

Students' Heavy Use of Internet Gaming and Addiction: An Online Interview Study

Mayuresh Namdeo¹, Santosh Kumar Gupta²

¹Research scholar, Govt. Girls' Degree college of Excellence Sagar M.

²Professor & HOD, Govt. Girls' Degree college of Excellence Sagar M.

Abstract

Addiction to online video games among children and young adults has been deemed a public health problem in a number of nations, including India. This study aims to investigate the impacts of online video gaming addiction among young students in light of the growing concerns regarding how often children and early adolescents in school and colleges spend time playing online video games. This study used a qualitative research design with in-depth interviews and drew on the theory of online gaming addiction. For the purpose of facilitating an interdisciplinary understanding of Internet gaming heavy usage, addiction, and its possible effects, it provides in-depth online interviews with student subjects. Both one-on-one and group chatroom interviews with a total of 30 participants were conducted. Five key topics emerged from the examination of qualitative data: (1) Internet game use and causes; (2) Internet game features; (3) Effects of Internet gaming Overuse; (4) Controlling Internet gaming Use; and (5) Coping with Internet gaming Withdrawal. Each section includes discussions, explanations, examples, and quotes from various themes. Additionally, covered are student affairs administrators' implications and potential avenues for future research.

Keyword: Gaming addiction, Internet gaming, interview, students

Introduction

Today, a growing number of people are beginning to use the Internet. The same time. With the passage of time, online games have grown to be quite popular among the younger generation, which has caused an increase in online gaming addiction on a global scale (Iowa State). 2011; university. The Internet has created a brand-new playground. In practise, there are many different games to play on the Internet that span many different genres. These comprise, but are not limited to, simple browser games (CBGs), like Dark Orbit, First-Person or Ego-Shooters (FPSs) like Counterstrike, Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) like World of Warcraft (Wow), and Simulation Games (SGs) like Second Life. Additionally, there are hybrid forms that blend various genres into a single game, such as MMORPFPS (Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing First-Person Shooters), like Neocron. CBGs can be played on a web browser for no cost and are widely available. FPSs are 3D online first-person shooters that are played from the perspective of the player's ego. Online gaming has reportedly developed into one of the most addicting Internet hobbies to date (Wan & Chiou, 2006). The research is interested in learning the causes of young people starting to play online games as well as how playing such games affects their everyday activities and lifestyles. This interest is based on well-established research. Alarming global data shows that young teenagers are becoming addicted to online video games. According

