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## **Personality Types and Mental Health Problems in Young Adults with Binge Watching: The Mediating Role of Self-Criticism**

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### **Abstract**

The current research focused to find out the mediating role of Self-Criticism between Personality Types and Mental Health Problems in Young Adults with Binge Watching. A Sample of 350 participants with the age range of 19-27 ( $M=20.21$ ;  $SD= 1.61$ ), including men( $n=175$ ) and women( $n=175$ ) was selected from private and government universities of Lahore. The Self-Criticism Scale for University Students (Shehzadi & Saleem, 2016), Introvert Personality Scale (IPS) (Bibi & Saleem, 2022), Extrovert Personality Scale (EPS) (Imran & Khurshid, 2022) and Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) were used. The results of this study revealed that Self-Criticism was fully mediating the relationship between Personality Types and Mental Health Problems in Young Adults with Binge Watching. Therefore, future interventions and mental health programs targeting young adults may benefit from incorporating strategies to lower self-critical tendencies, thereby potentially reducing the negative mental health outcomes associated with binge-watching.

*Keywords:* Young adults, Binge-watching, Extraversion Personality, Introversion Personality, Self-Criticism and Mental Health problem

### **Introduction**

Platforms for streaming videos, such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime, have been rapidly growing over the past few years. These services are now a regular part of the daily routines of millions of TV series viewers due to their simplicity of use (affordability and broad accessibility through just about any internet-connected device) and prodigious content libraries available on demand at one's convenience (Osur,2016). The shift away from the customary week-by-week publication of episodes and the current availability of complete seasons of TV programs at once are central to the developments made possible by these technologies. Binge-watching, which refers to watching several episodes of a TV show back-to-back (Inc, 2013), has quickly replaced episodic viewing as the preferred method of watching TV, especially among young adults. As earlier mentioned, watching two to six episodes of a TV show in one sitting is known as binge-watching, and it is a relatively recent behavioral phenomenon. Due to the



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emergence of numerous on-demand streaming services including Netflix, Hulu, HBO GO, Amazon Prime, Disney plus, Crunchyroll, and Apple TV, this behavior began to gain popularity (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020).

However, a new field of study has recently emerged, expanding the notion that binge-watching for extended periods of time leads to problematic TV series viewing patterns and negative outcomes (Flayelle et al., 2020). This is due to the fact that viewers are now literally free to watch as many episodes of a TV series as they desire young adults are at a higher risk of acquiring an excessive binge-watching habit because, according to statistics, they frequently binge-watch (Sabin, 2018).

Researchers have also discussed the potentially addictive qualities that binge-watching may develop for some people and the traits that problematic binge-watching may share with substance- or behavior-related addictions, such as loss of control over watching, neglect of other activities and watching to deal with negative emotions (Steins-Loeber et al., 2020). A research has concentrated on examining the association between binge-watching and the Big Five personality traits, according to the findings of these studies, people who are high in neuroticism and low in conscientiousness are more likely to binge watch (Starosta et al., 2020). Problematic Internet use is thought to adversely connect with personality qualities including conscientiousness and agreeableness, according to research on other behavioral addictions. Extroverts showed higher degrees of addictive tendencies in how they utilized SNS, according to a study that examined psychological determinants of personality in college students in connection to SNS consumption. The more extraverted people admitted to utilizing social networking sites more frequently to communicate with others (Wilson et al., 2010). One of the most important causes of bingeing is self-criticism and persistently poor self-evaluation/self-criticism (Sun & Chang, 2021).

Self-criticism is a form of negative self-judgment and self-scrutiny where someone exhibits a punishing reaction to their particular flaws, defects, or characteristics (such as their physical appearance), which could lead to societal rejection or disapproval (Ferreira et al., 2014). As a result, once they are overcome by feelings of inadequacy, worthlessness, failure, and shame, self-critical people are typically focused on attaining their goals (Powers et al., 2009) However, ongoing self-criticism not only breeds more sentiments of failure and inadequacy but also rekindles the desire to run away from these emotions. Self-criticism is a coping strategy that is "avoidance focused." People engage in escapist hobbies to escape from daily life, divert from negative self-awareness, satisfy their fantasies, and control unpleasant (Wang, 2019). The cycle that supports binge watching is sustained by this potent maladaptive emotion regulation process. According to the gratification theory people binge watch because it satisfies their need for information and entertainment, they do it to strengthen social bonds and to escape from problems in their daily lives, and they do it because they identify with fictional characters (Pena, 2015). According to other studies some people utilize binge-watching as a coping mechanism for controlling their emotions and dealing with depressing affective states (Flayelle et al., 2017).

