

Perceptions of the Impact of US Drama Binge-Watching in the Emirates

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Abstract

The study investigates respondents' perception of the negative effects of US drama binge watching on the respondents' own cultural values as compared with its perceived effects on the cultural values of others. The study examines both the perceptual and behavioral components of The Third Person Effect (TPE) in relation to binge TV watching. Cultural background traits (individualism and collectivism) are studied as an intervening variable. The results showed that UAE binge US Drama watchers tend to perceive the effects of binge watching as more positive for themselves than on other people. The finding was the same even for TV drama perceived as violent. The results also showed that the presence of individualist vs collectivist cultural tendency did not have a significant impact with respect to the workings of TPE. The perceptual component of TPE was proved, while the behavioral component was not significant.

Keywords: Third Person Effect - US Violent Drama - Binge TV Watching - Media Imperialism - US Drama - Cultural Self-Conceptual

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Introduction

As technology advances and media becomes more accessible, psychologists, among others, have inquired about the impact of media on human development and society, as the values and the everyday lives of its audience have been affected (Jacobs, 2017:1). In the advent of new technologies – for example, online services like Netflix, which are so popular among a huge number of youngsters – efforts to limit the negative impact of US and western influences are quite challenging.

The ability of digitalization to allow “interoperability” between television and other technologies gradually has led to a transformation of multiple aspects of television, including its technology, distribution, economics, associated media policy, and use (Mikos, 2016: 154). The convergence between television and computers was a key outcome of interoperability (Lotzl, 2009, p. 53). Rather than only being received by means of the conventional television set, television content can now be accessed from various platforms and technical devices (Mikos, 2016: 155). As viewers began to use new technologies to watch TV content in different ways, they discovered that they had access to huge amounts of new content that they had never seen before (Colin, 2015: 2). The result was a new era of TV watching behavior, binge (TV) watching. Binge watching has been supported by a phenomenon known as media symbiosis, where people are using new media to watch traditional media-TV content more than ever before (Ahmed, 2017:205). Further, the continuing evolutions in new technology and internet services allow users greater control over the time and duration of their consumption of a televised content. In light of such changes and impacts like binge-watching, it is important to explore how individuals view the impact of intensive watching of certain content, and how their perception of this differs from that of others. In the Arab world, most media scholars and professionals used to look at foreign (US and Western) media flows in the region as a real threat to their local culture and Arab identity. Yet Arab audiences’ perception of the effects of US TV drama on their cultural values has received little attention from media scholars.

This study investigates how US drama binge-watchers in the UAE perceive its influence on themselves and on other Arabs from various nationalities. Cultural self-construal, i.e., a person’s perception of their level of interdependence in terms of collectivism and individualism, is studied as a possible predictor of the relationship between binge TV watching and TPE.

The study also examines whether Davison’s (1983) Third Person Effect and cultural self construal correlate with existing support for the censorship of US TV dramas in the UAE and the Arab world.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

The study is based on a conjunction of three theoretical frameworks. The first is the Third-Person Effect (TPE) hypothesis of Davison (1983) which proposes that people exposed to a persuasive communication tend to perceive themselves to be less influenced by such communication than others. The second is the literature on binge TV watching (aka marathon TV watching), that is, watching back to back episodes of the same TV content over the internet for four hours or more in one sitting. The third is the literature on media and cultural imperialism that discusses the impact on

audiences' values and culture from the consumption of foreign media, as well as literature related to the study of cultural self-construal (individualism vs. collectivism).

