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Understanding Gaming Addiction in Teenagers: A Content Analysis

Abstract

Internet gaming plays a major role in the lives of teenager because of the time gradually increasing time window that they spend on gaming. Teens rely on social media to connect with friends. A significant amount of their social interaction takes place online as the games are connected to their social media id(s) too, in case of role playing group gaming. The main motive of unwinding and recreation has undergone massive changes and this has turned itself into addiction. This paper aims at defining the technology addiction via gaming discussing the various reasons of addiction. Asides that the changeover from engagement to technology addiction is also discussed along with the positive and negative effects of online gaming amongst teenagers.

Key Words

Internet Gaming, Addiction, Teenagers, New media games.

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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What Is Technology Addiction?

Though technology addiction is referred to more frequently than ever, it has yet to be officially recognized by the Diagnostics and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-V). The publication does refer to Internet Gaming Disorder, but states that people's reliance on gaming needs more research. The same thing can be said about technology addiction. Technology is converted into addiction when you rely more on technology for every little thing. Teens may spend so much time on their devices that they struggle in school, forego their relationships with friends and family, and no longer engage in their lives off-screen.

A 2018 Pew Research Survey found that 45% of teens claimed to use the internet 'almost constantly'—almost double the number from the 2014-2015 survey. The same survey indicated that 97% of boys claimed to play new media games in their spare time.

Teenagers' Dependency on Technology

It operates in a similar way to chemical addictions, blending expectation and reward with the release of dopamine and other chemicals to create a 'high.' The reward in question might be winning a challenging new

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media game, or getting a high number of likes or views on an Instagram post or TikTok. Over time, your teen could begin to crave the dopamine release they receive from technology—resulting in their needing even more stimulation to achieve the same feel-good effect.

Risks and Symbols of Addiction

Here are a few common symptoms of gadget addiction amongst teens which are as follows:

➢ Isolation/ aloofness/ detachment

➢ Depression and anxiety

➢ Being over defensive

➢ Avoidance of school, work, and family

➢ Changes in mood, sleep, and appetite

Hence the graph between the usage of technology and mental health is inversely proportional. Adolescents, mainly active on social media and play new media games are at an increased risk of anxiety, depression, and isolation. Ultimately, technology offers a sense of escape and connection that teens have come to crave. However, adolescents should monitor their cumulative screen time. In such cases, moderation is key, and families should communicate consistently to promote healthy technology amongst all the family members.

Current Scenario of New Media Game Addiction

The huge demand for new media games has resulted in a multibillion-dollar market. The market size is expected to reach $90 billion U.S. Dollars by 2020.
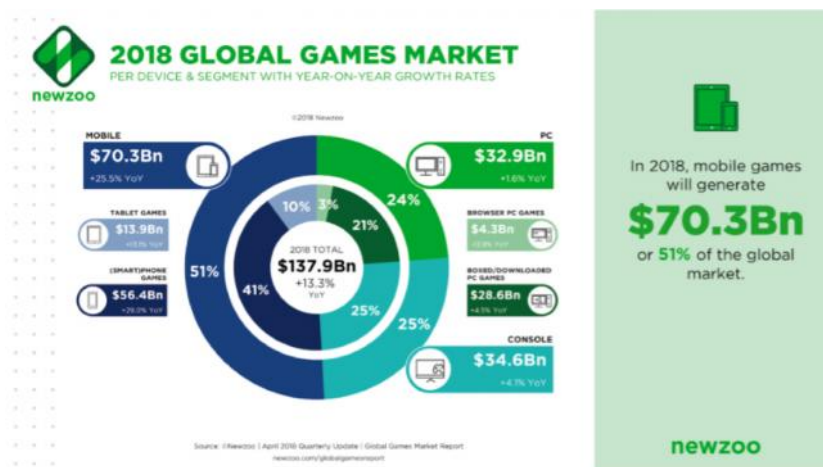
Global Game Market

The entire team of gaming professionals works to solve the problem by creating constantly interactive, highly engaging games, and addictive gaming, only to entice customers to spend as much time as possible with them in order to mint market volumes. So it's a challenging task for the developers to design such games in order to retain the player's attention right from the beginning to the end, and such challenges, along with the pressure to create highly engaging games, give rise to addictive gaming, due to which the teens find it difficult to resist, which results in the neglecting of their day-to-day routine work and thus leads to the loss of their social and family ties.

