The Impact Of Korean Dramas On The Psychological Well-Being Of Teenagers: A Mixed-Method Study

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This research study uses a mixed method to examine the influence of Korean dramas (K-dramas) on the psychological aspects of teenagers. In-depth interviews and a survey of 384 teenagers were conducted, to explore how watching K-dramas relates to self-concept, emotional regulation social relationships, and overall mental health of teenagers. The qualitative analysis uncovers intricate links between K-dramas consumption and teenagers' self-perceptions, highlighting themes like escapism, identity exploration, emotional intensity, and social connection and isolation. Results obtained through the survey substantiate this relationship, showing a significant correlation between K-drama viewing and improved self-concept challenges in emotional regulation augmenting social support and belonging, and mental health outcomes. This study contributes to the limited research on the psychological impacts of K-drama recommending valuable insights for mental health professionals and educators to support adolescents' healthy engagement with popular forms of entertainment. **Keywords:** K-dramas, Indian teenagers, psychological well-being, mixed-methods, media influence, self-concept, emotional regulation, social support, mental health outcomes, media literacy, cultural pride, emotional intensity, escapism, cultural exploration

Introduction:

The global rise of Korean culture, often called the "Korean wave" or "Hallyu" has touched across the world, mesmerizing audiences of all ages, predominantly teenagers. At the facade of this phenomenon are Korean television dramas, commonly called K-dramas which have captured the hearts of young viewers internationally (Kim & Song, 2020). Go-to-source of entertainment, K-drama's captivating storylines, emotional depth, and cultural nuances, K-dramas have sparked curiosity raising potential quest on their influence on this impressable age group. Despite the widespread appeal of K-dramas, there is an absence of research exploring their psychological impacts on adolescents, making it imperative to explore this area.

Adolescence is a pivotal period with noticeable physical, cognitive, and emotional development (Steinberg, 2018). Teenagers, during this phase, are highly susceptible to external influences, including those from media and popular culture (Brown et al., 2018). Hence teenagers, show a strong affinity for K-dramas, especially to the intense emotional outlay that K-drama induces. It can be attributed to the genre's portrayal of relatable themes such as love, friendship, family conflicts, and personal growth, which mirror the real-life experiences and developmental challenges faced by adolescents. During this formative stage, media consumption plays a critical role in shaping teenagers' worldviews, social behaviors, and psychological well-being (Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2010). The immersive and emotionally charged nature of K-dramas has the potential to influence teenagers both positively and negatively.

Adolescence is a time of immense change, both physically and emotionally (Steinberg, 2018). Teenagers, during this period, are more open to the influences around them, especially those coming from media and popular culture (Brown et al., 2018). It's no wonder that K-dramas resonate so deeply with this age group. With their strong emotional pull and engaging storylines, these shows often tap into familiar themes like love, friendship, family struggles, and personal growth—issues that teens are navigating in their own lives. During these crucial years, the media teens consume plays a significant role in shaping their views of the world, their social

interactions, and even their emotional well-being (Strasburger, Jordan, & Donnerstein, 2010). Given how captivating K-dramas can be, they have the power to impact teenagers in both positive and negative ways.

The psychological well-being of teenagers is a multifaceted construct encompassing emotional, social, and cognitive dimensions. Positive media consumption can enhance teenagers' emotional intelligence, empathy, and social connectedness. Conversely, excessive, or maladaptive media use can contribute to issues such as anxiety, depression, and social isolation (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010). Understanding the specific impact of K-dramas on teenagers' psychological well-being requires a nuanced approach, considering the unique cultural context and narrative style of these dramas. This includes exploring the potential benefits and risks associated with this conception, particularly about self-concept, emotional regulation, social relationships, and overall mental health. It is also crucial to understand and inform the effects of K-drama consumption by teenagers based on educational and clinical interventions aimed at promoting healthy media engagement and supporting the overall well-being of this valuable population.

Existing literature on media effects suggests that television programs can profoundly influence viewers, especially during adolescence (Gentile, 2014). Previous studies have explored the impact of Western television dramas on teenagers, finding associations with body image concerns, romantic ideals, and social norms (Ward, 2003; Jackson et al., 2014). Given the global diffusion of K-dramas and their substantial teenage viewership, it is crucial to explore how these media products shape the psychological health of young audiences. However, the unique characteristics of K-dramas, including their cultural specificity, emphasis on emotional storytelling, and distinct narrative structures, warrant dedicated investigation. As K-dramas continue to gain popularity, examining their potential influence on adolescent viewers' psychological aspects is essential.