Defining mental health as, Cognitive, behavioral, and emotional health are all included in mental health. It all comes down to how people act, feel, and think



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(Felman, 2020). The World Health Organization (WHO) defines mental health as "a condition of well-being in which one understands one's own abilities, can cope with typical life stresses, can work successfully and fruitfully, and is able to contribute to one's community" (World Health Organization, 2004). According to research findings, problematic binge-watching is positively correlated with unhappiness, social anxiety, and loneliness (Sun & Chang, 2021). Binge-watching results into the development of addictive behaviors, issues related to sleep and psychological distress including depression and anxiety (Amiloride et al., 2022). Binge-watching has acquired widespread popularity and is currently a hot topic in the fields of philosophy and social sciences, including sociology, psychology, and media studies. With over 182.8 million subscribers, Netflix has acquired worldwide popularity and has subscribers from nearly every country who stream Netflix series daily (Pengi, 2021). The platform of Netflix and other streaming sites has not been investigated by researchers, and there are only a handful of studies focusing on the effects of binge-watching on the personality traits of users. In the present study, the gap left by previous research will be filled by identifying specifically the function of self-criticism and emotional regulation between personality types and, consequently, its impact on mental health. Furthermore, the young adults are getting affected by this unhealthy bingeing in the top (Jay, 2021). They have access to the required gadgets in the form of laptops, pads, or mobile phones, with 24/7 available internet and access to Netflix and other streaming sites even in the offline mood. Even though there have been numerous articles and books regarding binge-watching, more research seems to be necessary to determine how it affects people in general and their mental health in particular. This study, examined the relationship of personality types with mental health problems along with the mediating role of self-criticism in young adults with binge watching.

### **Method**

#### **Research Design**

Establishing links between two or more variables in the same population or between the same variables in two populations is the goal of correlational research (Curtis et al., 2016). The correlational research design which has the quantitative and qualitative elements was used to find out the relationship among Personality type, self-criticism and mental health problems in young adults with binge-watching.

#### **Sample**

The data was collected from government and private universities in Lahore. The sample was 350 participants (175 Men and 175 women)

#### **Sampling Technique**

Purposive sampling was used to gather data from the participants. Where participants were selected based on specific characteristics or criteria, rather than randomly. Purposive sampling is a non-random selection strategy in which participants are chosen based on specific criteria or traits related to the research question or purpose (Teddlie & Yu, 2007).

#### **Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**



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Participants who fall in the range of 19-27 were included. Participants had binge watch shows on Netflix or other streaming networks. Also, participants with any psychological or physical disability were not included in the study.

### Measures

#### Demographic Information

The demographic information sheet included characteristics of participants such as Age, Gender, University, Family System, Personality Type, and binge-watcher. if yes then how many hours?

#### Self-Criticism Scale for University Students (Shehzadi & Saleem, 2016)

This scale has a total of 61 items and six factors. F1 Hopelessness, F2 Lack of Self Confidence, F3 Rejection, F4 Over Sensitive, F5 Anxious, F6 Lack of Initiative. The scale has excellent reliability having .96 internal consistency.

#### Introvert Personality Scale (IPS) (Bibi & Saleem, 2022)

This scale has a total of 40 items. The scale has 3 factors, Factor 1: Anxious and Restrained Introverts (16 items) Factor 2: Thinking Introverts (15 items) Factor 3: Selective Social Introverts (9 items). The scale has good reliability having .88 internal consistency.