to a poll conducted by Przybylski et al. (2017) in four developed nations—like the United Kingdom, Canada, and the United States—between 0.3% and 1% of the population could be considered "fit for video game addiction diagnosis." (Przybylski et al., 2017). For instance, over 6,000 children and young adults in South Korea battle addictions to video games. According to the data that is currently available, 8.4% of youngsters (students) between the ages of 11 and 15 have developed a major gaming addiction (Lal, 2021). The excessive internet gaming habit has been labelled a "public health emergency" by the government because of Lal's (2021) findings, which are regarded as inappropriate and unprecedented. The State of Online Gaming report for 2020 evaluated 4,000 online video gamers from ten (10) technologically advanced nations and investigated how much time young individuals under the age of 18 spent playing online video games. The Indian government has planned a nationwide strategy aimed at controlling the number of hours' youngsters (students) spend playing video games in an effort to discover long-term solutions to the high rates of online video game addiction. Hundreds of thousands of players play MMORPGs at once throughout the globe. Players commonly interact in-game in guilds and work together to accomplish game-related objectives. Additionally, they perform roles by assuming virtual personae, sometimes known as avatars, including fighters and wizards. In a metaverse where anything that can be done in real life can also be done in a virtual second life, simulation games simulate real life. The NPD's 2009 software sales ranking demonstrates the games' wide appeal: According to The NPD Group (2010), *The Sims 3* and *World of Warcraft: Wrath of the Lich King* saw the most sales. The ranking of the following games shows a change between different iterations of these two titles, demonstrating that MMORPGs and real-world simulations are currently more popular with players, especially pertinent for the two most popular gaming genres. In play, we are free to investigate both our society and ourselves. Play allows us to both explore and construct culture, according to Silverstone (1999), p. 64. As a result, for these two most popular gaming genres, the blending of the actual and virtual worlds becomes especially pertinent. According to research, this minority may exhibit symptoms such as mood modification, tolerance, and behavioural salience that are typically linked to substance-related addictions (Hsu, Wen, & Wu, 2009; Ko, Liu, Hsiao, Yen, Yang, Lin, Yen, & Chen, 2009; Mehroof & Griffiths, 2010; Wölfling, Thalemann, & Grüsser-Sinopoli, 2008; Young, 2009). A sizable number of studies were released, covering a wide range of subjects such as behavioural addiction's classification, aetiology, and phenomenology. Recent reviews have also questioned whether the idea of Internet gaming addiction is indeed a real thing (see Griffiths, 2010a), but that discussion is not the subject of this essay. Nowadays, it is incredibly rare to encounter children and young teenagers interacting face-to-face with their peers or families due to the high rate of addiction to online video games within this age group (Gros et al., 2020). The type of game played by adolescents and other factors, such as location, have an impact on children's social relationships, according to a study by Ruzic-Baf et al. (2015) on the addictions to online video games and social relationships, participation, and social skills of children and young adolescents in the first grade. According to the study by Shi et al. (2019), adolescents who opt to play video games at home end up having much worse social relationships than those who play the same game outside of the house. Despite the fact that the locational focus of this study is general, our findings completely concur with those reached by Shi et al. (2019; Ruzic-Baf et al. 2015). This literature review makes an effort to clarify the present scientific understanding of Internet gaming addiction, which is extensive in scope and looks to be quite complex. It does so by offering an original framework within which all previous studies can be grouped.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Students who are heavy or compulsive Internet users who reside on Taiwanese college campuses were selected as subjects for this study.

1. The group of Internet gaming addicts that the prior study¹ identified
2. Anyone who spends more than 30 hours every week online.
3. The author contacted and analyses students who admitted to being frequent Internet gaming users.

Subject recruitment and interviewing was conducted from March through June 2023.

We conducted interviews each time we were able to schedule one, two, or more subjects for a single time window. In other words, we kept recruiting while the interviews were going on.

Research design

In order to conduct a thorough analysis, this study employed a qualitative phenomenological design. Phenomenological design emphasizes subjective measurement and discusses the significance of the perceived experience or the interpretation of the said data. It makes use of unstructured or semi-structured data collection methods, such as interviews and questionnaires, is transparent, and adopts the first-person perspective in order to use the data collection and interpretation of the research. This research strategy is suitable for this topic since it collects data from experiences that have been analyzed and interpreted as well as from subjective data.

Research setting and method

Online interviews were done in both solo and group formats. Researchers and subjects met to discuss interview scheduling and desired format. For this study, we conducted a total of 30 interviews. Online zoom access was restricted to interview subjects only. For subsequent study, all queries and responses were displayed and recorded in text form. The interviews were semi structured and participatory, meaning that while the researchers prepared sets of predetermined questions, some "follow-up" questions were improvised in response to the participants' responses. The interview technique was employed to enhance our earlier research results and get verbal information from our subjects directly. Interviews give the interviewer access to the participants' own words and ideas. We anticipated that the qualitative aspect of our study would offer more detailed and richer explanations, such as the "how" and "why" of Internet gaming addiction and heavy use, and would allow us to construct a holistic, and hence more comprehensive, image of our participants. The goal, however, was not to generalize the results to a larger population or to offer precise quantitative or statistical descriptions.

Interview questions

The questions that were posed to each subject are mentioned below; however, more questions may have been asked in response to the subjects' responses and in light of other circumstances.

These inquiries Centre on the causes of excessive Internet gaming use and addiction, the effects of such use, and how subjects deal with the challenges that emerge from it. Four groups of questions are presented: (A) Internet gaming use (B) reasons for and features of that use; (C) impacts and coping strategies.

A: - Internet gaming use questions:

A-1 What online application do you utilize most frequently?

A-2 What online gaming do you engage in most often?

A-3 How long do you often spend online each day, and what time of day do you typically access the Internet gaming?