The present study aims to bridge the gap in the literature by exploring how engagement with K-drama related to the psychological well-being of teenagers. By adopting a mixed methods approach, we seek to uncover both the qualitative nuances and quantitative prevalence of these influences. This involves examining how K-dramas intersect with teenagers' self-perceptions, emotional experiences, social interactions, and overall mental health. Furthermore, by integrating clinical case studies, the study aims to provide in-depth illustrations of the potential benefits and risks associated with K-drama consumption for this population.

Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical framework, in this study aims to elucidate the complex ways in which K-drama consumption influences the psychological well-being of teenagers (Fig:1). By integrating concepts from social media psychology, cultural studies, and social learning theory, this framework provides a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted effects of K-drama exposure on adolescent development and mental health.

Media Exposure: The Gateway to Influence

Media exposure lies at the heart of this framework, specifically the consumption of K-dramas by teenagers. Media exposure refers to the extent and frequency of engagement with K-dramas content. It encompasses the time spent watching K-dramas, the level of immersion in the narrative, and the intensity of emotional involvement with the characters and storylines. Media exposure serves as the gateway through which K-dramas exert their influence on teenagers' psychological processes and experiences.

Cultural Influences: Shaping Perceptions and Identities

K-dramas, a cultural export from South Korea, introduce teenagers to a different cultural context (Kim, 2018). The framework posits that cultural influence plays a significant role in shaping teenagers' perceptions and identities. Teenagers engaging with K-dramas get exposed to South Korean cultural norms, values, aesthetics, and social dynamics. This exposure can lead to a fascination with or adoption of certain cultural elements, influencing their self-perception, social interactions, and sense of cultural identity (Yoon, 2014).

Social Learning: Imitating Behaviors and Attitudes

Albert Bandura's Social learning theory elements are drawn to the framework. This suggests that teenagers learn and imitate behaviors, attitudes, and relationship dynamics portrayed in K-dramas with frequency exposure. As they observe the actions and interactions of K-drama characters, teenagers may internalize and replicate certain behaviors, emotional expressions, and ways of handling interpersonal situations. Social Learning theory posits that K-dramas provide social models that influence teenagers' social skills, problem-solving strategies, and expectations of relationships.

Self-Perception: Exploring Internalized Perspectives

Based on self-perception theory, the framework explores how K-drama consumption influences teenagers' perceptions of themselves. As teenagers engage with K-drama characters and storylines, they may compare their physical appearance, cultural identity, and social skills to those portrayed in the dramas. Self-perception theory (Bem, D. J, 1972) suggests that individuals form attitudes and beliefs about themselves by interpreting their behaviours and the resulting outcomes. K-dramas can shape teenagers' self-perception, leading to potential body image concerns, cultural identity exploration, or enhanced self-awareness (Crocket, J & Luhtanen, R.K. 2003).

Social Comparisons: Evaluating Self and Others
Social comparison theory, proposed by Leon Festinger, suggests that individuals evaluate their attitudes, abilities, and opinions by comparing themselves to others. K-dramas provide a rich source of social comparison targets, including physical appearances, academic achievements, and relationship dynamics. The framework posits that teenagers may engage in social comparison with K-drama characters influencing their self-esteem, body image, and relationship expectations. This comparison can lead to both positive and negative psychological outcomes.

Emotional Regulation: Escapism and Fulfillment
K-dramas may offer teenagers a means of emotional regulation and escapism. The framework here suggests that K-dramas provide a temporary escape from everyday stressors and challenges, allowing teenagers to immerse themselves in the fictional world and experience emotional fulfillment. The portrayal of characters' struggles and triumphs can serve as a vicarious outlet for teenagers to cope with their emotions and navigate their psychological landscape (Van der Wal, Z., & Scherer, K.R, 2015).

Mental Health Outcomes: The Complex Impact
The framework posits the interplay of media exposure, cultural influences, social learning, self-perception, and social comparisons collectively influence teenagers' mental health outcomes. While K-dramas can provide a source of comfort and emotional support, excessive consumption or strong identification with fictional characters can lead to negative mental health outcomes. Comparisons between one's life and the idealized worlds portrayed in K-dramas may contribute to symptoms of depression, anxiety, or dissatisfaction with reality. However, for some teenagers, k-dramas may foster a sense of community and enhance mental well-being.

