A STUDY ON IMPACT OF ONLINE GAMING AND ITS ADDICTION AMONG YOUTH WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SAURASHTRA

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ABSTRACT

In today's modern era, technology plays a crucial role in nearly every aspect of human life. People now rely on advanced technologies for both information and entertainment, which offer a wide range of benefits to society. When it comes to infotainment, social media and online gaming have become dominant platforms. Online gaming has reached unprecedented levels in the virtual world.

Online gaming refers to video games that are played via the internet or any other available computer network. Many people view online gaming as a form of entertainment, and with the growth of the mobile and network industries, the online gaming sector has flourished. It also serves as a means for individuals to escape from stress and daily pressures.

However, like anything, online gaming has its drawbacks. Excessive engagement in gaming can lead to addiction, which in turn may result in various health issues such as vision problems, headaches, and neck pain. Moreover, it can cause mental health concerns, including gaming disorders.

Our study aims to explore the impact of online gaming and its addictive nature among the youth of Saurashtra.

Key words: Online gaming, Addiction Level, Infotainment,

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INTRODUCTION

Online gaming has become a major trend worldwide, offering a platform for individuals to play games as long as they have internet access. It provides the opportunity to compete with people globally, many of whom we may never meet in person, and helps in developing various skills. Online games allow players to stay connected with friends while also offering opportunities to earn rewards.

While online gaming is an enjoyable experience for many, it comes with both advantages and disadvantages. On the positive side, online gaming can keep individuals, especially the youth, away from dangerous behaviors like drug use or involvement in gangs. It can be a source of excitement and motivation, encouraging players to compete and strive for success. Additionally, online gaming can help improve mental sharpness and cognitive skills.

However, online gaming can also have negative effects. One major concern is the lack of physical activity, which may lead to health problems over time. Gaming addiction is another issue, as excessive time spent on games can interfere with other important activities. Online gaming may also expose players, particularly children, to potential dangers like online harassment or cyberbullying. Furthermore, downloading games from unreliable sources may result in viruses that can harm devices.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

We primarily aim to study the level of online gaming addiction among the youth in Saurashtra. By addressing this issue, we can help reclaim our younger generation and encourage them to become more socially engaged within their community.

With the advent of new technologies, teenagers are increasingly getting absorbed into online games, retreating into their own virtual worlds and distancing themselves from real-life social interactions. This leads to a decrease in face-to-face communication and socialization. To tackle this problem, we propose using gaming detoxification as a solution.

OBJECTIVES

- To study the effect of online gaming among youth in Saurashtra.

- To assess the level of online gaming addiction among youth in Saurashtra.

- To identify the different types of online gaming disorders among youth in Saurashtra.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

A descriptive study was conducted for this research. Data for the study was collected from respondents in Saurashtra. The sample size consisted of 100 participants.

SOURCE OF DATA

The data of the study has been collected from primary data through structured questionnaires.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1) ONLINE GAMING AND YOUTH BEHAVIOR:

Online gaming has become a widely practiced activity among youth, with its impact on behavior varying significantly. Anderson and Dill (2000) contend that online games, especially those featuring violent content, can lead to aggressive behavior and a desensitization to violence in young players. On the other hand, other studies, such as Griffiths (2010), propose that online gaming can offer positive benefits, such as promoting social interaction, teamwork, and cognitive development, particularly in tasks that require problem-solving. However, these benefits are typically dependent on maintaining moderation in gaming habits.

In the context of India, Sharma and Kumar (2016) emphasize that online gaming serves not only as a source of entertainment for youth but also as a means of socializing with peers. In urban areas like Saurashtra, the increasing popularity of online gaming can be attributed to better access to the internet and widespread smartphone usage. This growing trend has raised concerns regarding its impact on youth behavior, especially when gaming becomes excessive or compulsive.

2) ONLINE GAMING ADDICTION:

Online gaming addiction has become a significant area of academic research in recent years. Gentile (2009) introduced the term "internet gaming disorder" (igd), describing it as a compulsive gaming behavior that disrupts daily life and activities.

The world health organization (who) recognized the clinical relevance of this issue by including gaming disorder in the 11th edition of the international classification of diseases (icd-11).

