



Gaming Addiction And Its Effects On Education Excellency On Youth

(A Case Study On Pakistani Society)

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ABSTRACT

Excessive exposure to video games and internet seems like a harmless phenomenon, but it can be a cause of mental and behavioral disorders including developmental issues in the youth particularly. In an exclusive report published in January 2018 by WHO, the international scientific research has confirmed that gaming addiction is classified as mental health disorder. In order to check the gravity of this issue in Pakistan an empirical survey has been conducted with parents of young youth. Despite so much concern and research done by international professionals, Pakistani society is still unable to accept it as a disorder and to safe the young minds from harmful content. It has been revealed during survey that certain percentage of youth in Pakistani society are at higher risk of developing some kind of behavioral disorder due to gaming addiction. Now it has become evident that a strategy needs to be develop immediately to generate mindfulness amongst the adults first about Internet and Gaming Disorder (IGD) and its related problems. On the contrary, it is the responsibility of media personnel & Industry both, on the other hand to create and develop harmless youth programming to refrain youth from such disorders.

Keywords: Online Games, Social Media Engagement, Education Grades, WHO

1. INTRODUCTION

Excessive exposure to video games seems like a harmless phenomenon, but it can be a cause of mental and behavioral disorders including developmental issues in the youth particularly. It has been proven through collecting data and evidences by World Health Organization. In an exclusive report published in January 2018 by WHO, the international scientific research has confirmed that gaming addiction is classified as mental health disorder and should be regarded as a disease with serious consequences on child's health and well-being. In Pakistan mostly, parents are unaware of this important fact and does not provide any parental



mediation if their child is exposed to this illness because of lack of information about this disorder. There are thousands of research papers available online and in published forms which clearly allow the readers to detect a behavioral disorder in individuals especially in youth. But unfortunately, in Pakistan due to lack of awareness, addiction of Internet and Gaming is not considered as a behavioral issue. As media personnel it is our utmost responsibility to taken pros and cons both into consideration pertaining to all media products and procedures.

Statement of the problem

Youth are exposed to gaming addiction in our society and there is no parental mediation available to seek professional help due to lack of awareness about this disorder in Pakistan to save the child from this disorder and its consequences.

Scope of the Study

My research on gaming addiction behavior would be helpful in future for Parents, psychologists, Teachers, Social activists or Scholars, Bloggers and Media expert can make new strategies by using these findings. It would be especially very beneficial for the parents and guardians of young youth to deal with the gaming addiction before they face developmental issues such as depression, poor grades, social phobia, anxiety and serious life consequences if they are addicted to gaming. A survey would be conducted to find out the awareness level in parents about this illness. My research on gaming addiction behavior would be helpful in future for Parents, psychologists, It would be especially very beneficial for the parents and guardians of young youth to deal with the gaming addiction before they face developmental issues such as depression, poor grades, social phobia, anxiety and serious life consequences if they are addicted to gaming. Parents would play more responsible role in selecting entertainment channels for youth which are not harmful and can be helpful in building up young minds towards positive things at the same time. A survey has been conducted with parents to find out the awareness level in Pakistani Society about this disorder which can be converted into a serious illness if preventive measures are not taken by the parents and guardian of youth exposed to excessive gaming and internet.

Objectives of the study

To create awareness amongst the parents, teachers and guardians that WHO has confirmed the gaming addiction as a classified disease which can cause serious personality harms to youth. A public service campaign may be designed after getting the results from the research to create awareness and alarm the parents about the harmful effects of this disease. On the contrary good quality entertainment programs can be designed specifically for youth and youth to keep them away from addiction while providing the harmless entertainment at the same time.

Research Questions

1. What percentage of youth in Pakistan are exposed to gaming addiction?
2. Are the parents aware that their kids are exposed to mental health disorder as confirmed by WHO?

Hypothesis of Study / Assumptions of the Study

H1 = It is predicted that higher percentage of youth in Pakistan are not suffering from Gaming Addiction in urban areas which is a disease confirmed by WHO

H2 = It is predicted that higher percentage of youth in Pakistan are suffering from Gaming Addiction in urban areas which is a disease confirmed by WHO.

H3 = There is no sufficient awareness and parents do not take preventive measures to avoid excessive exposure of internet and gaming for their child.

