

The Effect of Content Consumption Format on Reconsumption

by

Niusha Safarpour

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Abstract

Content consumption (e.g., watching a television show, reading a book) is a prevalent behaviour among consumers. This dissertation focuses on the consumption of digital video content (e.g., YouTube videos, television shows), and examines two common behaviours in this context: content consumption format (i.e., bingeing: watching two or more episodes at a time; or not bingeing: watching a single episode at a time) and reconsumption (i.e., watching the same content again). Prior work does not provide a comprehensive examination of these two behaviours, nor does it investigate how and why content consumption format might influence reconsumption. This research examines the underresearched area of content consumption in marketing and develops a conceptual framework for investigating the relationship between these two behaviours. First, I offer a thorough review of the literature on content consumption format and reconsumption and identify gaps in the literature. Second, I develop a conceptual framework and present propositions about how and why content consumption format (bingeing vs. non-bingeing) might impact reconsumption. Third, in a series of controlled experiments, I investigate the effect of content consumption format on the desire to reconsume. The experiments reveal that non-binge content consumption (vs. binge content consumption) increases anticipation. In turn, this enhances enjoyment and ultimately leads to a higher desire to reconsume. Fourth, I analyze two secondary datasets from Netflix to draw parallels between the experimental paradigm and real-world behaviour, further providing evidence for the propositions of this research.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Consider how much digital video content you consume every day in the form of TV shows, YouTube videos, docuseries, or course material. On average, consumers spend six hours and 59 minutes daily consuming digital video content on channels such as social media, television, and streaming platforms (e.g., Netflix; Koetsier, 2020). The majority of this content consumption, three hours and nine minutes—the equivalent of a part-time job—occurs on streaming platforms, which deliver content on-demand to subscribers (Durrani, 2024). Ninety- nine percent of households in the US pay for at least one streaming service (Durrani, 2024).

These platforms have caused a paradigm shift in how content is consumed by enabling consumers to control their consumption. While content consumption was traditionally controlled by the producer or network (e.g., new episodes were broadcast only once a week), streaming platforms have introduced self-paced narrative to TV shows and other serialised content (Nell, 1988; Feiereisen, 2021). As a result, consumers can choose how much content to consume, from what source, and when, in order to manage their experiences and outcomes (Russell & Levy, 2012; Feiereisen et al., 2021). The rise of streaming platforms, and their ability to grant viewing control to consumers, has facilitated two prevalent content consumption behaviours.

First, once consumers have control of their content consumption, they can accelerate and decelerate their viewing experience (Feiereisen et al., 2021). Some viewers might choose to watch only one episode of a show in each session, spacing their consumption over time, while others might choose to watch two or more episodes back-to-

back in the same session, engaging in binge-watching (Schweidel & Moe, 2016). I refer to these two content consumption formats as “non-binge” and “binge”, respectively. These two formats can be applied to traditional media, such as TV shows, and to user-generated content such as YouTube videos (Woolley & Sharif, 2022; Merikivi et al., 2020). Regardless of the media or platform for which it occurs, binge-watching is an extremely common consumption behaviour. Seventy percent of consumers in the US binge-watch, and viewers consume on average five TV show episodes at a time (Deloitte, 2015). With 90% of millennials binge-watching, it seems like binge-watching is the new normal (“Platforms Are Letting Us Binge-Watch, but Maybe They Shouldn’t”, n.d.).

Second, via on-demand streaming platforms, consumers have seamless access to content they have watched before at no extra cost. Thus, if viewers wish to rewatch content, it is available. The act of watching previously viewed content again is referred to as “reconsumption” (Russell & Levy, 2012). This behaviour is also prevalent: half of American TV watchers report rewatching episodes at least once a week, and two-thirds report having rewatched a season at least twice (Orth, 2023).

Importantly, streaming platforms can enable and encourage—or disable and discourage—both binge-watching and reconsumption by granting consumers different degrees of control. They can do so by deciding which content is available to consumers and when, and by designing the platform in particular ways (e.g., recommendation algorithms and autoplay features). For instance, Netflix has a category of content labelled “binge-worthy”. More broadly, while streaming services carefully plan content release schedules, those schedules vary considerably. For example, Netflix released each season of *Stranger Things* immediately in its entirety, allowing viewers to consume this content as

they pleased. Conversely, AMC released *Interview with the Vampire* on a weekly basis, imposing a schedule on viewers—or forcing them to wait until the end of the season if they wanted to consume the content all at once. Some streaming platforms adopt one approach or the other, releasing episodes either all at once (Netflix) or on a schedule (e.g., weekly; Paramount+, CW). Other platforms adopt a mixed release strategy, releasing some content all at once and some content on a schedule (e.g., Hulu, Apple TV+).

Similarly, for reconsumption, platforms vary in whether their algorithms recommend previously watched content, and in whether they indicate what consumers have already watched. Netflix has explored several reconsumption-oriented features. For example, they tested an “I have watched this” button, but ultimately decided against it (Hill, 2021). However, similar to their “binge-worthy” category label, they have a “watch again” category label, which displays content that individuals have already watched, perhaps to encourage reconsumption.

The diverse strategies that platforms have adopted about binge-watching and reconsumption suggests that these content consumption behaviours may not be well understood in practice. First, to recommend content, Netflix uses watch history, ratings, and the time of day a consumer typically engages in content consumption—without accounting for whether a show was binged or not. Second, there is still debate about whether platforms should allow binge-watching and risk losing subscribers to quick consumption of all their content or prevent it and risk losing subscribers to boredom (“How Netflix’s Recommendations System Works”, n.d.).

Despite the prevalence of these two behaviours, and the varied strategies firms have adopted to manage them, academic research on binge-watching and reconsumption is

incomplete. Further, no research has explored the intersection of the two behaviours. Thus, I build on and integrate prior literature on bingeing and reconsumption to develop a framework to examine the relationship between content consumption format (binge-watching vs. not) and consumers' propensity to reconsume.

In the academic literature, the phenomenon of binge-watching has garnered significant attention. However, researchers have often portrayed this behaviour as pathological (Flayelle et al., 2018), passive, and undesirable (Bandura et al., 1963; Alba & Williams, 2013; Jones et al., 2018; Steiner & Xu, 2020), overlooking its nuances. Given that most users (73%) report positive emotions associated with binge-watching TV shows (Deloitte, 2018; West, 2014; Rubenking & Bracken; 2018), the insights that have arisen from pathologizing binge-watching may not provide a complete picture. Indeed, Pittman and Steiner (2011) argue that studying binge-watching as a monolithic activity oversimplifies its nuances and complexity. Prior research has also failed to consider non-binge content consumption in juxtaposition to binge content consumption. Consuming content with a break in between episodes, as in non-binge watching, introduces an array of cognitive and affective processes and consequences that have been overlooked, given the strong focus on binge-watching. Finally, prior research often employs retrospective self-report surveys, making interpretation challenging. Additional research that explores binge and non-binge content consumption, and that employs more controlled methods such as experiments, is needed to understand the nuances of content consumption in the digital age—whether such consumption is consumer- or platform-controlled.

Further, while reconsumption has been considered in the literature, content reconsumption has garnered less attention. Some scholars have explored automatic and

ritualistic reconsumption (e.g., addiction; Russel & Levy, 2012; Goodman, 1990; Shaffer, 1999; Hirschman, 1992; Boyer & Lienard, 2007; Marcoux, 2009; Clark, 2000), noting the obsessive, impulsive, and involuntary nature of such tendencies. The focus of the current work is on volitional reconsumption, a concept that was introduced and explored by Russell and Levy (2012) using a qualitative methodology. While this work, and some subsequent work (O'Brien, 2019; O'Brien, 2021), examined when and why individuals choose to reconsume, it focused on lay beliefs around reconsumption, enjoyment after reconsuming, and hedonic adaptation, overlooking factors such as content consumption format (e.g., binge-watching vs. not), which may play a role in determining patterns of reconsumption.

In addition, binge-watching has been traditionally studied in isolation, detached from other content-related behaviours, such as reconsumption. However, both behaviours occur in the context of digital content consumption. Further, from a theoretical perspective, some of the consequences of content consumption format overlap with the antecedents of reconsumption, such as enjoyment. Despite this overlap, to the best of my knowledge, there is no research into the connection between these two behaviours. To better comprehend content consumption, we must broaden our perspective. Rather than examining a single watching session in isolation, or collecting retrospective self-report measures after watching, research should consider the full temporal span of viewers' interaction with consumed content, from initial consumption decisions to binge-watch or not, to subsequent decisions like reconsumption—and should do so using more controlled methods.

Accordingly, in this dissertation, I examine the relationship between two under-

researched consumer behaviours: content consumption format (binge-watching and non-binge watching) and reconsumption. I develop and test a framework for how and why content consumption format influences consumers' propensity to reconsume. I also investigate related behavioural consequences such as subscribing to the platform, watching a spin-off of the original content, and engaging in word-of-mouth about the content.

In the novel and evolving landscape of content consumption, this research contributes to theory and practice. First, I contribute to research on binge-watching (Schweidel & Moe, 2016; Trouleau et al., 2016; Lu et al., 2019; de Matos & Ferreira 2020; Zhang et al., 2021) and reconsumption (O'Brien, 2019; O'Brien, 2021; Russell & Levy, 2012) by examining their relationship. Second, I advance research on hedonic experiences by examining how content consumption format affects and is determined by anticipation and enjoyment. Further, whereas prior work in binge-watching has been largely correlational and prior work in reconsumption has been primarily qualitative, I contribute by developing and employing an experimental paradigm which is then complemented with secondary data.

Beyond their theoretical significance, exploring these two behaviours offers practical implications for consumers and marketers. For consumers, my empirical investigations aim to help self-manage their content consumption and increase their well-being by providing insights about how binge-watching (vs. not) affects anticipation, enjoyment, and reconsumption—as well as other relevant behaviours. For platforms, understanding how binge-watching (vs. not) impacts reconsumption will allow for more effective content release strategies and platform design (e.g., recommendation algorithms). A more comprehensive understanding of these two behaviours will help platforms provide

more personalized and enjoyable experiences, potentially leading to increased viewer retention and loyalty. Drawing from this research, platforms and producers can devise release schedules that enhance viewers' enjoyment, as well as their engagement with the content, with other consumers, and with other related content (e.g., spin-offs).

In the following chapters, I first review the two bodies of literature on content consumption: binge-watching (and non-binge watching) and reconsumption (Chapter 2). In Chapter 3, I develop a conceptual framework and propositions about how and why content consumption format might influence reconsumption and related behaviours. Chapter 4 provides an experimental examination of how content consumption format affects reconsumption. In this chapter, consumption format is determined exogenously, analogous to platforms retaining control over viewing behaviour. Chapter 5 provides an examination of the relationship between content consumption format and reconsumption using secondary Netflix data. In this data, control over consumption format rests primarily with the consumer, analogous to platforms ceding control over viewing behaviour. I take this combined approach so that I can draw causal conclusions about the impact of content consumption format (binge-watching vs. not binge-watching) on reconsumption and related behaviours, and so that I can provide practical conclusions for platforms about whether they should exert (vs. cede) control to consumers. Chapter 6 concludes and elaborates on future research opportunities.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, I provide a thorough literature review on the two key content consumption behaviours that are the focus of this dissertation: binge-watching and reconsumption. First, I discuss the broad reasons that motivate content consumption. Next,

I define binge and non-binge content consumption and provide an overview of the antecedents and consequences of these content consumption formats. Then I define and discuss reconsumption and its antecedents and consequences.

Content Consumption

Consumers decide to watch digital video content, such as TV shows, for an array of reasons. These can be broadly categorised into affective and cognitive (Bartsch & Hartmann, 2017). From an affective perspective, one of the primary reasons for content consumption is the pursuit of entertainment and enjoyment. Consumers select content that provides pleasure, amusement, and a break from their daily routines (Zillmann, 2000; Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000; Vorderer et al., 2004). They often choose content that helps them regulate their emotions—that is, that enhances positive moods or mitigates negative ones—due to affective involvement with the story or the characters (Zillmann, 1988; Knobloch-Westerwick, 2015; Igartua, 2010). Sometimes consumers choose to watch content to create a sense of belonging with society and the institutions they occupy as members, such as family or politics, which can increase enjoyment (Katz et al., 1973).

From a cognitive perspective, some viewers consume content to acquire knowledge and learn about new topics, solve mental puzzles, explore a novel experience, or act as a means to validate their identity. Cognitive engagement with content can stimulate critical thinking and deepen viewers' understanding of the world (Oliver & Raney, 2011).

Complex narratives might be interesting for those who enjoy solving puzzles, uncovering mysteries, or engaging with thought-provoking material, providing intrinsic enjoyment (Cantor, 2009). Viewers may watch content that promises unique or innovative experiences, satisfying their desire for novelty and exploration (Litman, 2005). Narrative

consumption can also serve as a means of affirming one's identity and allow the viewer to discover themselves and feel validated (Cohen, 2001; Livingstone, 2009).

The antecedents of why individuals consume content serve as a general overview of why they engage in any content consumption behaviour, including binge-watching (and not binge-watching) as well as reconsumption. As the next sections elaborate further on these behaviours of interest, some of the determinants of content consumption will be repeated, as these behaviours are a subset of content consumption behaviour as a whole and are thus motivated by some of the same reasons. However, in this particular stream of research, my focus is on content consumption format—binge-watching or not—and reconsumption.

Content Consumption Format

I introduce the term “content consumption format” to refer to either binge or non-binge content consumption. In this work, I juxtapose binge and non-binge content consumption, and explore their unique characteristics, antecedents, and consequences. I suggest that these two formats of content consumption are differentiated primarily by the timing of episode viewing— that is, by watching more than one episode back-to-back or not. Indeed, binge-watching is simply defined as “consuming multiple episodes of a TV show in succession” (Oxford Dictionary, 2024). However, although the terms “bingeing” and “binge-watching” permeate our digital culture, their scope and definition remain unclear in the scholarly literature.

In terms of scope, some scholars posit parallels in bingeing behaviour across seemingly disparate contexts, from eating and drinking to watching television. Regardless of what is being binged, these scholars broadly categorize such behaviours as addictive

(Hirschman, 1992; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002; Schweidel & Moe, 2016). However, when individuals engage with presumably intellectual content—like books—they do not perceive their behaviour as maladaptive or addictive (Jenner, 2017) and do not label it “binge-reading”. Although binge-watching can become pathological and display similarities with addiction, it is not always so (Flayelle et al., 2020). Thus, it is worth exploring on par with other forms of hedonic content consumption (e.g., reading books) which are not necessarily considered addictive or a transgression of social norms (Jenner, 2017; Oh & Pham, 2022).

The conceptual definition of binge-watching consists of three components: quantity (how many episodes are watched), time (how long watching occurs), and content (what is watched; the same TV show or different ones; Flayelle et al., 2020). Prior definitions of binge-watching differentially rely on these components, and definitions also vary within each component. For example, binge consumption has sometimes been considered as viewing multiple episodes in one sitting or across a short time span (Merikivi et al., 2020). Further, the quantity used to define binge-watching in terms of number of episodes differs widely. Some researchers have operationalised it as watching more than one episode (Merikivi et al., 2020), watching two or more episodes (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015; Ahmed, 2020; Panda & Pandey 2017; Sung et al., 2020; Walton-Pattison et al., 2020; Merrill & Rubenking, 2020), and watching three or more episodes at a time (Riddle et al., 2020; Rubenking & Bracken, 2020; Erickson et al., 2020; Pittman & Steiner, 2020). Others have left the number unspecified (Conlin et al., 2020; Shim et al., 2020; Shim & Kim, 2020; Flayelle et al., 2020). Alternatively, other researchers have focused on duration: watching for one hour (Panda & Pandey 2017) or watching for three or more hours (Horvath et al.,

2017). Still others have operationalised binge-watching as viewing a whole TV season in one sitting (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015; Trouleau et al., 2016). Some have only considered viewing episodes of the same title as binge-watching (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015), whereas others have kept the title unspecified and consider viewing several episodes of different content binge-watching, as long as the viewing is uninterrupted (Shim et al., 2018).

The divergence in how scholars have operationalised binge-watching might be indicative of a discrepancy between the different perceptions of both scholars and consumers regarding what constitutes binge-watching (Pittman & Sheehan, 2015). The shifting nature of the definition can also be traced to the traditional view of binge-watching as an excessive behaviour, where in order to determine excess, norms need to be determined—and norms are highly subjective (Jenner, 2017). As noted, bingeing has mostly been studied through the lens of addiction, and the word “binge” typically evokes associations with addictive behaviours like excessive drinking or overeating (Dingeman et al., 2002; Courtney & Polich, 2009; Giel et al., 2022). Instead, in this dissertation, I focus on more common binge-watching that is not addictive or excessive, but which has been largely overshadowed by the more pathological variations of these behaviours. I also focus on the opposite behaviour of not binge-watching. This work, to the best of my knowledge, is one of the first research works to study non-binge consumption and does not merely rely on binge-watching to deduce the consequences of content consumption format.

For this research, I define binge content consumption as the viewing of multiple episodes—that is, two or more—in the same viewing session. I adopt this definition to be relatively conservative, and to maintain ecological validity based on an analysis of secondary data from Netflix (discussed in Chapter 5). This data revealed that most

individuals watch two to three episodes in each viewing session, with a one-day break between viewing sessions. It is critical to note that here, binge-watching is not defined by the total duration of content consumption, as different types of content have episodes of diverse durations. Similarly, binge-watching is not contingent upon the exact number of episodes watched. Instead, binge-watching is characterised by proceeding to the next episode of the content once one episode ends.

In contrast, I define non-binge content consumption as the viewing of one episode of content at a time with a break in between. Note that to fit within the non-binge category, the break must be longer than a mere interruption (such as a snack or bathroom break, or a short commercial—which have recently been introduced on streaming platforms). Interruptions are short enough so that the viewing experience is perceived as continuous (i.e., the experience is not over), and have been shown to improve the experience (Nelson et al., 2009).

Antecedents of Content Consumption Format

Several factors have been identified to explain why binge-watching occurs. These factors can be broadly categorised into those related to the consumer, the content, and the platform. Consumer-related factors can be further categorised into trait-based, pathological, or motivational criteria.

Some researchers have posited that certain personality traits, such as low self-control, low impulse control, and high sensation-seeking may predispose individuals to binge-watching (Riddle et al., 2018; Shim & Kim, 2018; Tukachinsky & Eyal, 2018; Hofmann et al., 2017; Schnauber-Stockmann et al., 2018; Minear et al., 2013; Panek, 2014; Wirz et al., 2023). Similarly, consumers who are higher in neuroticism and lower in

agreeableness, conscientiousness, and openness to new experiences are more likely to binge-watch (Pittman & Steiner, 2020). Binge-watching may also be determined by certain pathological factors. Some individuals utilise binge-watching as an avoidance mechanism—a maladaptive, affective, regulatory attempt to cope with stress (Flayelle et al., 2019; Merrill & Rubenking, 2019; Chambliss et al., 2017; Pittman & Sheehan, 2015; Ahmed, 2022; Shim & Kim, 2018; Conlin et al., 2016; Ahmed, 2022; Riddle et al., 2017; Tefertiller & Maxwell, 2018). However, since the majority of this literature relies on self-reports and surveys (Granow et al., 2018; Erdmann & Dienlin, 2022; Baumgartner & Kühne, 2024), the causal relationship between personality traits, pathological factors, and binge-watching cannot be established.

Binge-watching behaviour can be driven by social, affective, or cognitive motivations and needs (Katz et al., 1973; Pittman & Sheehan, 2015). On a social level, connection to peers or to a fan community can motivate content consumption (Sung et al., 2020). Sometimes, individuals binge-watch to bond with their circle or connect with the fandom by engaging in real-time discussions with other fans (Conlin et al., 2020). At other times, consumers might binge-watch for affective reasons, such as hedonic experience, escapism, or entertainment, where they expect that bingeing will be more gratifying than not bingeing (Rubenking & Bracken, 2018; Erickson et al., 2019; Harris Interactive, 2013; Pittman & Sheehan, 2015; Woolley & Sharif, 2022). Alternatively, consumers may be cognitively motivated to binge-watch in an attempt to gather knowledge or information (Merikivi et al., 2020), or to attain closure and complete the experience and the narrative (Lu et al., 2017; Rubenking et al., 2018).

There are two limitations of the current literature on consumer-related antecedents

of binge-watching. First, these motivations are often cited as antecedents for content consumption itself and for binge-watching more specifically. In short, scholars appear to view binge-watching motivations as a subset of content consumption motivations; this has precluded exploration of not only the motivations behind non-binge content consumption but also a broad examination of the two juxtaposing behaviours. Second, affective and motivational consumer-level factors are cited as determinants of binge-watching by some scholars (Sung et al., 2020; Erickson et al., 2019; Merikivi et al., 2020) and as consequences by others (Rubenking & Bracken, 2018; Pittman & Sheehan, 2015; Woolley & Sharif, 2022). This discrepancy can be reconciled by conceptualising these experiences as an instance of learning: if a consumer binges once and attains particular affective or motivational outcomes, these may become the reason for engaging in another episode of the same behaviour.