Third-Person Effect Theory and Binge TV Watching

Davidson's (1983) perceptual hypothesis states that people tend to believe they are less influenced, compared to others, by content perceived as negative and deleterious to one's own cultural values. This theory has been applied to a wide range of media content, such as pornography (Lo and Wei, 2002), music clips (Ahmed, 2006), advertisement (Henriksen and Flora, 1999), political advertising (Cohen and Davis, 1991), defamation (Cohen & Price, 1988), violence (Hoffner et al., 2001). Asian and European students who exposed themselves to US traditional media (newspapers, magazines or TV) were more likely to believe that violent US media content affected others more than themselves (Wallnat et al., 2002: 186). The cognitive processes underlying TPE have generally been related to how and why social comparisons and contrasts are made (Tsay-Vogel, 2016: 1957). US drama, particularly examples that include violence, has been perceived as negative TV content that might affect its Arab audiences. This subject has attracted the attention of some scholars who studied this phenomenon in Europe, Asia, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore among other countries (Lee, 1998; Hoffner, et al., 2001; Willnat et al., 2002; Willnat et al., 2007). Yet this subject and related issues have been investigated primarily for traditional series or spontaneous TV watching, and not for binge watching, nor for viewers from the UAE and the Middle East. This leads to the first research question:

Q1: How do UAE respondents perceive the negative impact of US drama on self vs. others?

The majority of media programs, including TV dramas, are flowing mainly from the Global North and West to the East. As a sign of the emergence of new technologies that make US media products available to audience all over the world 24/7 through internet live streaming and various website such as Netflix, US drama was marked as a top favorite type of televised content among various age groups in the Arab world (Ahmed, 2017 & 2019).

In terms of beliefs about positive or negative media influences, Lee (1998) found that few people in Hong Kong believed that foreign programs had negative effects on their personal values, behaviors, or way of living. Instead, many of the respondents thought that foreign programs could increase their knowledge of foreign cultures and enrich their own culture. Attitudes about positive or negative influences also have differed cross-culturally with respect to whether such influence was experienced more strongly within or without the local culture or society.

While TPE has been widely supported in the context of social media (Tsay-Vogel, 2016) and traditional media, including print, auditory, and visual (Hoffner, et al, 1997 & 2001; Boynton & Wu, 1999; Ahmed, 2006), it is unclear whether TPE is still prevalent considering new developments in TV watching behavior, for example, binge watching. Binge watching has recently received attention from scholars because of the potential impact such constant consumption of TV content has on media habits, and people's behaviors and beliefs. Binge TV watching is defined as watching back-to-back episodes of TV content, enabling viewers to potentially

consume full seasons in a matter of hours, and a full series in a matter of days. Mikos (2016) considered binge watching of television series as a cultural practice that viewers integrate in their everyday lives and adapt to their personal circumstances. The social conditions of their lives limit their consumption of series, as work, partners, and children demand a share of their time (p: 159). Research on binge watching has recently flourished, bringing in its wake some concerns about worrying consequences for viewers' physical and mental health (Flayelle, 2019: 26).

Based on the TPE hypothesis that people tend to perceive the impact of media content as higher on others than themselves, as well as research on TPE and binge TV watching, the first hypothesis is stated as follow:

H1. Binge watchers of US TV dramas will perceive its negative impact as greater on others than on themselves.

Concern about the three possible types of effects of television violence (cognitive, affective, and behavioral) may have stimulated more research than any topic in media and communication studies. Controversy concerning television violence helps to reveal public beliefs about media effects. Although some people believe that television violence has a significant effect on other all people's behaviors and morals, others believe that they themselves are unaffected (Salwen & Dupagne, 2001: 211, 212). Therefore, the second research question was:

Q2: How do respondents perceive the negative impact of violent US TV drama on self vs. others?

Hoffner, et al. (2001) examined the third-person effect in perceptions of the influence of television violence and found that the more people liked violent television, the less effect they saw on themselves relative to others on average around the world. Willnat, et al. (2002) concluded that respondents in eight Asian and European countries perceived the effects of mediated US violence to be stronger on others than on themselves (p. 188). Therefore, the second hypothesis stated:

H2. Binge watchers of US violent TV drama will perceive its negative impact as greater on others than on themselves.

Davison (2003) discussed the relationship between third-person perception and censorship attitudes, and highlighted that those who strongly supported censorship believed that the general public is adversely influenced by media messages, but did not admit to themselves being affected by media messages. The third-person effect's behavioral hypothesis predicts that people who are more likely to exhibit third-person perception are also more likely to support restrictions on media messages (Lee & Yang, 1996), and has been examined and supported by many researchers (Chia, Lu & McLeod, 2004; Hoffner et al., 1999; Salwen & Dupagne, 1999; Ahmed, 2006; McLeod et al., 1997). Therefore, the third research question formed as follow:

Q3: To what extent do UAE respondents support censorship of US drama and violent drama?