#### Extrovert Personality Scale (EPS) (Imran & Khurshid, 2022)

This scale has total of 38 items and is a 4-point Likert-type scale 0=never, 1=rarely, 2= to some extent, 3=mostly. The scale has 3 factors, 1-prosocial, 2-social facilitation, 3-socially likable 1,1, 11 and 8 items respectively. The scale has good reliability having 0.87 internal consistency.

#### Depression Anxiety Stress Scale (DASS) (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995).

The DASS-21 is a widely utilized self-report questionnaire designed to measure depressive, anxious, and stress-related symptoms. It was created by Lovibond and Lovibond (1995) and contains 21 items, seven for each subscale. On a 4-point scale spanning from 0 (did not apply to me at all) to 3 (applied to me frequently or most of the time).

### Procedure

The research procedure began with permission from the Departmental Review Board, followed by permission to collect data from other institutions. After obtaining permission, the data collection procedure began with a thorough introduction of the researcher and the research topic to the subjects. The participant's confidentiality was ensured, and they were informed about their right to withdraw from the study at any time. Participants were also encouraged to seek clarification if any aspect of the research procedure was unclear.

### Analysis

The data was analyzed by using descriptive and inferential statistics. Correlational analysis was used to determine the relationship among Personality type, Self-Criticism and Mental Health Problem. Moreover, Mediation Analysis



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was done to analyze the role of self-criticism between personality types and Mental health problems in young adults with binge watching.

### Ethical Considerations

- Permission was taken from the institute authorities to collect data from their institutes.
- Participants were briefed about the purpose and nature of the study and their consent was taken.
- Acknowledgement for the work of other authors used in any part of the research was referenced

### Results

#### Sample Description

This section describes the frequency distribution of the demographic characteristics of the sample that participated in the current research (N= 350)

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Demographic Variables (N=350)

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	20.21	1.61
Binge-watching hours	3.20	1.08

Table 1 showed that the average age of the participants is 20.21 (SD 1.61). Furthermore, the results revealed the average hours of binge-watching in participants were 3.20 (SD 1.08).

Table 2: Frequencies of Percentages of the Demographic Characteristics of the Participants (N= 350)

Variables	<i>f</i>	%
Gender		
Men	175	50
Women	175	50
University		
Government	174	50
Private	176	50
Family System		
Nuclear	207	59
Joint	143	41
Birth Order		



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First	105	30
Middle	135	39
Last	110	31

Table 2 showed that there were an equal number of men-women participants, men (50%) and women (50%) as well. The above table also indicated that there were almost equal participants from the government sector (50%) and from the private sector (50%). Moreover, it was found that there were more participants in the nuclear family system (59%) than joint family system (50%). As far as the birth order is concerned, there were slightly more participants in the middle with (39%) than participants in the first-born category (30%) and participants in the last-born category (31%).

**Correlation Analysis**

The correlation analysis was done to find out the relationship among extraversion, introversion, self-criticism and mental health Problems in Young adults with Binge-watching

Table 3: Inter-correlations among Personality Types, Self-Criticism and Mental Health Problems in Young Adults with binge-watching (N = 350)

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	ET	IT	SCT	ST	AT	DT
Extraversion T	84.87	10.48	-	.27***	-.22***	-.16**	-.11*	.21***
Introvert T	54.81	19.50		-	.44***	.30***	.33***	.27***
Self-criticism T	114.02	33.13			-	.62***	.60***	.65***
Stress T	-13.78	3.90				-	.64***	.67***
Anxiety T	15.74	3.46					-	.63***
Depression T	15.69	3.94						-

Note. \**p* < .05, \*\**p* < .01, \*\*\**p* < .001, ET=Extraversion Total, IT=Introversion Total, SCT=Self-Criticism Total, ERT=Emotion Regulation Total, ST= Stress Total, AT=Anxiety Total, DT=Depression Total

**Mediation Analysis**

The mediation analysis was done to find out the mediating role of self-criticism between personality types and mental health problems in young adults

Table 4: Direct Effects of Extraversion, Self-Criticism, and Mental health problems (N=350)

Antecedent	Consequent					
	M(SC)			Y(MHP)		
	<i>β</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i> <	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	<i>p</i> <