From a content perspective, certain genres and titles are more likely to be binge-watched. For example, those that are more narratively complex are more “binge-worthy” (Jenner, 2017). Using secondary data from streaming platforms, some studies have shown that certain genres (i.e., sitcoms) induce longer binge-watching sessions than others (i.e., drama, horror, and action; Touleau et al., 2016). While a survey suggested that individuals believe comedies lend themselves better to binge-watching (Wagner, 2016), some scholars have posited that intense drama or suspense are more conducive to binge-watching due to higher narrative transportation (Fahr & Böcking, 2009; Heeter, 1985). Overall, there is no consensus about the effect of genre on binge-watching, likely due to a lack of a theoretical exploration of binge-watching and genre.

Finally, from a platform perspective, the choice architecture and design of

streaming platforms could potentially impact content consumption. For example, the release schedule for the content and the options available on the platform (e.g., Netflix's "binge-worthy" label, the ability to skip an episode's introduction or end credits, the platform automatically proceeding to the next episode) might make binge-watching more enjoyable by offering viewers a continuous narrative over episodic experiences (Jenner, 2018, 2020). In short, the antecedents of binge-watching are well-researched. However, a gap in the literature remains in the realm of consequences. In this dissertation, I examine the consequences of binge-watching; I summarise prior work in this area in the next section.

Consequences of Content Consumption Format

There is diverging evidence regarding the consequences of binge-watching. Some research relies heavily on the pathological view of this behaviour (Flayelle et al., 2020; Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020). However, this work tends to examine excessive and pathological binge-watching that derails the individual's regular life. This view does not lend itself to more common binge-watching practices. The focus of this dissertation is not on pathological binge-watching, but on the consecutive viewing of several episodes (i.e., two or more). Pathological binge-watching, akin to other addictive and compulsive consumption behaviours, is characterised by the individual's inability to disengage from the behaviour despite negative consequences in other aspects of the individual's life (O'Guinn & Faber, 1989; Hoch & Loewenstein, 1991; Feiereisen et al., 2021).

Several streams of research have delved into the physiological, psychological, and behavioural consequences of binge-watching content. In the following section, the consequences of binge-watching and the juxtaposing behaviour of not binge-watching are

outlined. I first offer a concise overview of the physiological and mental health consequences of pathological binge-watching. I then review the psychological (cognitive and affective) and behavioural outcomes of non-pathological binge-watching, which is the focus of this dissertation.

Consequences of Pathological Content Consumption Format

Physiologically, pathological or excessive binge-watching is associated with a sedentary lifestyle, which can lead to weight gain and other health issues such as cardiovascular problems (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020; Flayelle, 2020). Extended periods of inactivity during binge-watching sessions can increase the risk of obesity and related diseases (Flayelle et al., 2020; Merrill & Rubenking, 2019). It is linked to poorer sleep quality due to late-night viewing sessions, which can disrupt sleep patterns (Exelmans & Van den Bulck, 2017; Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020; Walton-Pattison et al., 2018). Conversely, not binge-watching may mitigate such physical issues, leaving time for physical activity and reducing the risk of health problems (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020).

From a mental health perspective, anxiety and depression are other significant consequences of excessive binge-watching (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020; Sun & Chang, 2021). The compulsive nature of the behaviour can lead to a cycle of anxiety and stress, particularly when individuals perceive it as a failure of their self-regulatory mechanism (Flayelle, 2020; Rubenking & Bracken, 2018). In contrast, watching in a non-binge format might attenuate possible anxiety and stress (Walton-Pattison et al., 2018).

These physiological and mental health consequences stem from pathological or excessive binge-watching, which has been a major focus in prior literature. I take a more ecologically valid and theoretically grounded approach by investigating the consequences

of non-pathological binge-watching, and by comparing binge-watching to not binge-watching.

Consequences of Non-pathological Binge-watching

Although pathological binge-watching has been a primary focus of a large body of prior work, researchers have also investigated the outcomes of non-pathological binge-watching. This work has examined cognitive and affective psychological consequences (Rubin & Perse, 1987), as well as behavioural consequences of binge-watching. The evidence for how viewers respond to content depending on the content consumption format is diverging, and focused on binge-watching, as that has been the behaviour primarily examined in the literature. A quintessential characteristic of non-binge content consumption which distinguishes it from binge content consumption is the break between episodes. This break can alter viewers' responses to the experience. In the following section, I will outline viewers' responses to binge and non-binge content consumption as suggested by prior literature.

Psychological Responses to Binge Content Consumption

First, because binge-watching involves consuming a continuous narrative without interruption, individuals often experience narrative transportation, which refers to the immersive experience of being “transported” into the world of the story (Nelson et al., 2009; Erickson et al., 2019). This can lead to stronger cognitive engagement, where viewers engage more deeply, pay more attention to details, and have a more profound experience while viewing (Nelson et al., 2009; Erickson et al., 2019; Anghelcev et al., 2021; Chen & Redden, 2023). For instance, in an experimental paradigm, Erickson et al. (2019) investigated narrative transportation and binge-watching while viewing three

episodes of popular television shows. Using a two (viewing schedule: weekly, binge [single session]) by two (show: *Everwood*, *Felicity*) design, they concluded that binge-watching leads to higher narrative transportation and stronger parasocial connections with beloved characters that persists over time (measured after 140 days).

In addition, binge content consumption can increase enjoyment. When individuals binge-watch, they experience more intrinsic enjoyment, finding satisfaction in the ability to watch at their own pace and without interruptions (Schweidel & Moe, 2016). By enhancing consumers' sense of perceived autonomy, binge-watching might lead to a better overall viewing experience (Granow et al., 2018). Further, through binge-watching, viewers develop stronger parasocial relationships with the characters, which can lead to more immersion, enhanced entertainment, and subsequently enjoyment (Flayelle et al., 2017; Sung et al., 2018; Feiereisen et al., 2021).

With regard to unfavourable outcomes, consuming content by binge-watching can also decrease enjoyment. Upon completion of binge-watching, consumers may feel a sense of emptiness (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020; Walton-Pattison et al., 2018). Binge-watching might also lead to guilt and regret if the individual believes they have engaged in binge-watching excessively and there is a conflict with other life responsibilities (Hofmann et al. 2012; Flayelle et al., 2020; Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020). Experienced enjoyment might diminish, as the pleasure derived from watching dissipates over time due to diminishing returns, adaptation, and satiation (Nelson et al., 2009; Horvath et al., 2017). These negative consequences may decrease enjoyment as a result of binge-watching.

Further, binge-watching is related to less robust content memory, which can be detrimental to the retention of educational and informational content (Flayelle et al., 2020).

Horvath et al. (2017) find that upon binge-watching, individuals retain information about the content better for the first 24 hours compared to those who watch weekly or daily, but over 140 days, their retention declines more steeply than those who watch one episode at a time. This suggests that while immediate recall may be strong, binge-watching impairs long-term retention.

Psychological Responses to Non-binge Content Consumption

The evidence for how non-binge content consumption changes viewers' responses to the experience is sparse, given the literature's focus on binge-watching. However, it is possible that non-binge content consumption may also have diverse effects on consumers.

First, a non-binge format could enhance narrative engagement and satisfaction, as breaks can prevent cognitive fatigue, allow for adaptation, and allow for a more balanced viewing experience (Lang, 2000). When viewers do not binge-watch, they might also experience greater overall enjoyment of the narrative due to the anticipation that builds between episodes (Granow et al., 2018). In a non-binge content consumption experience, the break between episodes presents an opportunity for anticipation and the development of other emotions as consumers draw utility from past emotions and anticipation. The intervals between episodes allow viewers to reflect on past episodes and speculate about future developments, heightening their affective investment in the narrative and prolonging engagement with the content and enjoyment between episodes (Loewenstein, 1987; Kumar et al., 2014; Dunlop & Walker, 2013; Trope & Liberman, 2010).

Further, not binge-watching could enhance viewers' need for closure, as it is similar to a climactic interruption (Kupor et al., 2015). When each episode ends (often on a cliff-hanger), it leaves the consumer feeling a heightened desire to attain closure (Beike et

al., 2007; Beike & Wirth-Beaumont, 2005; Kupor et al., 2014); in turn, this might increase cognitive engagement.

Finally, viewers who do not binge-watch tend to have better long-term memory retention, as the distributed practice effect helps improve cognitive processing and memory consolidation (Cepeda et al., 2006; Horvath et al., 2017).

Behavioural Responses to Content Consumption Format

The behavioural outcomes associated with binge-watching can be categorised into factors that pertain to content consumption behaviour, platform-related behaviour, and social behaviour.

Regarding content-related behavioural outcomes, binge-watching seems to perpetuate continued viewing, creating a cycle where viewers are more likely to engage in further binge-watching sessions (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). This could occur because of its similarity with other addictive behaviours and because of habit formation (Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). This cycle of consumption may also be driven by the immersive and engaging nature of the content, leading to prolonged viewing periods without breaks (Starosta & Izydorczyk, 2020).

Content consumption format can also impact platform-related behaviours around binge-watching. For example, consumers are willing to pay more for a service that makes binge-watching possible (Godinho de Matos & Ferreira, 2020). In addition, binge-watching affects how viewers respond to advertisements (Schweidel & Moe, 2016); viewers who tend to binge-watch are less likely to respond to advertisements, possibly due to the uninterrupted flow of content that reduces the effectiveness of traditional advertising breaks (Schweidel & Moe, 2016). This reduced responsiveness can impact advertising

strategies, as binge-watchers may skip advertisements or find them more intrusive (Granow et al., 2018). The expectation of a seamless viewing experience may lead viewers to avoid content with frequent ad interruptions (Schweidel & Moe, 2016).

Content consumption format also affects social behaviour. For example, compared to non-binge content consumption, when consuming content in a binge format, viewers are less likely to recommend shows to others (Ferchaud, 2018). This reduced inclination to recommend may stem from a more solitary viewing experience or from the rapid consumption of content, which leaves less time for social interaction about the shows (Walton-Pattison et al., 2018). Additionally, the intensive viewing experience can sometimes lead to a sense of guilt or regret, further diminishing the desire to discuss or recommend the content (Flayelle et al., 2020). In contrast, viewers who watch with breaks are more likely to engage in social discussions about the content, enhancing their viewing experience through shared insights and recommendations (Ferchaud, 2018).

Unexplored Questions in Prior Research

Despite the insights research on binge-watching provides, particularly regarding its motivations and antecedents, the evidence that exists on the consequences of the content consumption format is primarily based on methodology that introduces confounding effects, namely self-report surveys. Further, it often does not examine non-binge content consumption and its consequences. The divergence can also be attributed to excessive theoretical focus on binge content consumption and the assumption that the consequences of non-binge content consumption are symmetrical. Prior studies often do not measure the individual's experience of non-binge content consumption and only rely on their exploration of binge content consumption, which is then generalized to non-binge

consumption. Yet if binge-consumption has been shown to lead to a battery of psychological and behavioural outcomes, it does not necessarily mean that non-binge consumption would lead to the opposite outcome, as indicated in the limited research that focuses on non-binge-watching. For instance, there is evidence that both binge-watching and non-binge-watching can lead to increased enjoyment. I suggest that the symmetry in the consequences of binge and non-binge content consumption—which has been implicitly assumed in prior work—cannot be readily theorised. I aim to compare the two content consumption formats explicitly, and to explore a particular downstream consequence of binge and non-binge content consumption which has not been explored: reconsumption.

Content Reconsumption

Content reconsumption is a prevalent content-related behaviour. In the realm of consumer behaviour, the deliberate choice to revisit experiences—that is, volitional reconsumption—holds significance for individuals, culture, and the entertainment industry (Bentley & Murray, 2016).

Through reconsumption, individuals revisit their past, define their present, and carry on into the future (Russell & Levy, 2012). From a marketing perspective, rerunning previously successful shows has been a key source of revenue for many TV stations in the past—and this still holds true in the era of on-demand streaming platforms (Bentley & Murray, 2016). This phenomenon is often termed “reconsumption” or “volitional reconsumption” (Russell & Levy, 2012). Below, I define reconsumption and discuss its determinants. I then synthesise the literature on the consequences of reconsumption.

Reconsumption behaviours can have different characteristics, based on which they can be categorised into habitual, addictive, ritualistic, or volitional reconsumption. For

example, habitual and addictive reconsumption cannot be stopped intentionally, despite not being desirable (Goodman, 1990). Ritualistic behaviour, either personal or collective, often follows certain obligatory and culturally enforced behaviour that is associated with a date (Levy, 1981; Boyer & Lienard, 2007; Russell & Levy, 2012). Ritualistic consumption is often less about the content and more about the motive (Rubin & Perse, 1987). However, habitual (Bennett & Watson, 2005; Verplanken & Wood, 2006), ritualistic (Boyer & Lienard, 2007; Rook, 1985), and addictive (Boyer & Lienard, 2007) reconsumption are distinct from volitional reconsumption because they are determined by factors that are not within the consumers' control (Russell & Levy, 2012). Because of my interest in consumers' content consumption unencumbered by automaticity, habit, or maladaptive patterns, volitional reconsumption is the sole focus of this dissertation.

Antecedents of Reconsumption

There are several reasons why reconsumption may occur, which can be broadly categorised according to the unit of analysis, akin to binge-watching: consumer, content, and context. The consumer-related reasons can be categorised into trait-based and goal-based. Content-related factors interact with consumer goal-related factors to determine reconsumption behaviour.

First, when it comes to consumer traits, some individuals are inherently more prone to reconsumption (Russell & Levy, 2012; Zemack-Rugar & Moore, 2019). At times, this behaviour is caused by a preference for the status quo: people might prefer to consume content they know instead of sampling the unfamiliar (Russell & Levy, 2012), due to nostalgia and a longing for past experiences (Furno-Lamude & Anderson, 1992; Holbrook 1993), or because consumers consider themselves hardcore fans and might reconsume to

establish their identity as a member of the fandom (Bentley & Murray, 2016). Arriaga et al. (2020) also present evidence for extraversion and age (young individuals) predicting reconsumption.

Reconsumption can sometimes occur due to the consumer's goals and not their traits. These goals can be further categorised into reconstructive, reflective, and social. Some viewers return to the experience with a goal to reconstruct their memory of it, or to enhance their understanding of the earlier stories in the TV show, given what they know about the general trajectory (Shuster, 2021). Sometimes, individuals rewatch content to prepare for an upcoming season (Bentley & Murray, 2016). In this future-oriented, reconstructive reconsumption, the consumer aims to revisit the experience in an attempt to deepen or enhance it and confirm or reject their first impression (Russell & Levy, 2012; Keinan & Kivetz, 2011). When individuals have a goal to reflect on the content, they might re-engage in a hedonic experience so as to reflect on themselves and their evolution as an individual (Russell & Levy, 2012). In this past-oriented, reflective reconsumption, the consumer aims to replicate, relive, and consolidate memories. Individuals might also have social goals in mind when engaging in reconsumption. Socially, certain experiences are revisited in order to reinforce relationships with others while sharing an experience (Bentley & Murray, 2016; Arriaga, 2020).

Content factors can also interact with goal-related factors to determine reconsumption. From a content perspective, reconsumption may be more prevalent when content is too complex upon first consumption. As a result, the consumer might reconsume due to reconstructive goals to construct the narrative more easily, making the ending more predictable (De Gruyter, 2022; Shuster, 2021; Gitlin, 1985). As content complexity

increases, consumers rewatch to engage in deeper processing and reconstruct their understanding of the subtleties of the content (Bentley & Murray, 2016). Some content, such as drama, is rife with details that must be retained in memory as the story unfolds in order to comprehend the narrative. During the first viewing experience, some of these details might be missed, which can be more thoroughly understood upon reconsumption. In contrast, some types of content are more conducive to reflective goals because of the experience they create for the individual upon the first encounter that the consumer would like to revisit, akin to nostalgia. These often include stories or aesthetics that are familiar or bring to mind a past time (Russell & Levy, 2012; Kaur, 2021). Some consumers might rewatch content they have watched during their childhood to revisit their past experiences. Alternatively, they might wish for the viewing experience to induce a particular mood (Bentley & Murray, 2016).

Contextual factors denote the external environment within which a TV show is reconsumed. Such factors include the viewing platform (e.g., Netflix), scheduling characteristics (e.g., weekly episode releases), device (e.g., smartphone), and social context (e.g., with others to recruit more fans) (Bentley & Murray, 2016; Levenson et al., 2017). Another contextual factor is the perception of an impending ending which increases the desire to repeat a hedonic experience (Winet & O'Brien, 2023). In the under-researched body of literature about reconsumption, contextual factors are notably absent. I aim to examine a novel contextual factor: content consumption (binge vs. non-binge). The focal behaviour explored in this dissertation, content consumption, is a contextual factor that could conceivably lead to different reconsumption behaviour.

Antecedents of Not Reconsuming

There are several reasons why consumers might not reconsume, namely maximizing enjoyment, perception of opportunity cost, and hedonic adaptation. A consumer might choose not to rewatch in their quest to maximize the enjoyment of their experience (O'Brien, 2018; Kahn & Ratner, 2005; McAlister & Pessemier, 1982). There is evidence of a consumer lay theory characterizing rewatching as a waste of time, and exploring an alternative option as more appealing (Fennis & Stroebe, 2016; Tormala et al., 2012; Wänke et al., 1998; O'Brien, 2018). People might refrain from a rewatching experience due to satiation (Chintagunta, 1999; Papatla & Krishnamurthi, 1992) or if they have an aversion to repetition because of the expectation that it can potentially cause satiation (O'Brien, 2018).

Adaptation might be another determinant of not reconsuming. Adaptation, often associated with physiological experiences, refers to the reduction in pleasure derived from repeated exposure to the same stimulus (Frederick & Loewenstein, 1999). This phenomenon is commonly observed in activities such as eating, where consuming the same food repeatedly can lead to diminished enjoyment (Redden, 2008). Adaptation is often generalized to include the psychological realm, impacting activities like rewatching (McAlister, 1982; Redden, 2008). Psychological adaptation can occur as novelty diminishes, leading to a decrease in the perceived value and enjoyment of the experience. However, some scholars have posited that no repeated hedonic experience is inherently identical to the first (O'Brien, 2018). Variability in the context, such as watching with different people or under different circumstances, or the content, such as the complexity of the plot, can mitigate this effect and maintain or restore initial enjoyment (Galak et al.,

2009). In addition, each encounter with a hedonic activity, such as rewatching a TV show, is impacted by various determinants including the individual's affective and cognitive state. These determinants might lead to a new hedonic experience and subsequently different cognitive and affective outcomes, making the repeated experience distinct from the initial one (O'Brien, 2018; Galak et al., 2009).

Consequences of Reconsumption

Rewatching TV shows or movies can result in various cognitive and affective outcomes. The increased familiarity of reconsumed content can lead to greater affective efficiency, allowing consumers to regulate their affective response more consciously because they can anticipate the upcoming plot points and their own reactions (Russell & Levy, 2012; Gross, 1999). Reconsumption can also foster a deeper understanding of content through hyperresponsiveness, an intense affective experience where consumers return to their baseline affective state more slowly, allowing for a more nuanced experience (Russell & Levy, 2012). Hyperresponsiveness occurs because repeated exposure allows viewers to notice subtleties and nuances they might have missed, leading to deeper affective and cognitive engagement with the content (Redden, 2008; Galak et al., 2009). The consequences of reconsumption are generally less explored and, as a result, largely unknown.

Content reconsumption, as a behaviour, is common, overlooked, and rife with opportunities for research and exploration. The reflective and reconstructive drives for reconsumption, because of the desire to revisit an experience or deepen it, could conceivably change due to the content consumption format. As discussed previously, the content consumption format changes the viewers' experience as elaborated on before, and

thus alters these reflective and reconstructive drives.

CHAPTER 3: CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

In the following section, I develop a conceptual framework for why and how content consumption format affects the desire to reconsume and offer four propositions based on this framework. To develop a theoretical framework for how these two behaviours are related, I expand on how content consumption format (binge and non-binge) could increase or decrease the desire to reconsume. I draw from our understanding of the affective and cognitive consequences of content consumption format to describe processes that could lead to reconsumption. My thesis hinges on the two broad reasons for reconsumption described above: reflective and reconstructive. I theorize about how binge and non-binge content consumption may lead to an experience that the viewer would revisit in an attempt to relive it (reflective) or deepen it (reconstructive), depending on the format of their first consumption experience.

The Effect of Binge Content Consumption on Reconsumption

Reflective reconsumption might occur after binge content consumption because during binge content consumption, viewers are highly emotionally engaged and immersed in the experience, resulting in greater overall entertainment and enjoyment (Flayelle et al., 2017; Sung et al., 2018). Thus, when retrospectively examining whether they want to reconsume the content, consumers might have a higher desire to reconsume in order to have a similar affective experience again.

P1. Binge (vs. non-binge) content consumption might increase affective engagement, leading to an increased desire to reconsume

P2. Binge (vs. non-binge) content consumption might increase cognitive engagement, leading to a decreased desire to reconsume.

Reconstructive reconsumption might be less likely to occur after binge content

consumption due to cognitive engagement. During binge content consumption, individuals may engage more deeply, pay attention to details, and experience stronger cognitive engagement (Nelson et al., 2009; Erickson et al., 2019). Having engaged strongly on a cognitive level, after binge content consumption, the viewer might be less motivated to reconsume in a reconstructive attempt.

Figure 1 illustrates the pathways through which a binge-watching content consumption format could increase the desire to reconsume.