Taking for granted a direct correspondence between the presumed exposure of others to a media message and its impact on them, individuals are more likely to partake in actions aimed at regulating the distribution and/or production of media messages under consideration (Sun, Shen and Pan, 2008: 260). Willnat, et al (2002) indicated that European policy makers have tried to restrict the amount of US television programming shown in Europe with the 1989 Television Without Frontiers directive, as per the Commission of the European Communities 1989. While the quota limiting US programming to 50 percent of European television was ignored by many EU members, countries such as France and Great Britain strongly supported limits on US media imports (p. 178). This leads to the hypothesis below.

H3. Binge US TV drama watchers in the UAE who perceive that US drama negatively affects others more than themselves are more likely to support imposing censorship.

Cultural & Media Imperialism and TPE

Culture affects the way its members view themselves, their social environment, and their relationships with others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Cultural imperialism theory suggests that media from one country will invade and colonize another, and the culture of the invading nation will seep into the receiving/victim nation. The victim nation is imagined to be culturally autonomous prior to invasion, then under siege and culturally disenfranchised (Gray,2014 :984). Unlike the colonial enterprise, which was imposed in many instances by force of arms, cultural imperialism acts subtly until it gets to the critical stage of addiction (Akpabio & Mustapha-Lambe, 2008: 261).

Cultural imperialism may be distinguished from physical colonization. Beyond the mere physical attacks associated with colonization, virtual colonization is a process that often outlives physical disengagement from the occupied territories.

Communication imperialism, as a form of cultural imperialism, suggests that Global North political and economic powers not only control the political and economic management of the world, but also have worldwide control over means of communication, and thus rule over communication flow (Sabir, 2013: 284). Consequently, communication and media imperialism diminish cultural interaction to be a one-sided process instead of a two-party exchange of culture and values.

The closely related term “media imperialism” also implies a situation whereby the media system of a particular area of focus is subjected to the dictates of the media system of another area. The pertinent issue here is the effect of media imperialism on culture (Omoera and Ibagere, 2010: 5). Media imperialism emerged from the West, and it created an entirely new phenomenon – a media dominance that has controlled, managed, and changed the culture of developing countries around the world (Sabir, 2013: 283).

Boyd – Barrett (1977) described several features of media imperialism: the shaping of the communication vehicle (communication technology); a set of individual arrangements for the continuation of media production, the body of values about ideal practice, and special media content. The current study is concerned with the latter, that is, “special media content”. Omoera and Ibagere (2010) have argued that, in many countries compelled to view the world through the prism of Western values, ideas, and civilization, the influence of American media content only intensifies consumption values rather than production values (p. 6). Consequently, this relegated the developing world as mere consumers of American media content. The negative impact of US media on local cultures has been studied in various contexts, such as in Nigeria (Omoera & Ibagere, 2010), Malaysia (Willnat, et al. 2007), and among Asian and European students (Willnat, et al 2002).

Kim (1995) describes how individuals with an independent cultural self-construal tend to see themselves as unique and value the ability to express themselves and act independently. On the other hand, individuals with an interdependent self-construal have the desire to be part of a social group, and are less likely to behave in a way that disrupts the social order (Triandis, 1989).

Lee & Tamborini (2005) found that students who perceived themselves as more collectivist (or interdependent) exhibited smaller third-person effects and were less likely to support internet pornography censorship.

Willnat, et al. (2007) found respondents who exhibited interdependent (or collectivist) self-construal were less likely to exhibit the third-person effect and more likely to support censorship of US media in Malaysia (p. 16). Therefore, it can be hypothesized that:

H4. The cultural background (individualism vs collectivism) of UAE binge watchers of US drama correlates to perception of its negative effect on self vs. others.