Several studies have provided compelling evidence that excessive gaming can result in serious psychological and physical consequences. Kuss and Griffiths (2012) identified a strong link between gaming addiction and mental health problems, including anxiety, depression, and social isolation. Furthermore, addicted gamers often experience disrupted sleep patterns, physical health decline, and poor academic performance (king et al., 2013). These findings are consistent with research by lee et al. (2017), which reported similar patterns of addiction and its effects among youth in Asian countries, including India.

3) **THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF ONLINE GAMING IN INDIA AND SAURASHTRA :**

India stands as one of the largest gaming markets globally, with a rapidly expanding number of online gamers. By 2020, India had over 365 million online gamers, a significant portion of whom were youth (Statista, 2020). Among this demographic, the youth in urban and semi-urban areas, including Saurashtra, are increasingly drawn to online gaming, fueled by better access to smartphones and affordable internet services. Jain et al. (2017) found that in Gujarat, particularly in the Saurashtra region, adolescents commonly spend several hours each day on online gaming platforms. This group is particularly attracted to multiplayer online games, which provide both social interaction and competitive engagement.

While the popularity of gaming continues to rise, there is a lack of focused research on gaming addiction specifically among youth in Saurashtra. However, studies from similar urban and semi-urban areas suggest a growing trend of dependence on gaming, with young people increasingly prioritizing their gaming activities over academic and social obligations (Bansal & Kumar, 2018).

4) **IMPACT OF GAMING ADDICTION ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE AND SOCIAL BEHAVIOR :**

The literature consistently indicates that gaming addiction has a detrimental effect on both academic performance and social development. Excessive gaming is often associated with poor time management, decreased concentration, and lower

academic achievement (Raith et al., 2019). In Saurashtra, this pattern is evident in both secondary and tertiary educational institutions, where students who spend extended hours gaming tend to experience a decline in their academic performance and involvement in extracurricular activities.

Additionally, social isolation is another significant outcome of gaming addiction. Chou et al. (2017) highlight that gamers suffering from addiction often withdraw from family interactions and real-life social engagements. This trend is also observed among the youth in Saurashtra, where, despite the region's strong communal bonds, many young gamers prefer virtual interactions to in-person connections with family and friends. Such a shift can lead to the erosion of traditional family structures and social cohesion.

5) CULTURAL PERSPECTIVES ON ONLINE GAMING IN SAURASHTRA:

Saurashtra, a region known for its rich cultural heritage, places significant importance on familial values and community relationships. However, the increasing presence of digital technologies, particularly the rise of online gaming, has brought about a cultural shift. Youth in Saurashtra, particularly in urban areas, are becoming more exposed to global gaming trends, which is altering their leisure activities and social behaviors.

A study by Patel and Desai (2019) examined the gaming habits of Saurashtra's youth, revealing that while some view gaming as an innocent form of entertainment, others especially parents are concerned about its addictive nature. This divergence in perspective underscores the ongoing tension between upholding traditional cultural values and adapting to modern digital forms of entertainment.

As a result, many young individuals in Saurashtra experience internal conflict, struggling to balance their gaming habits with familial and cultural expectations.

6) INTERVENTIONS AND PREVENTION MEASURES:

Various strategies have been proposed to address the challenges of gaming addiction. Family-based interventions and educational programs that raise awareness about the risks of excessive gaming have proven effective in curbing addictive behavior. Lee et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of parental monitoring, open communication, and setting clear limits on gaming time as key measures to mitigate the risk of addiction. In Saurashtra, schools and NGOs have begun implementing workshops

and counseling programs aimed at educating both parents and youth on the importance of healthy gaming habits.

Additionally, promoting sports and extracurricular activities as alternative forms of engagement has been encouraged to help reduce youth reliance on gaming for entertainment. These efforts play a vital role in fostering a balanced lifestyle that integrates both digital and physical activities, contributing to the overall well-being of young people.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Table 1: Distribution of respondents based on Gender

GENDER	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Male	58	58
Female	42	42
TOTAL	100	100%

INTERPRETATION

In a sample of 100 respondents, 58 were male, representing 58%, while the remaining 42 were female, accounting for 42%. Additionally, there were no respondents in the third category.

Table 2: Distribution of respondents based on Location

CITY'S	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Jamnagar	6	6
Rajkot	24	24
Junagadh	4	4
Surendranagar	6	6
Khambhaliya	14	14
Dwarka	4	4
Porbandar	12	12
Morbi	18	18
Veraval	8	8
Keshod	4	4
TOTAL	100	100%

INTERPRETATION

Based on the data from the table, it can be inferred that 24% of the responses are from Rajkot, 18% from Morbi, 14% from Khambhaliya, 12% from Porbandar, 8% from Veraval, and 6% each from Jamnagar and Surendranagar. Additionally, 4% of the responses are from Junagadh, Keshod, and Dwarka.

