

Online Gaming Addiction and Its Impact on the Mental Health of Primary School Students

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Abstract

Gaming has long been a beloved source of entertainment, and today's titles like Fortnite, Valorant, Rainbow 6 Siege, Apex Legends, and League of Legends have become a daily ritual for many. These games transcend age barriers, captivating players of all generations. Gaming has become a ubiquitous form of entertainment in the modern digital era, with online games attracting players of all ages, including primary school students. However, concerns about online gaming addiction and its detrimental effects on mental health have escalated. This paper investigates the prevalence of online gaming addiction among primary school students, identifies contributing factors, analyzes both the negative and positive effects, and assesses its implications for their mental well-being. Employing a mixed-methods approach incorporating surveys and interviews, this research aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the complex relationship between online gaming addiction and mental health outcomes. The findings offer valuable insights into the challenges and opportunities for addressing this issue to support the well-being of primary school students in the digital age.

Keywords: Online gaming addiction, primary school students, mental health, risk factors, positive and negative analysis.

Introduction:

The escalation of online gaming addiction among primary school students has stirred significant concern in recent years, primarily due to its potential ramifications for mental health. As digital technologies continue to permeate society, children are increasingly drawn to online gaming platforms, prompting questions about the consequences of excessive gaming behavior on their overall well-being. This study aims to delve into the intricate relationship between online gaming addiction and the mental health of primary school students. By investigating the prevalence of addiction, identifying associated risk factors, and examining its effects on anxiety, depression, and overall well-being, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issue. Recognizing the implications of online gaming addiction is crucial for educators, parents, and policymakers as they endeavor to develop effective interventions to promote responsible gaming habits and safeguard the mental health of young gamers.

Background:

The rising prevalence of online gaming addiction among primary school students has become a topic of increasing concern, shedding light on its potential impact on their mental health. In an era dominated by digital technology, children are increasingly immersed in online gaming, leading to apprehensions regarding the consequences of excessive gaming behavior. This investigation aims to unravel the complex correlation between addiction to online gaming and the mental well-being of primary school students. By scrutinizing prevalence rates, identifying associated risk factors, and exploring implications for anxiety, depression, and overall psychological welfare, this study seeks to provide a comprehensive exploration of this pressing issue. Recognizing the significance of understanding the implications of online gaming addiction is pivotal for educators, parents, and policymakers as they strive to implement effective strategies and interventions to cultivate responsible gaming habits and uphold the mental health of young gamers.

Methodology:

This study employed a survey framework to explore the challenges faced by primary school students aged 6 to 12 who exhibited signs of gaming addiction between 2019 and the present day. The comprehensive survey aimed to elucidate the nuances of behavioral transformations observed among these young individuals as they navigated the demands of reality. The study meticulously examined how these alterations manifested across various spectrums, encompassing emotional realms such as depression, anxiety, social unease, sleep disturbances, negligence in responsibilities, and inclinations towards aggressive behavior. These behavioral changes seemed to be markedly influenced by exposure to mature-rated gaming content prevalent in titles such as Call of Duty, Apex Legends, Fortnite, PUBG, and GTA.

Survey data revealed a disconcerting trend, indicating that more than a quarter of primary school students grappled with distressing issues associated with gaming addiction. A significant contributing factor to this trend appeared to be parental acquisition of games without a thorough understanding or awareness of their

content's potential impact. Equally influential were peer discussions, predominantly fueled by the endorsements and discussions of online influencers through various social media platforms, exacerbating the problem.

Amidst this landscape, the survey provided crucial insights into prevalent gaming preferences among primary school students. Notably, Fortnite emerged as the most favored gaming choice, captivating a staggering 78% of the young demographic. Following closely behind were GTA, capturing the attention of 43% of children, and Call of Duty, engaging 62% of the same age group.

These findings underscore the urgent need for a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of gaming exposure on young minds, emphasizing the necessity for parental guidance and informed decision-making regarding the selection and consumption of age-appropriate gaming content within this vulnerable demographic.

Theoretical Framework:

Biopsychosocial Perspective

The biopsychosocial perspective emphasizes the interconnected nature of biological, psychological, and social factors in shaping gaming addiction in primary school children. It underscores the role of neurological predispositions to reward, cognitive patterns, emotional regulation, family dynamics, and peer influence in influencing addictive behaviors.

Cognitive Behavioral Perspective

The cognitive behavioral perspective focuses on how thought patterns like escapism and compulsion, along with behavioral reinforcement from in-game rewards, contribute to the development and perpetuation of gaming addiction. This perspective highlights the importance of understanding cognitive and behavioral aspects, especially in younger individuals, to address gaming addiction effectively.