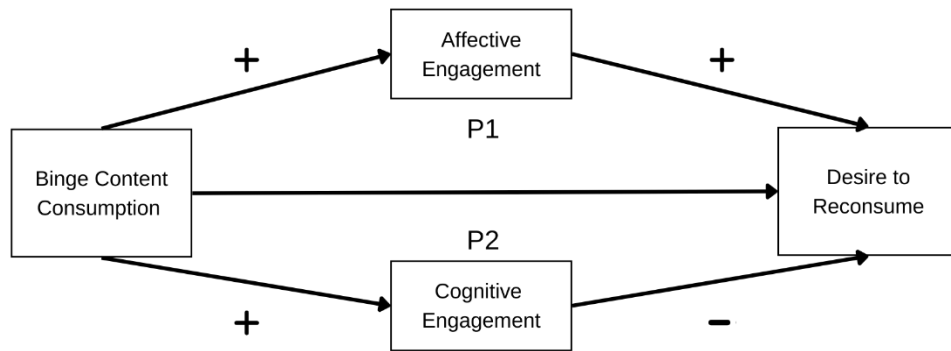


Figure 1. Pathways through which binge content consumption might increase the desire to reconsume.

The Effect of Non-binge Content Consumption on Reconsumption

Reflective reconsumption could also occur after non-binge content consumption. Non-binge-watching, characterised by breaks between episodes, can build anticipation (Lang, 2000; Granow et al., 2018). The anticipation between episodes can enhance the overall viewing experience, as viewers await the next episode (Granow et al., 2018; Vichiengior et al., 2019, Nowlis et al., 2004). Breaks leave room for reflection and speculation, enhancing affective engagement and responses, specifically enjoyment (Loewenstein, 1987; Kumar et al., 2014; Dunlop & Walker, 2013; Trope & Liberman, 2010). This prolonged enjoyment can lead to a desire to rewatch the series to re-experience the enjoyment enhanced by anticipation.

P3. Non-binge (vs. binge) content consumption might lead to more anticipation, in turn increasing enjoyment and leading to an increased desire to reconsume.

Reconstructive reconsumption also could conceivably occur as a result of non-binge content consumption. The non-binge format often involves viewing episodes over an extended period, which can lead to a more distributed engagement and decreased feeling of closure (Cepeda et al., 2006; Horvath et al., 2017). By the time the new episode is viewed, some details might have been forgotten, leading to a disruption in the viewer's understanding of the storyline. The consumer then might have a desire to reconsume in an attempt to understand the narrative better.

P4. Non-binge (vs. binge) content consumption may interrupt processing, in turn decreasing closure and leading to an increased desire to reconsume.

Figure 2 illustrates the pathways through which a non-binge content consumption format could increase the desire to reconsume .

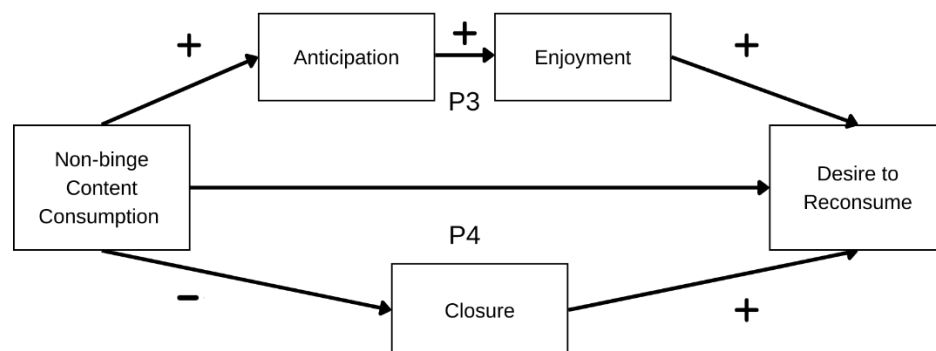


Figure 2. Pathways through which non-binge content consumption might increase the desire to reconsume.

Moderators

The conceptual framework in this research focuses on the contextual factor of content consumption format, and how it might affect reconsumption behaviour. However, some of the consequences of the content consumption format may be contingent upon consumer-related and content-related factors. I provide an initial exploration of some of these factors as moderators. Individual Differences

Certain individual differences may affect the desire to rewatch, as noted in the literature review (Russell & Levy, 2012). The following section draws from trait-based reconsumption behaviours to expand on how the propositions in this paper may be moderated by individual inclinations.

Orientation toward Reconsumption

Attitudinal Orientation

Attitude toward reconsumption refers to a viewer's overall positive or negative evaluation of the idea of rewatching content. This attitude can predict reconsumption frequency and willingness to pay for reconsumption experiences (Zemack-Rugar & Moore, 2019). It is likely that attitude toward reconsumption is rooted in the individual's propensity to experience adaptation which leads to boredom causing diminished affective engagement and enjoyment. It is then plausible that attitude toward reconsumption amplifies the negative affect of binge content consumption on the desire to reconsume. Attitude toward reconsumption might moderate P1.

Temporal Orientation

Future-Oriented. Future-oriented reconsumption refers to rewatching content in anticipation of future installments or sequels. This motivation focuses on learning and

growing from the experience (Russell & Levy, 2012). For future-oriented reconsumers, binge-watching might intensify their desire to reconsume because they want to refresh their memory, deepen their understanding, and prepare for upcoming episodes. A propensity for future-oriented reconsumption could moderate the effect of anticipation on reconsumption. If the consumer's reconsumption is generally more future-oriented, the effect of anticipation on reconsumption would increase; the more the consumer reconsumes to prepare for a future event, the more their anticipation would affect the eventual desire to reconsume because their inclination toward future consumption can interact with the anticipation induced by non-binge content consumption and an increased desire to reconsume. Future orientation could potentially moderate P3.

Past-Oriented. Past-oriented reconsumption involves rewatching content to relive the experiences and emotions associated with the original viewing. This motivation focuses on preserving memories (Russell & Levy, 2012). Individuals with a stronger past orientation may engage more in reflective reconsumption to repeat past experiences. Past-oriented viewers may have a stronger desire to reconsume binge-watched content due to the intensified affective engagement. As such, past orientation may moderate P1.

TV Show Viewing Tendencies.

Being a Fan of TV Shows. Fans of TV shows often have specific preferences for the genre, enjoying the characters, plotlines, and episodic nature of the content. They might engage in more reconsumption to signal to themselves and others that they are a member of the fan community, attaining social validation (Russell & Levy, 2012). TV show fans might be more inclined to reconsume content because TV shows often provide comfort and familiarity (Russell & Levy, 2012). If the consumer is not a fan of TV shows, upon binge

content consumption, they might experience less enjoyment in retrospect due to their general idea about TV shows paired with the significant time commitment, and they might perceive it as less favorable behaviour than if they do not consume it in a non-binge format. In retrospect then, individuals who are generally not a fan of TV shows might evaluate the experience of binge viewing a TV show as less enjoyable than individuals who are a fan of TV shows which leads to less desire to reconsume and re-engage in the behaviour. In contrast, fans of TV shows might perceive the experience in a binge format as more enjoyable due to its validating effect on their fan identity and in turn increase their desire to reconsume (P1).

Content Consumption Format Tendencies. Content consumption format tendencies refer to an individual's general preference for binge-watching or non-binge-watching formats. Individuals might not follow their general tendency due to their other commitments, the release schedule of the TV show, and their social viewing plans. However, when they are able to do so, individuals with a tendency to binge-watch are likely to experience greater affective engagement (P1) and immersion (P2), leading to a higher desire to reconsume if the prior experience was done in a binge format. Those who prefer non-binge content consumption might find more value in the episodic enjoyment and cognitive engagement as a result of previous non-binge content consumption .

Need for Closure. Individuals vary in their inherent need for closure, a stable personality trait characterized by the desire for definitive answers and an aversion to ambiguity (Webster & Kruglanski, 1994). People with a high need for closure prefer certainty and are uncomfortable with open-ended situations. For these individuals, the cliff-hangers and unresolved narratives typical of non-binge content consumption may be

particularly compelling, as their intrinsic need to resolve ambiguity drives them to seek narrative closure. This heightened lack of closure could lead to a stronger desire to reconsume the content, as rewatching allows them to better understand and resolve the plot intricacies (P4). Conversely, individuals with a low need for closure may be more comfortable with ambiguity and less driven to resolve narrative tension. For these viewers, the cognitive engagement induced by cliff-hangers may be less pronounced, and their desire to rewatch might be driven more by other factors, such as overall enjoyment or emotional connection to the characters.

I propose that trait-based closure can moderate the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption as it can moderate the anticipation experienced and the subsequent enjoyment (P3). It is also plausible that an individual's need for closure moderates the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption, such that if there is not a fit between their need and the format (a high need for closure and non-binge or a low need for closure and binge content consumption), they might show a greater desire to reconsume to have the experience better suited to them. Trait-based closure might then moderate P4.

Content-related Moderator: Genre

Different genres have various characteristics which could also affect the pathways through which content consumption format can impact the desire to reconsume. What makes content consumption a unique experience is the role of genre, which has rarely been studied in the already scant content consumption literature, to the best of my knowledge. Some genres are more complex. I suggest that this complexity may moderate the effect of content consumption format on the desire to reconsume.

Genre complexity could potentially impact content consumption decisions and experiences, the cognitive and affective consequences of viewing, and in turn, the desire to reconsume. I focus on one key dimension of such complexity: whether each episode has a distinct storyline, or whether the storyline spans multiple episodes. For example, sitcoms tend to have single episodes with distinct storylines, rather than overarching stories; these genres are less complex because the narrative is completed in one episode. On the other hand, dramas tend to have storylines that span multiple episodes; these genres are more complex. Each episode typically includes cues that need to be stored in memory and retrieved as the consumer progresses in the narrative (Newman, 2006). From a cognitive perspective, then, consuming TV show dramas requires more engagement with the plotline to fully comprehend the storyline (P2). From an affective perspective, due to the suspense and uncertainty between episodes, there might be a stronger affective response (P1).

Complex Genres with Overarching Stories: These genres (e.g., drama) build suspense and keep viewers guessing about future plot developments, heightening anticipation and affective and cognitive engagement during binge-watching. Heightened affective engagement (P1) with such TV shows often means heightened potentially negative affect as they often have more somber storylines. The overall intense affective engagement may lead to a decreased desire to reconsume, moderating P1.

Simple and Formulaic Genres with Self-contained Episodes: Sitcoms typically resolve their storylines within a single episode. Comedic moments and character-driven plots can create a steady but potentially lower level of anticipation, resulting in a consistent yet possibly less intense desire to reconsume, moderating the mediating effect of anticipation (P3).

Conclusion

Drawing from three bodies of research—content consumption, binge and non-binge content consumption format, and reconsumption—I examine the relationship between content consumption format and reconsumption. In the conceptual framework of this research, I have identified four possible pathways through which content consumption format may or may not lead to reconsumption. Based on the theoretical foundation, I have included some moderators, specifically about the other determinants of reconsumption (i.e., content and consumer).

CHAPTER 4: EXPERIMENTS

In this chapter, I detail the procedures, measures, and results of a screening study and five experiments, all testing the effect of binge versus non-binge content consumption format on the desire to reconsume, as well as on related behaviours (e.g., watching spin-offs).

First, I provide an overview of the four screening surveys I used to select participants for inclusion in the experiments. Then, I describe five experiments which simulated a TV show viewing experience. For these experiments, I developed an experimental paradigm to manipulate content consumption format (binge vs. non-binge). In this paradigm, participants either watch 4-5 mini-episodes (2-3 minutes long) of a TV show in a single session (binge), or watch one episode at a time across several days (non-binge).

Experiment 1 examines the basic effect of content consumption format on reconsumption and several related behaviours (e.g., subscribing to the platform, watching a spin-off) and provides evidence that non-binge content consumption leads to an increased desire to reconsume. In Experiment 2, I focus on two possible pathways that might underlie reconsumption: anticipation (P3) and engagement (P1). I also incorporate open-ended questions and text analysis to capture the reasons behind reconsumption decisions. Experiment 2 uncovers some evidence for anticipation and enjoyment as mediators that explain the differences in reconsumption across binge and non-binge formats (P3). In Experiment 3, I provide further evidence for the main effect of content consumption format on the desire to reconsume and examine the roles of anticipation and enjoyment (P3), as well as closure (P4), as mediating mechanisms. In Experiment 4, I again explore the basic effect of content consumption format on desire to reconsume and investigate whether the

effect is mediated by affective engagement and enjoyment (P1), closure (P2), or anticipation and enjoyment (P3) by examining the connectedness of episode storylines. This experiment provides further evidence for anticipation and enjoyment as underlying processes (P3) and rules out the roles of affective engagement and cognitive engagement (P1, P2). In Experiment 5, I examine whether genre moderates the effect of content consumption format on desire to reconsume and provide further evidence for anticipation and enjoyment (P3) as the mediating mechanism. To manipulate genre, participants watch mini-episodes of the same TV show, but the episode storylines are designed to represent a comedy or a drama.

Across experiments, I aimed for 100 participants per cell. However, given the longitudinal design in the non-binge condition, in some experiments there was attrition in terms of participant return rate, leading to fewer participants per cell. Table 1 outlines the schematic of the two conditions used for the experimental paradigm in this research.

Table 1. Timeline of Experiments by Content Consumption Format.

Day	Binge Condition	Non-Binge Condition
1	<p>Watch mini-episodes 1-4 back-to-back.</p> <p>Answer <i>post-episode</i> measures after each episode, if relevant.</p> <p>Answer <i>post-viewing</i> measures after completing all 4 episodes, if relevant.</p>	<p>Watch episode 1 and answer <i>post-episode</i> measures, if relevant.</p>
2	<p>Return to answer <i>post-viewing</i> measures again, in some experiments.</p>	<p>Watch episode 2 and answer <i>post-episode</i> measures, if relevant.</p>
3		<p>Watch episode 3 and answer <i>post-episode</i> measures, if relevant.</p>
4		<p>Watch episode 4 and answer <i>post-episode</i> measures, if relevant.</p>
5		<p>Return to answer <i>post-viewing</i> measures again, in some experiments.</p>

PRE-SCREENING SURVEY

I used screening surveys throughout this dissertation. In these four identical surveys, conducted prior to the experiments, participants indicated which TV shows they had watched out of a list of popular TV shows, and responded to some individual difference measures and demographic questions.

The screening was used to ensure that participants in the primary experiments had not watched the TV show used in that particular experiment; thus, only those who had not watched a particular show were invited to participate in the experiments.

Method

During the pre-screening survey, participants completed the following items: a trait reconsumption scale, questions about their content consumption tendencies (e.g., propensity to binge, need for closure, being a fan of sitcoms), whether they had watched different TV shows, and demographic measures (gender, age).

The trait reconsumption measure was adopted from a developed scale (Zemack-Rugar & Moore, 2019). There were three sets of questions, and all items were measured on a 7-point scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 7 = Strongly Agree). The first set of questions assessed general attitudes toward reconsumption: Reconsuming an experience is boring; Reconsuming an item is not engaging for me; If I watch a movie more than once, I become bored. The second and third sets of questions assessed reasons for reconsuming. The second set captured past-focused reasons for reconsuming: It reminds me of certain people or places that I like; It gives me fond memories of the past and allows me to relive them; I like to feel the way I did when I previously consumed the item; I want to share it with others who have not experienced it before. The third set captured future-focused reasons for reconsuming: It helps me move on with my life and let go of the past; It helps me learn something new about myself every time; It helps me better understand who I am; It provides me with hope for the future.

Participants also responded to some content-related measures on 6-point scales (1 = Not at all, 6 = Very much). These included a measure of fandom: “How much do you enjoy watching sitcoms (comedy TV shows with 20-minute episodes)?”; a measure of propensity to binge: “How likely are you to binge-watch TV shows (watch different episodes back to back)?”; and a measure of need for closure: “How strongly do you feel like you need to finish TV shows when you start them?”.

Then, depending on the screening survey, participants viewed a list of 2-5 popular TV shows (Suits, Brooklyn 99, The Big Bang Theory, The Bear, and Sherlock) and indicated which they had watched. I compiled the list of TV shows from the secondary data and some lists of highly recommended TV shows, selecting the shows whose clips could be found on YouTube. Across studies I used Brooklyn 99 and Suits as the stimuli because I was able to create a mini- season comprising mini-episodes from available videos on YouTube.

Results

Table 2 summarizes the results of the screening studies. These studies were run whenever there was a need for more participants and the only inclusion criterion was the absence of viewing of the TV shows of interest prior to the experiments. This was done in an attempt to ensure that the reconsumption desire measured was accurate.

Table 2. Screening Studies Statistics.

Screening Survey	Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Survey 1 N = 1409 48.59% Female 47.00% Male 1.52% Self-identified	Age	40.52	12.70
	Attitude to Reconsumption	2.77	1.49
	Future-oriented Reconsumption	3.76	1.49
	Past-oriented Reconsumption	5.47	1.05
	Being a Fan of Sitcoms	4.40	1.45
	Need for Closure	4.58	1.37
	Propensity to Binge	4.84	1.34
Survey 2 N = 935 48.08% Female 44.23% Male 7.69% Self-identified	Age	37.24	12.22
	Attitude to Reconsumption	2.76	1.43
	Future-oriented Reconsumption	3.69	1.38
	Past-oriented Reconsumption	5.53	0.99
	Being a Fan of Sitcoms	4.39	1.45
	Need for Closure	4.54	1.32
	Propensity to Binge	4.96	1.25
Survey 3 N = 2003 50.72% Female 43.79% Male 5.49% Self-identified	Age	37.39	12.20
	Attitude to Reconsumption	2.83	1.49
	Future-oriented Reconsumption	3.67	1.44
	Past-oriented Reconsumption	5.45	1.07
	Being a Fan of Sitcoms	4.47	1.40
	Need for Closure	4.53	1.36
	Propensity to Binge	4.89	1.27
Survey 4 N = 1006 52% Female 43.43% Male 4.57% Self-identified	Age	36.89	12.62
	Attitude to Reconsumption	2.80	1.49
	Future-oriented Reconsumption	3.77	1.37
	Past-oriented Reconsumption	5.47	1.11
	Being a Fan of Sitcoms	4.89	1.19
	Need for Closure	4.53	1.38
	Propensity to Binge	4.89	1.31

This screening served as a study to get an initial understanding of consumers' reconsumption inclinations and to ensure that the content consumption in the upcoming experiments was indeed the first instance of consumption and not reconsumption.

EXPERIMENT 1

In this experiment, I develop a paradigm that effectively manipulates both binge-watching and not binge-watching, to test the basic effect of content consumption format on reconsumption intentions. Participants watch four mini-episodes of a TV show (Suits), either all in one viewing session (binge format) or spread out with a break between every episode (non-binge format), watching one episode per day.

In addition to the key dependent variable of reconsumption, Experiment 1 assesses other outcomes that might vary by content consumption format. Specifically, I measure content-related outcomes, such as how likely participants would be to binge the content again; platform-related outcomes, such as whether participants would subscribe to the platform; and social outcomes, such as the desire to consume content other users generate and word-of-mouth intentions.

Participants

Pre-screened participants who had not watched Suits were invited to participate. Two hundred participants (Mage = 39.13, SD = 12.63; 54.23% female, 42.79% male, 2.98% self-identified) were recruited.

Methods

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two content consumption formats: binge and non-binge. In both conditions, participants watched 4 mini-episodes of the TV show Suits. Each episode was approximately 2 minutes in length. The 4 episodes told a

brief story about drama at a legal firm. Across conditions, participants were assigned to consume the content in different ways. In the binge condition, participants watched the 4 mini-episodes back-to-back in a single session. After completing all 4 mini-episodes, they reported on the dependent variables. In the non-binge condition, participants watched the 4 mini-episodes in separate sessions over 4 consecutive days; they reported on the dependent variables on the fourth day after completing all 4 mini-episodes.

After the participants had finished watching the last of the four episodes, they completed the dependent variables: desire to reconsume, as well as content-related, platform-related, and social outcomes. For desire to reconsume, participants answered the following question: “Imagine you had access to these mini-episodes through a streaming service. How likely would you be to watch them again?” (1 = not at all likely; 6 = very likely).

Next, for content-related outcomes, they responded to a question about how they would rewatch (rewatching format): “If you watch these mini-episodes again, how would you watch them?” (One episode at a time, Binge a few episodes at a time, Binge the full show at once).

Participants were also informed that they might be invited to complete a similar experiment in the future, and were asked whether they would prefer to watch the same show or a different one if they participated: “In this future experiment, would you prefer to watch the rest of the same TV show or a different one?” (1 = I prefer to watch the rest of the same TV show, 6 = I prefer to watch a different TV show). They also reported on their desire to watch spin-offs: “How interested are you in watching other content that is related to these mini-episodes? This might include other mini-episodes, other seasons of the show,

spin-offs, sequels, or prequels.” (1 = Not at all interested, 6 = Very interested).

As a measure of a platform-related outcome, participants indicated their desire to subscribe to the platform: “How interested are you in subscribing to the platform that releases these mini-episodes?” (1 = Not at all interested, 6 = Very interested).

Participants next responded to some questions about social outcomes, in terms of both creating and consuming other relevant content. They were asked how likely they were to: “Talk to someone about these mini-episodes” to measure their desire to engage in social behaviour, and about their desire to “Watch or listen to some relevant content about these mini-episodes” to examine their consumption of other user-generated content (1 = Not likely at all, 6 = Very likely).