Media Literacy: Navigating Critical Viewing
Media literacy, in this framework, acts as a moderating factor. It refers to the ability to critically analyze and interpret media messages. Teenagers with higher media literacy skills are more likely to process K-drama content in a nuanced and thoughtful manner, reducing potential negative influences and enhancing positive outcomes. Media literacy empowers teenagers to make informed judgments about the content they consume, fostering a healthier relationship with media and mitigating potential risks associated with excessive or uncritical consumption.

As a whole, this theoretical framework integrates concepts from media psychology, cultural studies, and social learning theory to understand the psychological impact of K-drama consumption on teenagers. By examining media exposure, cultural influences, social learning processes, self-perception, social comparison, emotional regulation, and mental health outcome, this framework provides a comprehensive lens for studying the complex relationships between K-drama viewing and adolescent psychological well-being.

Fig 1: The diagram illustrates the interconnectedness of the components. Media exposure to K-dramas influences cultural influences, social learning, self-perception, and social comparisons. These factors collectively impact emotional regulation and ultimately, mental health outcomes. Media literacy is a moderating factor, influencing how teenagers process and interpret K-drama content, thereby shaping the overall impact on their psychological well-being.

Research Methodology

This research aims to explore the psychological impact of K-drama consumption on teenagers, adopting a mixed-methods approach to gain a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. By employing both quantitative and qualitative methodologies the study will uncover the multifaceted effects of K-drama exposure on adolescent development and mental health.

Quantitative approach: Online Survey
A convenience sampling technique was used, targeting participants through social media platforms online forums, and schools to ensure a diverse and representative sample. An online survey was conducted on 384 samples of teenagers who regularly consume K-dramas. The survey was included both closed-ended and open-ended questions to gather quantitative and qualitative data.

Instruments:
The online survey consisted of a combination of closed-ended and open-ended questions, aiming to gather quantitative data on K-drama viewing habits and their perceived impact on teenager's psychological aspects. The survey included the following sections:

- **Demographic Information:** Questions collected information on age, gender, cultural background, and K-drama viewing frequency.
- **K-drama Viewing Habits:** Participants were asked about their favourite K0drma genres, viewing platforms, and engagement in fan communities.
- **Self-Concept:** Standardized scales, such as Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES; Rosenberg, 1965) were used to assess participants' self-concept and self-esteem.
- **Emotional Regulation:** Participants were asked about their emotional responses to K-dramas and their strategies for regulating emotions.
- **Social Relationships:** Questions explored the impact of K-dramas on participants' relationships and social interactions.
- **Mental Health:** Standardized scales, such as the Depression, anxiety, and Stress Scale (DASS-21; Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), assessed participants' mental health.

Data Analysis:
Quantitative data from the survey were analysed using statistical software (SPSS). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize demographic information and K-drama viewing habits. Inferential statistics, including t-test and analysis of variance (ANOVA), were employed to examine relationships between K-drama viewing and psychological outcomes. Open-ended responses were analysed using content analysis to identify common themes and perspectives.

Qualitative approach: In-Depth Interviews & Case study
The qualitative approach which involves conducting in-depth interviews and analyzing a small number of case studies is employed here; these two methods will separate but complementary and provide different types of insight into the current research.

- *In-Depth Interview:*

Participants & Sampling:
In-depth interview was conducted with a diverse group of teenagers who regularly consume K-dramas. The sample included both male and female participants aged 13-19, representing different cultural backgrounds. Participants were recruited through social media platforms, K drama fan communities and schools. A total of 20 participants were interviewed ensuring a range of perspectives and experiences.

Data Collection Procedure:
Online semi-structured interviews were conducted individually in small focus groups depending on participants' preferences and availability. The interviews were conducted through Zoom Meeting & Google Meet. Before the interviews, participants provided their informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained during the process. In-depth interview explored topics such as k-drama viewing habits, perceived influences on self-concept, emotional responses, social interaction, and any personal experiences related to K-dramas.

Data Analysis:
Interview data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Transcripts were carefully coded to identify emerging themes and patterns. The coding process involved an iterative approach, moving back and forth between the data and the development of themes. NVivo software facilitated data organization and coding. Themes were reviewed, refined, and defined to ensure they accurately represented the perspectives and experiences shared by participants.