Control variables

Salwen & Dupagne (2001) indicated that biased optimism, one of the causes of TPE, which is tied to sociodemographic factors, such as age and education, may lead individuals to look at themselves and at others in a self-serving manner as invulnerable to harmful media influences (p. 214). Hoffner et al. (1997) found that males exhibited a larger third-person gap (self vs. others) regarding mean-world perceptions, but females exhibited a larger gap regarding acceptance of aggression and aggressive behavior.

Boynton and Wu (1999) found that older respondents reported greater estimated effects of television violence on themselves than on younger viewers; additionally, females were more likely than males to perceive greater effects on others. Salwen & Dupagne (2001) tested the third-person effect in relation to television violence to determine whether self-perceived knowledge is a stronger predictor of third person perception than sociodemographic variables. They found that self-perceived knowledge was a stronger predictor of third-person perception than sociodemographic variables (demographics, ideology, and media use). Therefore, it was predicted that:

H5. Third Person Effect differs among binge US TV drama watchers according to their age, gender, English language proficiency and visit/s to USA.

Methodology

Data collection

The data were collected using an online survey disseminated to US TV drama Arab fans in the UAE using a snowball sampling technique. Data collection took place in July 2019. All participants were informed about the aims of the study and asked to give their consent before starting the survey, which took 15 to 20 minutes to complete. The criteria for participation, stated in the beginning of the questionnaire, was being at least 18 years old and having watched US TV drama episodes regularly over the last six months. Anonymity and confidentiality were guaranteed as respondents were not asked to reveal their personal identification. The questionnaire obtained approval from Zayed University Office of Research in June 2019. It included 19 questions in Arabic, the mother tongue of the respondents, and was constructed to measure the research variables.

Variable	%
Gender	
• Females	72
• Males	28
Age	
• Less than 20	25.7
• From 20 to less than 25	36.6
• From 25 to less than 30	21.4
• From 30 and more	14.0
• Missed	2.3
Nationalities	
• UAE	48.6
• Egyptian	5.4
• Palestinian	8.9
• Jordanian	10.9
• Syria	9.3
• Sudan	3.5
• Oman	2.3
• Others (Lebanon-Iraq- KSA..etc)	11
English language proficiency	
• Fair	5.4
• Good	21.8
• Very Good	37.3
• Excellent	35
Visiting USA	
• None	78.6
• Once	12.5
• Twice	3.5
• Three times and more	5.4

Table (1): Sample characteristics (N: 257)

Measurements

Exposure to TV US Drama

The questionnaire started with two questions designed to filter respondents to better reach the target category of US TV drama watchers. The first one asked respondent to identify the frequency of exposure to US Drama (Always, Sometimes and Never), and the second asked about the type of US TV drama the respondent tends to watch. Those who never watched US TV drama were excluded and asked not to answer the rest of questions.

Binge TV watching of US drama

This is the independent variable of the research. It was measured through three questions: first, the number of days per week in which the respondents are watching US TV drama. It ranged from one day a week to every day; second, how many hours a day the respondents watch US TV drama. It ranged from less than one hour to 6 hours or more per day; third, how many hours respondents watch American drama sequentially in a single session per day, whether on television or on websites. The score ranged from 3-12, with a mean of 5.6 and standard deviation of 2.16. Cronbach's Alpha is .784, which is an accepted level of reliability for the measurement.

Third Person Effect

- **TPE's Perceptual Component**

The respondents were asked four questions to measure the perceptual component of the Third Person Effect. They were asked how they perceive the influence of US TV Drama and violent drama on their own local cultural values and those of Arab youth (others). The answers ranged from "no effect at all" to "very negative," "negative," "positive," or "very positive."

- **TPE's Behavioral Component**

This was measured through two questions using a 5-point Likert scale. One asked about the respondent's support of censorship of US TV Drama in Arab countries to protect youth from the possible negative effects, and the second asked the same for the UAE. The answers ranged from: "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Cultural background of the respondents: Individualism and collectivism

A 5-point Likert scale ranged from (5) strongly agree to (1) strongly disagree, and was adopted from Willnat, et al. (2007) to measure the independence (individualism) and interdependence (collectivism) variables. 13 statements were included in the questionnaire to measure independence or (individualism) and 13 statements to measure interdependence (collectivism). The total score ranged from 13-65, mean 50.5 and standard deviation 8.8. Cronbach's Alpha = .8964, which indicates a high level of reliability.