Extraversion	(X)	-0.22	.16	.00***	c'	-0.02	.03	.44
a1								
Self-criticism					b1	.70	.01	.00***
Constant	i	175.00	14.10	.00***	I	-3.32	3.50	.00***
		$R^2 = .51$				$R^2 = .03$		
		$F = 181.70, p < .00$				$F = 13.05, p < .00$		

Note. SC=Self-Criticism, MHP=Mental Health Problems, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001, p>.05

Table 5 showed the results of mediation analysis where the path (a) depicted the significant relationship between extraversion as the independent variable and self-criticism as a mediator  $\beta = -.22, p < .001$ . Furthermore, path (b) depicted the significant relationship between self-criticism as a mediator and mental health problems as a dependent variable  $\beta = .70, p < .001$ . Moreover, path (c) indicated the non-significant relationship between extraversion as an independent variable and mental health problems as a dependent variable  $\beta = -.19, p > .05$ . Moreover, emotion regulation was fully mediating the relationship between extraversion and mental health problems

Figure 4: Mediation model of Extraversion, Self-criticism, and mental health problems.

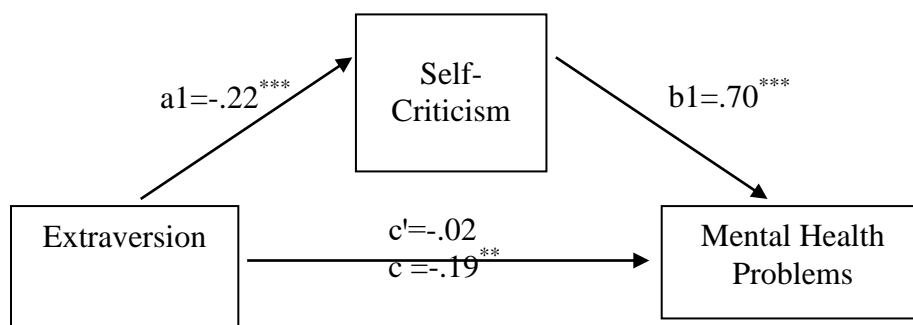


Table 5 :  
Direct Effects of Introversion, Self-Criticism, and Mental health problems (n=350)

Antecedent	Consequent							
	(X)	M(SC)			c'	Y(MHP)		
		B	SE	p<		B	SE	p<
Introversion	(X)	.45	.08	.00***	c'	.04	.02	.40
a1								
Self-criticism					b1	.69	.01	.00***
Constant	i	72.41	4.73	.00***	i	-6.22	1.37	.00***
		$R^2 = .51$				$R^2 = .12$		
		$F = 181.83, p < .00$				$F = 47.84, p < .00$		

Note. SC=Self-Criticism, MHP=Mental Health Problems, \*p<.05, \*\*p<.01, \*\*\*p<.001, p>.05

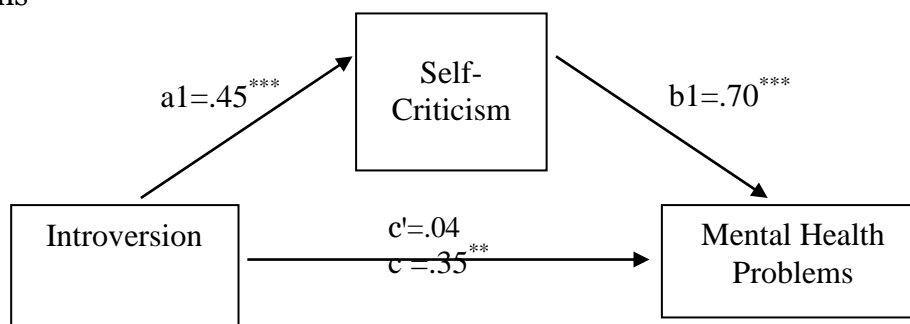
Table 6 showed the results of mediation analysis where the path (a) depicted the significant relationship between introversion as the independent



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variable and self-criticism as a mediator  $\beta=.45$ ,  $p<.001$ . Furthermore, path (b) depicted the significant relationship between self-criticism as a mediator and mental health problems as a dependent variable  $\beta=.69$ ,  $p<.001$ . Moreover, path (c) indicated a significant relationship between introversion as an independent variable and mental health problems as a dependent variable  $\beta=.34$ ,  $p>.05$ . Which means that self-criticism was fully mediating the relationship between introversion and mental health problems. Moreover, emotion regulation was not fully mediating the relationship between introversion and mental health problems.