A-4 Tell us about your Internet game usage habits.

B: - Reasons and features questions:

B-1 Why are these the gaming application(s) you use the most?

B-2 Do you appreciate utilizing this (or these) gaming application(s) in particular, as well as the Internet in general?

B-3 Do you find that using the Internet gaming and/or the applications you use allows you to escape from reality or lessens your unpleasant emotions (such as anxiety)? Explain.

B-4 Which of the main characteristics of the Internet gaming (multimedia, interactivity, actions, adaptability, availability, virtual experience, etc.) most appeals to you? Give explanations and examples.

B-5 How do you make advantage of the two-way chat features offered by the Internet gaming?

B-6 Do you find these two-way communication features to be enjoyable? Explain.

C: - Impact and coping questions:

C-1 How do your family, friends, roommates, classmates, and other close friends feel about your use of the Internet gaming?

C-2 Does anyone object to your usage of the gaming too much? How do they respond?

C-3 Please assess how the Internet gaming has affected your study habits, daily activities, health, relationships with friends and classmates, parents, and teachers

C-4 Do you intend to limit or curtail your Internet gaming usage?

C-5 If the response to D-4 is "yes," how do you propose to carry this out?

C-6 Do you experience agitation, irritability, depression, or moodiness when trying to reduce or stop your Internet gaming usage?

C-7 What will you do in the event that the response to D-6 is "yes"?

Result

The main focus of our study of the information acquired from 30 participants is presented in the section that follows. In general, participants were very helpful in reporting and assessing their Internet gaming usage.

Game use and reasons.

The majority of the subjects had used the Internet gaming for one year or more. During the academic year, they spend about 4-5 hours per workday in online gaming, and during weekends and school breaks, they spend up to 10 hours per day in online gaming. It's important to note that these three locations often don't charge customers to access the Internet. No residential users claimed to have a constant connection to the Internet. These 7 subjects occasionally checked their email and notification of games, participated in chat rooms and events in games, and didn't really use the Internet all day.

Although more than half of the subjects claimed that their weekly and daily Internet game usage hours varied, roughly 6 of the subjects acknowledged that they typically used the Internet gaming for longer periods of time than the subject-average would suggest. The sense of friendship or belonging to

people get from such relationships is one explanation for this. Following is how one Subject described using the Internet after school:

Subject: - "When I back to my bed room, I log in to the gaming lobby I frequently visit because i have a daily habit to do so. They welcome me and are eager to hear about my day in the game and its chatroom. I enjoy the feeling that I am always accompanied by pals while I am out and about."

To live a good and balanced life, everyone requires interpersonal relationships, social acceptance, social support, and a sense of belonging. According to Young's definition of online social support, groups of people who regularly communicate with one another through computers over a long period of time develop these networks.

It is possible to build familiarity and a sense of belonging through routine or frequent visits to a particular newsgroup, chatroom, or BBS board, particularly in Taiwan's situation. Through one specific chatroom, it appears that B-8 receives his or her social validation, support, and sense of belonging.

According to Kandell, developing a sense of identity and belonging are two of the hurdles that adolescents must overcome as they navigate their developmental processes.

Young teenagers are frequently well-protected by their families, who also aggressively encourage, if not outright force them, to enroll in college. Although some students had access to the Internet in high school, few people started utilizing it for social media and gaming until they were in college. The situation of Subject exemplifies the need for sharing among average college students. If roommates in the dorm, parents, and siblings at home are not available, Internet gaming pals appear like a suitable option to complete this important activity.

gaming and chat in game are good for passing the time for subjects; in other words, time seems to move more quickly for subjects while they are connected to the Internet. "I wonder if Net time is triple the speed of our real-world clock," subject C wrote. The voluntary response from Subject D was particularly interesting: "I wish I had 100 hours per day to be on the Internet gaming."