H4 = There is sufficient awareness and parents do take preventive measures to avoid excessive exposure of internet and gaming for their kids.



2. LITERATURE REVIEW

World Health Organization (WHO) has added Gaming Addiction in its 11th Classification of Diseases for the first time (<http://www.who.int/features/qa/gaming-disorder/en/>). This would have created an alarming situation in Pakistan but due to lack of awareness, parents are not considering it as a mental health issue. WHO discussed some sign and symptoms of disorder (Gaming addiction classified as disorder by WHO). If this would not be realized as a disorder and would be left without cure, then the dire consequences will affect our youth as stated by David Giles (2013) in his book of Media Psychology which includes psychological effects and influences of mass media exposure on individuals.

Through this research I will try to find out the gravity of this issue in Pakistan and its possible consequences in youth such as Attention Deficit Disorder, Lee D (2017). Gaming addiction is also causing personalities issues because of lack of parental intervention because parents are encouraging the exposure to youth (Tech Addiction and the Paradox of Apple's "Screen Time Tools). On the contrary, there is not much emphasis on persuading youth to go out and involve in physical activities than suffering from gaming addiction (Reset Your Child's Brain: A Four-Week Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen-Time).

As a media student it is our prime responsibility to work ethically and behave professionally, so in the environment where the internet gaming exposure is being promoted to our youth, it is our obligation to warn the parents and guardians about the possible disaster of this addiction. The research would help collecting the relevant data from Pakistani society and to stress on the need to officially list in the behavior disorders to prevent youth from its affects in Pakistan.

Although case studies of extreme gaming usage came on surface as early as 1983 and then they were supported by scientific studies which were first began to be reported in the mid-1990s (Fisher, 1994; Griffiths &Dancaster, 1995; Griffiths & Hunt, 1998). The amount of time youth and adolescents spend with video games has been increasing steadily (Anderson, Gentile, & Buckley, 2007). Changes in technologies bring the potential for changes in users' thoughts, feelings, and behaviors (Kipnis, 1997).

While addiction is defined as the excessive involvement in any activity, Isaac Marks (1990)¹ introduced the term of "non-chemical addictions" which was then converted into "Behavioral Addiction" by researchers to mark the clarity between changes in behaviors which have destructive consequences. Gaming and Excessive use of Internet or social media are also parts of these behavioral addictions which have been classified by the researchers as disorders now. This is the most demanding challenge of the latest era and in Pakistani perspective the biggest challenge is to create awareness amongst the parents to take corrective measures for their youth. It has been also confirmed that addiction and behavioral changes may lead to psychiatric disorders (Mihordin, 2012)². Investing much time and energy in the game causes problematic use and provides addiction core criteria to declare addiction (Charlton & Danforth, 2007). The studies done in 2010 showed the prevalence of gaming addiction of around 2.2 percent of middle and high school students in china (Jeong and Kim, 2010) which has increased to a shocking level of 83% in 2017 (addictive behaviors report 2018 Jun; 7: 14–18. Published online 2017 Oct 19. doi: [10.1016/j.abrep.2017.10.003](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.abrep.2017.10.003)).

Researchers used diverse participants' groups in case of adults, but in order to check prevalence in youth mostly middle and high school youth were part of the population or sampling of study. The results of these studies suggest that gaming addiction means spending large amount of time on gaming i.e. up to 16 hours per day (Allison, 2006). The parameters to assess the addiction included psychiatric interviews, academic achievements, visual and verbal memory tests, social competence etc.

¹Marks, I. (1990).Behavioural (non-chemical) addictions. British Journal of Addiction, 85, 1389–1394.

²Mihordin, R. (2012). Behavioral Addiction—Quo Vadis? The Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease, 200, 489–491.



3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Geographical Distribution of the Sample:

In order to verify the facts presented in World Health Organization's report disclosed in January 2018 to declare Gaming Addiction as a behavioral disorder, a detailed literature research (mentioned above) has been conducted to get the primary data and facts available in this regard. Most of the international studies and research articles revealed that words or terms associated to addiction of gaming are in use for decades may be since the beginning of new millennium but still their implementation in third world countries like Pakistani society did not progress.

