

# K-Drama Excessive Watching Behavior and Loneliness of Parasocial Interaction in College Students

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**Abstract.** The emergence of the Korean Wave, encompassing K-dramas and K-pop, has garnered significant interest, particularly among college students. This research investigates how excessive viewing and feelings of loneliness impact social interactions. Utilizing a quantitative research design, the study involved 83 students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at X University, selected through probability sampling methods. Data collection methods included scales measuring parasocial interactions, excessive viewing habits, and loneliness levels. The analysis employed multiple linear regression techniques. Key findings indicate that: (1) excessive viewing and loneliness significantly affect parasocial interactions, with an  $F$ -value of 3.992 exceeding the  $F$ -table value of 3.18 and a  $p$ -value of 0.001, contributing an influence of 42.1% ( $R^2$ ); (2) excessive viewing positively correlates with parasocial interactions, shown by a beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.377, a  $t$ -value of 2.071 surpassing the  $t$ -table value of 2.008, and a  $p$ -value of 0.044 ( $p < 0.05$ ); (3) however, loneliness does not significantly impact parasocial interactions, evidenced by a beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.156, a count of 0.156.859 falling below the  $t$ -table value of 2.008, and a  $p$ -value of 0.395 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Keywords:** Social interaction, excessive watching, loneliness.

**Abstrak.** Perkembangan fenomena Korean Wave, yang mencakup K-Drama dan musik K-Pop, telah menarik perhatian yang luas, khususnya di kalangan mahasiswa. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi dampak dari menonton secara berlebihan dan perasaan kesepian terhadap interaksi parasosial. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah pendekatan kuantitatif. Subjek penelitian terdiri dari 83 mahasiswa Fakultas Ilmu Sosial dan Ilmu Politik Universitas X yang dipilih melalui teknik probability sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan dengan menggunakan skala untuk mengukur interaksi parasosial, tingkat menonton berlebihan, dan kesepian. Analisis data dilakukan menggunakan regresi linier berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa: (1) terdapat pengaruh signifikan antara menonton berlebihan dan kesepian terhadap interaksi parasosial, dengan nilai  $F$  hitung sebesar 3.992 yang lebih besar dari  $F$  tabel 3.18 dan nilai  $p$  sebesar 0.001, serta kontribusi pengaruh ( $R^2$ ) mencapai 42.1%; (2) terdapat pengaruh positif yang signifikan dari menonton berlebihan terhadap interaksi parasosial dengan nilai koefisien beta ( $\beta$ ) sebesar 0.377,  $t$  hitung 2.071 lebih besar dari  $t$  tabel 2.008, dan nilai  $p$  sebesar 0.044 ( $p < 0.05$ ); (3) tidak ditemukan pengaruh signifikan dari kesepian terhadap interaksi parasosial dengan nilai koefisien beta ( $\beta$ ) sebesar 0.156,  $t$  hitung 0.859 lebih kecil dari  $t$  tabel 2.008, dan nilai  $p$  sebesar 0.395 ( $p < 0.05$ ).

**Kata Kunci:** Interaksi parasosial, menonton berlebihan, kesepian.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Over the years, there have been many technological advancements. In Indonesia, smartphones facilitate the fulfillment of various human needs. Fahirra and Andjarwati (2022) assert that these technological developments have made it easier for people to access a wide range of information, thus streamlining many tasks. The entertainment sector has also been influenced by these technological changes. This progress has introduced various foreign cultures, which are increasingly recognized and embraced by the Indonesian populace, particularly students (Aspi, 2022). Azelia et al. (2022) noted that Western cultures (from America and Europe) and Asian cultures (including Japan, South Korea, and China) are among those discussed.

One of the foreign cultures that has emerged in Indonesia is the Korean Wave. According to Valenciana and Pudjibudojo (2022), the term "Korean Wave" refers to the spread of South Korean pop culture across various countries, including Indonesia. This culture is disseminated through entertainment products such as music, drama, and fashion (Yulianawati & Ganjar, 2022). The popularity of South Korean pop culture in Indonesia began in 2002 with the airing of the South Korea and Japan World Cup on Indonesian television, which led to the introduction of South Korean dramas, commonly referred to as K-Dramas (Mahardika et al., 2022).