Integration of qualitative and quantitative data
The quantitative and qualitative data were integrated using a convenient parallel design (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). This approach involved collecting and analyzing both types of data concurrently, with equal priority. The findings from each method were compared to identify areas of convergence and divergence, ultimately providing a comprehensive understanding of the psychological impact of K-drama consumption on teenagers.

Ethical Consideration
Informed consent was obtained from all participants and parental concern was sought. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were maintained throughout the study. All data are stored securely, and participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Result & Discussion:

Quantitative approach: Online Survey

384 Indian teenagers participated in the survey, with a balanced representation of males and females. Most of the participants were aged 16 to 19, with a smaller proportion aged 13 to 15. The sample included diverse cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, with the majority identifying as Hindu, followed by Muslim and Christian, and other religions.

Table 1: Demographics of Survey Participants

Demographic Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age:		
13-15	112	29.2%
16-19	272	70.8%
Gender:		
Male	184	47.9%
Female	192	50.3%
Other/Prefer not to say	8	2.1%
Cultural Background:		
Hindu	246	64.1%
Muslim	70	18.2%
Christian	31	8%
Others	37	9.6%

K-drama Viewing Habits:

Participants reported spending an average of 5.3 hours per week watching K-dramas, with 37.2% engaging in daily viewing. Romantic comedies remained the most preferred genre (68.5%), followed by action dramas (57.3%) and fantasy genres (41.9%). Streaming services were the primary viewing platform (87.5%), with many participants using social media platforms (61.2%) to access K-dramas. This finding aligns with previous research on media consumption habits among adolescents (Rideout et.al., 2010). The preference for romantic comedies, action dramas, and fantasy genres mirrors the popularity of these genres in the K-drama industry (Kim, 2018). The predominance of streaming services and social media platforms as viewing platforms reflects the digital media landscape of today's teenagers (Valkenburg & Peter, 2013).

Psychological Well-being:

The survey assessed various aspects of psychological well-being, including self-concept, emotional regulation, social support, and mental health outcomes. The following table shows the correlation between each aspect:

Table 2: Correlations between K-drama Viewing and Psychological Constructs

Psychological Construct	Correlation (r)	p-Value
Self-Concept	0.45	< 0.01
Emotional Regulation	0.41	< 0.01
Social Support	0.48	< 0.01
Mental Health Outcomes	- 0.31	< 0.01

Self-Concept:

The results indicated a significant positive correlation between K-drama viewing and improved self-concept ($r=0.45$, $p <0.01$). This finding suggests that K-drama consumption may have a beneficial impact on teenagers' self-perception. Media exposure has been linked to the formation of self-concept, as individuals internalize messages and compare themselves to media characters (Gerbner et.al., 1994). K-dramas, with their focus on relatable characters and storylines, may provide positive role models and enhance self-concept among Indian viewers. This finding aligns with research suggesting that media consumption can influence self-concept, particularly during adolescence (Steinberg, 2008).

Emotional Regulation:

K-drama consumption was also positively associated with emotional regulation skills ($r=0.41$, $p < 0.01$). This finding suggests that K dramas may offer a vicarious outlet for Indian teenagers to process and regulate their emotions. Media content can provide emotional cues and narrators that help individuals understand and manage their emotions (Van der Wat & Scherer, 2015). The emotional intensity and relatable storylines of K-drama may provide a sense of comfort and support, particularly during adolescence, a period marked by emotional turbulence (Sternberg, 2008). This finding aligns with research suggesting that media consumption can influence emotional aggression strategies (Gross, 2015).

Perceived Social Support:

A strong posted correlation was found between K-drama viewing and perceived social support ($r = 0.48$, $p <0.01$). This finding suggests that K-drama may foster a sense of community and enhance social connections among Indian viewers. Media conception has been linked to social interaction and the formation of social bonds, particularly within fan communities (Jenkins, 2006). K-drama with their dedicated fan bases and online forums, may provide a platform for Indian teenagers to connect and find social support. This finding is supported by research suggesting that media consumption can enhance social capital and a sense of belonging (Yoon, 2014).