Demographic Distribution of the Sample:

A survey would be conducted to find out the awareness level in parents, teachers, guardians about this illness in various areas of Karachi. Moreover, a strategy needs to be developed on how to spread this awareness in masses of Pakistani society to save many youth exposed to the risk of addiction.

Population, Sample & Sampling technique:

Henceforth, a Survey based Questionnaire is designed to conduct a study with around 100 Parents and Guardians of young youth randomly, to get Quantitative and Qualitative both forms of data to ascertain the level of awareness in Pakistani society about gaming addiction.

Research design:

I use mix method based on Qualitative and Quantitative. Parents and Guardians will answer question about their youth mental health and personality disorder.

Description of Instruments:

Interviews based on structured questionnaire.

Procedure of the study and Data collection:

In addition, more studies / work done to classify gaming addiction as disorder were recognized from additional sources such as Jstor scholarly articles and books or literature on Media Psychology. Studies were shortlisted to include in this paper according to their relevance and to produce a wide-ranging literature review. This comprehensive literature review would be reinforced by the findings of the empirical survey mentioned above to determine the level of addiction and its effects on mental health in Pakistani perspective. Some data or study related to specific Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) has been also included as reference to disclose the challenges related to both i.e. usage of Internet and Gaming is associated to one another and can imply similar negative consequences on youth's behavior. It is also assumed that Gaming addiction is developed through online and offline both resources. Also, the specific debates and studies related to Gaming addiction behavioral changes has been taken into consideration for youth and teenagers (at some extent) only.

4. DATA ANALYSIS & RESULTS OF THE STUDY

Findings of the survey shows an alarming percentage of parents and caretakers of youth in Karachi who are unaware of this horrifying fact that excessive exposure to Gaming and its addiction can cause behavioral disorders.

Qualitative Analysis

Almost percentage does not know about any repercussions which would be happening in their youth's lives as they would grow older if they are exposed to Gaming Addiction. First of all, the majority of parents are not sure about the concept of addiction and how much exposure would they consider as an addiction in their



youth, even for adults as well. Also, the biggest challenge is the amount in hours pertaining to usage of Internet being done by almost all of youth in our society. Parents do not consider limiting its usage for their kids as they think it is quite necessary to move forward in their studies and life. Exposure to digital world including Internet and Gaming both, has caused mental and physical disorders in the growing youth but in a society like Pakistan due to lack of awareness the problem not only persists but aggravating at an alarming level. (Addictive Behaviors Report 2018)³.

There are many addictions related to media programs and digital devices which are quite apparent in the Pakistani society such as an addiction of Indian Dramas although they have created a disastrous effect on our homes, culture and overall societal norms. Nevertheless, our survey also dealt with the ignorant parental attitude towards their youth by allowing them the free access to Gaming consoles and Internet without any parental supervision and that's how the gravity of being addicted to them increases.

The basic purpose of this survey is to find out whether the concept of Gaming addiction is even a valid concept in Pakistani society or not such as Griffiths (2010a)⁴ denied the excessive use of Gaming to be called as addiction in American Society, he rather emphasized on clear distinction between these two terms separately.

5. DISCUSSION

Today it is almost impossible to live without the digital solutions and exposures including gaming and use of internet for longer hours. But as presumed in the beginning of this paper, Pakistani society is deprived of the necessary awareness about how much usage of gaming consoles is permissible for school youth of age as young as 6 - 8 years old. They are oblivious of the most alarming fact that Gaming Addiction in their youth can cause behavioral disorders. Although the behavioral addiction research field is one of the mostly worked research and the findings are always shared with the larger amount of general publics to prevent dire consequences.

As mentioned in the Data Analysis of survey above, it is an aggravating issue because many parents or guardians think that their youth need to spend longer hours on internet to fulfill the study requirements or homework. In the second annual "Digital Media and Developing Minds Congress and Exposition" held in Long Island, New York in October 2018, the participants highlighted the impacts of digital media on child's growth and development and declared the too much usage Gaming consoles as wide spread form of addiction in youth⁵.