Figure 5: Mediation model of Introversion, Self-criticism, and mental health problems



**Discussion**

In recent years, binge-watching has gained popularity as a kind of entertainment, living in a tech friendly era where education, professions, managing household, recreations and socialization are all tech-centric it has made a room for different platforms that facilitate binge watching. It has shifted the viewing habits of individuals along with serving as a escapism and enjoyment it has also sparked questions about its impact on mental health, self – perceptions and communal activities. Several research have investigated its potential effects on mental health, its motivations, and its connections to sleep. A 2019 study indicated that binge-watching was linked to increased levels of sadness, anxiety, and stress, but that the content of what was being seen had a bigger influence than the act of binge-watching itself (Hotaling & Johnson, 2019). Additionally, a 2017 study indicated that binge-watching was connected to poor sleep quality, which in turn was connected to an increase in the symptoms of insomnia, weariness, and sadness (Exelmans & Bulck, 2017). The present body of study focuses on young individuals’ personality types, self-criticism, emotion regulation, and mental health problems. Although binge-watching is linked to many issues, but the lag of researches mentioned in literature review compelled to execute this research.

The aim of the research was to find the relationship among Personality Type, Self-Criticism, Emotion Regulation and Mental Health problems in young adults with binge-watching. It was hypothesized that Extraversion will more likely to have a negative relationship with self-criticism, and mental health problems, whereas positive relationship with emotional regulation in young adults with binge-watching. Results of the study indicated that extraversion was significantly and negatively associated with self-criticism ( $r=-.22$ ). According to several studies, those with high extraversion scores are less prone to engage in self-criticism than people with low extraversion scores. Extraversion was found to be





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positively correlated with good affect and self-esteem and negatively correlated with negative affect and self-criticism (Vaughan – Johnston, 2020). Another study found that extraversion was associated negatively with self-criticism but not necessarily positively with self-enhancement, and it was hypothesized that extraverted people may be less likely to engage in self-criticism because of their generally upbeat outlook and social confidence (Smith, 2022). Aligning with the hypothesis it was found that there was a negative relationship between extraversion and mental health problems i.e stress ( $r=-.16$ ), anxiety( $r=-.11$ ), and depression( $r=-.21$ ) in young adults with binge watching. Considering the negative associations between extraversion and Mental health issues it can be assumed that extraversion acts as a resilience and buffering factor against mental health issues. It can act as a positive factor or coping mechanism against depression, anxiety and stress. So promoting such traits in binge watching individual could reduce self-derogatory perceptions and enhance mental wellbeing (James et al., 2023). Extraversion was found to be positively linked with externalizing disorders like substance use disorders but negatively associated with internalizing disorders like anxiety and depression in a meta-analysis of 175 studies (Ayrio, 2022). Overall, even though the relationship between extraversion and mental health issues is nuanced and may vary based on the condition in question as well as other variables, some studies have found a link between higher levels of extraversion and fewer internalizing symptoms.

According to Results, self-criticism and introversion are positively correlated ( $r=.44$ ). For instance, a study indicated that introverted people were more prone than extroverted people to engage in self-critical thought patterns, such as negative self-evaluation and self-blame (Mor & Winqvist, 2002). According to a different study, perfectionism, which is frequently connected with self-criticism and low self-esteem, was positively correlated with introversion (Flett et al., 2009). It was also found to have a positive relationship with mental health problems i.e stress ( $r=.30$ ), anxiety( $r=.33$ ), and depression ( $r=.27$ ) in young adults with binge-watching. Additionally, a number of research have discovered a positive relationship between introversion and internalizing disorders including depression and anxiety (Bienvenu et al., 2004; Kotov et al., 2010). One study indicated that introverted people tended to employ maladaptive methods like rumination and avoidance and were less likely to adopt adaptive emotion regulation techniques like cognitive reappraisal and problem-solving than extroverted people (Demeo et al., 2023). Another study discovered that introversion was negatively correlated with cognitive reappraisal and positively correlated with expressive suppression, a technique for preventing emotional outbursts (Gross & John, 2003).

