & Billieux, 2020). Additionally, when this sedentary lifestyle becomes the norm, health problems may worsen as a result of the lack of exercise and mobility. This might also be a consequence of less regular, high-quality rest and sleep. People who practice binge-watching shall be impacted by that reason both physically and mentally (Samsudin, 2022).

Studies about how relaxation from binge-watching may bring negative effects on individuals were also being investigated. Binge-watching is a streaming behaviour that people frequently engage in with the goal of relaxing, but it can also result in feelings of guilt and procrastination

(Granow, Reinecke, & Ziegele, 2018). Over the years, numerous research has examined the detrimental impacts that this behaviour has on people's health, such as the propensity for a sedentary lifestyle (Granow et al., 2018). Additionally, this extremely immersing in TV behaviour gives a rapid reward, therefore it may cause someone to lose self-control and watch TV shows for far longer than they intended to (Walton-Pattison, Dombrowski, & Presseau, 2018).

In the context of escapism, there are early studies on escapism examined how escapist entertainment consumption impacts society. Early studies on escapism focused on the target and examined how escapism negatively impacts society (Halfmann & Reinecke, 2021). Examples include decreased political participation, diminished social role performance, and relationship issues (Katz & Foulkes, 1962). A more in-depth of the effects were further discussed and investigated were both immediate impacts, such as psychological discomfort and negative effects (Hagström & Kaldo, 2014; Stenseng, Rise, & Kraft., 2012), and long-term ones, such as decreased life satisfaction and general well-being (Hagström & Kaldo, 2014; Kaczmarek & Drażkowski, 2014; Meier, Meltzer, & Reinecke, 2018). Moreover, in research conducted by Castro, Rigby, Cabral, & Nisi (2021), people report feeling more depressed after binge-watching, which may be a result of their adjustment to reality following a very enjoyable and engrossing pastime.

Online streaming services cultivate a culture of quick gratification while also satiating people's desire for escape and imagination (Matrix, 2014). Binge-watching may lead people to forget their responsibilities leading to procrastination and delay in what needs to be done. Pena (2015) looked into the social and stress-relieving benefits sought and received from binge-watching and discovered that the optimal way to get those benefits is as an escape from everyday life.

## **Research Hypothesis**

H1: There is no significant relationship between escapism and the intention of binge-watching among Penangites.

H2: There is a significant relationship between escapism and the intention of binge-watching among Penangites.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Binge-watching and Genre**

People are increasingly using digital and mobile devices to consume broadcast media. They frequently use internet streaming services, which are easily accessible through everyday devices like smartphones or tablets, to watch TV channels, movies, series, shows, etc. (Camilleri & Falzon, 2020). The phrase "binge-viewing," which was popularized by the media, often describes a compulsive habit of watching video-on-demand content. Watching several episodes of a show in a row is one of the definitions of binge-watching that is frequently used (Joswiak, 2022). The most popular binge-watching definition, according to Netflix, is watching two to six episodes of a single TV show at once (Jenner, 2018). Binge-watching is the overconsumption of serialised content, which is frequently promoted by VoD providers. For instance, Netflix promotes this behaviour by creating different kinds of binge-worthy shows whether by releasing one or even the entire seasons in one go (Buschmeyer, 2020).

With the emergence of technology and the changing of watching habits, the habit of binge-watching has arisen and is becoming more popular. The development of streaming platforms, which provided consumers with some control over their digital media consumption, is what contributed to the emergence of binge-watching (Merikivi, Bragge, Scornavacca, & Verhagen, 2020).

With digital streaming services, the audience can choose what they want to watch easily. Audiences may choose what to watch from a variety of genres of shows. Nowadays, the genre of a show has been hardly determined as some shows contain hybrid genres. Although there have been considerable crosses among television genres in recent years, some have stayed popular, particularly on more modern platforms like streaming services (Wagner, 2016).

The motivations for watching particular genres have been the subject of several uses and gratifications studies, with a focus on those that are interesting due to viewer loyalty or societal relevance (Hawkins, Pingree, Hitchon, Gorham, Kannaovakun, Gilligan, Radler, Kolbeins, & Schmidt, 2001). For example, in a research study of television genre viewing by Hawkins et al., (2001), college students estimated that they watched 13 hours of television overall during the diary week, with drama and situation comedies being the most popular genres and these genres of shows most likely being binge-watched by the audience.

According to another study of binge-watching by Wagner (2016), dramas and comedies were the most popular series to binge. Moreover, according to another study of binge-watching by Tefertiller and Maxwell (2018), the researcher emphasized that besides long-hour drama as a genre that motivates binge-watching because of the ongoing nature of the plot, other genres of shows such as comedies and reality TV, also encourage this habit. In another study, respondents who displayed binge-watching behaviour also concluded that the Sci-Fi genre and comedy genre had the most impact on their emotional and psychological effects (Cabral, Castro, Rigby, Vasanth, Cameirão, & Nisi, 2020). Besides, in another study conducted by Oberschmidt (2017), the genre has an impact on the factors that define binge-watching. The study found that irreverent comedy is the genre that discourages binge-watching while thriller series is the genre that encourages it. While another research also highlighted that genre may influence the motivation of viewers to binge-watch, the research shows that mystery and horror genres are the genres that motivate binge-watching behavior (Iyer, Nishkala, Priyanka, & Srilalitha, 2019).

### **Binge-watching as Audience Practice**

For the modern audience, binge-watching has surely taken over as the popular and entertaining method of consuming media content, such as TV programs. Binge-watching grew in popularity, becoming a common way for audiences to consume Television programs in general between 2011 to 2015 (Pierce-Grove, 2016). It also became more popular with the emergence of streaming platforms such as Disney +, Netflix, and so on. In 2013, Netflix offered new ways to watch TV shows, allowing users to choose from a wide range of options and watch as many episodes as they want, and this feature has encouraged viewers to binge-watch (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020).