In 2019, Putri et al. reported that Trans TV was one of the first networks to broadcast a K-Drama titled "Mother's Sea" on March 26, 2002, followed by Indosiar airing "Endless" on July 1, 2002. By 2011, approximately 50 Korean dramas were being shown on private Indonesian television channels, with this number increasing each year. During the pandemic from 2020 to mid-2022, educational institutions transitioned to online learning due to closures (Handarini & Wulandari, 2020).

Students found it challenging to concentrate on their studies during online classes as they spent extended hours in front of their laptop screens, leading to eye strain. Furthermore, assignments often required even more screen time than usual (Herlina, 2020). Puspita and Suciati (2024) noted that this situation can result

in students losing interest in their studies and gravitating toward activities such as gaming, watching TikTok videos, and viewing dramas or movies recommended by friends.

According to Yakub et al. (2023), several popular K-Dramas like "The World of the Married," "Crash Landing on You," and "Hospital Playlist" gained notable viewership during the pandemic. Key findings indicated that 43% of participants watched Korean dramas more than six times a week. Additionally, there was a change in viewing duration before and during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The average time spent watching K-Dramas increased from about 2.7 hours per day before Covid to approximately 4.6 hours per day during the pandemic, highlighting the importance of leisure time during critical periods. "The World of the Married" became one of the most anticipated drama series and achieved record ratings in South Korean television history (Setiawan et al., 2022).

Dafnaz and Effendy (2020) pointed out that beyond feelings of boredom and frustration, individuals often experience a sense of isolation due to a lack of social interaction with others (Sagita et al., 2020). This research aims to examine how increased screen time and feelings of loneliness affect parasocial relationships.

Oktaviana and Ambarwati (2022) noted that individuals aged 18 to 24 frequently experience loneliness due to excessive screen time, which hampers their ability to engage in face-to-face interactions and leads to feelings of isolation. They also report experiencing stress and anxiety, sleep difficulties, and a sense of emptiness in their lives. Excessive viewing can negatively impact both physical health and cognitive functions.

Loneliness arises from a perceived lack of social connections and an inability to form relationships (Sagita et al., 2020). It is a complex emotion often characterized by feelings of emptiness, solitude, and social rejection (Rusdani, 2022). Sholichah et al. (2022) argue that this sense of loneliness can lead individuals to feel significant discomfort even within social contexts.

Xu et al. (2020) emphasize that maintaining close and high-quality relationships is essential for protecting oneself against feelings of loneliness. During the pandemic, some students chose to return home while others opted to stay elsewhere due to various commitments outside their homes (Schwartz et al., 2021). Rahiem et al. (2021) observed that students' relationships with family suffered in terms of both closeness and quality while away from home. Many students experienced a decline in both the quantity and quality of their connections with classmates when they returned home due to universities transitioning to online education as a measure against Covid-19 spread (Rinaldi, 2021).

Sadida (2022) investigated how excessive viewing and feelings of loneliness can influence parasocial interactions affected by weak social ties within one's environment. Dani et al. (2024) suggest that individuals often cope with loneliness by engaging in activities like watching media since it allows them to empathize with characters' emotions and become immersed in narratives.

Further research by Karsay et al. (2019) titled "Longitudinal Impact of Excessive Smartphone Use on Stress and Loneliness: How Self-Disclosure Can Make a Difference" indicates that sharing personal experiences can reduce stress and loneliness stemming from social interactions by highlighting self-worth's role in mental well-being. A previous study conducted by WAN and WU (2020) utilized an online questionnaire involving 244 participants to explore how viewing experiences could lead to unexpected outcomes like feelings of isolation.

Firdausa and Shanti (2019) noted that loneliness often results from mismatched social relationships leading to anxiety, depression, and social isolation; this prompts individuals to seek distractions such as forming parasocial bonds through media consumption. It is crucial for individuals to recognize that parasocial interactions are not genuine emotions but rather artificial connections.

This research aims to explore how excessive viewing habits and feelings of loneliness impact parasocial interactions among young adults while considering media

consumption frequency and duration alongside levels of loneliness regarding these interactions. Additionally, it examines how these factors influence perceptions, emotional attachments to media characters, interpersonal relationships, and overall psychological well-being among young adults.

## 2. METHOD

The methodology used in this study is quantitative in nature. In this research, parasocial interaction serves as the dependent variable, while excessive viewing and loneliness are identified as independent variables. The sample consisted of 83 students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at University X. This faculty was selected for the study because it met specific criteria, having experienced a year of online lectures in the 2020 cohort due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, students may be more prone to feelings of boredom and loneliness stemming from repetitive lecture-based activities. A non-probability sampling method was employed for participant selection, with subjects chosen based on particular considerations or criteria (Sugiyono, 2018).