Finally, participants answered a manipulation check question: “Think back to when you were watching the mini-episodes. To what extent did it feel like you were bingeing the mini- episodes?” (1 = Not at all, 6 = Very much).

Results

Manipulation Check. The manipulation check confirmed a significant difference ($F(1, 199) = 25.81, p < .001$) by content consumption format, such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 2.81, SD = 1.74$) perceived the experience to be further from a binge-watching experience than those in the binge condition ($M = 4.03, SD = 1.63$).

Reconsumption. An ANOVA indicated that content consumption format (binge vs. not binge) had a significant effect on reconsumption ($F(1,199) = 7.74, p < .01$). Those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.95, SD = 1.79$) indicated a significantly higher desire to reconsume the previously viewed content, compared to those in the binge condition ($M = 3.25, SD = 1.79$).

Additional Outcomes. Content-related Outcomes. First, for rewatching format, there was no statistically significant association between content consumption format (binge vs. non-binge) and the participant's preference for how to reconsume the content (e.g., binge a few episodes at a time vs. binge the full show at once). Interestingly, no respondents expressed interest in rewatching the show one episode at a time. All opted for either watching a few episodes at once or for watching the full show at once. Specifically, 77% of binge condition respondents and 63% of non-binge condition respondents preferred to binge a few episodes at a time, while 41% of binge condition respondents and 20% of non-binge condition respondents preferred to binge the full show at once. A chi-squared test ($X^2 = 2.61$, $p = .11$) confirmed that these differences were not statistically significant.

Second, an ANOVA indicated that content consumption format (binge vs. not binge) had a significant effect on the desire to watch a spin-off ($F(1,199) = 4.37$, $p < .05$). Those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.02$, $SD = 1.59$) indicated a higher desire to watch a spin-off, compared to those in the binge condition ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.69$).

Finally, content consumption format (binge vs. not binge) did not have a significant effect on preference to watch a different TV show or the rest of the same TV show in a future study ($F(1,199) = 2.02$, $p = .16$; $M_{\text{non-binge}} = 3.23$, $SD = 1.97$; $M_{\text{binge}} = 3.63$, $SD = 2.05$).

Platform-related Outcomes. Content consumption format (binge vs. not binge) had a marginally significant effect on the desire to subscribe to the platform ($F(1,199) = 3.41$, $p = .07$). Those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.65$) indicated a significantly higher desire to subscribe to the platform, compared to those in the binge condition ($M = 2.90$, $SD = 1.64$).

Social Outcomes. Content consumption format (binge vs. not binge) had a significant effect on the desire to talk to others about the show ($F(1,199) = 5.04, p < .05$), with those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.57, SD = 1.69$) indicating a significantly higher desire to talk to others, compared to those in the binge condition ($M = 3.02, SD = 1.78$).

Content consumption format (binge vs. not binge) also had a significant effect on the desire to watch or listen to other relevant content ($F(1,199) = 7.57, p < .01$), with those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.65, SD = 1.69$) indicating a significantly higher desire to watch or listen to other relevant content, relative to those in the binge condition ($M = 2.98, SD = 1.76$).

Individual Factors Moderation. Using the answers participants provided in the screening survey, I ran a PROCESS moderation model (Hayes, 2013; Model 1) to test whether several factors moderated the relationship between content consumption format (binge vs. non-binge) and desire to reconsume. Specifically, I tested: attitude toward reconsumption, future-oriented reconsumption, past-oriented reconsumption, fandom, bingeing tendencies, and need for closure.

Attitude toward Reconsumption. The overall model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.04, F(3, 197) = 2.59, p = 0.05$). However, the interaction term between content consumption format and attitude toward reconsumption did not significantly predict desire to reconsume ($t = -0.33, p = .74$), indicating that attitude is not a significant moderator ($\Delta R^2 = 0.00, F(1, 197) = 0.04, p = 0.84$).

Future-oriented Reconsumption. The overall model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.09, F(3, 197) = 6.84, p < .001$), but the interaction term was not significant ($t = 0.79, p$

= .07), indicating that future orientation does not moderate the relationship ($\Delta R^2 = 0.00$, $F(1, 197) = 0.63$, $p = .43$).

Past-oriented Reconsumption. The overall model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.24$, $F(3, 197) = 4.05$, $p < .01$), but the interaction term was not ($t = 1.46$, $p = .15$), indicating that past orientation does not moderate the relationship ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $F(1, 197) = 2.13$, $p = .15$).

Fandom. The overall model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.09$, $F(3, 197) = 6.37$, $p < .001$), but the interaction term was not ($t = 1.22$, $p = .65$), indicating that fandom does not significantly moderate the relationship ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $F(1, 197) = 1.49$, $p = .22$).

Binge Tendency. The overall model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.06$, $F(3, 197) = 4.02$, $p < .01$), but the interaction term was not ($t = 0.33$, $p = .74$), indicating that binge tendency does not significantly moderate the relationship ($\Delta R^2 = 0.00$, $F(1, 197) = 0.11$, $p = .74$).

Need for Closure. The overall model was statistically significant ($R^2 = 0.07$, $F(3, 197) = 4.92$, $p < .01$), but the interaction was not ($t = 1.26$, $p = .21$), indicating that need for closure does not significantly moderate the relationship ($\Delta R^2 = 0.01$, $F(1, 197) = 1.58$, $p = .21$).

Discussion

This experiment effectively manipulated content consumption format (binge vs. non-binge) and tested the effects of content consumption format on reconsumption. The results indicated that participants who did not binge-watch had a significantly higher desire to reconsume content compared to those who binge-watched, providing preliminary evidence for the proposition that a non-binge content consumption format can increase

propensity to reconsume. This experiment also demonstrated that non-binge (vs. binge) content consumption has a similarly positive effect on other subsequent behaviours, in terms of future content consumption (e.g., spin-offs), platforms (e.g., desire to subscribe), and social behaviour (e.g., greater desire to talk to others). The desire to converse with others and consume relevant content in the non-binge content condition could mean that the consumer ultimately spends more time engaging cognitively with the content when they consume it in this format. Interestingly, in this experiment, all participants indicated they would watch more than one episode at a time if they chose to reconsume, which speaks to the prevalence of the binge content consumption format. Finally, the individual differences assessed in the screening survey did not moderate the effect of content consumption format on the desire to reconsume.

In the next experiment, I start delving into the mechanisms underlying this effect. In Experiment 2, I examine cognitive engagement and anticipation in an attempt to tap into the cognitive and affective underpinnings of the effect.

EXPERIMENT 2

The aim of this experiment was twofold: to replicate the main effect of content consumption format (binge-watching vs. not) on reconsumption and to provide an initial test of some of the proposed underlying mechanisms. As proposed in the conceptual development, I measured anticipation (P3) as well as cognitive engagement (P2) to examine whether these two potential pathways might underlie the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption. At the end of the experiment, I also aimed to explore some other pathways. I asked participants to indicate whether their desire to reconsume was driven by affective engagement (P1) or cognitive engagement (P2). Thus,

this experiment tested three pathways through which content consumption format determines reconsumption through anticipation and cognitive engagement.

Further, I asked participants to use a text box to describe the reasons behind their reconsumption decision in order to examine underlying reasons for reconsuming using text analysis. I analyze these responses using two different methods: asking participants to self-code their responses and using the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count program (LIWC; Pennebaker et al. 2007) to examine the prevalence of certain word categories in participants' answers. Specifically, I examine the following LIWC dictionaries: want, cognitive processes, affect, and temporal focus. Want (e.g., "want", "hope", "wanted", "wish") is used as a proxy for anticipation, as anticipation is the process of preparing for the experience. Affect (e.g., "good", "well", "love") and cognitive engagement (e.g., "know", "or", "but") are used as proxies to examine the affective and cognitive engagement with the content consumption format and the determinants of reconsumption. Temporal focus (past: "was", "had"; present: "is", "are"; future: "will", "going to") is used as a proxy for reflective and reconstructive reasons for reconsumption. The rationale is that reflective reconsumption is usually past-oriented and done in an attempt to revisit an experience, while reconstructive reconsumption is usually future-oriented and done in an attempt to deepen the experience (Russell & Levy, 2012).

Participants

All participants from the pre-screen who had not watched *Suits* were invited to participate. Two hundred and three participants ($M_{age} = 36.86$, $SD = 11.56$; 48.53% female, 49.02% male, 2.45% self-identified) were recruited.

Methods

Participants were randomly assigned to one of two content consumption conditions: binge and non-binge. In both conditions, participants watched four mini-episodes of the TV show *Suits*; each episode was approximately two minutes in length. The four episodes told a brief story about drama at a legal firm. Across conditions, participants were assigned to consume the content in different ways, following the same design as Experiment 1 with a few minor differences.

In the binge condition, participants watched the four mini-episodes back-to-back in a single session. In this experiment, they completed post-episode measures immediately after each episode, and post-viewing measures after completing all four mini-episodes. In the non-binge condition, participants watched the four mini-episodes in separate sessions over 4 consecutive days; they completed post-episode measures after each episode, and post-viewing measures on the fourth day after completing all four mini-episodes. Once the episodes ended, participants returned the next day to respond again to the post-viewing dependent measures. All participants were invited to return, but only 123 did so.

Post-episode measures. After watching each mini-episode, on 6-point scales (1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree) participants indicated their anticipation of the next episode (“I am looking forward to watching the next mini-episode”), as well as their engagement with the episode (“I was mentally involved in the story during the mini-episode”).

Post-viewing measures. After watching all four mini-episodes, participants answered several additional questions. These included our key dependent measure of reconsumption, an exploratory open-ended question about reasons for reconsuming, and

several related dependent measures of content- and platform-related outcomes.

First, participants reported on their desire to reconsume: “Imagine you had access to these mini-episodes through a streaming service. How likely would you be to watch them again?” (1 = Not at all likely; 6 = Very likely). Following the reconsumption measure, in a text box, participants were asked to describe why they would or would not engage in reconsumption: “You indicated that it is [not at all likely/very likely/etc.] that you will rewatch these mini- episodes. Can you use the box below to explain why you would or would not rewatch these mini- episodes?”

Next, participants responded to some questions about content-related outcomes, including the rewatching format: “If you watch these mini-episodes again, how would you watch them?” (One episode at a time, Binge a few episodes at a time, Binge the full show at once) and how attentively they would rewatch: “How attentive would you be while rewatching?” (1 = Not attentive at all, 6 = Very attentive). Participants were also informed that they might be invited to complete a similar experiment in the future, and were asked whether they would prefer to watch the same show or a different one if they participated (preference for the rest of the TV show): “In this future experiment, would you prefer to watch the rest of the same TV show or a different one?” (1 = I prefer to watch the rest of the same TV show, 6 = I prefer to watch a different TV show). They then reported on their desire to watch spin-offs: “How interested are you in watching other content that is related to these mini-episodes? This might include other mini- episodes, other seasons of the show, spin-offs, sequels, or prequels.” (1 = Not at all interested, 6 = Very interested). Participants also reported on enjoyment “How much did you enjoy the mini- episodes?” (1 = Not at all ; 6 = Very much).

Participants completed a measure of platform-related outcomes by indicating their desire to subscribe to the platform (platform subscription): “How interested are you in subscribing to the platform that releases these mini-episodes?” (1 = Not at all interested, 6 = Very interested).

The experiment ended with a manipulation check: “Think back to when you were watching the mini-episodes. To what extent did it feel like you were bingeing the mini-episodes?” (1 = Not at all, 6 = Very much).

After these measures, participants were asked to review their response to the previous open-ended text box question, and to code whether or not specific themes appeared in their response (yes/no). The themes are outlined in Table 3.

Table 3. Coding Themes.

Please indicate whether you mentioned any of the following reasons for rewatching or not rewatching the mini-episodes:
<p>The emotions you experienced while watching the mini-episodes.</p> <p>The thoughts you had while watching the mini-episodes.</p> <p>Wanting to experience the mini-episodes again to feel just like you did the first time. Anticipating the next mini-episode.</p> <p>Reasons related to the characters.</p> <p>Wanting to experience the mini-episodes again to understand them better.</p> <p>Thinking about the story and characters between watching the mini-episodes.</p> <p>Reasons related to the plot or story.</p> <p>Other (please specify):</p>

Last, participants indicated to what degree cognitive and affective factors might have impacted their re-watching, also on 6-point scales (1 = Not at all, 6 = Very). The cognitive factors measure read, “Overall, to what extent would rewatching be because of the thoughts and cognitions you had while watching the mini-episodes?”, while the affective factors measure read “Overall, to what extent would rewatching be because of the feelings and emotions you felt while watching the mini-episodes?”.

One day after completing the post-viewing measures, participants in both content consumption conditions were invited to return and to respond again to all dependent measures, using the same questions and scales .

Results

Manipulation Check. The manipulation check confirmed a significant difference ($F(1, 202) = 28.88, p < .001$) between content consumption conditions, such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 2.94, SD = 1.74$) perceived the experience to be further from a binge-watching experience than those in the binge condition ($M = 4.19, SD = 1.56$).

Reconsumption. An ANOVA indicated that content consumption (binge vs. not binge) had a significant effect on reconsumption ($F(1, 202) = 7.51, p < .01$). As in Experiment 1, those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.13, SD = 1.73$) had a significantly higher desire to reconsume the viewed content, compared to those in the binge condition ($M = 3.43, SD = 1.93$).

Follow-up Reconsumption. I conducted an ANOVA to assess the follow-up measure of reconsumption. This was collected one day after all participants had completed the mini- episodes, though not all participants returned. Content consumption had a marginally significant effect on this follow-up measure of desire to reconsume ($F(1, 123) = 3.42, p = .07$). Mirroring the results for the immediate post-watching measure of reconsumption, those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.92, SD = 1.59$) still indicated a significantly higher desire to reconsume the viewed content, compared to those in the binge condition ($M = 3.35, SD = 1.82$).

I next conducted a repeated measures ANOVA, with content consumption condition predicting the immediate and follow-up measures of desire to reconsume. The

condition had a significant effect on the repeated measure of reconsumption ($F(1,123) = 6.49, p < .05$) such that, regardless of measurement timing, those in the non-binge condition expressed a higher desire to reconsume ($M = 4.06, SD = 1.69$) than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.39, SD = 1.88$). There was no significant effect of measurement timing ($F(1,123) = 0.06, p = .80$), indicating that the two measures of reconsumption did not significantly change over time. However, there was significant interaction between time and condition ($F(1,123) = 4.57, p < .05$). This indicates that the impact of binge-watching (vs. not binge-watching) changes over time. A post-hoc analysis revealed that the only significant difference was between the immediate measures of reconsumption across conditions ($t = -3.07, p < .05$), as the analysis of the main effect indicated.

Text box language analysis

First, I analyzed participants' open-ended responses using Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), a dictionary-based word counting program (Pennebaker et al., 2007). For each open-ended response, LIWC reports the percentages of words that fall into multiple validated categories, such as personal pronouns (e.g., I, you) or cognitive processes (e.g., think, know).

An ANOVA was conducted to compare relevant LIWC categories between the binge and non-binge conditions. Specifically, based on my theorizing, I examined differences in want (as a proxy for anticipation), cognitive processes (as a proxy for cognitive engagement), emotion (as a proxy for emotional engagement), and temporal focus (past, present, future).

In the want category (e.g., “want”, “need”) there was a marginally significant difference across conditions ($F(1,202) = 3.83, p = .05$) such that the non-binge condition

($M = 1.18$, $SD = 2.40$) had a higher mean compared to the binge condition ($M = 0.62$, $SD = 1.62$). Cognitive process was significantly different ($F(1,202) = 5.01$, $p < .05$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 17.59$, $SD = 8.32$) reflected more on cognitive processes than those in the binge condition ($M = 15.12$, $SD = 74$). Emotion was not significantly different across conditions ($F(1,202) = 0.59$, $p = .44$), indicating that the non-binge ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 3.65$) and binge participants ($M = 2.22$, $SD = 3.44$) had a similar level of emotionality in their responses.

With regard to temporal orientation, there was a significant difference in focus on the past across conditions ($F(1,202) = 7.49$, $p < .01$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 4.85$) used more past-focused language than those in the binge condition ($M = 5.73$, $SD = 5.42$). There was no significant difference in focus on future ($F(1,202) = 0.1$, $p = .75$), with non-binge ($M = 0.89$, $SD = 2.23$) and binge ($M = 0.80$, $SD = 1.86$) both referring only slightly to the future. The focus on the present ($F(1,202) = 2.35$, $p = .13$) was similar and non-significant between binge ($M = 4.59$, $SD = 4.16$) and non-binge ($M = 5.50$, $SD = 4.32$). A paired sample t-test indicated a significant difference between past and future focus ($t(203) = 10.13$, $p < .001$) and future and present focus ($t(203) = 12.26$, $p < .001$) with language about both past ($M = 4.73$, $SD = 5.22$) and present ($M = 5.05$, $SD = 4.26$) being included more than about future ($M = 0.85$, $SD = 2.05$).

Second, I analyzed the self-coded themes. The only significant difference across conditions was “Wanting to experience the mini-episodes again to understand them better.” The analysis indicates that there was a significant association ($X^2 = 4.00$, $p < .05$) between the content consumption format (binge vs. non-binge) and the inclusion of this theme. Specifically, 72% of binge condition respondents and 61% of non-binge condition

respondents included this in their response, while 28% of binge condition respondents and 43% of non-binge condition respondents did not. That is, relative to those in the non-binge condition, a higher proportion of participants in the binge condition reported wanting to reconsume in order to understand the show better.

An ANOVA using this theme ("Wanting to experience the mini-episodes again to understand them better") to predict reconsumption showed a significant effect ($F(1,202) = 834.00, p < .001$) such that those who included this theme in their response ($M = 5.17, SD = 1.00$) indicated more desire to reconsume than those who did not include this theme in their text response ($M = 3.05, SD = 1.80$).

Measured Mediators

I next analyzed the proposed mediators, anticipation and cognitive engagement, which were (repeated) post-episode measures, as well as enjoyment, which was a post-viewing measure.

Anticipation. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in anticipation between conditions (binge vs. non-binge) and across episodes. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated ($p < .01$); therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity. There was a marginally significant main effect of condition ($F(1, 202) = 3.40, p = .07$). The results also indicated a significant main effect of episode ($F(3, 606) = 20.92, p < .001$) and the interaction effect between episode and condition was also significant ($F(3, 606) = 10.59, p < .001$). Nevertheless, a post-hoc analysis revealed that the significant differences were not between the same episode across the two conditions, which is the difference that is pertinent to my theorizing. Since the main effect of content consumption condition over

time is the most critical, I use an average of these repeated anticipation measures to test for mediation.

Average Anticipation. I calculated the average of the four post-episode measures of anticipation. There was a marginally significant effect of content consumption on anticipation ($F(1, 202) = 3.40, p = .07$) between the non-binge condition ($M = 4.57, SD = 1.47$) and the binge condition ($M = 4.21, SD = 1.47$).

Cognitive Engagement. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in cognitive engagement between conditions (binge vs. non-binge) and across episodes. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated ($p < .01$); therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity.

The main effect of condition was not significant ($F(1, 202) = 0.19, p = .66$). The results indicated a significant main effect of episode ($F(3, 606) = 4.48, p < .01$) and the interaction effect between episode and condition was significant ($F(3, 606) = 13.21, p < .001$). However, a post hoc analysis revealed that there were no significant differences in cognitive engagement by condition within each episode, which is most pertinent to the current research question; this suggests the detected effects reflect random variation across episodes, regardless of condition.

Average Cognitive Engagement. I calculated the average of the four post-episode measures of cognitive engagement. This measure was not significantly different ($F(1, 202) = 0.19, p = .66$) across the non-binge ($M = 4.86, SD = 1.20$) and binge ($M = 4.78, SD = 1.29$) conditions.

Enjoyment. Enjoyment was significantly different across the two content

consumption conditions ($F(1, 202) = 8.79, p < .01$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.81, SD = 1.41$) enjoyed the episodes more than those in the binge condition ($M = 4.16, SD = 1.69$).

Post-viewing Affective Engagement. The measure of whether participants would rewatch due to affective factors, captured at the end of the experiment, was not significantly different ($F(1,202) = 0.003, p = .95$) across the non-binge ($M = 3.67, SD = 1.70$) and binge ($M = 3.66, SD = 1.67$) conditions.

Post-viewing Cognitive Engagement. The measure of whether participants would rewatch due to cognitive factors, captured at the end of the experiment, was not significantly different ($F(1,202) = 1.95, p = .16$) across the non-binge ($M = 3.92, SD = 1.57$) and binge ($M = 3.61, SD = 1.63$) conditions.

Mediation Analysis. A serial mediation analysis (PROCESS, model 6; Hayes, 2013; CI: 95%) with 5,000 resamples tested whether the average anticipation and enjoyment participants experienced explained the effect of content consumption format (binge-watching vs. not binge-watching) on the desire to reconsume. Content consumption format was entered as the independent variable (binge-watching = 0, not binge-watching = 1), average anticipation and enjoyment were entered as serial mediators, and desire to reconsume was entered as the dependent variable.