According to Jenner (2020), the practice of binge-watching is still perceived as "exceptional" media behavior rather than a standard way to watch TV. In the research by Jenner (2020), the researcher concluded a few perspectives on binge-watching in this digital era. The researcher

argues that the place of binge-watching within a larger online culture is another crucial consideration when conceptualizing it as an audience habit.

### **Binge-watching and Escapism**

By defining escapism is the need of average individuals to seek relief from the unpleasant realities of daily life with the realm of mass media and entertainment (Vordere & Hartmann, 2009) introduced escapism for the first time into the field of mass media research. From the psychological context, Katz and Foulke (1962) established a connection between escapist tendencies and the drives of deprivation or alienation. Escapism has played a substantial and ubiquitous part in media use, and the Uses and Gratification Theory lists this aspect as one of the media-related pleasures (Katz, Blumler, & Gurevitch, 1973). Further into the study of binge-watching, according to Pena (2015), one of the main causes of binge-watching is the desire for escapism. To sum it up, escapism is frequently thought to be a coping mechanism for people who need to escape from unpleasant events (Heatherton and Baumeister, 1991).

Multiple types of research have confirmed how escapism affects media consumption. For instance, in a research study by Rubenking, Bracken, Sandoval, and Rister (2018) about the motivation of binge-watching, the study concluded that many people employ binge-watching to satisfy their demands for pleasure or escapism. In another previous study by Vincent and Basil (1997), escapism was still a significant driving force behind print and broadcast media consumption.

### **The Intention of Binge-watching Among Penangites**

The intention of binge-watching among Penangites is the dependent variable set by the researchers for this research. According to Karim, Haque, Ulfy, Hossain, & Anis, (2020), the intention is the nature of a person's action to comply with something. It was believed that the idea of motivations and desires was a development of the Uses and Gratifications Theory (UGT) (Ray, Dhir, Bala, & Kaur, 2019; Nikou and Economides, 2017; Katz et al.,1973). UGT is chosen to examine the research topic as the research aims to understand and analyze the intention of Penangites who employ binge-watching behavior. The theory makes the assumption that people use media technologies to increase their satisfaction. It also aims to provide insight into why and how people are drawn to utilize cutting-edge technologies to meet their particular requirements and desires (Katz et al.,1973). UGT has thus been widely utilized to investigate how different media are used and to better comprehend why individuals use them. To sum it up, it is logical that intention is a dependent variable when researching binge-watching.

### **Uses and Gratification Theory**

The UGT is used in this study to give a more in-depth and comprehensive explanation of why Penangites binge-watch. This research focuses on using one factor only, which is escapism from the UGT. The UGT framework focuses primarily on the psychological causes of needs, which give rise to expectancies, which in turn lead to needs satisfaction and other, potentially unintentional, outcomes (Susanno et al., 2019). Another perspective of UGT explained by Rubin (2020), is the notion that one searches out media that best meets their needs. Behaviour and selection are driven by motivation and function, and people sift through competing media to consume what best meets their wants and desires.

There are several researchers who have used this theory to investigate the usage of media consumption. According to Dickinson (2015), people watch television for seven different reasons: companion, routine, education, escape, pleasure, passing time, and relaxation. Thus, these factors may have contributed to the influence of binge-watching, and it is worth discovering more about the intention of audiences binge-watching through the factor of escapism. Additionally, in research done by Susanno et al., (2019), UGT is used to examine Netflix subscribers in Jakarta's intentions to binge-watch more frequently. To conclude, it is logical that the UGT is suitable to study media consumption and binge-watching behaviour in this digital era.

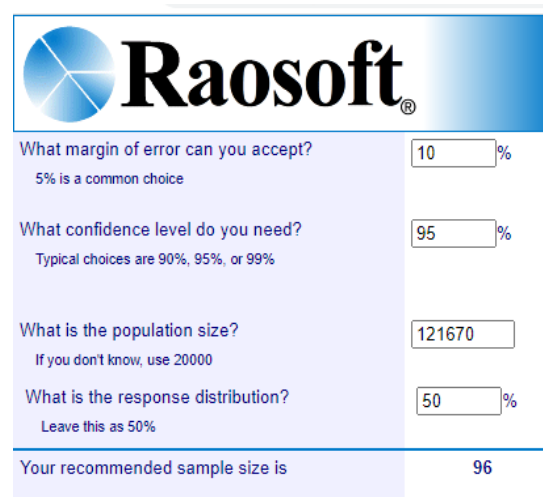
## METHODOLOGY

For this research, a quantitative research method is utilized. The researcher employed a quantitative approach for this study since a large sample size with 200 respondents targeted is desired using the Raosoft sample size calculator (See Figure 1). The 10% were chosen from 121,670 youth in Penang aged between 18 to 45 years old. This research implements purposive sampling techniques were used including this study include this criterion:

1. Aged from 18 to 45 years old
2. Respondents from Penang who practiced binge-watching behaviour

**Figure 1**

*Sample Size Calculator using Raosoft*



| Raosoft®                                                                                  |        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| What margin of error can you accept?<br><small>5% is a common choice</small>              | 10 %   |
| What confidence level do you need?<br><small>Typical choices are 90%, 95%, or 99%</small> | 95 %   |
| What is the population size?<br><small>If you don't know, use 20000</small>               | 121670 |
| What is the response distribution?<br><small>Leave this as 50%</small>                    | 50 %   |
| Your recommended sample size is                                                           | 96     |