The questionnaire also included questions about number of visits to the USA, if any, English language proficiency, and demographic variables (age, gender and nationality).

Control variables

Demographic questions – age, gender (M,F) , English language proficiency (excellent, very good, good, poor), and previous visit(s) to the USA (“1” Never to “4” three times or more) – were assessed to control for possible external influences on perceptions of US media effects.

Statistical techniques

The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). The following statistical tests were used to examine the research hypotheses: reliability analysis, scale (alpha), frequencies and percentages, means and standard deviations, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, T- Test and paired sample T-test, One Analysis of Variance (ANOVA).

Results

Types of US drama the respondents tend to watch frequently

The respondents were asked about the type of US drama they frequently watch. The answers are shown in the following chart:

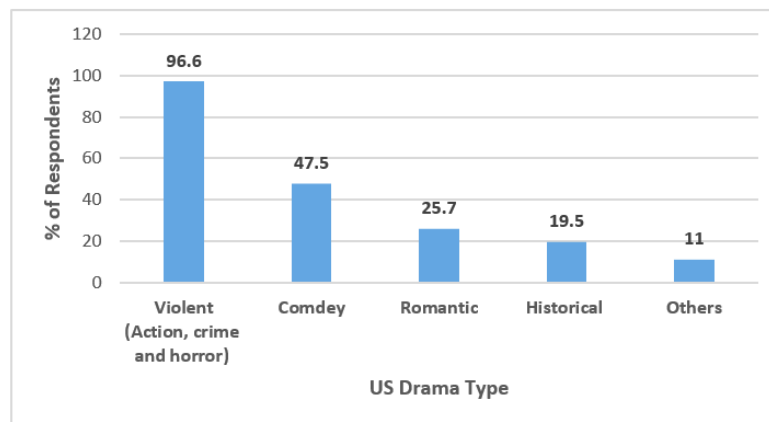


Chart 1: Respondents' Preference of US Drama Types
Respondents can select more than one type

As Chart 1 shows, the most preferred type of US drama the respondents tend to watch frequently is violent drama (96.6%), that is, US televised drama that included action, crime, and horror. Comedy is the second (47.5%) preference, followed by romantic drama (19.5%).

Q1: How do respondents perceive the negative impact of US drama on self vs. others?

The respondents were asked about their perception of the negative impact of US drama on themselves and on other Arabs. Chart 2 summarizes the results:

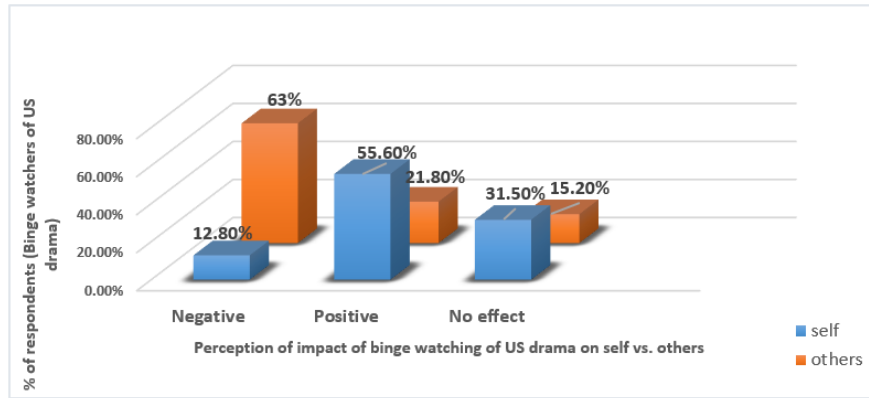


Chart 2: Perception of impact of US drama on self vs. others

The results reveal that US drama binge watchers tend to perceive the negative effect of US drama as higher on others, 63%, compared to themselves, 12.8%, while they perceive the positive impact as higher on themselves, 55.6%, compared to others 21.8%.

Q2: How do respondents perceive the negative impact of violent US drama on self vs. others?