The results indicated that content consumption format had a marginally significant effect on average anticipation ($\beta = 0.35, 95\% \text{ CI: } -0.03 \text{ to } 0.74$) and a significant effect on enjoyment ($\beta = 0.31, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.10 \text{ to } 0.52$). Anticipation also significantly predicted enjoyment ($\beta = 0.98, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.91 \text{ to } 1.06$).

The indirect effect of condition on reconsumption was significant through

enjoyment ($\beta = 0.14$, 95% CI: 0.04 to 0.28) and there was no significant direct effect ($\beta = 0.19$, 95% CI: -0.10 to 0.48). The indirect effect through anticipation ($\beta = 0.21$, 95% CI: -0.02 to 0.47) and the serial mediation of anticipation and enjoyment ($\beta = 0.16$, 95% CI: -0.01 to 0.36) were not significant.

I repeated the analysis with a 90% confidence interval and it revealed that the three paths, anticipation ($\beta = 0.21$, 90% CI: 0.02 to 0.42), enjoyment ($\beta = 0.14$, 90% CI: 0.05 to 0.26), and the serial mediation of anticipation and enjoyment ($\beta = 0.16$, 90% CI: 0.01 to 0.32), significantly mediated the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption.

Additional Outcomes

Content-related Outcomes. First, for rewatching format, there was no statistically significant association between content consumption format (binge vs. non-binge) and participants' preference for how to reconsume the content (e.g., binge a few episodes at a time vs. binge the full show at once). Interestingly, no respondents expressed interest in rewatching the show one episode at a time. All opted for either watching a few episodes at once or watching the full show at once. Specifically, 72% of binge condition respondents and 69% of non-binge condition respondents preferred to binge a few episodes at a time, while 28% of binge condition respondents and 35% of non-binge condition respondents preferred to binge the full show at once. A chi-squared test ($X^2 = 0.76$, $p = 0.38$) confirmed that these differences were not statistically significant. Similarly, there was no significant difference in predicted attentiveness upon reconsumption ($F(1,202) = 2.88$, $p = .09$).

However, the desire to watch a spin-off was significantly different across conditions ($F(1,202) = 13.54$, $p < .001$): those in the non-binge condition indicated greater interest in watching a spin-off ($M = 4.41$, $SD = 1.49$) than those in the binge condition (M

= 3.56, SD = 1.81). Participants' preference for viewing the rest of the TV show relative to a new TV show in a future study was not significantly different ($F(1,202) = 0.07, p = .80$) across non-binge ($M = 3.70, SD = 1.78$) and binge ($M = 3.77, SD = 2.01$) conditions.

Platform-related Outcomes. The desire to subscribe to the platform was not significantly different ($F(1,202) = 1.48, p = .23$) across the non-binge ($M = 3.56, SD = 1.64$) and binge ($M = 3.27, SD = 1.74$) conditions.

Discussion

This experiment again successfully manipulated binge-watching within the constraints of an experimental paradigm and replicated the results of the first experiment: a non-binge content consumption format increases the desire to reconsume. In this experiment, I also probed into the reasons for desire to reconsume using a text protocol. Those in the non-binge condition reflected more on wants, indicating higher anticipation; on cognitive processes, indicating cognitive engagement; and on past focus, indicating reflective reconsumption motives. The self-coded analysis of the desire to understand the mini-episodes better also suggested that cognitive engagement might be a determinant of reconsumption. However, the direct measure of cognitive processing did not reveal a significant difference between the conditions in terms of engagement, affective engagement, and cognitive processing, leaving room for further exploration in the upcoming experiments.

This experiment found differences in anticipation and enjoyment by content consumption format, and enjoyment mediated the effect of format on reconsumption. Specifically, those in the non-binge (vs. binge) condition reported greater enjoyment, which ultimately increased their desire to reconsume. These results indicate that the desire

to reconsume is partly due to enhanced hedonic experience in non-binge consumption. This experiment also provided further evidence on other downstream consequences of content consumption format. Those who viewed the episodes in a non-binge manner were more interested in watching a spin-off. The next experiment probes further into the underlying mechanisms of non-binge content consumption: anticipation and closure.

EXPERIMENT 3

The aim of this experiment is to provide further evidence of the main effect of content consumption format on the desire to reconsume. A different TV show was used to ensure generalizability. In this experiment, the two propositions pertaining to the mediating processes, anticipation (P3) and closure (P4), are examined. These propositions suggest that non-binge watching might increase anticipation (P3) and decrease closure (P4) and as a result increase the desire to reconsume.

Participants

I recruited 147 participants ($M_{age} = 42.5$, $SD = 13.45$; 46.93% female, 48.30% male, and 4.76% self-described) from Connect research. All the participants from one of the pre-screen studies who had not watched Brooklyn 99 were invited to participate. The data from participants who had not missed some of the stages was removed, leaving a final sample size of 139.

Methods

In this experiment, participants watched five episodes in one session (binge condition) or over five consecutive days (non-binge condition). After every episode, participants completed two post-episode measures. They were asked to indicate their level of closure (“Having watched this mini-episode, I feel like I have closure on this story”) as

well as their anticipation to watch the next episode (“I am interested to watch the next mini-episode”), both on 6-point scales (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree). After they finished watching the episodes, participants completed post-viewing measures.

First, they were asked about their desire to reconsume: “Imagine you had access to these mini- episodes through a streaming service. How likely would you be to watch them again?” on a 6- point scale (1 = Not Likely at All, 6 = Very Likely). They also completed post-viewing measures of closure: “Having watched these mini-episodes, I feel like I have closure on this story” (1 = strongly disagree, 6 = strongly agree) and enjoyment: “How much did you enjoy the mini- episodes?” (1 = did not enjoy at all, 6 = enjoyed very much).

Finally, participants were asked some outcome questions from previous experiments: preference for watching the same or a different TV show in a future study, subscribing to platform, and consuming and creating other relevant content. Participants were also asked some memory questions about the details of the episodes, but since these memory measures are not directly relevant to my theorizing, I do not analyze or discuss them further.

Results

Manipulation Check. The manipulation check showed a significant difference between conditions ($F(1, 137) = 15.25, p < .001$), such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.79$) perceived the experience to be significantly further from a binge-watching experience than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.94, SD = 1.60$).

Reconsumption. There was a significant effect of content consumption (binge vs. non-binge) on the desire to reconsume the mini-episodes ($F(1, 137) = 14.64, p < .001$). Those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.24, SD = 1.67$) reported a significantly higher

desire to rewatch the content than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.87$).

Mediators

Post-episode Anticipation. A repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in post-episode anticipation of the next episode between conditions (binge vs. non-binge) and across episodes. Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated ($p < .01$); therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity.

The results indicated a significant main effect of episode ($F(4, 548) = 73.72$, $p < .001$). The main effect of condition was also significant ($F(1, 137) = 4.63$, $p < .05$), as was the interaction effect between episode and condition ($F(4, 548) = 104.26$, $p < .001$). As in Experiment 2, the observed differences across episodes were not of theoretical interest so the measures were combined.

Average Anticipation. I calculated the average of the five post-episode measures of anticipation. There was a significant effect of content consumption (binge vs. non-binge) on average anticipation ($F(1,137) = 4.63$, $p < .05$). Participants in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.33$, $SD = 0.78$) reported more anticipation than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.85$, $SD = 1.67$).

Post-episode Closure. A repeated-measures ANOVA was conducted to examine differences in post-episode closure across episodes and between conditions (binge vs. non-binge). Mauchly's test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated ($p < .01$); therefore, degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse-Geisser estimates of sphericity.

The results indicated a significant main effect of condition ($F(1, 137) = 9.234$, p

<.01) such that the binge condition was generally higher on closure ($M_{\text{difference}} = 0.48$, $t = 3.04$, $p < .01$). The main effect of episode was also significant ($F(4, 548) = 180.94$, $p < .001$), as was the interaction effect between episode and condition ($F(4, 548) = 3.29$, $p < .05$). As above, since the observed differences across episodes were not of theoretical interest, the measures were combined.

Average Closure. I calculated the average of the five post-episode measures of closure. Content consumption (binge vs. non-binge) had a significant effect on average closure ($F(1,137) = 9.23$, $p < .01$). Those in the non-binge condition ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 0.85$) reported less closure than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.99$).

Post-viewing Enjoyment. The enjoyment measure, a post-viewing measure, was significantly different across the two content consumption conditions ($F(1,137) = 14.87$, $p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 5.19$, $SD = 1.25$) enjoyed the episodes more than those in the binge condition ($M = 4.24$, $SD = 1.64$).

Post-viewing Closure. The post-viewing measure of closure was not significantly different ($F(1,137) = 0.004$, $p = .95$) between the non-binge ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 1.31$) and binge ($M = 4.99$, $SD = 1.19$) conditions.

Discriminant Validity. I have theorized that post-episode anticipation, post-episode closure, and post-viewing enjoyment might mediate the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption. To ensure that these mediators are empirically differentiable, I ran a correlation analysis followed by a factor analysis on all three.

The results indicated a significant but weak correlation between anticipation and closure ($r = -0.18$, $p < .05$ / $p = .03$), suggesting that these two constructs are differentiable empirically. Similarly, there was a nonsignificant correlation between enjoyment and

closure ($r = -0.9$, $p = .28$). However, there was a significant and strong correlation between enjoyment and anticipation ($r = 0.87$, $p < .01$). The exploratory factor analysis suggests that these two variables factor together ($\chi^2(0) = 0.00$, $p = N/A$) with identical factor loadings (0.93). Despite this correlation, I argue that these constructs are theoretically distinct, and the correlation reflects their hypothesized relationship. Further, the constructs were measured quite differently: anticipation was measured after each episode, while enjoyment was a single post-viewing measure that was temporally separated from the anticipation measures.

Mediation Analysis

Anticipation and Enjoyment. I conducted a serial mediation analysis (PROCESS model 6; Hayes, 2013) with 5,000 resamples to test whether the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption is serially mediated through anticipation and enjoyment.

Results indicated that not binge-watching, compared to binge-watching (binge-watching = 0, not binge-watching = 1), increased average anticipation ($\beta = 0.48$, 95% CI: 0.04 to 0.92). Content consumption format ($\beta = 0.49$, 95% CI: 0.24 to 0.74) and anticipation ($\beta = 0.96$, 95% CI: 0.87 to 1.06) increased enjoyment.

The indirect effect of content consumption format on the desire to reconsume was significant through anticipation ($\beta = 0.33$, 95% CI: 0.04 to 0.70) and enjoyment ($\beta = 0.15$, 95% CI: 0.00 to 0.34), but the serial mediation effect was only marginally significant ($\beta = 0.15$, 95% CI: -0.01 to 0.37; significant at 93% CI: 0.00 to 0.34). The total indirect effect was significant and positive ($\beta = 0.63$, 95% CI: 0.19 to 1.06). The direct effect remained significant ($\beta = 0.52$, 95% CI: 0.09 to 0.95).

Anticipation and Closure. I conducted a mediation model to examine anticipation and closure as parallel mechanisms. A parallel mediation analysis (PROCESS, model 4; Hayes, 2013) with 5,000 resamples tested whether average closure and average anticipation explained the effect of content consumption format (binge-watching = 0, not binge-watching = 1) on the desire to reconsume.

Results indicated that not binge-watching increased average anticipation ($\beta = 0.48$, 95% CI: 0.04 to 0.92) and decreased closure ($\beta = -0.43$, 95% CI: -0.74 to -0.11). The total direct effect of not binge-watching on reconsumption was significant ($\beta = 0.78$, 95% CI: 0.36 to 1.20). The indirect effect of condition on reconsumption was significantly mediated via the parallel pathways of anticipation ($\beta = 0.49$, 95% CI: 0.05 to 0.90) but not closure ($\beta = -0.10$, 95% CI: -0.25 to -0.01). The total indirect effect was not significant ($\beta = 0.37$, 95% CI: -0.07 to 0.79).

Anticipation, Closure, and Enjoyment. A serial mediation analysis (PROCESS, model 6; Hayes, 2013) with 5,000 resamples tested whether average closure, average anticipation, and enjoyment explained the effect of content consumption format (binge vs. non-binge) on the desire to reconsume. Results indicated that not binge-watching (binge-watching = 0, not binge-watching = 1) increased average anticipation ($\beta = 0.48$, 95% CI: 0.04 to 0.92) and decreased closure ($\beta = -0.43$, 95% CI: -0.74 to -0.11). Content consumption format ($\beta = 0.56$, 95% CI: 0.31 to 0.81), average anticipation ($\beta = 0.98$, 95% CI: 0.89 to 1.07), and average closure ($\beta = 0.15$, 95% CI: 0.02 to 0.28) all increased enjoyment. The direct effect of content consumption format remained significant ($\beta = 0.63$, 95% CI: 0.19 to 1.08) and the indirect path through anticipation ($\beta = 0.36$, 95% CI: 0.04 to 0.76) was significant. The rest of the mediators were not significant.

I repeated the analysis with a 94% confidence interval. Results indicated that not binge-watching (binge-watching = 0, not binge-watching = 1) increased average anticipation ($\beta = 0.48$, 95% CI: 0.06 to 0.90) and decreased closure ($\beta = -0.43$, 95% CI: -0.73 to -0.13). Content consumption format ($\beta = 0.56$, 95% CI: 0.32 to 0.80), average anticipation ($\beta = 0.98$, 95% CI: 0.89 to 1.07), and average closure ($\beta = 0.15$, 95% CI: 0.02 to 0.28) all increased enjoyment. The direct effect of content consumption format remained significant ($\beta = 0.63$, 95% CI: 0.21 to 1.06) and the indirect path through anticipation ($\beta = 0.36$, 95% CI: 0.04 to 0.74) and closure ($\beta = -0.09$, 95% CI: -0.21 to -0.00) was significant. The rest of the mediators were not significant.

Other outcomes.

Content-related outcomes. Preference to watch the rest of the TV show or a different TV show was significantly different across conditions ($F(1,137) = 5.24$, $p < .05$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.42$, $SD = 1.75$) indicated less preference to watch a different TV show relative to those in the binge condition ($M = 4.08$, $SD = 1.68$).

Platform-related Outcomes. Condition also had a significant effect on desire to subscribe to the platform ($F(1,137) = 11.64$, $p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.95$, $SD = 1.51$) indicated more desire to subscribe to the platform than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.72$).

Social Outcomes. Condition had a significant effect on the desire to consume more content related to the mini-episodes ($F(1,137) = 7.02$, $p < .01$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.60$) indicated more desire to consume related content than those in the binge condition ($M = 2.93$, $SD = 1.75$). There was no significant

difference across conditions in the desire to talk to others ($F(1,137) = 2.72, p = .10$) or post on social media ($F(1,137) = 0.53, p = .47$).

Discussion

This experiment provided further evidence that those in the non-binge condition showed a higher desire to rewatch the episodes than those in the binge condition. Non-binge content consumption also reduced participants' interest in watching a different TV show, and increased their desire to subscribe to the platform and consume other related content.

This experiment also assessed closure, anticipation of the upcoming episode, and enjoyment as processes that might mediate the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption. The data showed evidence for anticipation and closure as opposite mechanisms driving the desire to reconsume. Specifically, the non-binge content consumption format increased anticipation and decreased closure, and both processes mediated participants' desire to reconsume.

In Experiment 4, I make an attempt to examine all the underlying mechanisms in one experiment to parse the different mechanisms. Specifically, I measure anticipation and closure as the mediators of the effect of non-binge content consumption on reconsumption. In addition, I measure affective and cognitive engagement to delve into the parallel mechanisms of the effect of binge content consumption on reconsumption.

EXPERIMENT 4

In this experiment, I aimed to explore the effect of content consumption format on the desire to reconsume and to further investigate the mediating effects of anticipation (P3), cognitive engagement (P2), affective engagement (P1), and closure (P4). Specifically,

given the complex elements that make up TV shows (e.g., storyline, characters, fictional worlds), it is not clear what aspect of the content participants are anticipating or gaining closure on. To examine whether viewers anticipate and gain closure on the storyline specifically, I used two different sets of episodes: one with a connected, overarching storyline across episodes, and one with a disconnected storyline, where each mini-episode presented a self-contained story. If closure and anticipation pertain only to the storyline or narrative, the observed effects should be attenuated in the disconnected condition (the self-contained episodes). However, if anticipation and closure apply more broadly to the characters and the fictional world in which the stories occur, then there should be no difference between whether the episode storylines are connected or disconnected.

Further, to again investigate the cognitive and affective underpinnings of the proposed mechanisms, I measured affective and cognitive engagement after each episode (P1 and P2). In this experiment, I measured anticipation and enjoyment once, after the experience, using a post-viewing measure to tap into retrospective experiences. I also included additional measures assessing reasons for reconsumption.

Participants

Two hundred and ninety-three participants ($M_{age} = 46.62$, $SD = 14.43$; 49.8% female, 47.0% male, 2.3% self-identified) were recruited from Connect research. All participants from the pre-screen who had not watched Brooklyn 99 were invited to participate. After removing the participants who had not responded to all post-viewing measures, data from 221 participants were retained.

Methods

This experiment employed a two (episode connection: connected, disconnected) by

two (content consumption format: binge, non-binge) between-subjects design. The former factor refers to whether the five episodes were connected through an overarching storyline or not (connected or disconnected). The latter refers to whether the episodes were binged and watched in one sitting or consumed one episode per day over five days.

After every episode, participants completed two post-episode measures. They reported on affective engagement (“This episode affected me emotionally”) and closure (“I understood everything I would like to know about this episode”), both on 6-point scales (1= Strongly disagree, 6= Strongly agree).

After content consumption, participants answered several post-viewing measures, including their desire to reconsume, measured as in previous studies. They also reported their reason for reconsuming (whether it was past-oriented “Looking back, you would like to repeat the watching experience that you had”, or future-oriented: “Looking forward, you would like to get something more out of the watching experience by repeating it”) both on 6-point scales. As in prior studies, they were also asked to indicate their preference for watching the same or a different TV show in a future study, enjoyment, platform subscription likelihood, and desire to consume and create other relevant content, with an added measure of posting on social media.

At the end of the experiment, participants reported on other potential mediators: cognitive engagement (“I was mentally involved in the story during the mini-episodes; I was mentally involved in the story between the episodes; After finishing the mini-episodes, I found it easy to put it out of my mind”), anticipation (“I wanted to learn how the mini-episodes ended”), and attention (“I found my mind wandering while watching the mini-episodes”). At the end of the study, participants answered manipulation check questions for

binge (measured as in prior studies) and for connection (“To what extent did it feel like the episodes were related?”), also on a 6-point scale (1 = Not at all, 6 = Very much).

Results

Manipulation check. The manipulation check for binge confirmed a significant difference ($F(1, 222) = 21.95, p < .001$) between the conditions, such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 2.69, SD = 1.62$) perceived the experience to be further from a binge-watching experience than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.75, SD = 1.76$).

The manipulation check for connection confirmed a significant difference ($F(1, 222) = 89.20, p < .001$) between the conditions such that those in the connected condition ($M = 5.11, SD = 1.01$) reported the episodes to be more connected than those in the disconnected condition ($M = 3.44, SD = 1.64$).

Reconsumption. A full-factorial ANOVA, using content consumption condition and episode connection to predict desire to reconsume, showed a significant effect of content consumption format on desire to reconsume ($F(1, 220) = 11.96, p < .001$). Those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.39, SD = 1.8$) were more interested in consuming than those in the binge condition ($M = 2.64, SD = 1.66$). Connection did not have a significant effect on desire to reconsume ($F(1, 220) = 1.14, p = .29$; $M_{\text{connected}} = 2.92, SD = 1.68$; $M_{\text{disconnected}} = 3.08, SD = 1.90$). The interaction between binge-watching and connection was also not significant ($F(1, 220) = 0.95, p = .33$).

Measured Mediators. Due to an error in data collection, the fifth measures of affective and cognitive engagement were not fully captured. As a result, I relied on the average measures for analysis.

Average Affective Engagement. An ANOVA revealed no significant main effects or

interactions. Specifically, there was no significant main effect of connection ($F(1, 220) = 0.22, p = .64$), no significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 220) = 0.00, p = .97$), and no significant interaction ($F(1, 220) = 0.27, p = .60$).

Average Closure. The ANOVA for average closure revealed a significant main effect of connection ($F(1, 220) = 38.62, p < .001$), with the connected group ($M = 3.85, SD = 1.23$) indicating lower closure than the disconnected group ($M = 4.88, SD = 1.11$). There was no significant main effect of content consumption format on closure ($F(1, 220) = 1.96, p = .16$). The interaction between content consumption format and connection was not significant ($F(1, 220) = 1.15, p = .28$).

Anticipation. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of content consumption format and connection on anticipation. The analysis revealed a marginally significant main effect of content consumption format on anticipation ($F(1, 220) = 3.69, p = .06$), with the non-binge condition ($M = 4.03, SD = 1.70$) showing higher anticipation compared to the binge condition ($M = 3.56, SD = 1.77$). There was no significant main effect of connection on reconsumption ($F(1, 220) = 2.93, p = .09$), and no significant interaction ($F(1, 220) = 0.18, p = .67$).

Enjoyment. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of content consumption format and connection on enjoyment ($F(1,220) = 6.14, p < .05$). Those in the non-binge condition reported more enjoyment ($M = 4.21, SD = 1.44$) than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.71, SD = 1.45$). There was no significant effect of connection ($F(1,220) = 0.48, p = .49$) or an interaction effect ($F(1, 220) = 1.646 \times 10^{-4}, p = .99$).