The questionnaire developed based on a few past research as guidelines such as research from Samsudin (2022); Karim et al., (2020); Susanno et al., (2019); Vordere & Hartmann, (2009); and Ray et al., (2019). Before starting the study, the researcher ensures that the respondents fulfill the criteria and a consent form to answer this questionnaire has been distributed to the respondents. This is to ensure that the respondents are not forced and volunteer to answer this research questionnaire. The questionnaire is divided into 2 sections, which are sections A and B. Section A focuses on the demographic information of the respondents. Respondents are classified according to gender, male and female and researchers also asked their respondents about their ages. Section B focuses on the intention of escapism of binge-watching among Penangites, the questions for section B can refer in Table 1. All the answers from the respondents are measured in the survey based on a 5-point Likert scale. Each statement is rated from 1 to 5 by the respondents and each number of the 5 Likert scales represents agree and

disagree which is stated as follows: 1 is for strongly disagree, 2 is for disagree, 3 is for neutral, 4 is for agree and lastly, 5 is for strongly agree. There are 5 statements for each variable investigated in this research.

**Table 1**

*List of questionnaires in section B*

| Variables     | Statements                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Escapism (IV) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I binge-watch because it helps me to escape from my everyday routine.</li> <li>2. I binge-watch because I want to seek relief from the unpleasant reality of everyday life.</li> <li>3. I binge-watch because it helps me to temporarily get away from the grind.</li> <li>4. I binge-watch because I enjoy immersing myself in the unreal world.</li> <li>5. I binge-watch because it gives me more pleasure than other leisure activities.</li> <li>6. Binge-watching has caused me to be less productive.</li> <li>7. Binge-watching has led me to neglect my responsibilities.</li> </ol> |

### **Descriptive Analysis**

Descriptive analysis plays an important role in quantitative research. Descriptive is a method of data analysis that assists in characterising, portraying, or summarising pieces of information so that patterns fully meet the needs of the data (Rawat, 2021). It is used to create a specific set of data, which could be a population sample or the overall population representation. (Hayes, 2022). As there is a large amount of data that needs to be tabulated, a descriptive analysis may be a useful approach to develop the collected data.

### **Reliability Test**

The principle of reliability tests is utilized to assess the integrity of a study (Middleton, 2022). When a study is conducted again under the same circumstances, the findings can generally be reproduced, that is what is meant by a measure's reliability (Middleton, 2022). In this research, Penangites are asked to complete a questionnaire to find out the relationship of the dependent variables of relaxation and escapism between the independent variable, the intention of binge-watching among Penangites. The SPSS system is utilized to conduct the reliability test for this research. If the variable's Cronbach Alpha is greater than 0.6, it is regarded as dependable (Golafshani, 2003).

### **Correlation Analysis**

When two (or more) quantitative variables are associated or related to one another, this is referred to as correlation analysis (Gogtay & Thatte, 2017). Correlation analysis is done to determine whether there are any patterns, trends, or relationships that stand out when analyzing quantitative information gathered from methods like questionnaires and surveys (James, 2022).

## RESULTS

### Descriptive Analysis (Demographic Profile)

The distribution of the survey's Section A (personal information) items, responses, respondents, and their percentages is shown overall in Table 2. From the responses collected for the first question, the table above indicates that those who frequently watch multiple episodes of their favorite TV series/shows made up 92.5% of the respondents, while those who do not take up 7.5% of them. While in question 2 where the respondents were asked about their time spent binge-watching TV series/shows, most of the respondents spent 2-3 hours watching which takes up to 56% of the respondents, while 28% of the respondents spent 4 hours watching and 16% of the respondents spent an hour or below. The pie charts below will show the responses to each item of demographic information.

**Table 2**

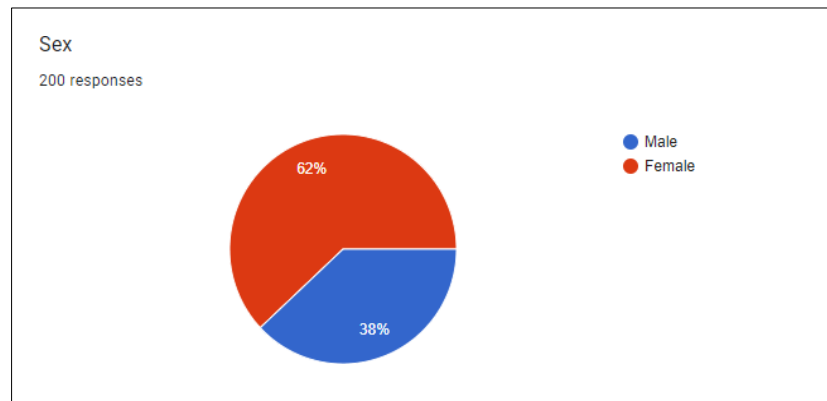
*Data collected in Section A of the survey questionnaire*

| Items                                                                      | Responses              | Number of respondents | Percentage ( % ) |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|------------------|
| Gender                                                                     | Male                   | 124                   | 62               |
|                                                                            | Female                 | 76                    | 38               |
| Race                                                                       | Malay                  | 46                    | 23               |
|                                                                            | Chinese                | 123                   | 61.5             |
|                                                                            | Indian                 | 30                    | 15               |
|                                                                            | Iban                   | 1                     | 0.5              |
| Age                                                                        | 18 to 20 years old     | 18                    | 9                |
|                                                                            | 21 to 29 years old     | 155                   | 77.5             |
|                                                                            | 30 to 39 years old     | 17                    | 8.5              |
|                                                                            | 40 years old and above | 10                    | 5                |
| Do you typically watch multiple episodes of your favorite TV series/shows? | Yes                    | 185                   | 92.5             |
|                                                                            | No                     | 15                    | 7.5              |
| How much time do you usually spend binge-watching TV series/shows?         | An hour or below       | 32                    | 16               |
|                                                                            | 2-3 hours              | 112                   | 56               |
|                                                                            | 4 hours and above      | 56                    | 28               |

## Gender of Respondents

Based on Figure 2 below, the pie chart shows that 62% out of the 200 respondents who participated in the questionnaire survey are female and 38% of them are male.