World Health Organization in their recent report states "Studies suggest that gaming disorder affects only a small proportion of people who engage in digital or video gaming activities but changes the physical and psychological health and social functioning of almost everyone exposed to this media". In Pakistan also the scenarios are almost same as other countries which also resulted greater gaming and lower social competence along with risk factors such as lower school performance which can also last for several years. Dr. Victoria Dunkley (2015) called it Electronic Screen Syndrome which destroys healthier habits in youth⁶. In

³ Addictive Behaviors, Volume 81, June 2018, pages 32-38

⁴Griffiths, M.D. (2010a). Online gaming addiction: Fact or fiction? In W. Kaminski & M. Lorber (Eds.), Clash of Realities, pp. 191-203. Munch: Kopaed.

⁵Video Game Addiction Treatment Centers in California. Psychology Today. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/treatment-rehab/video-game-addiction/california>

⁶Reset Your Child's Brain: A Four-Week Plan to End Meltdowns, Raise Grades and Boost Social Skills by Reversing the Effects of Electronic Screen-Time. (2015). Victoria Dunkley.



the pure psychological terminology, it is the destruction of grey matter in young brains which clearly means that the processes in which brain is involved would be seriously affected such as decision making, behavioral self-consciousness and emotional guidelines. As a result, all around the world we can see the emergence of thousands of gaming addiction treatment centers however, Pakistan is still and sadly an exception. Surprisingly many parents contain a different opinion for their youth if they are more interested in Gaming. They do not take it as an addiction rather they are happy that their youth take their aggression and anger in games rather than showing it in the real life in the form of fights and conflicts with the peers. On the contrary studies have shown that Gaming actually contributes to the Attention Deficit Disorders ADD and Attention Deficit Hyper Disorder ADHD including creating learning disabilities and sometimes even causing light induced seizures or attacks of light headedness. These symptoms may be defined as pathological computer or video game use indications. Initially the games are played for entertainment but at what stage it would become pathological or uncontrolled is directly linked with the symptoms which appear only when a person gets addicted to that certain activity. There was still a debate whether pathological gaming addiction should be listed as classified disorder till the World Health Organization took the initiative and added it in the 11th International Classification of Diseases as a mental health disorder.

Risks categories

We may easily distinguish the risks or negative implications now which may result out of Gaming Addiction or can cause Behavioral disorders. Various studies and our empirical survey show various risks developing factors associated with gaming addiction at persistent level remain noticeable in our society specifically in youth.

Personality changes

The foremost risk is the development of negatives traits in behaviors and personality of youth which are directly linked with excessive use of Gaming are proven in many case studies. These experiential studies were conducted on the population of primary, secondary / high school students and adolescents. In the survey many parents showed their concerned on the behavioral changes being developed in their youth including social withdrawal and spending more time on gaming consoles and internet. Many disorders related to Gaming addiction have also been clearly identified during this process such as Boredom Inclination, the Narcissistic Personality Disorder, Lack of Self Control, Sensation Seeking Syndrome etc. While the negative personality traits of being lonely, lack of intelligence, being introvert, aggression and hostility, low self-esteem are few examples which get developed as a result of Gaming Addiction in youth. To summarize the phenomena of Gaming Addiction is closely related with development or more likeness to develop at any state of life, the high risks and ramification of negative attributes in personality and behavior including youth and youngsters. However, this must be noted that all symptoms appear simultaneously, these may also exist unnoticeably in youth till their personality is fully developed later in the lives.

Addiction itself is an aggressive behavior

There are many changes in behavior as well which cannot be classified as disorder but their existence contains far more hazardous implications such as motivation to play more in youth at the cost of their physical activity and study time. The results of our survey and semi structured interviews done with parents assessing gaming addiction in Pakistan, also disclosed that youth always feel motivated for playing games because of the reasons that they want to take out their anger, stress, sometimes fear and looking for escape from the real world challenges. There is also a phenomenon of virtual friendship or relationships is also spreading at an alarming level which significantly causes isolation and disassociation in youth. On the contrary, this motivation to play more also creates the feelings of empowerment, control, victory, completion and above all excitement in the young users to play more and more. Fighting and winning a challenge in Gaming is the specific reason which enhances addiction and causes other related risks factors along with the feeling of playfulness, loyalty, reward etc. In summation, addiction itself contains highest level of negative concerns associated with its existence only.