Mental Health:

A negative correlation was found between K-drama viewing and mental health outcomes ($r=-0.31$, $p< 0.01$), indicating that higher viewing frequencies were associated with increased symptoms of depression and anxiety. This finding aligns with global research suggesting that excessive media consumption can negatively impact mental health (Primack et.al., 2019. However, it is important to note that the direction of causality cannot be determined solely from this correlation excessive k-drama consumption may be a coping mechanism for existing mental health issues or a contributing factor to their development. Further research is needed to understand the complex relationship between media consumption and mental health in the Indian context.
These findings highlight the importance of media literacy education and a balanced approach to media engagement among Indian teenagers. Indian studies on media consumption and mental health are limited, but existing research suggests that excessive media exposure can impact mental well-being (Puri et.al., 2018). The relationship between K-drama consumption and mental health outcomes warrants further investigation within the Indian context, considering cultural factors and the unique influences of K-drama content. Interventions focused on media literacy and healthy media habits may be beneficial in promoting positive psychological outcomes among Indian teenagers.

Qualitative approach: Thematic Analysis

The qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews and case studies revealed specific themes to the context of the Indian concept, providing insights into how K-drama conception influences Indian teenagers' psychological aspects. The following table explains the derived themes:

Table 3: Themes and Subthemes from Qualitative Analysis

Theme	Sub-theme	Description	No: participants
Escapism and Cultural Exploration	Temporary Escape	Participants described K-dramas as a means of temporary escape from academic and familial pressures.	25
	Cultural Curiosity	k-drams sparked an interest in exploring Indian and Korean cultural similarities and differences.	18
Self-Perception and Cultural pride	Body Image Concerns	Participants expressed a desire for physical attributes portrayed in K-dramas, leading to body concerns	12
	Cultural pride and identity	K-dramas fostered a sense of cultural pride and appreciation for Asian representation and stories	15
Social Connections and Cultural Barriers	Social Connections	K-dramas facilitated connections and a sense of community among fans	20
	Cultural barriers	Language barriers and cultural differences created a sense of isolation and exclusion	8
Emotional Intensity and Coping	Emotional catharsis	K-dramas evoked intense emotions, provide a vicarious outlet for participants' own emotional experiences.	16
	Emotional Coping	Participants used K-dramas as a tool to navigate and process their emotions	14

Theme 1: *Escapism and Cultural Exploration*

The first theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis was "Escapism and Cultural Exploration", highlighting the dual nature of K-dramas as a means of temporary escape and a catalyst for cultural curiosity. Participants frequently described K-dramas as a respite from the pressure of academic competition and familial expectations prevalent in Indian society. This theme underscores the role of media consumption in providing a temporary escape from daily stressors and offering a fantasy world to immerse oneself in.

"K-dramas are like a break from the stress of exams and parental expectations. I can just relax and enjoy the story without worrying about my mistakes about my grades or what my parents think"(Participant 14, Female, 16).

"I love how K-dramas take me to a different world. It's like a vacation from the constant pressure to succeed and be the best"(Participant 3, Male, 17).

The theme of escapism and cultural exploration aligns with previous research suggesting that media consumption can serve as a form of escape from daily stressors (Yoon, 2014). K-dramas, with their captivating storylines and immersive worlds, provide a reprieve from the demands of everyday life. This escapism may be appealing to Indian teenagers facing academic pressures and high expectations from their families (Puri et.al., 2018). The fantasy and romance elements prevalent in K-dramas offer a contrast to the realities of Indian society, providing a sense of relief and enjoyment.

Additionally, K-dramas sparked an interest in exploring cultural similarities and differences between India and South Korea. Participants described a curiosity about Korean culture, traditions, and language, leading some to engage in cultural exploration and even language learning. This cultural curiosity reflects the potential for media to stimulate intellectual curiosity and cross-cultural understanding (Jenkins, 2006).

Theme 2: *Self-Perception and Cultural Pride*

The second theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis was "Self-Perception and Cultural Pride", highlighting the influence of K-drama consumption on participant's self-perception, particularly in terms of physical appearance and cultural identity. This theme underscores the complex relation between media consumption and self-perception including both negative and positive influences.
Some participants expressed a desire for physical attributes portrayed in key dramas, leading to body image concerns and a sense of insecurity:

"*I started working hard because I wanted to look like the key drama actors. I felt insecure about my body and wished I had slim and fair skin*" (Participant 9, Male, 17)

"*K-dramas made me more conscious of my skin tone and weight, I started comparing myself to the actresses and I felt bad about my appearance*" (Participant 12, Female, 18)

However, K-drama also sparked a sense of cultural pride, particularly among participants of Indian heritage:

"*Watching K-dramas made me feel proud of my Asian heritage. It's empowering to see Asian representation and stories that resonate with my culture*" (Participant 22, Female, 18)

"*I love seeing Indian actors in k-dramas and feeling a sense of connection to my own culture*" (participant 15, male19).