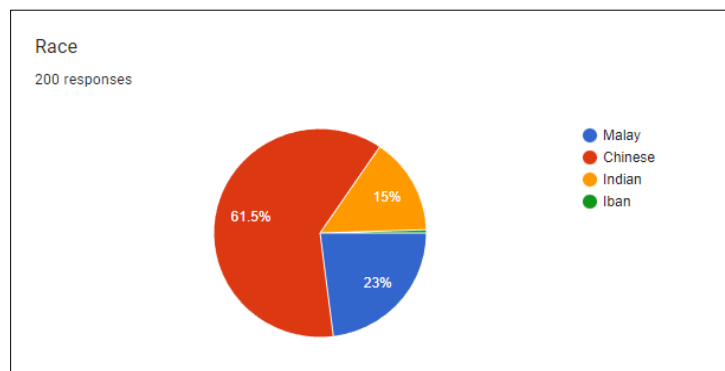
**Figure 2**  
*Gender of Respondents*



## Races of Respondents

Based on Figure 3, the pie chart shows that 61.5% out of the 200 respondents who participated in the questionnaire survey are Chinese, 23% of them are Malay, 15% are Indian and 0.5% are Iban.

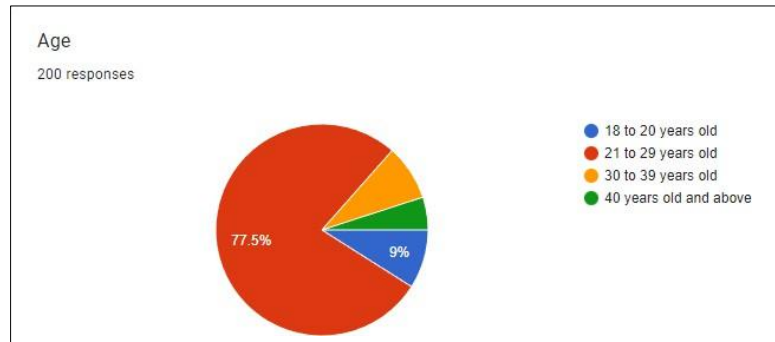
**Figure 3**  
*Races of Respondents*



## Age Range of Respondents

Based on Figure 4, the pie chart shows that 77.5% out of the 200 respondents who participated in the questionnaire survey are between 21 to 29 years old, 9% of them are between 18 to 20 years old, 8.5% are between 30 to 39 years old and 5% are 40 years old and above.

**Figure 4**  
*Age Range of Respondents*



### **The Intention of Escapism on Binge-watching among Penangites**

Table 3 shows the distribution of responses, mean and mean ranking of data collected in items one to seven in Section B of the questionnaire, formulated based on the independent variable 'escapism'. 'Item 3' has the highest mean of 3.96 among them. It stated that the respondents binge-watch because it helps them to temporarily get away from the grind, which a majority of the respondents (41% and 33.5%) agreed and strongly agreed. Besides, 17% expressed themselves as neutral whereas 5% and 3.5% of them disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Item 4 is ranked second and has a mean score of 3.83. 43.5% and 28.5% of respondents, respectively, agreed and strongly agreed that they enjoyed immersing themselves in the unreal world when binge-watching. 15% of respondents were neutral, while 8.5% and 4.5%, respectively, of respondents, disagreed and strongly disagreed.

Item 7 has the lowest mean ranking of all the items in section B. The majority of respondents 32.5% agreed that they believe binge-watching has caused them to neglect their responsibilities. In the meantime, 21.5% of them disagreed with the statement in "Item 7," whereas 19% of the respondents strongly agreed, 18.5% remained neutral and 8.5% strongly disagreed with it significantly.

**Table 3**

*Data collected in Section B (items 1-7) of the survey questionnaire.*

| Items no. | SD (%) | D (%) | N (%) | A (%) | SA (%) | Mean | Mean ranking |
|-----------|--------|-------|-------|-------|--------|------|--------------|
| 1         | 5      | 10    | 17    | 43.5  | 24.5   | 3.73 | 5            |
| 2         | 6.5    | 10.5  | 9     | 48    | 26     | 3.77 | 3            |
| 3         | 3.5    | 5     | 17    | 41    | 33.5   | 3.96 | 1            |
| 4         | 4.5    | 8.5   | 15    | 43.5  | 28.5   | 3.83 | 2            |
| 5         | 2.5    | 11.5  | 19.5  | 41.5  | 25     | 3.75 | 4            |
| 6         | 2.5    | 12.5  | 27    | 32    | 26     | 3.67 | 6            |
| 7         | 8.5    | 21.5  | 18.5  | 32.5  | 19     | 3.32 | 7            |

