When "Netflix and Chill" Leaves us Cold: Binge-Watching, Opportunity Costs, and Regret

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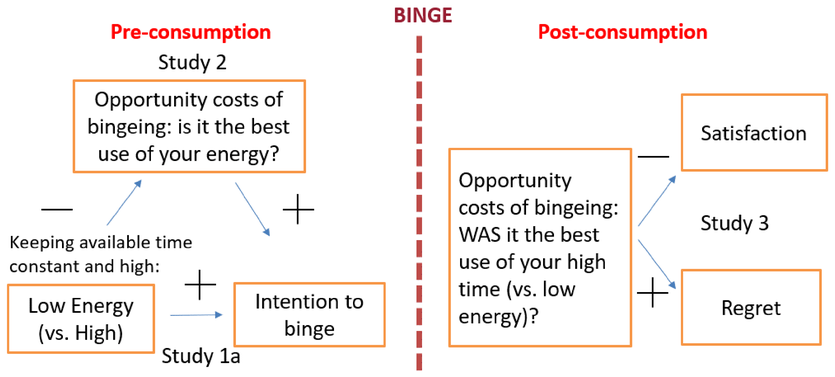
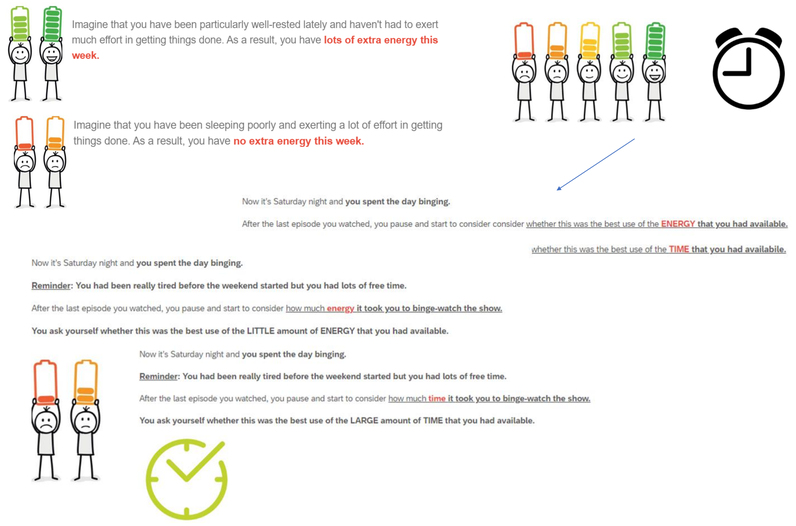
SUMMARY

Binge-watching is repeated and accumulated consumption, where consumers watch multiple episodes of the same show in a row. Streaming companies employ strategies where all episodes are released simultaneously. Is this type of consumption a win-win?

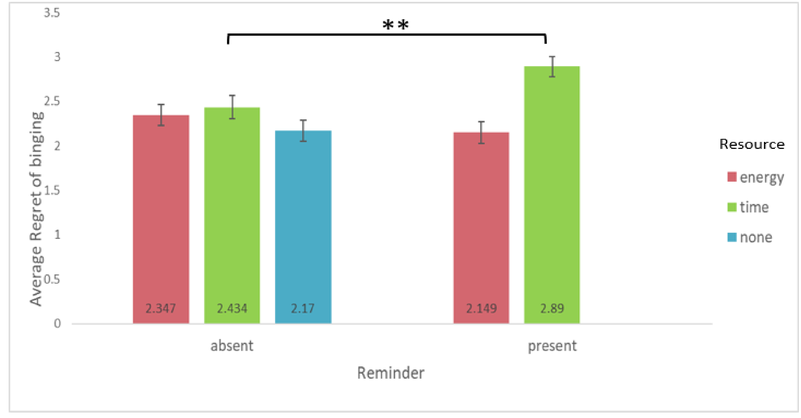
5 pre-registered experiments suggest that consumers who have low energy and lots of time are more likely to decide to binge-watch, considering it the best use of their limited resource.

Under these optimal conditions, consumers show lower regret when they are considering energy-related opportunity costs. However, if time become salient after consumption, regret increases, potentially harming future bingeing experiences.