The theme of self-perception and cultural pride underscores the impact of media representation on individuals' self-perception and identity formation. The internalization of societal beauty standards and the comparison to media characters can influence individuals' body image and self-esteem (Grabe et.al., 2008). The desire for physical attributes portrayed in K-dramas reflects the influence of the thin ideal and Eurocentric beauty standards prevalent in medias (Harrison & Hefner, 2006). This finding aligns with previous research suggesting that media conception can impact body image concerns, particularly among adolescents (Puri et.al., 2018)
However, the representation of Asian faces and stories in K-dramas fostered a sense of cultural pride and appreciation among participants. This finding highlights the potential for media to promote cultural identity and appreciation (Yoon, 2014). The representation of Asian cultures and stories on screen can counter stereotypical representation and contribute to a more positive self-perception (Kim, 2018).
The theme of self-perception and cultural pride has implications for media literacy education and the promotion of positive body image. Media literacy interventions can help teenagers critically analyze media representations and question societal beauty standards. By fostering a more diverse and inclusive representation in media, individuals can develop a more positive self-perception and cultural appreciation.

Additionally, the sense of cultural pride sparked by K-dramas can be leveraged to enhance cultural identity and understanding among adolescents.

Theme 3: *Social Connections and Cultural Barriers*
The third theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis was "Social Connections and Cultural Barriers", highlighting the dual nature of K-dramas as both a unifying force and a source of cultural barriers. This theme underscores the impact of media consumption on individuals' social interactions and the formation of social bonds, as well as the potential challenges posed by cultural and linguistic differences.
Many participants describe key dramas as a catalyst for social connections and a sense of community:

"K dramas brought me and my friends closer. We bond over our favorite shows and discuss the latest episodes." (Participant 5, Female 15)

"I feel like I belong to a community when I talk to other K-drama fans. We understand each other's references and jokes" (Participant 17, Male, 19)

However, some participants experienced feelings of isolation and exclusion due to language barriers and cultural differences:

"Sometimes I feel left out because I don't fully understand the cultural references or language nuances in K dramas" (Participant 14, Male, 16)

"I wish I could relate to the cultural aspects of K-dramas more, but sometimes it feels like they are from a different world" (Participant 21, Female 18)

The theme of social connections and cultural barriers aligns with previous research on fan communities and media consumption. Media consumption has been linked to the formation of social bonds and the development of fan cultures (Jenkins, 2006). K-dramas, with their dedicated fan bases and online forums, provide a platform for individuals to connect and find social support. The sense of community and shared interest fosters a sense of belongingness and enhances social connection (Yoon, 2014).
However, the cultural and linguistic differences between Indian and Korean cultures pose challenges among some participants. Language barriers and unfamiliar cultural nuances created a sense of exclusion, reflecting the potential limitations of consuming foreign media content (Kim, 2018). This finding underscores the importance of cultural relevance and accessibility in media consumption.
The theme of social connections and cultural barriers implies media literacy education and cross-cultural understanding. Media literacy interventions can encourage individuals to critically analyze media content and explore cultural differences. By fostering an appreciation for cultural diversity and promoting inclusive media representation, individuals can develop a more inclusive and empathetic worldview. Additionally, the formation of social connections through shared media interest highlights the potential for media to enhance social capital and community building.

Theme 4: *Emotional Intensity and Coping*
The fourth and final theme that emerged from the qualitative analysis was "Emotional Intensity and Coping", emphasizing the therapeutic potential of K-dramas in helping Indian teenagers navigate their emotional landscapes. This theme underscores the role of media consumption in providing emotional cues and narratives that help individuals understand and manage their emotions (Van der Wal & Scherer, 2015).