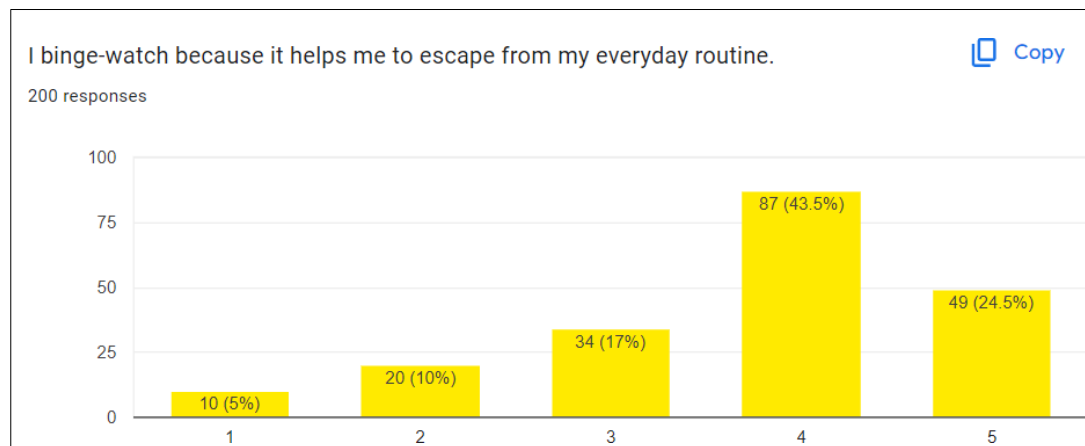
## Findings on Escapism

### Item 1

The question asked the respondents whether they agree with the statement ‘I binge-watch because it helps me to escape from my everyday routine’ (refer Figure 5). The result shows that most of the respondents, 87 out of 200 respondents (43.5%) agreed with the statement. 49 of the total respondents (24.5%) strongly agreed that binge-watch activity would help them escape their everyday routine. 34 of the respondents (17%) remained neutral on the statement, while 20 of the respondents (10%) disagreed and 10 of them (5%) strongly disagreed.

**Figure 5**

*Escape from everyday routine*

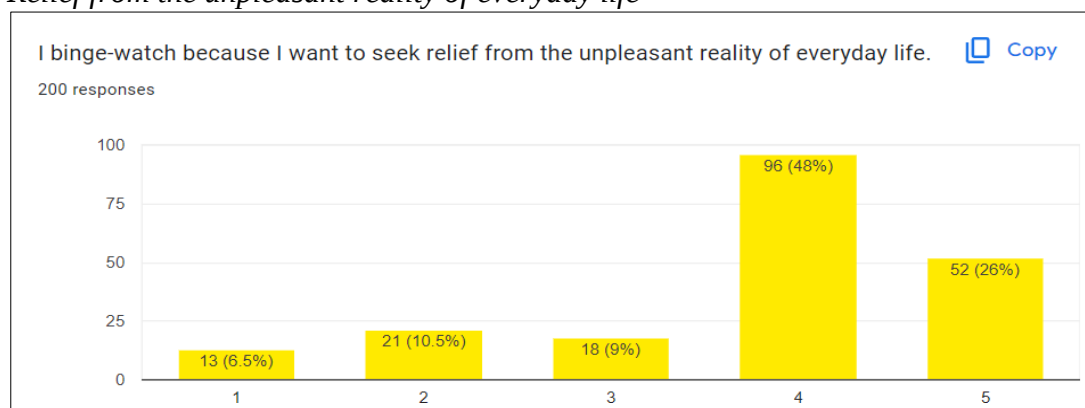


### Item 2

The question asked the respondents whether they agreed with the statement ‘I binge-watch because I want to seek relief from the unpleasant reality of everyday life’ (refer Figure 6). The outcome reveals that 96 out of 200 respondents (48%) agreed with the statement, which is a majority of the respondents. 52 of the total respondents (26%) strongly agreed that they want to seek relief from the unpleasant reality of everyday life. 21 (10.5%) of them disagreed, 18 (9%) of the total respondents remained neutral and 13 (6.5%) of respondents strongly disagreed.

**Figure 6**

*Relief from the unpleasant reality of everyday life*

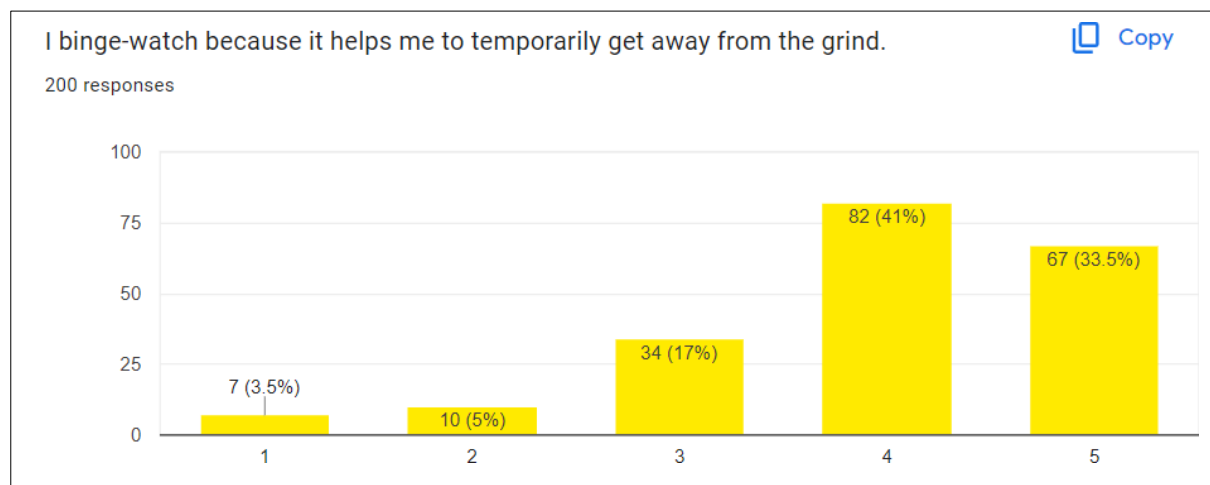


### Item 3

The question asked the respondents whether they agree with the statement ‘I binge-watch because it helps me to temporarily get away from the grind’ (refer Figure 7). The outcome reveals that 82 out of 200 respondents (41%) agreed with the statement, which is a majority of the respondents. 67 of the total respondents (33.5%) strongly agreed that binge-watch may help them to temporarily get away from the grind. 34 respondents (17%) remained neutral, while 10 of the respondents (5%) disagreed and seven of them (3.5%) strongly disagreed.

