A Study of the Impact of Internet Gaming on Aspects of Quality of Life and Flourishing of Young Undergraduates in India

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ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted to study the impact of internet gaming on the quality of life and flourishing of undergraduates. For this purpose, 80 internet gamers and 80 internet non-gamers lying within the age range of 17-24 years were recruited. For assessing the extent of internet gaming, the Internet Gaming Disorder Scale-Short Form (IGDS9-SF) was utilized while for assessing quality of life and flourishing, the WHO Quality of Life – BREF (WHOQOL-BREF) and Flourishing Scale were used, respectively. The results indicated significant differences in aspects of quality of life between the two groups. Further, the relationship of internet gaming with various aspects of quality of life and flourishing was also explored. The results reveal that internet gaming may indeed influence young undergraduates' quality of life and flourishing.

KEYWORDS

INTRODUCTION

Internet addiction (IA) and internet gaming disorder (IGD) are "conceptually different behaviours". Individuals with IA are usually males, invest a significant amount of time online doing any kind of online activities such as social networking, chatting, watching social media including gaming, whereas gaming disorder is specifically associated with gaming online (Griffiths, 2014).

Internet gaming disorder, also known as problematic online gaming or online gaming addiction or internet gaming addiction can be defined as disproportionate as well as uncontrollable usage of online games such that it starts affecting all aspects of a person's life (Schivinski, et al., 2018). An individual addicted to online gaming spends majority of the time in playing online games while neglecting personal hygiene, school/work and spending quality time with family and friends (Young, 2015). According to DSM-5 (American Psychiatric Association, Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 2013), an individual is said to be having Internet Gaming Disorder if any five out of the following nine features i.e. preoccupation, withdrawal, tolerance, loss of control, giving up other activities, continuation, deception, escape, and negative consequences (risking loss of or

actual loss of relationships, job, academic or career advancement opportunities), have been present in the last 12 month period.

It is often believed that the amount of time spent on online gaming is a great criterion for identifying internet gaming addicts (Lemmens & Hendriks, 2016). This idea is based on various studies that indicate that addicted online gamers generally spend approximately 80 hours in a week playing online (Griffiths, 2009) and that addicted gamers devote more than four times as much time engaging in online role-playing games and more than thrice as much time engaging in online shooter games than non-addicted gamers (Lemmens & Hendriks, 2016). However, by using the amount of time spent on online gaming, it is almost impossible to distinguish excessive gamers (those gamers who despite engaging in internet gaming for excessively long hours, sometimes as long as even 14 hours per day, exhibit a few or almost no negative consequences associated with IGD) from addicted gamers (those gamers who engage in online gaming so much so that they fulfil the DSM-5 criteria for diagnosis of IGD (Griffiths, 2010). Griffiths (2010) with the help of two case studies demonstrated that both excessive gaming and addictive gaming although being behaviourally identical in terms of hours of game playing, are quite distinct in terms of the motivation, the significance and the gaming experience that these two classes of gaming carry for the gamers. Currently, the number of hours spent playing online is not considered as a reliable as well as valid criterion for diagnosing online gaming addiction (Griffiths, 2009; Kuss, 2013).

Ferguson et al., (2011) performed a meta- analysis on thirty-three published research studies and dissertations to estimate the predominance of pathological online gaming as well as its co-morbidity with mental health issues, trouble in academics and difficulties in social relationships. The researchers estimated that around 3.1% population falls in the category of pathological gamers and that online gaming indeed leads to poor mental health, unsatisfactory academic performance and poor social relationships. To assess the relationship between Internet Gaming Disorder and psychological issues, interpersonal issues, and well-being, Cheng et al. (2018), found that Internet Gaming Disorder was highly positively correlated with psychological issues and interpersonal issues while it was found to be inversely correlated with life satisfaction and wellbeing. Scott and Porter-Armstrong (2018) did an extensive literature review of studies having key words namely, online/ internet gaming, wellbeing, psychosocial and the like. They tentatively concluded that playing online Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Games has both helpful as well as harmful impact on the psychosocial well being of the gamers. Bargeron and Hormes (2017) studied 257 regular online gamers and reported that nearly 8.7% of the study sample met the DSM-5 criteria for Internet Gaming Disorder and that such individuals more frequently experienced stress, anxiety and depression, had lower satisfaction with life and heightened levels of impulsivity. Männikkö et al. (2017) found problematic online gaming to be significantly associated with psychological and physical health issues such as sleep disturbances, fatigue, depression as well as anxiety and also concluded that individuals who had an inclination for social interactions over internet spent more amount of time playing online. Wartberg et al (2017a), found that adolescents who met the criteria for Internet Gaming Disorder perceived less amounts of social support, had a large number of friends, made over internet and had poor quality of life related to health in comparison to the adolescents without Internet Gaming Disorder. In another study, Wartberg et al (2017b) inferred that adolescents who have anger related issues, are emotionally distressed or have low self esteem or whose parents have anxiety are vulnerable to developing Internet Gaming Disorder in their early adolescence.

Lim et al. (2016), in a comparison of Internet gaming disorder group with the healthy control group indicated that the former group exhibited more symptoms of depression as well as anxiety, had higher degrees of impulsivity and aggression, higher degree of distress, and a poorer quality of life. Martončik and Lokša (2016), in their study on Massively Multiplayer Online Role Playing Gamers found that the gamers experienced appreciably lower amounts of loneliness and social anxiety when online than when in physical world. Smoking and employment of mother were found to increase addiction towards gaming while belonging to female gender and education of the mother decreased the

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