Cognitive Engagement. There was no significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 220) = 0.29, p = .59$) or connection ($F(1, 220) = 0.11, p = .74$) on

cognitive engagement during the episode. The interaction between content consumption format and connection was not significant either ($F(1, 220) = 2.29, p = .13$).

Reflective Reconsumption. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of content consumption format and connection on reflective reasons for reconsumption ($F(1,220) = 7.48, p < .01$). Those in the non-binge condition reported more reflective goals ($M = 3.13, SD = 1.64$) than those in the binge condition ($M = 2.58, SD = 1.59$). There was no significant effect of connection ($F(1,220) = 0.57, p = .45$) or interaction effect ($F(1, 220) = 0.97, p = .33$).

Reconstructive Reconsumption. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effect of content consumption format and connection on reconstructive reasons for reconsumption. This analysis showed no significant effect of content consumption format ($F(1,220) = 2.62, p = .11$), connection ($F(1,220) = 0.00, p = .96$), and interaction ($F(1,220) = 3.11, p = .08$).

Mediation Analyses.

Anticipation and Enjoyment. I conducted a serial mediation model (PROCESS model 6; Hayes, 2013) to test whether the effect of content consumption format on desire to reconsume is mediated by anticipation and enjoyment. Content consumption format (0 = binge, 1 = non-binge) significantly predicted anticipation ($\beta = 0.44, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.012 \text{ to } 0.93$) which significantly predicted enjoyment ($\beta = 0.55, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.47 \text{ to } 0.63$). Content consumption ($\beta = 0.33, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.007 \text{ to } 0.65$), anticipation ($\beta = 0.32, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.20 \text{ to } 0.33$), and enjoyment ($\beta = 0.55, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.40 \text{ to } 0.70$) all predicted reconsumption.

The direct effect of content consumption on reconsumption was significant ($\beta = 0.33, 95\% \text{ CI: } 0.01 \text{ to } 0.65$) and there were two indirect mediating pathways: one pathway

through anticipation ($\beta = 0.15$, 95% CI: 0.004 to 0.34) and one serial pathway through anticipation and enjoyment ($\beta = 0.14$, 95% CI: 0.004 to 0.30). The total effect was significant and positive ($\beta = 0.42$, 95% CI: 0.09 to 0.76).

Other Outcomes.

Content-related Outcomes. Content consumption format significantly predicted preference for the same show ($F(1,220) = 4.96$, $p < .05$). Connection ($F(1,220) = 0.97$, $p = .32$) and the interaction of binge and connection ($F(1,220) = 0.81$, $p = .37$) were not significant.

Platform-related Outcomes. Content consumption format significantly predicted platform subscription ($F(1,220) = 3.95$, $p = .05$). Connection ($F(1,220) = 1.26$, $p = .26$) and the interaction of binge and connection ($F(1,220) = 0.93$, $p = .34$) were not significant.

Social Outcomes. Connection significantly predicted posting on social media ($F(1,220) = 4.26$, $p < .05$). Content consumption format ($F(1,220) = 0.18$, $p = .67$) and the interaction of binge and connection ($F(1,220) = 0.57$, $p = .45$) were not significant predictors of the desire to talk to someone about the TV show. Content consumption format ($F(1,220) = 1.47$, $p = .23$), connection ($F(1,220) = .21$, $p = .64$), and the interaction of binge and connection ($F(1,220) = 0.84$, $p = .36$) were not significant predictors of the desire to talk to someone about the TV show. Content consumption format ($F(1,220) = 3.13$, $p = .08$), connection ($F(1,220) = 1.22$, $p = .27$), and the interaction of binge and connection ($F(1,220) = 1.69$, $p = .19$) were not significant predictors of the desire to watch or listen to relevant content.

Discussion

This experiment again replicated the main effect of non-binge content consumption

on the desire to reconsume content. It also investigated whether the connection between episodes and the existence of an overarching story affected anticipation and, as a result, the desire to reconsume. Results showed that non-binge watching significantly increased the desire to reconsume compared to binge-watching, while the connection between episodes did not significantly affect the desire to reconsume. The mediation analysis confirmed that anticipation and enjoyment explained the effect of content consumption on the desire to reconsume. Given the null results for connection, and the significant mediation through anticipation, these results also expand our understanding of anticipation. They suggest that anticipation might not be solely about the content's story, but also about other aspects of the content, such as the characters.

Additionally, Experiment 4 showed again that non-binge watching positively influences various downstream outcomes. Non-binge participants were more inclined to prefer watching the same TV show in future experiments rather than switching to a different one. They also showed a higher willingness to subscribe to the platform and to engage in related activities, such as talking to others about the mini-episodes, reflecting on them in social media posts, and consuming or creating relevant content about the episodes.

EXPERIMENT 5

The aim of this final experiment was to examine whether genre moderates the effect of content consumption format on the desire to reconsume. I chose two genres, comedy and drama, based on their variance in complexity, as discussed in the conceptual development section. To examine the mediating effect of anticipation and enjoyment, in this experiment I included post-episode measures of both constructs.

Participants

Three hundred and twenty participants (Mage = 38.56, SD = 13.29; 55.45% female, 42.99% male, 1.25% self-described) were recruited from Connect research. All participants from the pre-screen who had not watched Brooklyn 99 were invited to participate.

Methods

This experiment employed a two (binge vs. non-binge) by two (comedy vs. drama) between-subjects design. To manipulate genre as either comedy or drama, I chose two different storylines from the same TV show, using the same lead character, to keep most aspects of the TV show constant. The plot of the comedy genre was about the comical preparation for a gender reveal party. The plot of the drama genre was about solving a murder. In the binge condition, participants first watched the four mini-episodes back-to-back.

After each mini-episode, they indicated enjoyment of the episode (“I enjoyed watching this mini-episode”) and their anticipation of the next episode (“I am looking forward to watching the next mini-episode”) on a 6-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 6 = Strongly agree).

At the end of the experiment, participants answered our key reconsumption measure, as in prior studies. They also responded to some questions about how they would rewatch: “If you watch these mini-episodes again, how would you watch them?” (One episode at a time, Binge a few episodes at a time, Binge the full show at once); and how attentively they would rewatch: “How attentive would you be while rewatching?” (1 = Not attentive at all, 6 = Very attentive). They also reported whether they would prefer to rewatch the same show or a different one: “In a future experiment, would you prefer to

watch the rest of the same TV show or a different one?” (1 = I prefer to watch the rest of the same TV show, 6 = I prefer to watch a different TV show).

Next, they were asked to answer content, platform, and social outcome measures on 6- point scales, similar to prior studies. For content, I asked about the likelihood of watching spin-offs (“How interested are you in watching other content that is related to these mini-episodes? This might include other mini-episodes, other seasons of the show, spin-offs, sequels, or prequels.”). For platforms, I asked: “How interested are you in subscribing to the platform that releases these mini-episodes?”. For social, I asked about participants’ desire to consume or create related content (talk to someone about these mini-episodes; watch or listen to some relevant content about these mini-episodes). Finally, participants completed manipulation checks for content consumption format and genre. After completing the experiment and the post-viewing measures, all participants returned on the next day to respond to all the post-viewing measures one more time.

Results

Manipulation Check. The manipulation check confirmed a significant difference between content consumption conditions ($F(1, 319) = 13.28, p < .001$), such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 3.38, SD = 1.73$) perceived the experience to be significantly less of a binge than those in the binge condition ($M = 4.07, SD = 1.64$).

The genre manipulation check confirmed a significant difference between genre conditions ($F(1, 319) = 55.80, p < .001$). Those in the drama condition ($M = 4.46, SD = 1.44$) perceived the experience to be significantly closer to drama than those in the comedy condition ($M = 5.48, SD = 0.89$).

Reconsumption. A full-factorial ANOVA used content consumption condition,

genre, and their interaction to predict desire to reconsume. The results showed a significant effect of content consumption condition ($F(1, 317) = 30.34, p < .001$), where those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.75, SD = 1.51$) were more interested in reconsuming than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.63, SD = 1.92$). Genre also had a significant effect on desire to reconsume ($F(1, 317) = 4.35, p < .05$), such that those in the comedy condition ($M = 3.89, SD = 1.88$) had less interest in reconsuming than those in the drama condition ($M = 4.36, SD = 1.77$). There was no interaction effect of content consumption format and genre on desire to reconsume ($F(1, 317) = 1.35, p = .25$).

Mediators:

Post-episode Anticipation. A repeated measures ANOVA used content consumption format, genre, and episode to predict anticipation. This analysis showed a significant effect of content consumption format on anticipation ($F(1, 317) = 20.92, p < .001$) such that those in the binge condition experienced less anticipation across all episodes (Mean Difference = $-0.68, SE = 0.15, t = -4.57, p < .001$). There was no significant effect of genre on anticipation ($F(1, 317) = 1.34, p = .25$), nor an interaction effect of binge and genre ($F(1, 317) = 0.005, p = .95$).

However, there were significant effects of episode on anticipation ($F(3, 951) = 11.03, p < .001$), and an interaction between content consumption format and episode ($F(3, 951) = 32.70, p < .001$). There was also a significant interaction between genre and episode on anticipation ($F(3, 951) = 4.98, p = .002$). However, there was no significant three-way interaction effect between episode, genre, and content consumption format ($F(3, 951) = 1.41, p = .24$). As in prior studies, since differences across episodes are not of theoretical importance, and since the repeated measures analysis showed a significant effect of content

consumption format across episodes, I averaged the anticipation measures to create an overall score.

Average Anticipation. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of genre and content consumption format on average anticipation. There was a significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 317) = 30.27, p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.98, SD = 0.93$) reported more anticipation than those in the binge condition ($M = 4.30, SD = 1.18$). The main effect of genre was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 2.06, p = .152$). The interaction effect between genre and content consumption format was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 0.01, p = .943$).

Post-episode Enjoyment. A repeated measures ANOVA showed a significant effect of content consumption format on enjoyment ($F(1, 317) = 12.14, p < .001$). There was no significant effect of genre ($F(1, 317) = 0.40, p = .53$), nor an interaction effect of content consumption format and genre ($F(1, 317) = 0.01, p = .94$).

The repeated measures ANOVA revealed significant within-subjects effects for episode ($F(3, 951) = 8.03, p < .001$), and its interaction with content consumption format ($F(3, 951) = 8.99, p < .001$). There was also a significant effect of the interaction term of episode and genre ($F(3, 951) = 12.97, p < .001$). However, there was no significant interaction effect between episode, genre, and content consumption format ($F(3, 951) = 0.97, p = .40$). As above, enjoyment was averaged across episodes.

Average Enjoyment. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of genre and content consumption format on average enjoyment. There was a significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 317) = 12.14, p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.92, SD = 1.01$) reported more enjoyment than those in the binge

condition ($M = 4.43$, $SD = 1.39$). The main effect of genre was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 0.40$, $p = .53$). The interaction effect between genre and content consumption format was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 0.01$, $p = .94$).

Correlation between Enjoyment and Anticipation. Before investigating the potential mediating effects of anticipation and enjoyment, I examined their correlation, because in this study both measures were assessed together, immediately after each episode. They were highly correlated ($r = 0.86$, $p < .001$). Next, I conducted an exploratory factor analysis. The results indicate that enjoyment and anticipation can be represented by a single underlying factor, as both variables load highly on one factor (0.93). However, the model identification issue highlighted by the negative degrees of freedom (-1) in the chi-squared test suggests that caution should be taken in interpreting these results. Given these results, and given that both items were measured at the same time after each episode, I averaged anticipation and enjoyment to use them as one measure in the mediation analysis.

Mediation. A serial mediation analysis (PROCESS, model 6; Hayes, 2013) with 5,000 resamples tested the mediating effect of anticipation and enjoyment. The direct effect of content consumption format (0 = binge, 1 = non-binge) on reconsumption intentions was significant ($\beta = 0.43$, 95% CI: 0.16 to 0.69, $p < .01$). Additionally, the joint measure of anticipation and enjoyment significantly predicted reconsumption intentions ($\beta = 1.19$ 95% CI: 1.08 to 1.30, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of binge-watching on reconsumption intentions through enjoyment and anticipation was also significant ($\beta = 0.69$, 95% CI: 0.41 to 0.98). This indicates that binge-watching increases reconsumption intentions both directly and indirectly through increased anticipation and enjoyment.

Other outcomes.

Content-related outcomes. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of genre and content consumption format on preference to watch a different show in a future experiment. There was a significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 317) = 16.92, p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 2.59, SD = 1.81$) reported lower preference to watch a different show than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.48, SD = 1.99$). The main effect of genre was also significant ($F(1, 317) = 4.48, p < .05$) such that those in the comedy condition ($M = 3.36, SD = 1.99$) indicated a stronger preference for watching a different TV show than those in the drama condition ($M = 2.82, SD = 1.90$). The interaction effect between genre and content consumption format was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 1.35, p = .246$).

An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of genre and content consumption format on the desire to watch a spin-off. There was a significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 317) = 17.02, p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.52, SD = 1.28$) reported a higher desire to watch a spin-off than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.81, SD = 1.60$). The main effect of genre was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 0.74, p = .391$) across comedy ($M = 4.04, SD = 1.59$) or drama ($M = 4.21, SD = 1.42$). The interaction effect between genre and content consumption format was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 1.39, p = .239$).

Platform-related Outcomes. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of genre and content consumption format on the desire to subscribe to the platform. There was a significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 317) = 17.51, p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.10, SD = 1.41$) reported a higher desire

to subscribe to the platform than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.35$, $SD = 1.69$). The main effect of genre did not differ significantly ($F(1, 317) = 0.01$, $p = .92$) across comedy ($M = 3.68$, $SD = 1.66$) and drama ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.00$). The interaction effect between genre and content consumption format was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 1.56$, $p = .21$).

Social Outcomes. An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of genre and content consumption format on the desire to talk to someone about the mini-episodes.

There was a significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 317) = 21.33$, $p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.09$, $SD = 1.61$) reported a higher desire to talk to someone about these mini-episodes than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.18$, $SD = 1.79$). The main effect of genre was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 0.85$, $p = .36$) across comedy ($M = 3.47$, $SD = 1.83$) and drama ($M = 3.70$, $SD = 1.72$). The interaction effect between genre and content consumption format was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 0.42$, $p = .52$).

An ANOVA was conducted to examine the effects of genre and content consumption format on the desire to watch or listen to some relevant content about these mini-episodes. There was a significant main effect of content consumption format ($F(1, 317) = 16.31$, $p < .001$) such that those in the non-binge condition ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 1.55$) reported a higher desire to watch or listen to some relevant content about these mini-episodes than those in the binge condition ($M = 3.25$, $SD = 1.76$). The main effect of genre was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 1.07$, $p = .30$) across comedy ($M = 3.49$, $SD = 1.78$) and drama ($M = 3.72$, $SD = 1.65$). The interaction effect between genre and content consumption format was not significant ($F(1, 317) = 0.67$, $p = .41$).

Discussion

This experiment explored the effects of binge-watching versus not binge-watching across comedy and drama genres on the desire to reconsume content. The results indicated that not binge-watching increased the desire to reconsume content compared to binge-watching. This effect was observed across both comedy and drama genres, suggesting that the non-binge effect is consistent across different types of content. However, there was a significant difference in the desire to reconsume across genres.

Consistent with previous experiments, Experiment 5 also showed mediation via anticipation and enjoyment. Because both measures were assessed post-episode in this study, I explored their combined effect as a single mediator, and found that this joint measure explained the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption.

Finally, again consistent with previous experiments, this study provided evidence for outcomes of content consumption format beyond reconsumption. When content was consumed in a non-binge format, participants indicated a stronger preference for watching the same TV show or its spin-offs, subscribing to the platform, talking to others about the TV show, and consuming other content about the show.

Discussion of Experiments

The experiments in this research have afforded a more nuanced understanding of the consequences of content consumption format and reconsumption. Across all experiments, it was established that non-binge content consumption leads to increased desire to reconsume.

Experiment 1 established the main effect and explored some downstream behavioural outcomes. Some of the other outcomes explored in these experiments which

were significantly predicted by content consumption format include: the desire to watch spin-offs and sequels, the desire to subscribe to the platform, talking to others about the TV show, and the willingness to consume other relevant content.

Experiment 2 explored the mediating effect of anticipation (P3), cognitive engagement (P2), and affective engagement (P1). This experiment revealed that non-binge content consumption increases anticipation throughout the experience, which increased enjoyment of the experience, increased reconsumption, and offered some evidence for the mediating effect of anticipation and enjoyment (P3) and against the mediating effect of cognitive and affective engagement (P1, P2).

Experiment 3 further explored the processes underlying the effect of non-binge content consumption on reconsumption using anticipation and enjoyment (P3) in addition to closure (P4) as mediators. This experiment provided further evidence for the mediating effect of increasing anticipation and as a result enjoyment.

Experiment 4 further explored the processes that mediated the effect—anticipation (P3), affective engagement (P1), and closure (P4)—revealing that the anticipation inherent in the non-binge content consumption format was not particularly about the narrative, but about the experience.

Experiment 5 explored the role of genre and content consumption format on reconsumption. This experiment provided post-episode measures of anticipation and enjoyment, revealing that the two constructs may not be perceived separately by the viewers and that they mediate the effect of content consumption format on reconsumption. Table 4 summarises the results of the experiments.

Table 4. Experiment Results.

Experiment	Measure Category	Measures	Non-Binge Condition	Binge Condition	p-value
1	DV	Reconsumption	M = 3.95, SD = 1.79	M = 3.25, SD = 1.79	<.01
		Desire to Reconsume as Binge	a few eps: 63%; at once: 20%	a few eps: 77%; at once: 41%	0.11
		Desire to Watch Spin-offs	M = 4.02, SD = 1.59	M = 3.53, SD = 1.69	<.05
		Desire to Watch the Rest of the Show (vs. a Different one)	M = 3.23, SD = 1.97	M = 3.63, SD = 2.05	0.16
		Desire to Subscribe to Platform	M = 3.33, SD = 1.65	M = 2.90, SD = 1.64	0.07
		Consume User-generated Content	M = 3.65, SD = 1.69	M = 2.98, SD = 1.76	<.01
		Word of Mouth Intentions	M = 3.57, SD = 1.69	M = 3.02, SD = 1.78	<.05
2	Mediator: Post-episode	Post-episode Anticipation	M = 4.57, SD = 1.47	M = 4.21, SD = 1.47	0.07
		Post-episode Cognitive Engagement	M = 4.86, SD = 1.20	M = 4.78, SD = 1.29	0.66
	DV: Post-viewing	Reconsumption	M = 4.13, SD = 1.73	M = 3.43, SD = 1.93	<.01
		Delayed Reconsumption	M=3.92,SD=1.59	M = 3.35, SD = 1.82	0.07
		Enjoyment	M=4.81,SD=1.41	M = 4.16, SD = 1.69	<.01
		Desire to Reconsume as Binge	a few eps: 69%; at once: 35%	a few eps: 72%; at once: 28%	0.09
		Desire to Watch a Different TV show	M = 3.70, SD = 1.78	M = 3.77, SD = 2.01	0.8
		Desire to Watch Spin-offs	M = 4.41, SD = 1.49	M = 3.56, SD = 1.81	<.001
	Mediator: Post-viewing	Post-viewing Affective Engagement	M=3.67,SD=1.70	M = 3.66, SD = 1.67	0.95
		Post-viewing Cognitive Engagement	M=3.92,SD=1.57	M=3.61,SD=1.63	0.16
3	Mediator: Post-episode	Post-episode Closure	M = 2.66, SD = 0.85	M = 3.14, SD = 0.99	<.01
		Post-episode Anticipation	M = 4.33, SD = 0.78	M = 3.85, SD = 1.67	<.05
	DV: Post-viewing	Reconsumption	M = 4.24, SD = 1.67	M = 3.08, SD = 1.87	<.001
		Enjoyment	M = 5.19, SD = 1.25	M = 4.24, SD = 1.64	<.001
		Preference to Watch a Different TV show	M = 3.42, SD = 1.75	M = 4.08, SD = 1.68	<.05
		Desire to Subscribe to Platform	M = 3.95, SD = 1.51	M = 3.01, SD = 1.72	<.001
		Consume User-generated Content	M = 3.69, SD = 1.60	M = 2.93, SD = 1.75	<.01
	Mediator: Post-viewing	Post-viewing Closure	M = 5.00, SD = 1.31	M = 4.99, SD = 1.19	0.95
4	Mediator: Post-viewing	Anticipation	M = 4.03, SD = 1.70	M = 3.56, SD = 1.77	0.06
		Enjoyment	M = 4.21, SD = 1.44	M = 3.71, SD = 1.45	<.05
	DV: Post-viewing	Reflective Reconsumption	M = 3.13, SD = 1.64	M = 2.58, SD = 1.59	<.01
5	Mediator: Post-episode	Reconsumption	M = 3.39, SD = 1.8	M = 2.64, SD = 1.66	<.001
		Post-episode Anticipation	M = 4.98, SD = 0.93	M = 4.30, SD = 1.18	<.001
	DV: Post-viewing	Post-episode Enjoyment	M = 4.92, SD = 1.01	M = 4.43, SD = 1.39	<.001
		Reconsumption	M = 4.75, SD = 1.51	M = 3.63, SD = 1.92	<.001
		Desire to Watch a Different Show	M = 2.59, SD = 1.81	M = 3.48, SD = 1.99	<.001
		Desire to Subscribe to Platform	M = 4.10, SD = 1.41	M = 3.35, SD = 1.69	<.001
		Desire to Watch Spin-offs	M = 4.52, SD = 1.28	M = 3.81, SD = 1.60	<.001
		Consume User-generated Content	M = 4.04, SD = 1.55	M = 3.25, SD = 1.76	<.001
		Word of Mouth	M = 4.09, SD = 1.61	M = 3.18, SD = 1.79	<.001

CHAPTER 5: SECONDARY DATA

In this chapter, I used secondary data from Netflix. There are three objectives to this section. First, I intend to provide a general description of how consumers behave on streaming platforms, specifically with regard to content consumption format and repeat consumption. Second, I test whether binge-viewing and reconsumption are indeed related. Third, I test whether this relationship is different across genres. This real-world data provides evidence that complements the experimental evidence to ensure that it can be generalized.