Table 3: Distribution of respondents based on Gaming Hours spent.

PARTICULARS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
1-5 hours	42	42%
6-20 hours	47	47%
21-40 hours	5	5%
41-80 hours	3	3%
More than 80 hours	3	3%
TOTAL	100	100%

INTERPRETATION

Based on the data from the table, it can be inferred that 47% of respondents spend between 6 to 20 hours per week playing online games, 42% spend between 1 to 5 hours, 5% spend between 21 to 40 hours, 3% spend between 41 to 80 hours, and another 3% spend more than 80 hours on online gaming each week.

Table 4: Distribution of respondents based on time spend for sleeping

PARTICULARS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Agree	26	26%
Strongly agree	8	8%
Neutral	32	32%
Disagree	21	21%
Strongly disagree	13	13%
TOTAL	100	100%

INTERPRETATION

Based on the data from the table, it can be inferred that 8% of respondents strongly agree that they sacrifice sleep to play online games, 26% agree, 32% are neutral, 13% strongly

disagree, and the remaining 21% disagree with the statement that they spend less time sleeping to play online games.

Table 5: Distribution of respondents based on their use of online gaming as a way of escaping from stress and depression.

PARTICULARS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Agree	30	30%
Strongly agree	8	8%
Neutral	32	32%
Disagree	20	20%
Strongly disagree	10	10%
TOTAL	100	100%

INTERPRETATION

According to the data from the table, 8% of respondents strongly agree that they use online gaming as a means of escaping stress, 30% agree, 32% are neutral, 10% strongly disagree, and 20% disagree with the idea of using online gaming as a stress relief method.

Table 6: Distribution of respondents based on health issues caused by online gaming.

PARTICULARS	RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Vision Problems	25	25%
Neck pain	17	17%
Back pain	10	10%
Headache	35	35%
No health issues	13	13%
TOTAL	100	100%

INTERPRETATION

Based on the data from the table, it can be inferred that 35% of respondents experience severe headaches due to playing games, 25% have vision problems, 10% suffer from back pain, 17% have neck pain, and the remaining 13% report no health issues.

FINDINGS

- The study revealed that 58% of the respondents were male, while 42% were female.

- A majority of the respondents were from the cities of Rajkot, Morbi, and Khambhaliya.

- Approximately 47% of the participants reported engaging in online gaming for between 6 to 20 hours per week.

- Around 32% of respondents reported that their sleep was occasionally disrupted by online gaming, while 13% indicated that their sleep was unaffected by gaming activities.

- 32% of the respondents expressed neutrality regarding the use of online gaming as a means of coping with stress and depression.

- 35% of the respondents reported experiencing severe headaches as a result of prolonged gaming.

SUGGESTIONS

- The government should implement awareness campaigns and counselling programs to address online gaming addiction, especially among adolescents.

- Encourage more participation in outdoor sports such as football, cricket, and badminton, to reduce time spent on electronic devices like smartphones, laptops, and tablets.

- It is important to track and limit gaming time. Set a personal limit for gaming hours, choose games wisely, or take breaks through a gaming detox.

- Integrating yoga and meditation into your daily routine can effectively reduce stress and enhance concentration, helping to manage gaming addiction.

- Steer clear of gambling-based games, such as online casinos, to prevent monetary loss.

- Avoid extremely violent games like PUBG, as they may trigger aggressive thoughts, emotions, and behaviours, ultimately affecting mental health.

CONCLUSION

Online gaming has become a widely popular form of entertainment, particularly among the youth, and is played by individuals of all ages. Its primary goal is to entertain, but it

also indirectly encourages addiction to promote the growth of the gaming industry. This study reveals a neutral effect of online gaming in Saurashtra, with Rajkot City showing a higher tendency among males to become addicted to adventure games like PUBG. The study also highlights that prolonged gaming leads to addiction, which negatively impacts various aspects of health, increases sleep disturbances, and reduces face-to-face social interactions. On the positive side, online gaming can enhance mental development, foster critical thinking, and provide stress relief. In conclusion, the study shows that online gaming has both positive and negative effects on real-world well-being.

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