The respondents were asked about their perception of the negative impact of US violent drama on themselves and on others. Chart 3 summarizes the results.

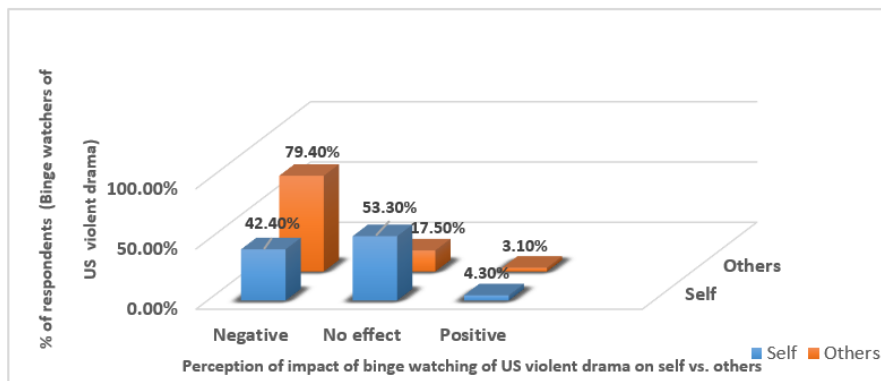


Chart 3: Perception of impact of US violent drama on self vs. others

Chart 3 shows that US drama binge watchers tend to perceive the negative effect of US violent drama as higher on others, 79.4%, compared to themselves, 42.4%, while they perceive the positive impact as higher on themselves, 53.3%, compared to others, 17.5%.

Q3: Do respondents support censorship of US drama in the UAE vs. other Arab Countries?

Respondents were asked about to what degree they support censorship of US drama in the UAE and other Arab countries to prevent its negative impact on Arab youth. To make the comparison between the UAE and other Arab countries clearer, the frequency of Strongly Agree responses was combined with that of Agree, and the

frequency of Strongly Disagree was combined with Disagree. The results are shown in Chart 4.

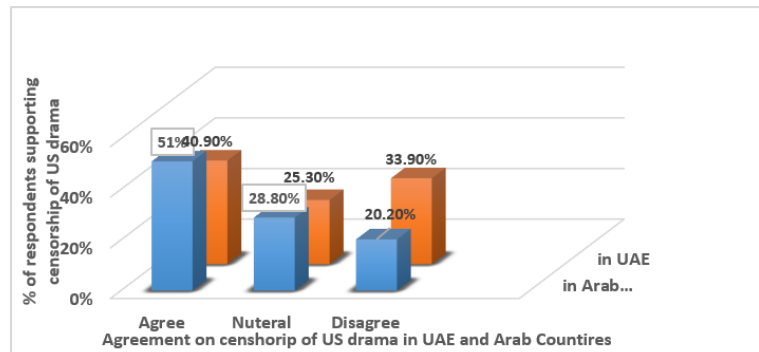


Chart 4: Support Censorship on US Drama in Arab Countries vs. UAE

The results shown in Chart 4 explain that binge watchers of US drama tend to agree on imposing censorship on US drama in Arab countries by 51% compared to 40.9% in the UAE, while 33.9% disagree that these shows should be censored in the UAE, as compared to 20% disagreeing on such censorship for Arab countries.

Hypotheses tests

H1. Binge watchers of US drama will perceive its negative impact as greater on others than on themselves.

Mean, standard deviation and paired sample correlation were used to examine this hypothesis. The results are shown in the table below.

Perception of negative impact of US drama	Self	Others	Paired Samples Correlation	T
Mean	1.8132	2.4786	.474	-14.899
Std. Deviation	.64054	.74512		

Table 2: Perception of US Drama's negative impact on self vs. others (n=257)

Note: P = .000 df = 256

The results reveal that binge watchers of US drama perceive its negative impact as higher on others (mean=2.47, St.D.= .745) than on themselves (mean=1.81, St.D. = .640). The difference between self and others is significant at ($p = .000$); therefore, the first hypothesis is accepted.

H2. Binge watchers of US violent drama will perceive its negative impact as greater on others than on themselves.