Ecological Theory

The ecological theory emphasizes the impact of various environments, including family, school, and peers, on gaming addiction. It highlights how interactions

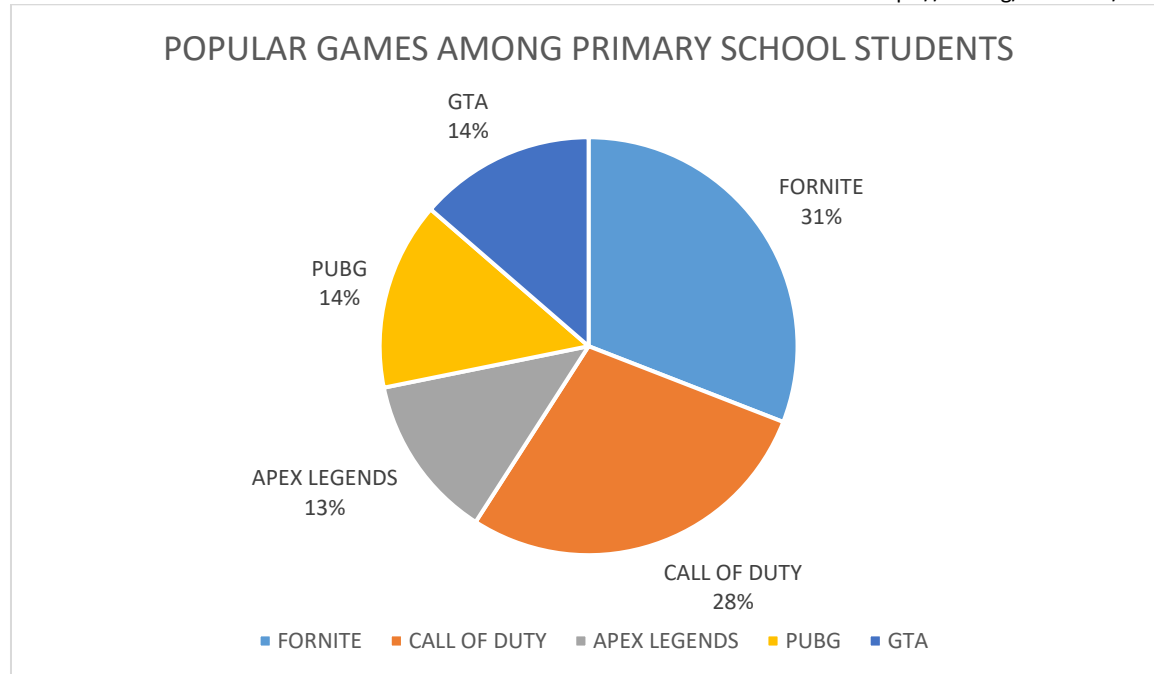
between these systems influence a child's gaming habits and behavior. Understanding these environmental influences is crucial for developing interventions to address gaming addiction in primary school children.

Risk & Protective Factors

Identifying specific risk factors such as excessive screen time and lack of parental monitoring, as well as protective factors like supportive family relationships and alternative recreational activities, is essential in understanding and mitigating gaming addiction risks among primary school students. Recognizing and addressing these factors can help prevent and manage gaming addiction effectively. By considering these perspectives and factors, stakeholders can develop comprehensive strategies to address gaming addiction.

Analysis and Discussion:

The analysis shows the primary school students' popular games with the charts given below:



The prevalence of online gaming addiction among primary school students has significant implications for their emotional and social well-being. The interactive nature of online games, particularly those featuring multiplayer and cooperative modes, provides a platform for players to engage in collaborative or competitive activities within a community-driven environment. However, this environment also harbors instances of bullying and harassment, creating alarming scenarios for young players.

Our survey findings revealed that a significant proportion of primary school

students, with percentages as follows: GTA (14%), PUBG (14%), Apex Legends (13%), Call of Duty (28%), and Fortnite (31%), are actively engaging with these popular games. These statistics underscore the widespread influence of online gaming in this demographic.

Within these gaming communities, instances of bullying and harassment are prevalent, posing serious challenges to the emotional well-being of primary school students. Exposure to such negative interactions often leads to feelings of discouragement, demotivation, and emotional distress among young players.

Moreover, these experiences contribute to social isolation, impacting their overall mental health.