**Figure 7**

*Temporarily get away from the grind*

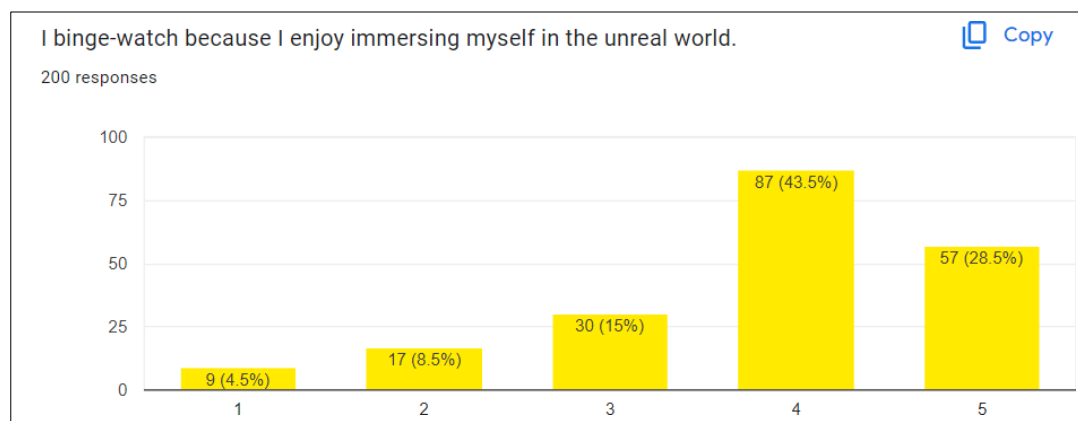


### Item 4

The question asked the respondents whether they agree with the statement ‘I binge-watch because I enjoy immersing myself in the unreal world’ (refer Figure 8). The result shows that most of the respondents, 87 out of 200 respondents (43.5%) agreed with the statement. 57 of the total respondents (28.5%) strongly agreed that they binge-watch because they enjoy immersing themselves in the unreal world. 30 of the respondents (15%) remained neutral on the statement, while 17 of the respondents (8.5%) disagreed and nine of them (4.5%) strongly disagreed.

**Figure 8**

*Enjoying immersing myself in the unreal world*

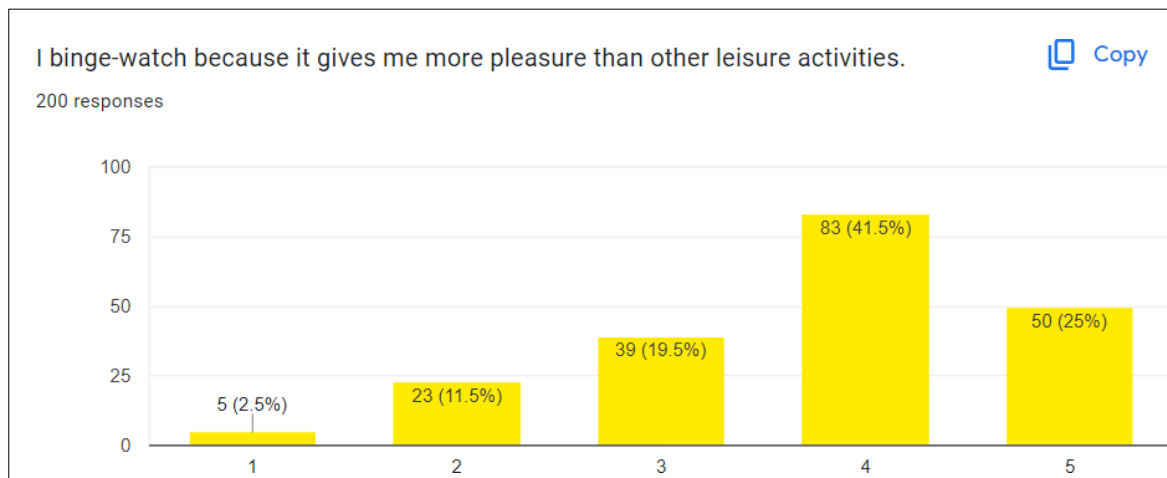


## Item 5

The question asked the respondents whether they agreed with the statement ‘I binge-watch because it gives me more pleasure than other leisure activities’ (refer Figure 9). The outcome reveals that 83 out of 200 respondents (41.5%) agreed with the statement, which is a majority of the respondents. 50 of the total respondents (25%) strongly agreed that binge-watching gives them more pleasure than other leisure activities. 39 of the respondents (19.5%) remained uncertain, 23 of them (11.5%) disagreed and five of them (2.5%) strongly disagreed.