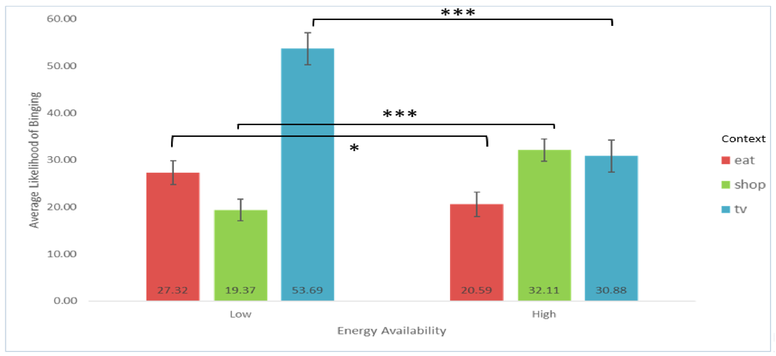
Study 3



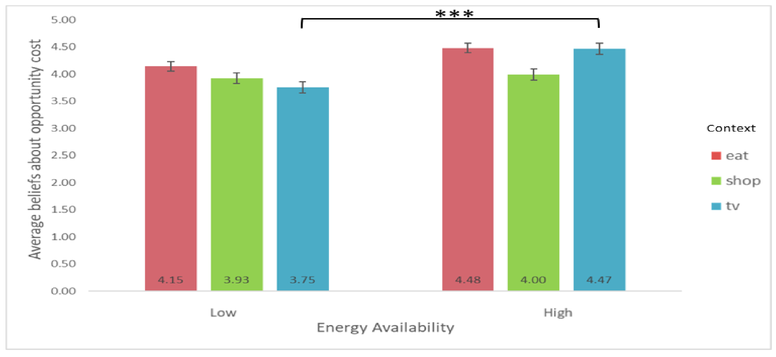
Int: $F(1,496)=7.42$, $p=0.007$; resource: $F(2, 496)=7.11$, $p<0.001$; reminder: $F(1, 496)= 3.36$, $p=0.07$

When they think of the opportunity cost of binging in hindsight: if they keep focusing on energy, they are still satisfied with their choice. If they switch their focus on time and they are reminded that they had a lot when they started binging, regret increases.

Study 1a



$F(2, 596)= 20.31$, $p<0.001$; eat: $t(196) =1.94$, $p=0.05$; shop: $t(202)= 3.41$, $p<0.001$; tv: $t(198) = 4.94$, $p<0.001$



$F(2, 596)= 10.31$, $p<0.001$; eat: $t(196) =2.02$, $p=0.04$; shop: $p=0.98$; tv: $t(198) = 5.50$, $p<0.001$

If energy is low, likelihood to plan binging increases, because binging is a low effort activity that constitute the best use of our low energy. This does not happen when energy is high or in other binging contexts.

Study 2

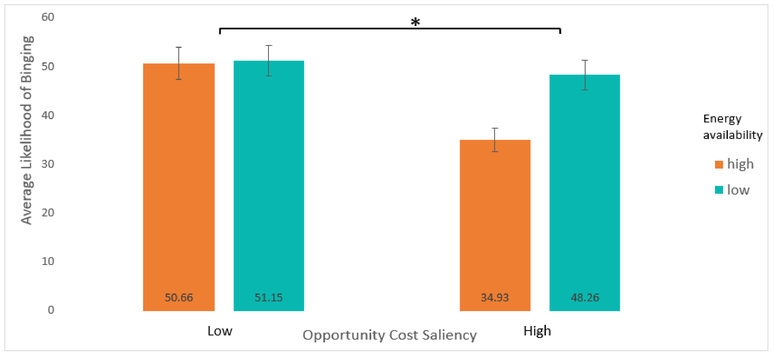
Before deciding whether to binge-watch, you consider how **many other things you could do with your LOW energy.**

Why would binge-watching not be the best use of your energy?

Please list up to 5 things you **could** have done **with your LOW energy instead of bingeing.**

WHEN YOU CANNOT THINK OF ANYTHING JUST WRITE "NA".

When we distract people from thinking about opportunity costs, the main effect of energy on likelihood to binge goes away!



Int: $F(1, 396)=4.71$; $p=0.03$, energy: $F(1, 396)= 6.26$, $p=0.01$; opp cost: $F(1, 396)= 9.87$, $p= 0.002$

Pre-regs and all material at: https://researchbox.org/1355&PEER_REVIEW_passcode=FACNUY

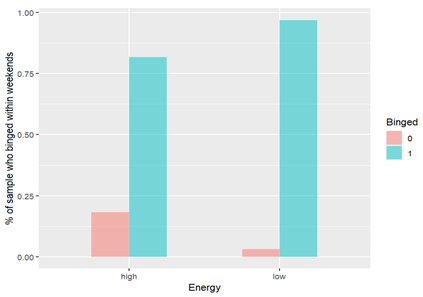
Field data – MyAnimeList

DV1: binging
- 1 if show is completed on day of release
- 0 otherwise

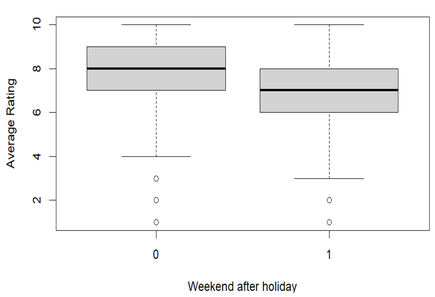
IV: Energy:
- low if watched on weekend after work
- high if watched on weekend after holiday

DV2: ratings of the show (1 to 10)

Time fixed: only weekends; FE: user id, title



b= -0.22, SE=0.003, t(186175)= 68.80, p<0.001



b= - 0.17, SE= 0.03, t(145114)= 6.67, p<0.001

People are more likely to binge on a weekend after work (low energy) rather than vacation (high energy). And they are more satisfied with what they are watching when doing so. Important to target well!