In this dataset I focus on TV shows, which are easier to binge-watch than movies. Further, because sagas (i.e., multiple related movies) are normally distributed on a yearly basis and use plot devices that differentiate them from TV shows, they were excluded from this analysis.

Data Collection

Viewing Data

I used Netflix viewing data to investigate content consumption and reconsumption because it is one of the most dominant, on demand video platforms, with over 70 million subscribers in 2020 (Statista, 2023). The “viewing history” data collected in this experiment is available to every individual who has a Netflix account. I asked participants to download this dataset from their Netflix account and upload it into the survey. This survey was conducted twice, once with a student sample and once on Cloud Research’s Connect platform.

The dataset encompasses the viewing history of all users on a single Netflix account. It includes:

Profile Name: Identifies the specific user profile within the account.

Start Time (date, time): The date and time when a user begins watching content.

Duration (h:mm:ss): The length of time the content is viewed, recorded in hours, minutes, and seconds.

Attributes (autoplay, has branched playback): Indicates specific viewing features such as whether autoplay is enabled, or if there is branched playback and a different content is played automatically after the viewing of the episode.

Title (name, season, episode): The name of the content, along with details like season and episode number as a string.

Supplemental Video Type (hook, bonus, etc.): Classifies additional content types such as hooks or bonus features.

Device Type (browser, phone model, console name): Specifies the device used for viewing, such as a browser, phone model, or console name.

Bookmark (h:mm): The specific timestamp when the user paused or stopped watching.

Latest Bookmark (h:mm): The most recent timestamp when the user paused or stopped watching.

Country (US and Canada): The geographical location of the user, limited to the US and Canada.

Supplementary Data Collection.

A research assistant gathered additional information for the 100 most-watched TV shows, including:

Run Time: The total duration of each episode.

Release Date: The date when the content was made available to viewers.

Production Date: The date when the content was produced.

Release Schedule (bingeable vs. non-bingeable): Categorized as either bingeable (all episodes released at once) or non-bingeable (episodes released periodically).

Producing Network (Netflix vs. not Netflix): Indicates whether the content was produced by Netflix or another network. This data was gathered to capture whether the show was released on a different platform before appearing on Netflix. Netflix-only shows mean that watching and rewatching the title could be observed in the dataset, while non-Netflix shows indicate that I could not determine whether the observed viewing instances were first-time consumption or reconsumption.

Genre (three different keywords): Three different keywords used on Netflix to capture the content's genre.

Using the variables above, I created measures to analyze the relationship between content consumption format and reconsumption. For the analyses in this paper, I have only used genre as a moderator variable . The rest of the variables were not analyzed and are hence not reported here.

Variable Definition

Using the variables in the tables, I created proxies for the constructs in my conceptual framework, namely content consumption format and reconsumption, to determine how they are related in a real-world dataset.

Session. I define a session as watching episodes from the same TV show with less than 60 minutes of break between episodes. A 60-minute threshold is practical for data analysis, allowing a clear distinction between sessions without excluding short, reasonable breaks that do not signify the end of a viewing session.

Binge session. If three episodes or more of the same title were watched and there was more than one hour watch time, the session was coded as a binge. This was done to ensure that sessions were not considered if they included episodes that were not viewed completely. The minimum episode duration is 20 minutes, adding up to a full binge viewing session of an hour. At times, the viewer might play some episodes but not watch them completely. Because the data lacked an indication of whether the episode was watched from the beginning or to completion, this coding allows for less bias in the analysis. I also analyzed viewing duration data, and the average viewing duration was 0.96 hours ($SD = 1.09$), so one hour presented a fair estimate for a binge-watching session. This definition aligns with existing academic and industry definitions of binge-watching, which often consider both the number of episodes and the total viewing time to classify a session as binge-watching.

Independent Variable: Content consumption speed

The focal independent variable captures the speed at which a user watches episodes of a TV series, calculated as the total number of episodes watched divided by the number

of days over which the user watched them. This variable provides insight into the binge-watching behaviour of users, with higher values indicating faster consumption (i.e., a higher degree of binge-watching).

Dependent Variable: Reconsumption

The focal dependent variable is a binary indicator that denotes whether a user has rewatched a TV series. It is conditional on the user having watched at least 50% of the episodes, and restarted from episode 1. This criterion ensures that the user has engaged substantially with the TV series before considering it for rewatching. If a user has watched less than 50% of the episodes, their decision to rewatch might not reflect genuine reconsumption behaviour but rather an attempt to give the series another try after an incomplete initial viewing. By setting the threshold at 50%, I ensure the user had enough exposure to the content to form a meaningful impression.

Results

Below, I elaborate on the results from the two different datasets. The datasets were obtained from two different samples, a student pool, and a Connect research pool. I outline some descriptive findings pertaining to content consumption and the results of some models with the aim of observing how the propositions of this research map onto real-world behaviour.

Dataset 1.

Dataset 1 was obtained from the undergraduate student research pool at the University of Alberta School of Business. The dataset included data from 126 accounts. Each account included data from all the profiles on the account, which amounted to 310 profiles. The data spanned from November 21, 2010, until December 9, 2022.

Descriptives. Table 5 summarizes some descriptive statistics from this dataset.

These descriptives provide evidence that both binge and non-binge content consumption are common practices, with non-binge comprising 60.94% of each individual's viewing practice on average, and binge comprising 39.06% (SD = 21.36%). Reconsumption also occurs at a reasonable rate (M = 27.3%, SD = 11.51). The average session duration for each individual was 1.26 hours (SD = 1.58) indicating that, generally, excessive binge-watching is not widespread.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics.

Behaviour	Mean	SD	Median	95% Lower	95% Upper	90% Lower	90% Upper	IQ R
Binge Watching Percentage	39.06	21.36	37.66	0.00	88.81	4.41	76.40	25.13
Reconsumption Percentage	27.30	11.51	27.78	0	52.81	8.82	46.36	13.24
Non-binge Watching Percentage	60.94	21.36	62.34	11.18	100	23.6	95.59	27.13
Viewing Duration Hours	1.26	1.58	0.79	0.002	5.21	0.02	3.92	1.23
Break Duration Hours	71.64	441.30	17.10	1.15	471.97	1.35	241.46	28.89

Below, I include three histograms that represent binge, reconsumption, and viewing duration in hours. I include those under 95% to provide a more informative graph, without outliers. Figure 3 shows the distribution of the proportion of binge sessions for each individual across the dataset, displaying semi-normal data. The x-axis shows the binge percentage, ranging from 0% to 70%, and the y-axis shows the frequency of occurrences for each binge percentage interval. There are several peaks in the graph. The peak at 0%

indicates that a significant number of individuals did not engage in binge-watching at all. The peaks at 40% suggest that a considerable number of individuals frequently binge-watch, which comprises approximately 40% of their viewing sessions.

The most binge-watched genres in descending order of proportion of binge session were competition, documentary, sci-fi, drama, romance, crime, and animation. The least reconsumed TV shows were reality, animation, mystery, and horror.

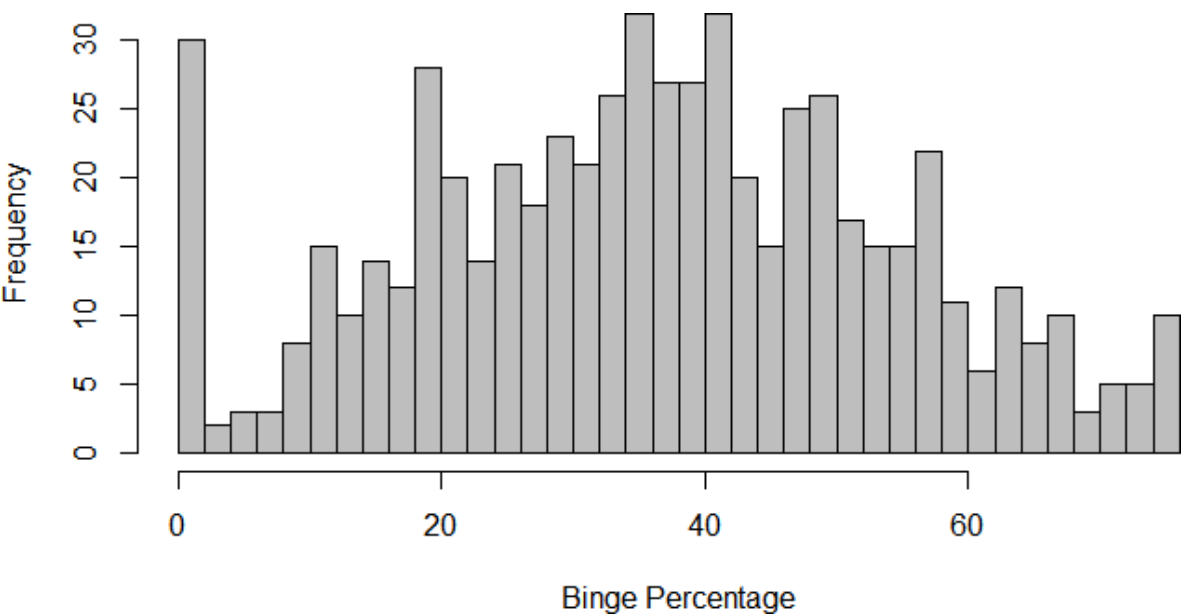


Figure 3. Percentage of Binge Session Proportion Relative to All Sessions.

Figure 4 depicts the distribution of the proportion of sessions that were coded as reconsumption. The most reconsumed genres were drama, comedy, romance, sitcoms, crime, and action. The x- axis represents the rewatch percentage, ranging from 0% to 70%, and the y-axis represents the frequency of occurrences for each rewatch percentage interval. The majority of the rewatch percentages fall between 10% and 50%. The most common rewatch percentage is around 30%, with the highest frequency of occurrences at this point. The distribution appears to be roughly symmetrical, with a slight skew to the right. There are few instances of rewatch percentages above 60%.

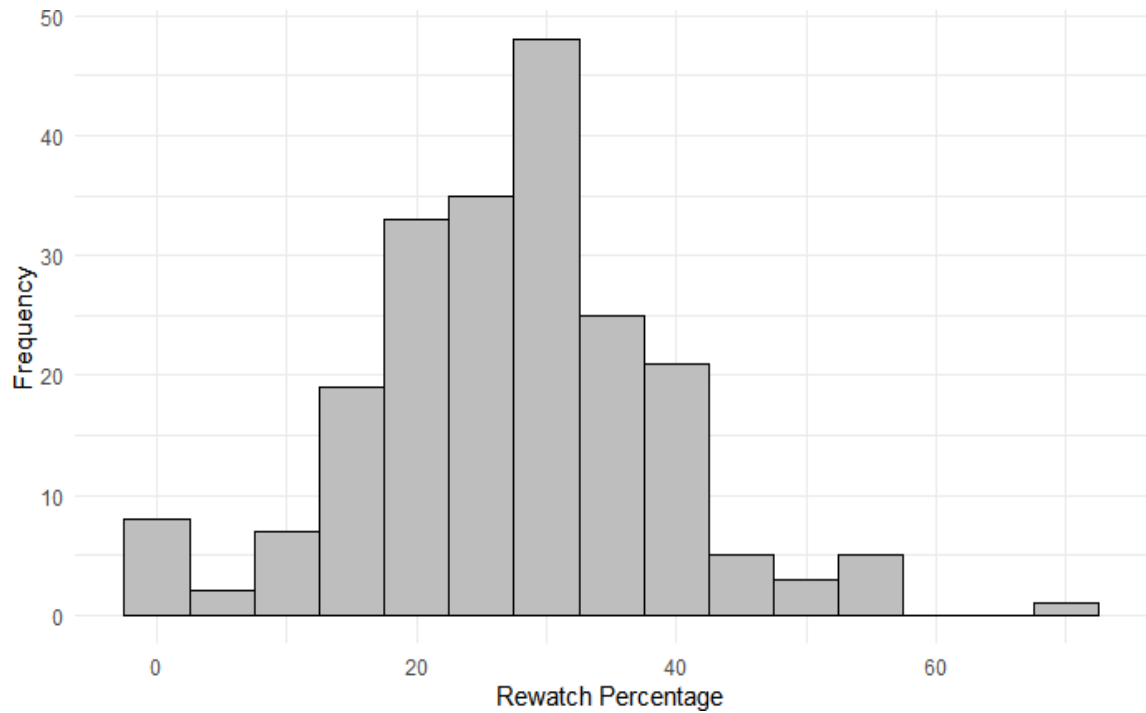


Figure 4. Percentage of Reconsumption Session Proportions Relative to All Sessions.

Figure 5 shows the distribution of viewing duration per session across the dataset. This histogram represents the distribution of watch durations (in hours), focusing on data under the 95th percentile. The x-axis represents the watch duration in hours, ranging from 0 to approximately 2.5 hours, while the y-axis shows the frequency of occurrences for each watch duration interval. The data is skewed to the right, with most watch durations clustered at the lower end of the scale. The peak at 0 indicates many sessions where viewers began watching but did not continue. The peak at 0.3 may have occurred due to the 20-minute episodes in sitcoms, and the peak between 0.5 and 1.0 may have occurred due to the longer episode formats of other genres.

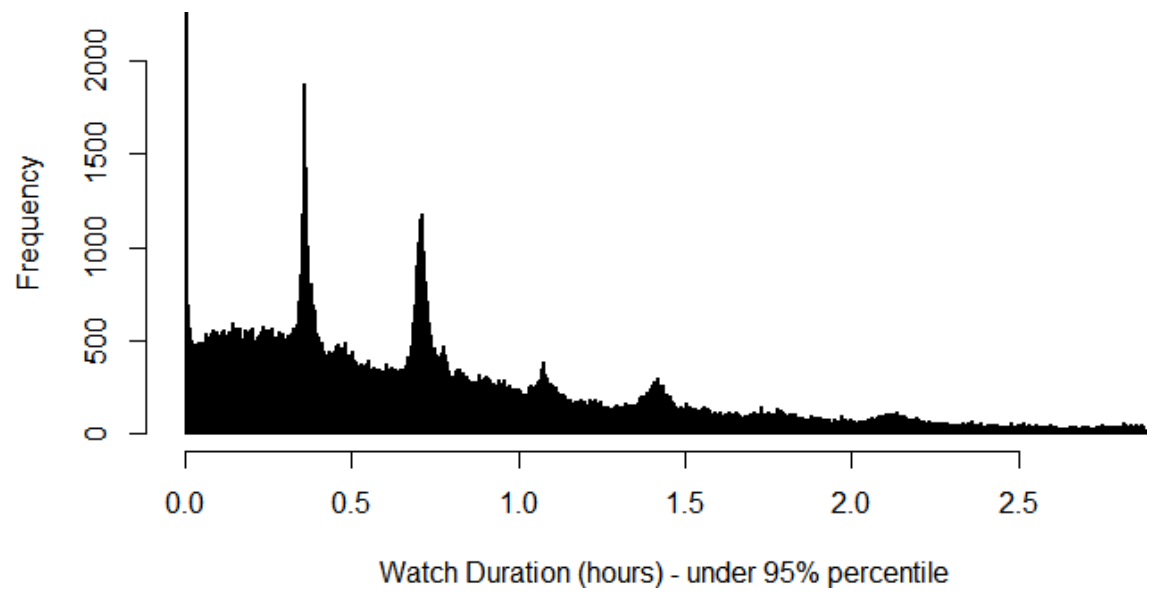


Figure 5. The Distribution of Watch Duration (Hour).

Dataset 2.

Dataset two was obtained from the Connect research pool. The dataset included data from 364 accounts. Each account included data from all the profiles on the account, which amounted to 465 profiles. The data spanned from November 14, 2008, to February 20, 2024. I aimed to analyze this data to ensure I draw from a more diverse sample than a student sample.

Descriptives. Table 6 summarizes some descriptive statistics from this dataset. These descriptives provide evidence that binge and non-binge content consumption are common practice among the general population as well, with 69.31% of each individual's viewing practice on average categorized as non-bingeing ($SD = 19.84\%$) and 30.69% categorized as binge.

Reconsumption also occurs ($M = 30.02\%$, $SD = 17.58$). The average session duration for each individual was 0.96 hours ($SD = 1.09$) indicating that, generally, excessive binge-watching is not as widespread as the existing body of research has assumed. The viewing duration is somewhat shorter among the more diverse non-student participants.

Table 6. Data Descriptives.

Behaviour	Mean	SD	Median	95% Lower	95% Upper	90% Lower	90% Upper	IQR
Binge Watching Percentage	30.69	19.84	27.85	0	76.00	0	66.84	25.57
Reconsumption Percentage	30.02	17.58	25.53	0	67.96	7.04	63.48	20.13
Non-binge Watching Percentage	69.31	19.84	27.15	24	100	33.16	100	25.57
Viewing Duration Hours	0.96	1.09	0.68	0.01	3.76	0.05	2.88	0.91
Break Duration Hours	34.01	272.83	11.01	1.14	178.46	1.31	98.85	18.90

Figure 6 shows the distribution of sessions that were coded as binge. This histogram shows the distribution of binge percentages for individuals, focusing on data under the 95th percentile. The x-axis represents the binge percentage, ranging from 0% to 60%, while the y-axis shows the frequency of occurrences for each binge percentage interval. There is a significant peak at 0%, indicating that a notable number of individuals did not engage in binge-watching at all.

Beyond 0%, the distribution is relatively spread out with various peaks, suggesting variability in binge-watching behavior. Peaks around 20%, 30%, and 40% indicate that these binge percentages are common among some individuals.

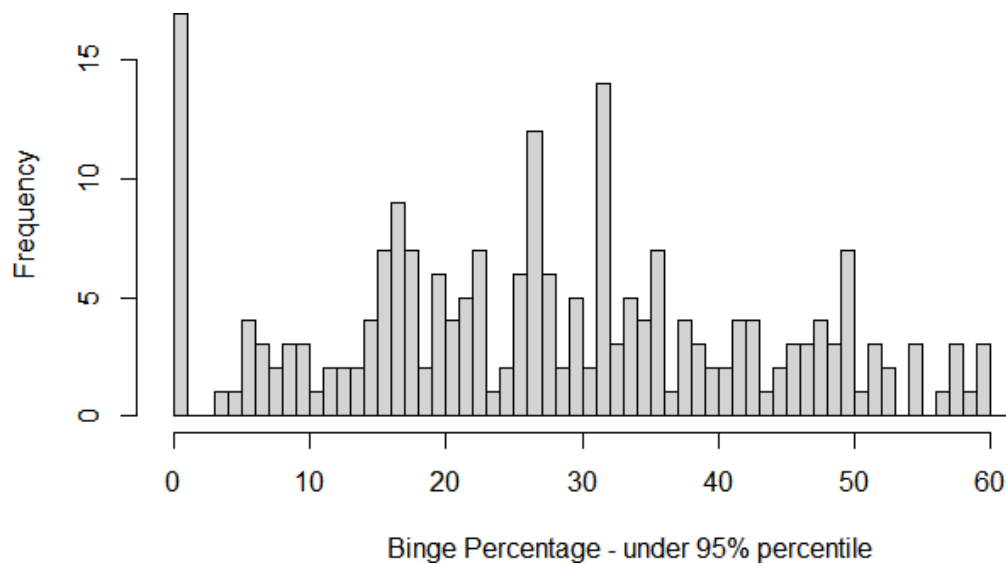


Figure 6. Percentage of Binge Session Proportions Relative to All Sessions

Figure 7 shows the distribution of sessions that were coded as reconsumption. The most binge- watched genres in descending order of proportion of binge session were competition, documentary, sci-fi, drama, romance, crime, and animation. The least reconsumed TV shows were reality, animation, mystery, and horror. The most reconsumed genres were drama, comedy, romance, sitcoms, crime, and action.