Social Factors Associated With Addiction Among Teenagers

Addiction is a neuropsychiatric illness characterised by a compulsive need to use the substance despite negative outcomes, according to psychologists and psychiatrists. Substance abuse receives more attention from the public, but non-drug dependency is on the rise as well. Addiction to video games is a subset of the

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broader addiction spectrum. The primary sign is an extreme reliance on and addiction to the game, to the point that real-world responsibilities are neglected in favour of the virtual ones, to the detriment of the individual's health and well-being. New media games have exploded in popularity as technology has advanced, and addiction to these games has become a significant problem in the gaming community. The term "new media game addiction" is used to describe a pattern of behavior in which people become physically, mentally, and socially dependent on playing digital games for extended periods of time. Addiction to a new media game has been linked to an increase in the prevalence of mental disorders, obsessive thinking, and social issues; players report skipping meals, missing school, and missing work; sleeping less; and having difficulty in their relationships with family and friends.

In light of this literature, it is quite important to examine adolescent addiction to new media games from the viewpoints of their social networks, including their families, schools, and friends.

Family Environment

Lack of affection from a parent or both parents may hinder development of important traits like empathy and intellectual curiosity. Because they are unable to experience or express love in the real world, people in this demographic may turn to online communities for companionship and affection.

Over-expectations

When parents set unrealistically benchmarks for their children, the kids may turn to instant gratification activities like video games to feel like they're making progress toward their goals. For this reason, it develops a reliance on gaming, which delivers a more immediate reward. Addiction stems from traumatic experiences, therefore repairing damaged attachment bonds with loved ones, particularly parents, and processing one's own history of trauma are essential in the recovery process.

Many parents deny that there is a problem with how they raise their children or the quality of their connections with their loved ones. The phrases "It's the game" and "It's the kid" are often heard. Putting the blame for a child's addiction on video games is unjust. Playing games is frequently nothing more than a way for kids to unwind and have fun in a loving household. Parents who struggle to maintain healthy relationships with their children are more likely to be used to scolding their kids, even though it's not healthy to place all the responsibility on the child. In most cases, they should be made to give up power. While it's not easy, it's the parents who need to let go of control, not the kid. Both the player (who is a child) and the controller (who is an adult) might see games as subjected to the gaming. Some parents worry that if they release their grip on their kid, they would lose even more control, but if they don't, their youngster will keep turning to the internet in pursuit of independence.

Parent-child Relationship

Each child's first source of guidance and instruction in the ways of the world is their family. As a result, family is a vital issue to consider when examining the societal influences of new media game addiction. Jeong found a clear inverse relationship between gaming addiction and how parents educated their children and the activities they participated in. Children are less prone to develop gaming addiction if they regularly interact with their parents. The likelihood that a youngster may get addicted to video games increases dramatically if he or she is unable to maintain regular, meaningful contact with his or her parents and instead chooses to interact with peers, teachers, and others outside of the immediate family.

Parental involvement in their children's gaming does not increase the risk of their kid developing a gaming addiction. It's possible that parental involvement in their children's gaming might act as a buffer against any adverse effects that the medium may have. They believe that ecosystem theory supports the idea that parental conduct is strongly tied to adolescents' development since the family is the first and most personal setting in which they are exposed. According to the self-determination theory, two distinct forms of parental education—psychological control and parental autonomy support—can shed light on the factors that contribute

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to the emergence of problematic behaviours in adolescents. It's possible that video game addiction will develop in youngsters whose parents have different ties with them than the average family. Children's emotional openness, capacity for independent thought, and freedom of will are strongly influenced by the way their parents raise them. Thus, there are two broad types of educational approaches: those that prioritise family involvement and those that prioritise parental autonomy. Adolescents are said to be under parental control when their parents exert coercive influence on their emotions and ideas, either verbally or nonverbally. This will seriously hamper their maturation into independent adults. When parents provide their children with independent support, they affirm their children's decisions in support if their rights to exercise their free will. Mental health in youngsters is enhanced when this kind of conduct is able to satisfy their most fundamental psychological demands. Furthermore, children's maladjustment, such as gaming addiction, results when parents' educational conduct falls short of meeting their children's' psychological demands.