**Figure 9**

*More pleasure than other leisure activities*

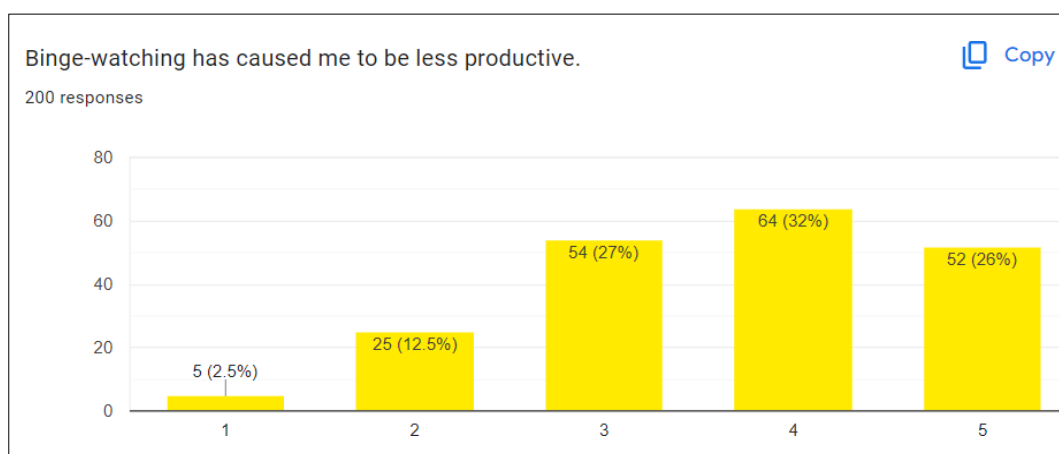


## Item 6

The question asked the respondents whether they agree with the statement ‘Binge-watching has caused me to be less productive’ (refer Figure 10). The result shows that 64 out of 200 respondents (32%) agreed with the statement. 54 of the respondents (27%) remained neutral with the statement, 52 of the total respondents (26%) strongly agreed that binge-watch activity has caused them to be less productive, while 25 of the respondents (12.5%) disagreed and five of them (2.5%) strongly disagreed.

**Figure 10**

*Less productive*

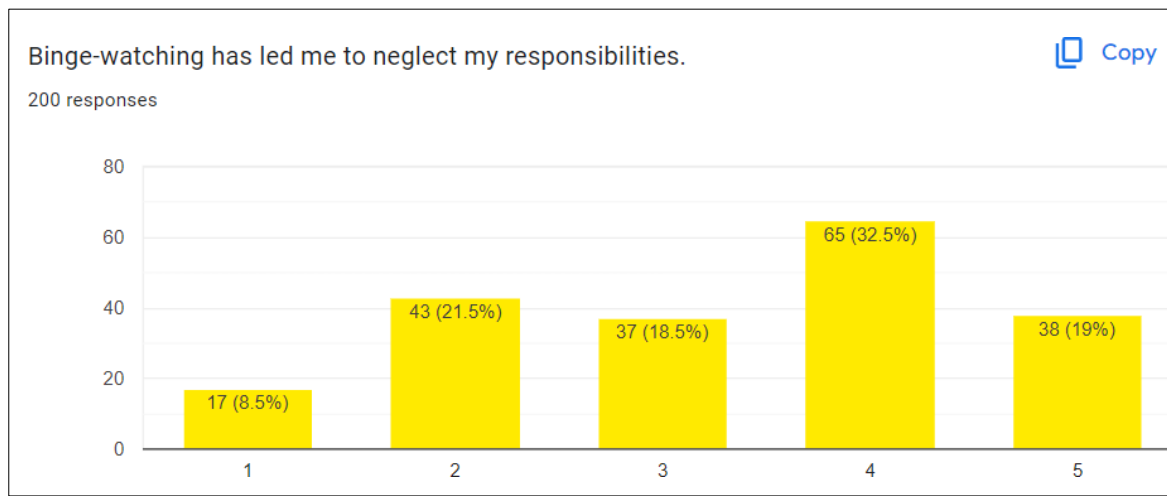


## Item 7

The question asked the respondents whether they agreed with the statement ‘Binge-watching has led me to neglect my responsibilities’ (refer Figure 11). The outcome reveals that 65 out of 200 respondents (32.5%) agreed with the statement. 43 of the total respondents (21.5%) disagreed that binge-watching has led them to neglect their responsibilities. 38 respondents (19%) strongly agreed with this statement, while 37 of the respondents (18.5%) remained neutral and 17 of them (8.5%) strongly disagreed.

**Figure 11**

*Less productive*



## Scale Measurement and Inferential Analysis

### Reliability Test

Table 4 shows the result of the alpha value for different variables of the study. The total number of respondents for our study is 200, and the alpha value for escapism is 0.855. If a variable's Cronbach Alpha is greater than 0.6, it is regarded as dependable (Golafshani, 2003).

**Table 4**

*Reliability Test*

| Variables | $\alpha$ |
|-----------|----------|
| Escapism  | 0.855    |

(n=200)

### Pearson Correlation Analysis

The results in Table 5 were obtained through a Pearson correlation test in SPSS to investigate the relationship between the independent variable, which is escapism, and the dependent variable, the intention of binge-watching among Penangites.

**Table 5***Pearson correlation analysis (coefficient and p-value)*

| <b>Independent variables</b> | <b>The intention of binge-watching among Penangites (dependent variable)</b> |                                 |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                              | <b>Pearson's coefficient (r)</b>                                             | <b>P-value [Sig (2-tailed)]</b> |
| <b>Escapism</b>              | <b>0.633**</b>                                                               | <b>0.000</b>                    |

(n=200, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.001)

### **Hypotheses Testing**

The research hypothesis proposed for this independent variable (H1 and H2):

H1: There is no significant relationship between escapism and the intention of binge-watching among Penangites.

H2: There is a significant relationship between escapism and the intention of binge-watching among Penangites.