Three assessment tools were utilized in this research: the parasocial interaction scale, the excessive viewing scale, and the loneliness scale (Kim & Kim, 2017). The parasocial interaction scale consists of 24 items and has a reliability coefficient of 0.855. The excessive viewing scale includes 32 items and has a reliability of 0.845. The loneliness scale also comprises 32 items, with a reliability coefficient of 0.826.

## 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The participants in this research were students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at University X, graduating in 2020 and 2021.

**Table 1. Number of Research Population**

No	Study program	Force		Frequency
		2020	2021	
1	Social Development	103	92	195
2	Public Administration	109	103	212
3	Public administration	104	104	213
4	International Relations Science	98	101	205
5	Communication Studies	106	107	213

6	Business Administration	110	110	220
7	Psychology	104	109	213
<b>Total</b>		<b>734</b>	<b>726</b>	<b>1,421</b>

The research study included 83 students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences at University X. Details about the research subjects are provided in the table below.

**Table 2. Distribution of Research Subjects Based on Age**

Aspect	Age	Frequency	Percentage
Age	16 years	1	1.2%
	17 years	2	2.4%
	18 years	9	10.8%
	19 years	22	26.5%
	20 years	36	43.4%
	21 years	10	12.0%
	22 years	2	2.4%
	23 years	1	1.2%
<b>Total</b>		<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

In this study, participants who were 16 years old represented 1.2% of the sample population. Those aged 17 accounted for 2.4%. Individuals who were 18 years old made up 10.8% of the sample. The age group of 19 years comprised 26.5%. The largest segment consisted of individuals who were 20 years old, making up 43.4% of the population. Participants aged 21 represented 12.0%, while those who were 22 years old constituted 2.4% of the total sample. Finally, the group of individuals aged 23 accounted for 1.2%.

**Table 3. Distribution of Research Subjects Based on Gender**

Aspect	Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Man	17	20.5%
	Woman	66	79.5%
<b>Total</b>		<b>83</b>	<b>100%</b>

This study reveals that the majority of the 83 students from the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences who took part in the research were female, comprising 79.5% of the sample.

Descriptive statistics are employed to demonstrate the distribution of data among the students in this faculty. The mean values obtained from the responses of the research sample include both empirical and theoretical means, which were collected from three research scales: the parasocial interaction scale,

the excessive viewing scale, and the loneliness scale.

**Table 4. Empirical Mean and Hypothetical Mean**

Variables	Empirical Mean	Mean Hypothetical	Status
Parasocial Interaction	58.21	55	High
Overwatching	77.32	67.5	High
Lonely	71.00	65	High

The empirical mean derived from the parasocial interaction scale measurements is 58.21, which exceeds the high hypothetical mean of 55. Similarly, the empirical average for the excessive viewing scale measurements was 77.32, surpassing the high hypothetical average of 67.5. The loneliness scale recorded an average of 71.00 in the study, which is higher than the anticipated high average of 65.

Before proceeding with data analysis for hypothesis testing, it is essential to conduct assumption tests, including a normality test and a linearity test. Below are the results from the assumption tests conducted on the research data.

#### Normality Test

In the normality test, if the p-value is greater than 0.05, the distribution is considered normal; conversely, if the p-value is less than 0.05, the distribution is deemed not normal (Minajim, 2020).

**Table 5. Normality Test Results**

Variables	z	P	Information
Parasocial Interaction	0.129	0.029	Not Normal
Overwatching	0.142	0.009	Not Normal
Lonely	0.109	0.164	Normal

The results of the normality test show that the p-value for the parasocial interaction and excessive viewing variables is greater than 0.05, indicating a non-normal data distribution. In contrast, the loneliness variable has a p-value greater than 0.05, suggesting a normal data distribution.

#### Linearity Test

In the linearity test, if the deviation from linearity value has a  $p > 0.05$  and the calculated F value is less than the F table at a 5% significance level, then the relationship is deemed linear (Rifayanti, et al., 2021).