Addiction to digital games affects the whole family, not just the kids. Parents support their kids' in their decisions. They don't use negative education to tell kids they can't play games since it stunts their development. It's important for parents to take some time for themselves to unwind after a long day of caring for their kids. It's the best to boost the familial ties and get everyone on the same page about the game, which may help prevent teens from becoming addicted to video games.

School Environment

The organisational makeup, personality types, and cultural traditions of a school all contribute to its unique atmosphere. There are two broad categories for the school setting: safe and unsafe. The term "protective environment" is used to describe the pleasant school climate that has a calming influence on pupils. The kids and instructors get along well, and everyone follows the regulations. In contrast, a dangerous school climate is one in which pupils routinely engage in antisocial conduct and disregard school regulations.

Peers
Catering to Peers and Seeking Friendship

The peer effect refers to the fact that the utility of an individual adopting a certain behavior is affected by whether a peer adopts that behavior or not. The peer effect in new media games is mainly manifested in the peer's influence on teenagers', who have just broken through the narrow social circle of their families and open up the territory on campus, pulling in peers to become playmates. "The gaming behavior of peers has a direct or indirect impact on that of teenagers."

Self-satisfaction and Recognition from Others

According to Jeong and Kim, low levels of self-confidence and self-efficacy are positively correlated with the likelihood of getting addicted to new media games. Self-efficacy, according to Bandura, is "the conviction that one can successfully execute the action required to achieve the outcomes," hence those with low self-efficacy may find it difficult to successfully maintain social relationships. Human beings with low self-confidence or self-efficacy seldom engage in social activities, or have less opportunities of engaging in such activities, due to their negative perceptions of their competence in sociability. However, social relationships are indeed an indispensable psychological desire for most human beings, therefore, people with low self-confidence or self-efficacy need to look for an alternative to fulfill their desire. The sense of belonging and identity conferred by peers motivates teenagers to learn to accept and imitate the lifestyles and values of their peers around them, which includes mobile game use behavior. Nowadays, teenagers live in a highly mediated society, where the ease of use of cell the Internet has become the 'strongest auxiliary' factor for new media game addiction. In addition, teenagers are quietly drawn into the whirlpool of addiction while gaining friendship, identity, and self-satisfaction as they work their way up through the game world with their peers.

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Positive Effects of New Media Games on Teenagers

Undoubtedly, excessive gaming leads to addiction; however, gaming also comes with the cultivation of certain positive traits too, which are as follows:

➢ **Logic building/ Solution oriented:** Children as gamers pick up a lot of ways by construction of logical situation to win an assigned task or to cross a particular level in a given gaming environment .

➢ Improved Time and motion results in sync with motor skills. Many games engage users in such a way so that their motor skills get improved, moreover they also aim at improving their time and motion ratios by improving their reaction time.

➢ **Plan Execution:** The players are driven to execute their plans and their day to day assigned tasks with the special consideration of restricting themselves to the scarce resources, very much similar to that of real life instances. The American Planning Association, the trade association of urban planners and Maxis, the game creator are few exapmes of such brilliant execution.

➢ **Multitasking:** The games also makes the players vertaile enough to handle multitasking. Clubbed with witty approach and quick decision making

➢ **Precision and Accuracy :** The gamers tend inculcate the features of Precision and accuracy majorly via means of action games which aim at training the user's brain to pick up quickly on decisions along with giving full proof numbers.

Negative Effects of Playing New Media Games

The excessive gaming can lead to multiple negative effects too like the deterioration of the average mental and physical health of the assiduous gamers. The anonymity factor associated with the gaming world leads to the unwarranted crimes in the virtual world along with the social isolation and escaping attitudes towards social gatherings along with poor academic scores. The heavy gamers might also face the problem of hallucination, lost culture etc.

Conclusion

Online new media game addiction is currently listed under Section III of the DSM-5 as a 'condition warranting more clinical research and experience'. This project followed a cognitive anthropological approach to explore how the stigmatization of new media game players might be hitting hard on the over all well-being of players. A number of researchers from different countries and academic fields developed a list of criteria that would negate the diagnoses of video gaming as a behavioral addiction for certain 'intensive' players. This research team's criteria for a medicalized diagnosis of video gaming as a behavioral addiction include an underlying disorder, a willful choice, prolonged intensive involvement, and a temporary coping strategy. Just to reinforce the idea, all mental health diagnoses are derived from cultural models of symptoms, diagnosis, and treatments, and that stigmatization by friends, family, and/or society can increase players' motivations for immersing in new media games.

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