Based on Table 5, the result revealed that there are significant and positive relationships between escapism and the intention of binge-watching among Penangites. This test is using Pearson's correlation coefficient between the two variables, ( $r=0.633$ ,  $p=0.000$ ). Thus, there is a moderate relationship between escapism and the intention of binge-watching among Penangites. It can be concluded that escapism is a factor that causes Penangites to binge-watch where people tend to seek relief from everyday life through binge-watch. Therefore, the H1 and H2 are accepted.

### **Discussion**

According to the result of Section B which is investigating the intention of escapism on binge-watching among Penangites. Most of the respondents show a positive view of the factor of escapism affecting their desire to binge-watch. It can be seen that the majority of the respondents agree that binge-watching may help them to escape from everyday life, seek relief from the unpleasant reality of everyday life, help them to temporarily get away from the grind, immerse themselves in the unreal world as well as give them more pleasure than other activities.

Many researchers have discovered that escapism is a crucial factor that may lead to binge-watching. For instance, in research by Halfmann and Reinecke (2021), the researcher highlights that because the characters and themes are easily followed from one episode to the next, binge-watching makes it possible to escape from daily stressors in heavy doses. Furthermore, according to Klimmt (2008), escapism can help people feel better since it can act as a "vacation" from the stresses of everyday life. Hence, escapism can be a crucial effect on binge-watching activity.

As for the negative effects of escapism, 58% of the respondents said that they have become less productive due to binge-watching. For example, people with a propensity for problematic binge-watching may also choose to forego sleep in order to binge on the next TV show episode, which can result in weariness, decreased productivity at work or school, and a lack of sleep (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020). It is also found in another study that the participants have been seen to binge-watch as a result of putting off things, which is an escapism-related behaviour (Ramayan, Estella, & Bakar, 2018). It makes sense that those who binge-watch frequently could utilize their conduct as a kind of escape.

According to the results, several participants stated that binge-watching has caused them to neglect their responsibilities. Some researchers also emphasize the potentially addictive qualities that binge-watching may develop for some people and talk about traits that problematic binge-watching may share with substance-related or behavioral addictions, such as loss of control over watching, lack of attention to other tasks, and watching to deal with negative emotions (Orosz, Bőthe, & Toth-Kiraly, 2016). On the other hand, many of the researchers have pointed out that binge-watching has caused negative effects of procrastination behavior which is a cause of the neglect of responsibilities. For instance, according to Merrill and Rubenking (2019), there is a statistically significant link between procrastination and binge-watching. According to the study's findings, procrastination tendencies and reward motivation are both significant predictors of binge-watching frequency. In another study, the researchers stated that a lack of control over binge-watching time could lead to a person neglecting their obligations to their family, job, or education (Starosta, Izydorczyk, & Wontorczyk, 2021). The findings of this study suggest a strong relationship between the desire to escape and the intention to binge-watch.

## **Discussion of UGT Theory**

The UGT paradigm is primarily focused on the psychological and social roots of needs, which lead to media expectations, need fulfillment, and other outcomes that may be unintentional or unexpected (Katz et al., 1973). According to the framework, viewers typically seek out five primary pleasures: information or education, identification with media characters, entertainment, improving social connections, and escape from the strains of daily life (McQuail, 2010). The UGT, which explains how people utilize media like the internet, television, and social media to satisfy their needs, is what most research references (Rubenking et al., 2018). Furthermore, in research by Steiner and Xu (2020), the researchers utilize UGT theory to better understand why people binge-watch because it is an emerging media behavior that combines culture and technology.

For this research, the researcher has identified only one main gratification of binge-watching which is escapism. Rubin's (1983) groundbreaking study on why people watch TV showed that people watch TV for a variety of reasons, including escape, arousal, information, companionship, enjoyment, and social connection. It is also highlighted that binge-watching with the express intention of escape motives is investigated from a uses and gratifications perspective (Rubenking et al., 2018). It is evident that many participants start binge-viewing to unwind and forget about their daily worries. Additionally, in a study about binge-watching and the television genre conducted by Moore (2015), the researcher focuses on the uses and gratifications hypothesis to explain how people have varied reasons for watching specific media, like certain types of television. Thus, in order to study the needs and the intentions of people binge-watching the uses and gratification theory has provided a suitable framework for the researcher to study binge-watching.

## **Future Recommendations**

There could be some improvements to the study of binge-watching. The first is to diversify the sample. Future research could use a larger and more varied sample to improve the study's generalizability. Better representation of many demographic groups, including age, gender, financial level, and cultural origins, would be possible as a result. Besides that, more additional dependent variables could be explored. For example, other pertinent factors that might affect escapism intentions could be taken into account. To provide a more thorough study, elements such as personality traits, cultural beliefs, or media preferences might be added. Moreover, a comparative analysis may also help to improve future research. Similarities, variances, and contextual elements that contribute to variations in motives and behaviors may be shown when comparing Penangites' goals of relaxation and escapism with that of other areas or groups. The topic might be better understood using this comparative perspective.

## **CONCLUSION**

From cable TV to video-on-demand, with the advancement of technology, the watching habits of TV viewers have led to changes and thus led to the habit of binge-watching. This research has aimed to study the intention of escapism of binge-watching among Penangites. About 200 Penangites, who ranged in age from 14 to 45, took part in the survey, and SPSS was used to analyze the results. Cronbach's Alpha was used to evaluate the research instrument's dependability, and the Pearson correlation test was used to examine the research hypotheses. The means and percentages were interpreted using descriptive analysis. The findings indicate that relaxation and escapism are the key variables of intention. Altogether, this study has attempted to address a variety of phenomena relating to binge-watching among Penangites.

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## **AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS**

All authors contributed to the study conception and design. Material preparation, data collection, and analysis were performed by all authors.

## **CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

## **DATA AVAILABILITY**

The data that support the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

## **ETHICS STATEMENT**

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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