Paired samples correlation was used to test the difference between perception of the possible negative effect of binge watching of US violent drama on self and others. The results are displayed in the table below.

Perception of negative impact of Violent US drama	Self	Others	Paired Samples Correlation	T
Mean	2.3813	2.7626	.393	-10.389
Std. Deviation	.56813	.49419		

Table (3): Perception of US violent drama negative impact on self vs. others
(n=257)

$P = .000$ $df = 256$

The results shown in table 3 demonstrate that the negative effect of intensive watching of violent TV drama is perceived as higher on others (mean=2.76, St.D.=.494) than on self (mean=2.38, St.D.=.568) among binge watchers of violent US TV drama. The second hypothesis is therefore accepted.

H3. Binge US drama watchers who perceive that US drama negatively affects others more than themselves are more likely to support imposing censorship.

Pearson correlation was used to examine this hypothesis. The results are shown in the table below.

Pearson correlation	Perception of negative effects of			
	US drama		US violent drama	
	on self	on others	on self	on others
TPE behavioral component Support of censoring on US drama	.068 (NS)	.168 (*)	-.235 (**)	.128 (***)

Table (4): Correlation between TPE behavioral component (censorship)

(*) $P = .01$ (**) $p = .000$ (***) $P = .05$ (NS) Not significant

The results indicate a positive, significant correlation between the perception of the negative impact of binge watching of US drama on others and the support of censoring US drama ($r = .168, P = .001$) and US violent drama ($r = .128, P = .05$).

There is no significant correlation between the perception of the negative effect of binge- US drama watching on self and the support of censorship. The correlation was significant between the perception of the negative effect of violent US drama on self and censorship ($r = -.235, p = .05$). This indicates that binge watchers of violent US drama do not support censoring US violent drama, which they perceive as having a negative effect on others, but not themselves.

H4. Cultural background (individualism vs collectivism) of binge US drama watchers correlates to perception of its negative effect on self vs. others.

The mean and standard deviation of individualism and collectivism statements based on respondents' answers were measured, and the results are listed below.

	Mean	St. D.
Individualism		
1. I should decide my future on my own	4.18	.993
2. My personal identity is very important to me	4.34	.979
3. I take responsibility for my own actions	4.21	1.146
4. I try not to depend on others	3.92	1.144
5. What happens to me is my own doing	3.72	1.185
6. I prefer to be self-reliant rather than depend on others	4.20	.995
7. I enjoy being unique and different from others	4.10	1.069
8. I am a unique person separate from others	4.02	1.114
9. I should be judged on my own merit	4.24	1.040
10. I am comfortable being singled out for praise and rewards	4.33	.949
11. I try to avoid customs and conventions	3.29	1.214
12. I don't support a group decision when it is wrong	4.15	1.087
13. If there is a conflict between my values, and the values of groups of which I am a member, I follow my values.	3.84	1.120
Overall score of individualism	4.04	
	Mean	St. D.
Collectivism		
1. I respect the majority's wishes in groups of which I am a member	4.08	.951
2. I maintain harmony in the groups of which I am a member	4.08	.908
3. I respect decisions made by my group	4.17	.898
4. I consult with other students on work-related matters	3.72	1.074
5. I give special consideration to others' personal situations so I can be efficient at work	3.85	1.001
6. I stick with my group even through difficulties	4.26	.950
7. It is better to consult with others and get their opinions before doing anything	3.97	1.055
8. I will sacrifice my self-interest for the benefit of my group	3.40	1.162
9. It is important to consult close friends and get their ideas before making a decision.	3.80	1.007
10. I help acquaintances, even if it is inconvenient	4.06	.952
11. I will stay in a group if they need me, even when I'm not happy with the group	3.63	1.172
12. I consult with others before making important decisions	3.88	.995
13. My relationships with others are more important than my accomplishments	3.60	1.135
Overall score of Collectivism		
4.19		

Table (5): Levels of individualism & collectivism among Arab residence of UAE
(*)

(*) Agreement of each statement was measured on a 5-point scale ranging from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

As shown in table 5, respondents tend to get a higher mean score in collectivism (interdependency) rather than individualism (independency), with a small difference

in the overall average mean score of (4.04) for individualism compared to (4.19) for collectivism.