The dynamics of online interactions within gaming environments present unique challenges for impressionable young minds. Instances of bullying and harassment, whether direct or indirect, have profound effects on children, leaving them vulnerable to emotional attacks and fostering a sense of exclusion within their peer groups. These negative experiences significantly influence their perceptions of social interactions, both online and offline, affecting their confidence, self-esteem, and anxiety levels.

It is essential to recognize the impact of these social and emotional challenges on primary school students. The exposure to toxic and negative online interactions can have detrimental effects on their emotional and social well-being. As such, addressing these issues requires a concerted effort from both parents and gaming platforms to create safer, more supportive online environments conducive to healthy social interaction and emotional growth for children navigating these virtual spaces.

The findings of this paper underscore the significance of employing a multifaceted theoretical approach to understand online gaming addiction among primary school students. Firstly, adopting a biopsychosocial perspective elucidates the intricate interplay between biological predispositions to reward, psychological factors such as cognitive patterns and emotional regulation, and social dynamics including family interactions and peer influence, all of which contribute to shaping addictive behaviors in young gamers. Secondly, a cognitive-behavioral framework highlights the role of thought patterns and behavioral reinforcement mechanisms within gaming contexts, emphasizing how escapism and compulsion perpetuate addiction. Thirdly, ecological theory sheds light on the influence of various environments, such as family, school, and peer groups, on gaming addiction, emphasizing the importance of understanding these interactions in shaping children's gaming behaviors. Finally, identifying specific risk and protective factors, such as excessive screen time and supportive family relationships, provides valuable insights into mitigating gaming

addiction risks among primary school students, highlighting the need for comprehensive prevention and intervention strategies.

In conclusion, the findings highlight the urgent need for proactive measures to mitigate the risks associated with online gaming addiction among primary school students. Educating parents and children about responsible gaming habits, fostering supportive online communities, and implementing robust reporting and moderation systems are crucial steps in creating a safer gaming environment for young players. By addressing these challenges collectively, we can promote the well-being of primary school students in the digital age and ensure that online gaming remains a positive and enriching experience for all.

Conclusion:

In conclusion, this study has illuminated the pervasive issue of online gaming addiction among primary school students and its profound ramifications for their mental health and overall well-being. By conducting a thorough examination of the prevalence, risk factors, and consequences

of gaming addiction, valuable insights into the challenges faced by young gamers in today's digital landscape have been provided.

The findings emphasize the urgent need for proactive interventions to mitigate the detrimental effects of excessive gaming behavior on primary school students. The interactive and immersive nature of online gaming environments, coupled with the prevalence of bullying and harassment, poses significant risks to children's emotional and social development. Collaboration among parents, educators, policymakers, and gaming platforms is crucial to creating safer and more supportive online spaces conducive to healthy social interaction and emotional growth.

Moreover, the identification of popular games among primary school students, such as GTA, PUBG, Apex Legends, Call of Duty, and Fortnite, underscores the widespread influence of online gaming in this demographic. Understanding children's gaming preferences and behaviors is vital for designing targeted interventions and promoting responsible gaming habits. Moving forward, evidence-based strategies

addressing individual and environmental factors contributing to gaming addiction must be implemented. Educating parents and children about the risks of excessive gaming, fostering open communication within families, and providing alternative recreational activities are essential steps in promoting balanced screen time and healthy gaming habits. Additionally, collaboration among stakeholders is critical in developing robust reporting and moderation systems within gaming platforms to address instances of bullying and harassment. Creating supportive online communities and promoting positive social interactions can help children navigate the digital landscape safely and responsibly.

In essence, addressing online gaming addiction among primary school students requires a multifaceted approach encompassing education, prevention, and intervention. By prioritizing the well-being of young gamers and fostering a culture of responsible gaming, we can ensure that online gaming remains a positive and enriching experience for children in the digital age.

Furthermore, tackling game addiction among primary school students demands a

holistic approach that extends beyond mere cessation of gaming. Encouraging participation in diverse social events outside the gaming realm provides children with opportunities to explore interests beyond screens, fostering physical activity and meaningful connections with peers. Open dialogues within families offer a platform for understanding motivations and collectively addressing gaming concerns. Facilitating contact with peers outside the gaming sphere expands social circles, providing alternative sources of enjoyment and reducing reliance on excessive gaming. Integrating social therapy equips children with essential skills for navigating social interactions confidently and managing emotions effectively.

By implementing these approaches, we empower primary school students to break free from addictive gaming behaviors, offering them the tools to lead fulfilling, well-rounded lives. This comprehensive strategy aims not only to mitigate game addiction but also to instill resilience, healthy habits, and a balanced approach to technology use, ensuring the holistic development and well-being of these young individuals.

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