The majority of respondents said that the Internet gaming offers users some degree of enjoyment and fulfilment and is useful for both work and entertainment. A quarter of the participants said they could escape their issues, upsets, and despair well on the Internet gaming. They think that talking about concerns helps them release bad emotions. They found the internet to be a useful escape from issues, upsets, and depression. Putting their views about issues into words, they believe, which aids in easing their emotional distress. Although there can be disagreements or "flames" on some topics, subjects showed a high level of commitment to their chosen BBSs and chatrooms. According to Morahan-Martin and Schumacher, the Internet offers a place to unwind, escape stress, and look for excitement. Scherer discovered that compared to other college students, Internet-dependent students spend twice as much time online for leisure activities. In their study⁸, Chou, Chou, and Tyan discovered a positive correlation between Taiwanese college students' overall communication pleasure scores and their Internet addiction scores, particularly their "escape pleasure" and "interpersonal relationship pleasure" scores.

Internet features

What key aspects of the Internet draw people in the most was one of the study's interview questions.

Collectively, the subjects conveyed their gratitude.

for the following online gaming capabilities:

- Interactivity (which encompasses both human-human and human-computer interaction)

- Usability (the majority of programmers are simple to use, which improves both sorts of interactive relationships)
- Accessibility (widespread use by students that is frequently free via university network infrastructures)

When describing the allure of the Internet gaming in terms of the depth of available knowledge, Subject A said:

A -: "I find the interesting individuals and material on the Internet gaming to be fascinating. I had no idea that there were so many diverse people and cultures in the world. Even if I occasionally marvel how someone with a viewpoint that is completely different from mine can also sound rational and right, I am very grateful to be an individual in this world.

It's interesting that at least four participants claimed to experience "gaming anxiety," They did concur, though, that there should be more information than there is. Subject S described the following incident:

Subject J explained another type of "anxiety":

J: "The issue with the Internet gaming is that there is entertainment as well as time wastage. I get a little concerned sometimes because I spend so much time playing but turn up so little. Given that Subject A made use of the word "world" talking about the one the Internet has produced virtually. Therefore, we inquired as to whether this "virtually" or which "world" more strongly attracted our subjects. Subject P voiced displeasure with our query: - What is real and what is virtual? I disagree with the classifications you employ. The virtual world of gaming, as you refer to it, seems to me to be more genuine. Instead of in the world you refer to as "real," I establish sincere friends here, speak my heart, and convey my true emotions.

Impact of internet use

The Internet gaming was typically considered as a more beneficial than unfavorable aspect of some subjects'. As was mentioned above, the positive effects noticed included self-identification, improved friendships, a sense of community, and others. Of the individuals who replied, 13 (45.8%) said they had stronger relationships with old friends as a result of the additional communication avenues the Internet gaming provided. Some respondents claimed that they had introduced the Internet gaming to old acquaintances who had never used it, and that in most cases, it had been successful because they now used it as their primary, if not only, means of communication. In addition, 16 (54.2%) of the participants reported making new friends during online gaming. Eyesight degradation and sleep disruption were the two most common side effects of Internet use. Eyes that were painful, dry, or unpleasant were related concerns. About half of the participants claimed that late-night log-ins frequently disturbed their sleep patterns. Some people claimed to have stayed up late and spent time online until 1, 2, or even 4:00 in the morning. Late-night log-ins had a negative impact on health, resulting in painful shoulders, backs, hands, and fingers, weariness, and being late for appointments or classes, among other things. These outcomes supported Young's conclusions.

Still, Subject L- had the following to say about late- night log- sways L" In my view, online gaming should only be done at night. The Internet gaming is beautiful the latterly it gets in the evening. While the commotion on the internet gaming is about to begin, I enjoy the peace and calm of the area.

Subject E stated the following:

E-: "One time I waked up till 5:00 a.m. online. You can only imagine how unpleasant working the following day was. During the meeting, my lab director just so happened to give a lengthy speech. I was unable to resist dozing off. Nearly lost my job.

Now seeking a master's degree is Subject S. This is what she/he recalled from her/his junior year:

S-: "At the time, I had been habitual of multiplayer gaming. Even though I had a final test the following morning, I was unable to stop playing MUD until six o'clock. I then made the decision to skip the test.