**Table 6. Linearity Test Results**

Variables	F-hit	F-tab	P	note
Interaction Parasocial – Excessive Watching	1,542	3.18	0.137	Linear
Parasocial Interaction – Loneliness	2,338	3.18	0.016	Non-Linear

The first, the results of the linearity assumption test between parasocial interaction and excessive viewing indicated a deviation from linearity with an F count value of 1.542, which is less than the F table value of 3.11. This suggests that there is an influence, and with a p-value of 0.137 (greater than 0.05), it indicates that the influence is linear.

The second, in contrast, the results of the linearity assumption test between parasocial interaction and excessive viewing revealed a deviation from linearity with an F count value of 2.338, which is also less than the F table value of 3.11. This indicates an influence, but with a p-value of 0.016 (greater than 0.05), it suggests that the influence is not linear.

Following the assumption tests, the researcher proceeded with hypothesis testing using multiple regression model analysis. The results from the full regression model test, based on the variables of excessive viewing and loneliness affecting parasocial interaction, yielded the following findings:

**Table 7. Multiple Regression Analysis Test Results**

Variables	F-hit	F-tab	R <sup>2</sup>	P
Parasocial Interaction(Y) Overwatch (X1) Loneliness (X2)	3.992	3.18	0.421	0.001

The results indicate that F count is greater than F table and p is less than 0.05, signifying that excessive viewing and loneliness have a significant impact on parasocial interaction. Furthermore, the findings from the stepwise regression analysis are as follows:

**Table 8. Results of Stepwise Model Regression Analysis Test**

Variables	Beta	T-hit	T-tab	p
Overwatch (X1) Parasocial Interaction (Y)	0.377	2,071	2.008	0.044
Loneliness (X2) Parasocial Interaction (Y)	0.156	0.859	2.008	0.395

The calculated t value exceeds the t table, and the p value is less than 0.05, indicating a significant and positive effect of excessive viewing on parasocial interaction, with a beta coefficient of 0.377. Specifically, the calculated t value is 2.071 and  $p = 0.044 (< 0.05)$ . This confirms the minor hypothesis that excessive viewing influences parasocial interaction. In contrast, loneliness in relation to parasocial interaction shows a calculated t value greater than the t table, reflecting a notable positive effect with a beta coefficient of 0.156. The calculated t value is 0.859, and the p value is 0.395, which is greater than 0.05.

Sari and Junita (2023) noted that prolonged viewing adversely affects both physical and mental capabilities. Feelings of isolation often arise from inadequate social interactions and an inability to form connections (Pramitha & Astuti, 2021). Nisa and Satwika (2022) describe loneliness as a complex and generally negative emotion, characterized by feelings of emptiness, isolation, and lack of appreciation from one's surroundings. It emerges when social connections are deficient in either quality or quantity (Pospos et al., 2022).

Through stepwise regression analysis, this research confirmed a positive relationship between excessive viewing and parasocial interactions, demonstrating a significant impact that supports the minor hypothesis of this study (Anghelcev et al., 2021). The hypothesis test results indicate that higher levels of excessive viewing correlate with increased levels of parasocial interaction, consistent with findings from Zafar et al. (2020). More parasocial interactions are likely to lead to increased excessive viewing; conversely, reduced excessive viewing correlates with diminished parasocial interaction (Sun & Chang, 2021).

The results from the full model regression analysis upheld the main hypothesis of the study, confirming that excessive viewing and loneliness do influence parasocial interactions. An R<sup>2</sup> value of 0.421 indicates that approximately 42% of the variance in parasocial interactions can be attributed to high levels of viewing and feelings of loneliness. According to Sugiyono (2018), this coefficient falls within the moderate range of 0.400-0.599, suggesting that excessive viewing and loneliness have a moderate impact on parasocial interactions.

Additionally, findings from Putri and Yatim's (2019) earlier study indicate that women tend to engage in more parasocial interactions indirectly, driven by perceived connections with television characters and influenced by emotions such as liking and communication.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This research seeks to investigate how extensive viewing and feelings of loneliness impact parasocial interactions in college students. Studies have found that both variables have a notable impact on parasocial interactions, and that excessive viewing and loneliness also have positive effects. This research helps advance theories in social and clinical psychology and promotes mental health initiatives focused on decreasing loneliness and unhealthy parasocial interactions through programs like time management workshops and social events.

This research also has constraints, particularly tied to the limited participant pool because of specific criteria. Additional researchers should consider increasing the participant pool and utilizing different sampling techniques like stratified sampling. Moreover, they should also conduct longitudinal studies to investigate the lasting effects of excessive screen time and feelings of loneliness on the formation of parasocial relationships.

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