The findings showed that personality types and self-criticism, were important predictors of mental health issues in young adults who binge-watch. According to a previous researches, both extraversion and introversion were linked to binge-watching's unfavorable effects, such as depression, anxiety, and poor sleep. Particularly, people who scored highly on introversion scales were more likely to suffer these negative effects, whereas people who scored highly on extraversion scales were more likely to engage in binge-watching behavior but were not necessarily adverse effects (Liu et al., 2021).

Numerous theories suggest that personality traits and mental health issues may all be linked to binge-watching. The reward-deficiency model proposes that



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binge-watching may be a way for people to experience pleasure and reward that they do not experience in other areas of their lives, while the self-determination theory suggests that it may be a way for people to meet their psychological needs for autonomy and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2017). According to the principle of mood management, binge-watching could help people control their feelings and moods (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020). While bonding with others and managing emotions are two advantages of binge-watching, it can also have drawbacks if it becomes excessive or interferes with other aspects of life.

It is significant to note that there are cultural aspects of Pakistani society that affect young adults' binge-watching behavior and its effects on their mental health. For instance, social and familial ties are highly valued in Pakistan, where people are under pressure to strike a balance between work and personal time (Sarfaraz et al., 2019). Thus, binge-watching behaviors run counter to these societal standards and result in guilt or self-criticism. Furthermore, binge-watching behaviors and their effects on mental health are influenced by the availability of streaming services in Pakistan (Akram et al., 2024). While binge-watching can offer a momentary respite from the stresses of the day, it has also resulted in sleep deprivation and social isolation, both of which have a detrimental effect on mental health.

The current study also sought to determine if emotional regulation and self-criticism were more likely to mediate the link between personality type and mental health issues. Results showed that self-criticism and emotion control fully mediated the relationship between extraversion and mental health issues, but that introversion as an independent variable did not mediate emotion regulation. Although there isn't much research on this subject, several studies have identified a connection between binge-watching and self-criticism, and mental health issues. One study indicated that more frequent binge-watching behavior among young adults was linked to higher levels of self-criticism. The researchers hypothesized that those with a high level of self-criticism could utilize binge-watching to detach themselves from their low self-esteem and negative self-evaluations (Gonçalves et al., 2020). Another study indicated that people who reported binge-watching behavior also frequently had greater levels of stress, anxiety, and depression. Another hypothesized that binge-watching could be utilized as a coping strategy to lessen unpleasant feelings related to these mental health issues (Bilandzic & Ritterfeld, 2018).

In Pakistan, mental health issues are becoming a greater concern, and there is a need for increased education and support for those coping with these issues. Due to the fact that only one city in Pakistan provided study participants, the variety of the sample was limited. To improve the generalizability of the results, future research could be conducted with larger sample sizes drawn from a broader variety of geographic regions, as well as other cultural and ethnic backgrounds. This would allow for a greater understanding of the potential population-specific distinctions in the relationships between personality traits, self-criticism, emotional control, and mental health. The study has the potential to advance knowledge of the intricate interactions between personality traits, self-criticism, emotional control, and mental health issues by examining the correlations between these variables. The study's results could also be used to raise awareness of the variables in the general public or pertinent communities, which might enhance the outcomes for people who are impacted in terms of mental health.



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Finally, by laying the groundwork for future research, the study has the potential to produce fresh perspectives and suggest new lines of inquiry for these crucial areas of inquiry.

### Conclusion

The findings suggested a significant relationship among personality types, self-criticism and mental health problems along with significant fully mediation of self-criticism between personality types and mental health problems in young adults with binge watching

### Recommendation

- Data can be collected from rural population as well
- A comparative study can be conducted between the mental health problems of binge watchers and non-binge watchers
- Future research may investigate the effects of social or environmental factors, such as socioeconomic status or formative experiences, on these variables.
- Qualitative research, including the exploration of lived experiences, is recommended for conducting cross-cultural studies.

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