All of the players in the MUD cheered as I announced this choice. I believed I was a tragic hero at the moment.

limiting or regulating Internet gaming usage

We have discussed our subjects' extensive Internet use up to this point. Some occurrences fulfil the Griffiths "salience" and "conflict" criteria, or the Chou and Hsiao "compulsive use" and "related problems" criteria.¹ These occurrences, however, are insufficient to evaluate patients' propensities for Internet gaming addiction. Other criteria are also listed by Griffiths, such as mood modification, tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms. One of the most crucial of these criteria is withdrawal, which includes unpleasant emotions, mental states, or physical side effects when Internet gaming use is discontinued or limited. We questioned our subjects about their attempts to limit their Internet gaming use, and if so, how. Surprisingly, less than 10% said they did, despite the fact that the majority of respondents said they already had some issues with excessive Internet use. Subject U clarified that rather than gaming usage, s/he would make better use of the Internet. Subject O claimed that the only time they genuinely considered reducing usage was when their results arrive. However, despite her/his best efforts, s/he was never able to cut down on Internet gaming usage. The Internet gaming is already a part of Subject T's everyday existence, and no one has the right to demand that he or she give it up entirely, just as no one has the right to demand that they stop eating or sleeping. How did our participants react when they were unable to access the Internet gaming for an extended period of time? 13 subjects out of all those that answered participants reported feeling depressed, anxious, or possessive towards the Internet gaming. When Subject S tried to avoid playing a favorite MUD, s/he claimed to experience depression and become highly agitated. The largest amount of time Subject K-2 can tolerate being without access to the Internet gaming is five days. The majority of the participants said they would like to return to the Internet gaming as soon as possible, even if more than half of them thought the situation may be tolerable for a little length of time.

Subject N described the incident:

N-: "Even though I'm in between lots of people when I switch off the Internet gaming, I feel lonely and bad.

reality: For a while, I made an effort to avoid using the computer and the Internet gaming. Well, the sky remained clear and stunning. My notification box had reached its maximum capacity when I returned to the internet, so I had to deal with these gaming notification and swiftly return to my daily life. Perhaps most noteworthy is Subject N's mention of "normal life," which in this situation refers to continuing to use the Internet gaming excessively as previously. How did the individuals' family, friends, coworkers, and any romantic partners see this "normal" existence of extensive Internet use? Subject N said that during summer vacations, his/her parents encouraged him/her to go out with friends rather than spend the entire time at home watching television or playing video games. Similar responses were given by many participants: parents were frequently more worried about their children's internet gaming use than their friends were, primarily due to concerns about their psychological and physical health.

According to Subject P, his/her mother reprimanded him/her for being too lazy. Subject E, on the other hand, claimed that his/her mother was envious of him/her for using the Internet gaming all the time.

How to deal with issues of Internet gaming withdrawal

If ceasing or reducing Internet gaming usage what triggers unpleasant feelings, and how did our subjects deal with them? Ten individuals indicated that they had given up the notion after making multiple unsuccessful attempts and did not possess any practical solutions to contribute. More than 90% of the participants in our study claimed that they had never even considered seeking outside assistance, such as from school counsellors or psychologists. They repeatedly believed that using the Internet gaming excessively was a personal or minor issue, and that this was not a good enough reason to visit the school counselling Centre. Why should I visit a counselling Centre if all I do is playing video games? Several topics were typed. It is clear that they are unaware of this new condition, underappreciate its harmful effects, and are unsure of where to turn for qualified assistance. Thus, participants experimented with their own coping mechanisms. A third of the participants claimed to have tried real-world pursuits as opposed to using the Internet gaming, such as shopping (in person, not online), reading books (in print), doing laundry, making phone calls, visiting friends' houses, etc. All of these exercises, however, were designed to be transitional, helping participants pass the time before their next Internet gaming session. When the Internet game server was down, according to Subject P, s/he spoke to friends face-to-face, something they didn't regularly get the chance to do. What were they discussing? concerns and people on the internet gaming.