To test H4, Pearson correlation was used. The results showed that respondents' cultural background (individualism vs. collectivism) does not affect binge US drama watcher's perception of its negative effects, neither on self nor others. This means that the perception of the negative effect of US drama and its violent content are not affected by the individuals' perception of cultural self-construal, whether individualist or collectivist. Therefore, H4 is not accepted.

H5. The Third Person Effect differs among binge US drama watchers according to their age, gender, English language proficiency, and visit(s) to the USA.

A T-test was used to examine this hypothesis. Results revealed that binge watchers' gender and age do not make a significant difference in the perception of the negative effect of US drama of on self vs. others.

A Pearson correlation was used to examine the possible relationship between the English language proficiency of respondents and the Third Person Effect in relation to the perception of the negative effect of US drama and violent drama on self vs. others. The results revealed a non-significant negative correlation between these variables.

As for the number of visits to the USA and the perception of the negative effect of US drama and violent drama on self vs. others, a Pearson correlation revealed a significant negative correlation ($r = -0.161$, $P = .01$) between the two. This means that the more the respondents visited the USA, the less they perceived US violent drama to have a harmful effect on self and others. The results also revealed that the correlation was not significant between the US visit and perception of negative effect of US drama. Therefore, H5 is partially accepted.

Discussion and Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between binge watching of televised US drama and violent drama on self vs. others. It also examined the role of cultural self-construal on the perceptual and behavioral components of TPE. Age, gender, English language proficiency, and number of visits to the USA were examined as control variables.

The results showed that 96.6% of binge US drama watchers prefer watching violent drama. This finding is consistent with prior study (Ahmed 2017 & 2019) showing how Emiratis and UAE Arab residents tend to binge watch foreign and US drama more than other types of TV content. The preference for US drama, especially violent drama, raises fears of possible negative impacts of its content on the cultural values of Arab youth. As predicted, binger US drama watchers tend to perceive the effect of US drama and violent drama to be positive for self, while they found US drama to be negative for other Arab youth. Consequently, they support censorship on the flow and content of US drama in Arab countries. The perception of a negative effect of US drama on others is consistent with other findings of previous research on the negative effect of US media content on the culture and values in other Muslim countries, such as Indonesia (Wallnat, et al. (2002) and Malaysia (Wallnat et al., 2007).

The research findings revealed that the respondents tend to perceive themselves as collectivist (mean 4.19) rather than individualist (mean 4.02); despite the high mean score of most of the individualist statements. This might indicate how binge US drama watching might affect the cultural structure and identity of Arab youth that used to be more interdependent rather than independent in nature. The current research hypothesized that this difference in perception of the negative effect of US drama on self and others might be related to the perception of cultural self-construal (Independent vs. interdependent). The results showed that the assumption that there is a difference between self and others in the perception of the harmful effects of US TV drama might be consistent with collectivist more than individualist cultural self-construal, but the correlation was not significant.

While age and gender do not have a significance effect on binge US drama watching and the third-person effect, English fluency and number of visits to the US have a significant effect. The results revealed that the more respondents visited the USA, the less they perceived the harmful effect of US drama and its violent content on self and others.

The overall results of the study support the perceptual and behavioral hypotheses of TPE, while the cultural background of respondents did not affect the relation between TPE and binge watching of US drama and violent drama.

Limitation and further research

The research finding is limited by the fact that the data collected relied on a snowball sampling technique, thus was a non-probability sample. The findings cannot be generalized to the whole population due to the sample size and technique. However, the results provide a significant indication of the hypothesized correlations regarding the validity of the perceptual and behavioral components of third-person effect theory. Further studies with an extended sample size and probability are recommended to be conducted to investigate binge-TV watching and TPE, which can also consider more control variables such as education level.

Further research should investigate the possible causes of TPE, such as attribution error, self-serving bias, and biased optimism (Griffin, 2009). More research should study the impact of foreign media content flow to Middle East countries and the tendency of Arab and Muslim youth to consume US media content compare to the consumption of Arab media televised production.

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