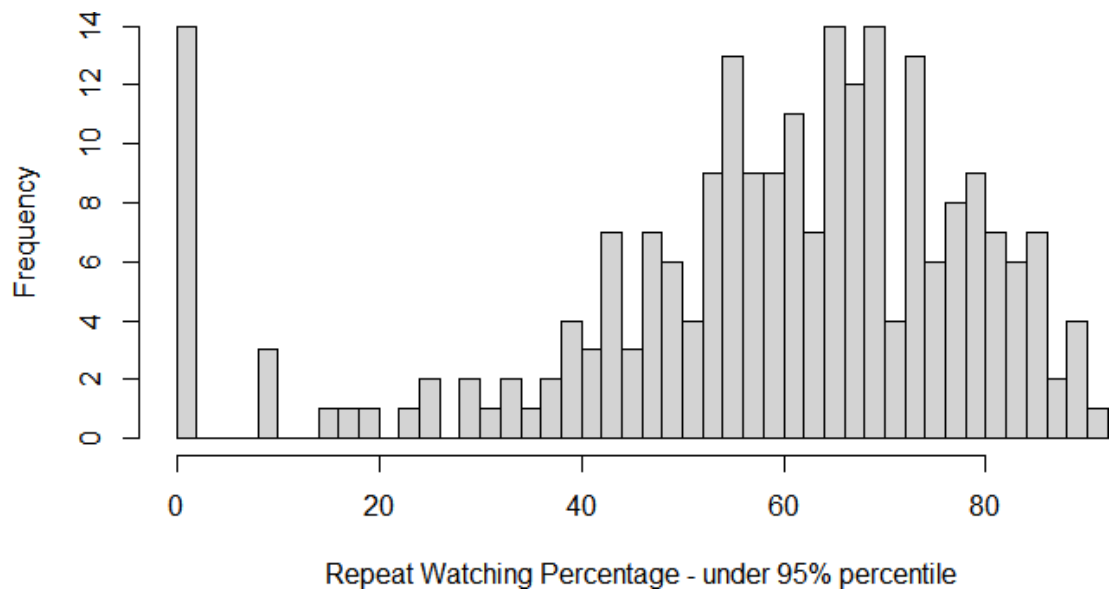


Figure 7. Percentage of Reconsumption Session Proportions Relative to All Sessions.

Figure 8 shows the distribution of viewing hours. The mean duration of viewing was 0.96 hours (SD = 1.09) suggesting that, generally, content consumption does not occur excessively.

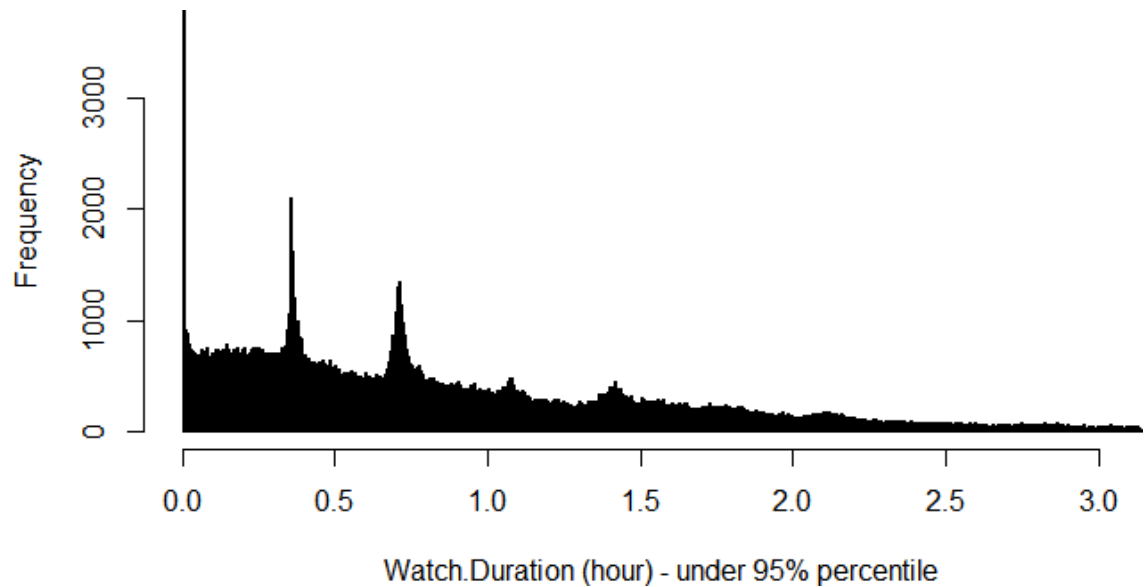


Figure 8. The Distribution of Watch Duration (Hour)

Results

The Effect of Content Consumption Format on Reconsumption

Next, I used a regression model to determine whether, in the two datasets, watch speed (a proxy for binge extent) determines downstream reconsumption. There were two controls included—show fixed effects and user fixed effects—to ensure that the differences between individuals and shows do not affect the results. Watch speed has a significant and positive effect on reconsumption, which reveals that the more individuals consumed content in a binge format, the more they reconsumed. The results are summarized in Table 7.

Table 7. Results.

Variable	Dataset 1		Dataset 2	
	Coefficient	SE	Coefficient	SE
Watch Speed	0.009***	0.002	0.011***	0.002
Watchspeed x Action	0.009***	0.005	0.005	0.003
Watchspeed x Adventure	-0.026*	0.015	-0.012**	0.006
Watchspeed x Animation	0.022**	0.010	0.012*	0.006
Watchspeed x Anime	-0.033***	0.009	-0.006	0.007
Watchspeed x Family	0.006	0.008	0.002	0.004
Watchspeed x Comedy	-0.002	0.006	0.002	0.005
Watchspeed x Competition	0.002	0.010	0.005	0.009
Watchspeed x Crime	0.023***	0.009	0.006	0.004
Watchspeed x Drama	-0.014*	0.008	-0.004	0.003
Watchspeed x Documentary	0.011	0.019	0.011	0.008
Watchspeed x Fantasy	0.009	0.012	0.000	0.005
Watchspeed x History	0.021	0.017	0.003	0.014
Watchspeed x Horror	0.000	0.006	0.005	0.005
Watchspeed x Reality	0.009	0.010	0.006	0.006
Watchspeed x Mystery	0.001	0.009	0.001	0.005
Watchspeed x Political	0.006	0.008	0.005	0.008
Watchspeed x Romance	0.025***	0.009	0.010*	0.005
Watchspeed x SciFi	0.010*	0.005	0.009**	0.004
Watchspeed x Sitcoms	0.005	0.007	0.009	0.006
Watchspeed x Teen	0.010	0.008	0.016***	0.005
Watchspeed x Thriller	-0.003	0.008	0.004	0.006
Number of Observations		8053		17519
R2		0.168		0.136
R2 Adj		0.145		0.108

In Dataset 1, the more individuals binge-watched action, animation, crime, romance, and science fiction, the higher their reconsumption behavior. However, the more they binge-watched, the less they reconsumed adventure, anime, and drama. In Dataset 2, the more people binge-watched adventure, the less they engaged in reconsumption. Nevertheless, the more they binge-watched animation, romance, science fiction, and teen genres, the more they reconsumed. Across both datasets, more binge-watching of content led to more reconsumption for animation, romance, and sci-fi genres, while more binge-

watching of content led to less reconsumption for the adventure genre.

Discussion

The secondary data indicates that binge-watching behaviour positively influences reconsumption, with significant variations across genres. Non-binge content consumption is more common than binge-watching, and reconsumption is a prevalent behaviour among viewers. However, the genre-specific analysis further reveals that the significance, magnitude, and direction of the basic binge-watching/reconsumption effect is moderated by genre, with some genres aligning with experimental observations and others not. The results provide some preliminary evidence for the moderating effect of genre, conceptualized in this work as well.

Follow-up Study

The objective of this study was to investigate the correlation between perceived binge-watching tendencies and the reconsumption of popular shows on Netflix. This survey reveals some lay theories about binge-watching. The contrast between this study and the first dataset reveals some fundamental differences between how individuals' viewing habits differ from their perception of it.

This experiment was conducted as the second part of a two-part survey. In the first part, participants uploaded their Netflix watch history, which was used as secondary data in this chapter (Dataset 1). In the second part, participants were asked to choose the show that they had watched most recently from the list of top watched TV shows in the dataset. Afterward, they reported the extent of their binge-watching and their rewatching of the content, among other measures. All measures were 7-point scale questions.

Participants

Participants for this survey were recruited from the University of Alberta School of Business subject pool. One hundred and seventeen undergraduates (Mage = 20.68, 29.36% female, 70.64% male) participated in the experiment for partial course credit. Participants were required to have an active Netflix subscription and access to their watching history data.

Methods

First, participants uploaded their Netflix watching data, which included information on the shows they watched and the duration of their watching sessions. This data was used to identify the most-watched show for further analysis. The analysis of this data was reported previously.

After three weeks, the participants were invited to the next part of the survey. They were presented with a list of the most-watched TV shows in the dataset (The Office, Friends, Brooklyn 99, Grey's Anatomy, How I Met Your Mother, Modern Family, Breaking Bad, Suits) and asked to indicate the one they had most recently watched, along with its genre classification. They then rated the extent to which they binge-watched the chosen show, where 0 = Did Not Binge at All (watched one episode at a time) and 6 = Binged the Whole Show (watched all episodes in a short time span). They also indicated whether they had finished watching the show (0 = Only Watched One Episode, 3 = Watched 50% of the Show, 6 = Watched 100% of the Show).

Participants were asked about concurrent watching, that is, whether they watched other shows between watching sessions of the chosen show, using three categories: only watched this TV show, watched another TV show, watched more than two TV shows. They indicated the similarity of the other shows they watched to the chosen show in terms

of story and genre on a 6-point scale (0 = Not at All, 6 = Very). Additionally, participants indicated if they had rewatched the chosen show (three categories: did not rewatch, rewatched a few times, rewatched many times).

Participants indicated the factors influencing their viewing of the show by selecting the determinants from a list: Because of my own interest, Because people I knew recommended it, Because everyone was watching it, Because it was recommended by the Netflix algorithm, and Other (with the option to self-declare). Next, they indicated whether the factors that impacted their content consumption were internal or external (-3 = just internal factors, 3 = just external factors). The factors that affect content consumption were also measured by asking participants the following question: To what extent was your watching format a result of your own decision, impacted by the other people you were watching the show with, impacted by the way the show was released, impacted by the fact that you wanted to keep up with others, or impacted by your other commitments? (0 = not at all, 6 = very much).

Participants were asked about their plan for most of their TV show watching sessions and whether they deviated from it (I watched the episodes I had planned, I watched fewer episodes than I had planned, I watched more episodes than I had planned). The next set of measures was also on a 6-point scale (0 = not at all, 6 = completely). These measures included: enjoyment, affective engagement, mood improvement, mood worsening, multitasking, and whether watching the TV show took their mind off other things.

The next set of measures was for cognitive outcomes. I measured how well the participants thought they remembered the whole story and the details, episode

interrelatedness, complexity, ease of following the story, preoccupation with the show in between sessions (anticipation), and being prevented from other tasks between watching sessions (0 = Not at all, 6 = Completely). Their feelings about themselves, how they used their time, and the TV show were measured (-3 = very bad, 3 = very good).

Future behaviour was also measured on a 6-point scale: how likely they were to binge another TV show, watch a similar TV show, watch a new season, or continue subscribing to the streaming service that releases bingeable TV shows (0 = Not likely at all, 6 = Very likely).

Last, I measured the individual's tendencies. I asked how likely they are to binge TV shows, watch a new TV show that becomes popular, talk to others about the shows they watch, watch TV shows as they are released even if it is one episode at a time, or wait until a TV show is fully released to binge it.

Results

Content Consumption Format. The binge measure indicated a mean of 3.4 and a standard deviation of 2.02, suggesting that there is variance across the sample. Perceived binge-watching was not significantly different ($F(1, 106) = 0.12, p = 0.73$) across genres: sitcom ($M = 3.46, SD = 2.05$) and drama ($M = 3.3, SD = 1.9$). There might be some selection bias involved when individuals choose to binge TV shows, leading to the most popular TV shows being primarily sitcoms. The majority of the top TV shows were sitcoms as well, leading to some bias in this self-report survey.

Reconsumption. Among participants, 38.9% did not rewatch the content. 38.1% rewatched the show a few times and 15.9% rewatched the show many times. I recoded the responses (0 = did not rewatch, 1 = rewatched) and conducted a logistic regression. Binge

content consumption positively predicted reconsumption, according to individuals' self-reports ($X^2 = 5.31$, $\beta = 0.22$, $p = 0.02$). I also added genre (drama) as a factor ($\beta = -1.42$, $p < .01$), indicating that drama (relative to sitcom) leads to decreased reconsumption.

Anticipation. I measured between episode anticipation using the following measure: To what extent were you preoccupied by the TV show in between the viewing sessions? The correlation coefficient between binge-watching and anticipation was -0.014 ($p = 0.881$) and not significant.

Enjoyment. Enjoyment was significantly correlated with perceived binge-watching behaviour ($r = 0.435$, $p < .001$). This suggests that individuals who reported engaging in more binge-watching reported higher levels of enjoyment.

Finishing. I observed a significant positive correlation between perceived binge-watching behavior and actually finishing the TV show (0 = Only watched one episode, 3 = watched 50% of the show, 6 = watched 100% of the show; $r = 0.405$, $p < .001$). This implies that individuals who engage in binge-watching are more likely to complete the TV shows they start.

Discussion

This follow-up study revealed different results compared to the experimental data. The reason for this divergence is what motivated the experimental investigation of this body of research in the first place. Self-report surveys have several caveats. First, different individuals might have varying concepts of binge consumption. Second, individuals might not be accurately reflecting on their reconsumption experience. The endogeneity inherent in such self-reports cannot be denied. The individuals might consume content in binge format because they enjoy it and for the same reason, reconsume the content. This study

reveals why self-report surveys might not be revealing the nuances in the behaviours this dissertation explores.

The investigation into the secondary data revealed seemingly different observations than the experiments. In an attempt to reconcile these differences, some key discrepancies between the two methodologies are worth noting. The experiments were designed in an attempt to isolate the content consumption behaviour from all other contextual factors except the method of initial consumption. This isolation is not present in the secondary data, which in turn changes the paradigm observed in the data. In the experiments, no choice is given to the participants in terms of what they view. This choice exists in the secondary data, which might present a source of endogeneity: consumers choose what they view, they finish it if they like it, they might even view it in a binge format and as a result of liking it, they might also choose to reconsume it. The experimental paradigm, however, controls for this source of endogeneity, as an experiment should. Nevertheless, the two methodologies explore different levels of the same behaviour and offer a more comprehensive description of the behaviour.

In addition, there is an array of other contextual factors that might be leading to this discrepancy. First, the consumption might be a result of someone else's choice other than the consumer, for example a partner or a parent in the case of family shows and animations. There is no source of information that would allow for a closer investigation of the behaviour given this antecedent, but it is likely to change the desire to reconsume as observed in the experiments where this effect is absent. Second, there are several ways in which the individuals might engage in content consumption differently than the experiments when it comes to the cognitive engagement they have with the content. For

instance, a viewing session in the secondary data is recorded the same way regardless of whether the individual is engaging with the TV show by sitting and watching it, or not engaging as much by having it play in the background as they engage in other activities.

Their reconsumption might also follow a similar pattern—some reconsumption observed in the secondary data might be merely a background viewing activity. Last, there are some shows that might be released on Netflix as a second source and the consumers might have viewed them prior to their release on Netflix, making the first viewing in the Netflix data a reconsumption experience. These inherent differences between the data, attained through the experimental paradigm and the secondary data, have resulted in the discrepancy between the results. My aim was to offer a comprehensive view of the viewing behaviour.

CHAPTER 6: CONTRIBUTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Although binge and non-binge content consumption and reconsumption are common practices among consumers, their nuances have not yet been examined in the literature. In addition, their interrelation has not been studied, despite the fact that they are both widespread content-related behaviours that overlap theoretically. Granted, the recent advent of streaming platforms has caused a paradigm shift in how content is consumed due to the extent of control it allows consumers. While traditionally, consumers were at the mercy of networks and producers to determine their viewing schedule, these days they can binge, not binge, or reconsume as they please. This research was conducted to reveal some of the deeper nuances of these behaviours and to examine the relationship between content consumption format and reconsumption. In doing so, I make several contributions, both theoretical and practical.

Theoretical Contributions

First, I contribute to the literature on content consumption format by studying binge and non-binge content consumption. To expand our understanding of these two behaviours, I step away from the assumption that binge-watching is pathological to the point of being an addiction and examine it from a psychological perspective. Furthermore, I turn my attention to a content consumption behaviour that has long been overshadowed by the literature's focus on binge-watching: not binge-watching. The focus on different degrees of binge content consumption and the lack of attention to non-binge content consumption may be due to a mistaken assumption that whatever happens when viewers binge-watch, the opposite must happen when viewers do not binge-watch. Instead, I examine the psychological underpinnings of both behaviours and juxtapose them to offer a more

parallel comparison.

Second, I expand our understanding of volitional reconsumption, which has remained largely unexplored in the context of content consumption. However, reconsumption is worth exploring in this context because content is a sophisticated medium made of several facets, such as narrative, storyline, characters, and visuals, which can prevent hedonic adaptation through the use of complexity and novelty. These characteristics make content consumption a unique form of consumption, distinct from, for instance, consuming a particular food, and deserving of its own body of research. I contribute to the concept of volitional reconsumption, rather than the habitual, ritualistic, and automatic reconsumption practices embraced in the past by researchers. While prior work has mostly examined lay beliefs and their inconsistencies with real outcomes of reconsumption, like enjoyment, I make an effort to uncover why reconsumption may occur.

More importantly, I offer an exploration of a previously disregarded consequence of content consumption format and an equally overlooked antecedent of reconsumption by exploring how content consumption format can change the desire to reconsume. I develop a framework to examine how and why content consumption format might impact reconsumption. In doing so, I investigate consumers' interaction with content, not just over one episode or encounter, but over the lifetime of the interaction between the consumer and the content. I add to the literature on binge and non-binge content consumption by examining several psychologically driven pathways through which non-binge content consumption format could lead to reconsumption.

Finally, through exploring the interconnection between content consumption format

and reconsumption, I contribute to the research on hedonic experiences, anticipation, and closure, and deepen our understanding of how these underlying processes change behaviour. I examine the determinants of content reconsumption as a hedonic experience, rather than an automatic and ritualistic one. Furthermore, I examine the role of anticipation in episodic consumption experiences, rather than in single episode experiences, between the decision and consumption, generally examined in consumer behaviour research. My research also deepens our understanding of process-induced closure, which is an expansion of the trait-based need for closure, typically studied in previous research.

Methodological Contributions

I contribute to the literature on binge and non-binge content consumption through developing an experimental paradigm and using secondary data. Whereas prior work has used primarily surveys and self-reporting measures to investigate binge-watching and its consequences, in this research, I consider both binge and non-binge content consumption and examine them using experimental methodology under the constraints presented by an experimental paradigm. I also use secondary data to examine the validity of my experimental findings and ensure external validity. Last, I use text analysis to explore how the desire to reconsume is spontaneously indicated without the necessity of providing direction to viewers. This multi-method approach offers a well- rounded understanding of reconsumption and the consequences of content consumption format.

Marketing Contributions

This work offers implications for platforms because it allows streaming services to predict how consumers consume content and devise release schedules and recommendation algorithms accordingly. Specifically, my experiments show that when consumers adopt a

non-binge consumption format, they will be more interested in re-consuming that content. Accordingly, platforms would do well to encourage re-consumption by reminding (non-bingeing) consumers about previously viewed content through platform features such as “watch again” buttons, recommendations, and lists. Further, streaming platforms may benefit from release schedules that encourage non-binge content consumption if the platform’s strategy is to enhance enjoyment and keep subscribers returning to the platform. Aligning the release schedules with the genre and how it affects re-consumption behaviour may prove beneficial. In addition, platforms can use the findings of this paper to make decisions about what sequels would be consumed by the subscribers depending on their viewing history. The platforms can also continue expanding on the amount of control they afford viewers by enabling them to choose the shows they would like to re-consume and recommending shows to them depending on their previous consumption format.

Future Research

With research on non-binge content consumption and volitional content re-consumption at a nascent stage, there are several avenues for future research. One, based on my framework, some trait-based measures can be explored further. This research offers some preliminary evidence for future and past orientation as predictors of re-consumption, but future research is needed to explore the nuances further. Research on different genres and how they are characterized, and subsequently how they impact content consumption, is surprisingly missing from marketing and content consumption research and provides a promising area for research. The present findings have provided preliminary evidence into how different genres differ in how their consumption format leads to re-consumption. Future research can examine these nuances further. Future research could conceptualize

genres further in TV shows, using narrative structures, aesthetics, and character arcs, and examine how the different genres lead to different desires to reconsume depending on the primary content consumption format.

While binge and non-binge content consumption have been operationalised with some degree of freedom in the literature so far, it might also be worth examining them on a more granular level and determining whether there are boundaries to the observed effects in terms of number of episodes, duration of consumption, and the nature and duration of the break. These factors were kept consistent in this research, but each presents an opportunity for future research that adds nuance and depth to our understanding of content consumption behaviour. For instance, if a break allows for more engagement with the narrative through social interaction, or consumption of other relevant content, non-binge content consumption may enhance understanding. Conversely, if the break is long, such as a break between seasons, it might perpetuate disengagement from the narrative completely. These are potential avenues for promising future research.

Last, the current research primarily focused on TV shows as the content type. Future research could expand this investigation to include other forms of digital content, such as user-generated content, movies, podcasts, and video games, to determine if the observed effects hold across different media types. I expect that each of these types of content, depending on their narrative structure and motives for consumption, may lead to behaviour that differs from TV show consumption.

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