Features of the Games



Features or characteristics of the games play a significant role in creating an appeal for the youth to constantly expose to video games or online gaming. It also includes various game genres selection such as preference of violence and fights over sports-based video games is a factor which need to be considered along with addiction. There is another factor of required skills to play a game with high scores which may include killing as many as possible while surrounded with enemies. It creates highest possible amount of desensitization in the users and at times they do not to hesitate in continuing the games even after experiencing too much blood shed. This would require lot of concentration hence the gamer would not mind playing in longer hours during late night which would ultimately cause learning disabilities in school going youth on one hand and lack of sleep and attention on the other. So, it would be pertinent to mention here that structural characteristics of games have a direct relation with gaming addiction in youth. Moreover, this would also affect the mood of the gamers eventually which may also cause frustration. There is also an evidence that gamers got so immersed in the game that they think themselves their virtual characters and also feel superior over others (Smahel, 2008)⁷.

Parental Guidance

Gaming addiction does not only develop behavioral or psychological concerns but they are also affecting the physical health of youth. Although changes in physical health do not relate to gaming addiction directly but since it plays an important role in psychological and mental health so indirectly may also affect overall health of youth. Hence in parents, acting with alertness can minimize the risks for youth to gain addiction for Digital media, Gaming and other related media in everyday use. Research shows that minority of gamers suffers from these symptoms or indications of behavioral changes but still it is a constant hazard because it persists with similar results and consequences for all gamers who have developed addiction.

It seems like the big names of gaming world are only concerned about their latest software or gaming sales and they can afford anything to increase their revenues even at the cost of developing personality disorder in youth. Although research reveals the possible outcomes of these kinds of addiction in youth but its classification and assessment is still vague.

6. CONCLUSION

World Health Organization's report of January 2018 and various other studies on Gaming Addiction have classified it as a Disorder. Hopefully, we will be able to control the situations where we hear the statements from parents or caretakers of young youth "I find it difficult to stop them from using too much Internet or play online Games".

There is much attention needed to construct a framework in order to create special programming for youth in Pakistan so as to provide them healthy alternatives of gaming and prevent its addiction. We have seen in recent years that lot of work is being done in this regard from creating youth messages campaigns to producing special animated movies for youth and adults both such as Allahyar, Teen Bahadur and Donkey King etc. but to safe the future of Pakistan we need to educate the parents and guardian in a way that they need to exercise their role as a responsible parent in all circumstances. During the study of this topic, various other factors have been unearthed which contribute to the development of negative personality traits in youth as they grow older, these also need to be taken care of along with Gaming addiction to build a healthy and positive society in Pakistan.

The best treatment to help the Gaming Addiction control in youth would be a combined platform where media experts and health professionals can come together to provide relief to the youth. An exclusive report by Charles Hymas on Gaming Addiction in youth was published the Telegraphy London on July 31, 2018 suggested diagnosis and treatment both. Nations are now getting ready to deal with this challenge globally after the World Health Organization's report. The most important aspect is the behavioral check by parents

⁷Smahel, D., Blinka, L., & Ledabyl, O. (2008). Playing MMORPGs: Connections between addiction and identifying with a character. *CyberPsychology & Behavior*, 11(6), 715-718.



and to find out the severity of addiction in their youth. For a society like Pakistan this challenge increases many folds due to lack of information in masses about these latest developments including the preventive measures which can save the youth from various disorders.

At this stage Media itself has to play a crucial role in Pakistan by running especially designed awareness campaigns for parents of young youth and teenagers both. These would be public service messages and highlight the indications of gaming addictions in youth such as mood swings, excessive or longer hours of playing games, declined school performance or difficulty in learning etc. It has been observed that parents are aware that their youth are exposed to excessive use of internet and gaming but they cannot differentiate it whether it is an addiction or not. Also, if they consider it as some kind of disorder they are unable to get the professional help due to some cultural barriers. In our society, it is not recommended to go to psychologists or psychiatrists for any professional view or help, it is rather considered as mental illness and people refrain from it. This is also a dilemma that we cannot access the professional help in case of mental illness to save ourselves from tags which are considered societal taboos.

During this research and survey both, the special focus was maintained with the parents and youth but this illness may also affect the teenagers, youth and adult simultaneously which needs to be considered as a separate research topic in the context of Pakistan's societal issue and challenge. There are number of parents and guardians who also disclosed that these symptoms are becoming obvious in teenagers and youth as well which needs to be addressed on urgent basis.

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