S-: "In my senior year, I made the point in my mind to restrict from using the Internet gaming until the graduation entrance tests were completed. In addition, I had missed half the semester's worth of classes. If I kept on playing my MUD, I'd fail. I succeeded in killing myself in MUD. I was stripped of my entire arsenal, strength, combat prowess, seniority, etc. I thought I had actually passed away at that point. Because subject S was one of the "Gods" of that MUD—top-level managers who oversaw both the programming work and players' behavior—rather than just a regular player, committing "suicide" was in fact a horrible experience for that person. The subjects felt that this failure was partly due to the Internet's pervasive presence in their lives, and partly because it has replaced some functions of other broadcasting and/or personal communication technologies. No-cost access is also a major reason for students who typically do not have much money to spend. However, as was already mentioned, they never thought to look, regardless of the approach they had taken. Seeking qualified assistance. Rudall recommends that the same approaches used to treat other behavioral addictions should be used to treat this new addiction as well. It is crucial to avoid completely cutting off Internet connection and instead to gradually limit usage. According to Orzack and Orzack, the goal of treating Internet gaming addiction should be to normalize network usage in order to survive, not abstinence as is the case with eating disorders. Therefore, the most crucial responsibility is to teach pupils how to use the Internet responsibly and productively and how to use limits over gaming.

DISCUSSION

Internet gaming abusers and over-involved users may become more prevalent due to the exponential growth of Internet use in society and on college campuses. The purpose of this study was to discuss current studies and interviews that concentrated on excessive and compulsive Internet gaming use among students. Instead of attempting to count the number of Internet-dependent students, this study aims to give detailed

and vivid descriptions of the psychology and behaviors of its participants by directly quoting them. Additionally, by including the researchers' own observations and analysis, the main topics of the study of Internet addiction may become more obvious and useful. In terms of the amount of time they spend online, the study's participants were at least frequent Internet users. They averaged 4-5 hours every weekday and 5-8 hours on weekends and during school breaks. They utilised game chat, video call to get to know other users, cultivate a feeling of community (belonging), monitor environments, look up practical information to better living, pass the time, and experience enjoyment and fulfilment. Depending on the geographic setting or accessibility in their environment, subjects may have substituted the Internet for traditional broadcast media. For instance, half of the subjects read electronic news on a regular basis. A third of the individuals reduced their use of the television, and more than half reduced writing letters by hand.

The interactivity, usability, accessibility of Internet gaming were praised by the subjects. Online, while some people can have "information anxiety" as a result of finding it difficult to sort through the deluge of data. The popularity of the Internet gaming will undoubtedly increase among college students as well as students at other grade levels as long as the continuously growing bandwidth of the Internet allows it to transmit multimedia resources in bigger quantities, of higher quality, and at a lower cost. According to Young4, while interactive programmers specifically seem to have a key influence in the emergence of pathological Internet use, the Internet itself is not addictive. This study offers some examples to support this claim.

These participants claimed that the Internet gaming had a major positive impact on their sense of self, friendships, and global connections. However, the two most detrimental effects of Internet gaming use were deteriorating eyesight and lack of sleep. Poor academic performance and employment performance were other issues. A third of those surveyed claimed that being unable to use the internet game caused them to feel sad, irritable, anxious, aggressive etc. Some of the subjects had tried abstinence, which did not always work. More critically, participants did not consider seeking professional assistance from school counsellors or psychologists. They repeatedly believed that using the Internet gaming excessively was a personal or minor issue, and that this was not a good enough reason to visit the school counselling centre.

In the future, specific study questions, such as how gaming and applications (such as chatrooms), and communications (what they talk about), addict student profiles, and the psychological coping methods of Internet users could all be addressed in a useful way. It is important to keep in mind that the definitions of the phrases "virtual," "real," and "normal life" that individuals may have may differ from those utilized in our interview questions. Therefore, extreme caution should be taken when using these phrases in survey questions or interview questions. Future studies might concentrate on the most efficient ways to cure Internet addiction. After all, information gleaned from research, like that presented in this paper, is what helps people recognize and treat Internet addiction. College and school students might not be aware of the signs of Internet gaming addiction or the resources available to treat these issues. Mental health professionals, on the other hand, are aware of the underlying causes and aggravating factors of Internet addiction and are able to use this understanding to create and implement effective treatments. As was already noted, a collaborative effort is needed to educate parents, psychiatrists, administrators and teachers in charge of student affairs, as well as other stakeholders, about this new condition and where to find support.

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