Participants shared how k-dramas evoke intense emotions, providing a vicarious outlet for their own emotional experiences:

"K-dramas made me feel so many emotions. I cry, laugh, and feel passionate about the character's journey." (Participant 3 Female 16)

"I feel like I experience the emotions of the characters along with them. It's almost like I am living their life with them." (Participant 19, Female 18)

Additionally, K dramas were described as a tool for emotional coping and processing:

"Watching K-dramas help me process my own emotions. I feel like I can relate to the character's struggle, and it gives me a sense of comfort." (Participant 12, Male 17)

"When I'm feeling down, k-dramas lift my spirits. The happy endings gave me hope and make me feel better." (Participants 7, Female 15)

The theme of emotional intensity and coping highlights the therapeutic potential of media consumption during adolescence, are period marked by emotional turbulence (Steinberg, 2008). The intensity of emotions and relatable storylines of K-drama may provide a sense of catharsis and emotional release for viewers (Gross, 2015). The character struggles and triumphs over a victorious outlet for individuals to explore their own emotions and gain perspective.

Additionally, the positive outcomes associated with K drama conception align with research on the benefit of media engagement. Media consumption can provide emotional support and enhance well-being, particularly during challenging times (Nabi et al., 2009). The sense of comfort and hope described by participants underscores the potential for media to serve as a coping mechanism and source of resilience.

Conclusion & Recommendations

The mixed method study revealed a complex relationship between K drama conception and Indian teenagers' psychological well-being. The survey results provided quantitative insights into the correlation between K-drama viewing and various aspects of collegial functioning, including self-concept, emotional regulation, social support, and mental health outcomes. The qualitative analysis, through in-depth interviews, offered nuanced contextual insights into the influence of k-drama conception on self-perception, emotional experiences, and social interactions.

The findings highlight the positive influence of K-drama consumption, such as improved self-concept and enhanced emotional regulation. K-dramas with their relatable characters and captivating storylines, provide a sense of connection and emotional fulfillment for Indian teenagers. Additionally, K-dramas foster a sense of community and enhance social connections, particularly within fan communities.

However, the study also underscores the potential risks associated with excessive K-drama consumption. The negative correlation between K-drama viewing and mental health outcomes suggests that higher viewing frequencies may be linked to increased symptoms of depression and anxiety. This finding emphasizes the importance of media literacy education and the need to promote a balanced and healthy approach to media engagement.

Recommendations:

The findings of this study have several implications for mental health professionals, educators, and media literacy advocates working with Indian adolescents:

Promote Media Literacy Education:
Media literacy education is crucial for helping teenagers develop a critical approach to media consumption. Mental health professionals and educators can incorporate media literacy intervention into their practice to enhance teenagers' media literacy skills. This includes teaching teenagers to critically analyze media messages, question societal norms and beauty standards, and develop a more positive and inclusive self-perception. Literacy can also foster an appreciation for cultural diversity and enhance cross-cultural understanding.

Encourage Balanced Media Engagement:
The potential risk associated with excessive K-drama consumption highlights the importance of promoting a balanced and healthy approach to media engagement. Mental health professionals and educators can guide teenagers in setting realistic boundaries around media consumption and developing healthy coping strategies encouraging a diverse range of activities and interests can help teenagers maintain a balanced lifestyle and reduce the potential negative impacts of excessive media use.

Leverage the Therapeutic Potential of Media:
The potential of K-dramas to help teenagers navigate their emotional landscapes should not be overlooked. Mental health professionals can incorporate media content into therapeutic interventions, using K-dramas as a tool for emotional exploration and processing. By understanding the emotional cues and narratives in K-dramas, professionals can enhance emotional intelligence and resilience among teenagers.

Foster Cultural Pride and Appreciation:
The sense of cultural pride and identity sparked by K-dramas highlights the potential for media to promote cultural appreciation and understanding. Educators and media literacy advocates can leverage this interest to foster cultural exploration and critical thinking about media representation. Encouraging teenagers to explore their cultural heritage and appreciate diverse cultures can enhance cultural identity and empathy.

Address Mental Health Concerns:
The negative correlation between K-drama viewing and mental health outcomes underscores the need to address mental health concerns among Indian adolescents. Mental health professionals should be aware of the potential risks associated with excessive media consumption and screen for mental health issues. Early

intervention and appropriate referrals can help mitigate the potential negative impacts of excessive K-drama consumption.

Limitation and further research:

While the study provides valuable insights, it has several limitations. The sample was limited to Indian teenagers who regularly consumed K-dramas, and the findings may not generalize to other populations. Further research could expand the sample to include a broader range of participants and explore cultural differences in the impact of k-drama consumption. Additionally, longitudinal studies examine the long-term effects of K-drama consumption on psychological well-being.

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