



INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH

IN SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, TECHNOLOGY AND MANAGEMENT

Volume 10, Issue 6, June 2023

ISSN

INTERNATIONAL
STANDARD
SERIAL
NUMBER
INDIA

Impact Factor: 7.580



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Online Gaming and Its Effects on Human Mind

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ABSTRACT: Online gaming has become a popular form of entertainment in recent years, and its effects on gamers are both positive and negative. Positive effects include improved problem-solving skills and increased social interaction, while negative effects include addiction and social isolation. The paper examines the neurological, psychological, and sociological effects of online gaming on gamers, and provides potential solutions to the potential negative effects. Additionally, it explores how online gaming can be used to foster positive development in gamers, such as improved skills in communication and collaboration.

Online gaming describes any video game that offers online interactions with other players. Video games used to be classified by an Online Content PEGI descriptor to signify whether they were online or not. However, as most games now provide online interactions this distinction is no longer used.

Online games are important to understand because they offer a huge amount of fun, enjoyment, teamwork, collaboration and imaginative adventure for children. Played healthily they contribute an essential part of children's development and socialisation.

However, it's important for parents to understand online gaming so they can encourage safe and healthy habits in children and technology from a young age.

I. INTRODUCTION

Definition and scope:

Online gaming refers to the practice of playing video games over the internet either individually or with other players it involves accessing and interacting with virtual game worlds often through gaming platforms such as PCs consoles or mobile devices that are connected to the internet.

The scope of online gaming encompasses a wide range of genres game types and platforms genres include action role playing strategy sports adventure and many others game types can vary from single player experiences to massively multiplayer online games MMOs, where thousands of players can simultaneously interact in a shared virtual environment.

Online gaming can also include casual games browser-based games social media games and mobile games. The online nature of gaming enables players to connect and compete with individuals from different geographic locations fostering a global gaming community it provides opportunities for players to engage in cooperative gameplay team up with friends or strangers, participate in competitive matches and communicate through built in chat systems or voice chat applications.

The advent of online gaming has transformed the gaming landscape offering players unprecedented levels of immersion interactivity and social connectivity. It has created vast virtual worlds with persistent environments where players can engage in quests explore expansive landscapes, build virtual communities and experience ongoing narratives.

Moreover, online gaming has evolved beyond mere entertainment with the emergence of esports competitive gaming as a professional industry and the integration of gaming elements into other domains such as education, training and health.

Understanding the definition and scope of online gaming provides the foundation for examining its impact on individuals exploring the various dimensions of the online gaming experience and evaluating its implications for society and the gaming industry.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

1. Psychological and Social Impacts of Online Gaming

- Yee, N. (2006). Motivations for play in online games. *Cyberpsychology & Behaviour*, 9(6), 772-775.
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2. Online Gaming and Education

- Connolly, T. M., Boyle, E. A., MacArthur, E., Hainey, T., & Boyle, J. M. (2012). Asystematic literature review of empirical evidence on computer games and serious games. *Computers & Education*, 59(2), 661-686.
- Wouters, P., van Nimwegen, C., van Oostendorp, H., & van der Spek, E. D. (2013). A meta-analysis of the cognitive and motivational effects of serious games. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 105(2), 249-265.

3. Health Considerations and Emerging Trends in Online Gaming

- Rehbein, F., Kliem, S., Baier, D., Mößle, T., & Petry, N. M. (2015). Prevalence of internet gaming disorder in German adolescents: Diagnostic contribution of the nine DSM-5 criteria in a state-wide representative sample. *Addiction*, 110(5), 842-851.
 - Husnu, S., & Griffiths, M. D. (2019). Problematic internet use, mental health, and wellbeing among adolescents and young adults: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of Behavioural Addictions*, 8(2), 278-306.
- This literature survey provides an overview of key studies on the psychological and social impacts of online gaming, the intersection of gaming and education, and health considerations related to excessive gaming. It also highlights emerging trends in online gaming, emphasizing the need for further research in this dynamic field.

II. PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF ONLINE GAMING

Online gaming has a profound influence on the human psyche, shaping emotions, thoughts, and behaviours in unique ways.

It engages players in immersive digital experiences, fostering a range of psychological effects that can both positively and negatively impact individuals.

2.1 Motivation and Engagement Factors in Online Gaming

One of the captivating aspects of online gaming is its ability to motivate and engage players on multiple levels.

The interactive and dynamic nature of these games stimulates intrinsic motivators, such as a sense of achievement, mastery, and personal growth.

Players are driven to complete challenging quests, unlock achievements, and progress within the game's virtual world.

Furthermore, online gaming provides a platform for social interaction and connection, allowing players to engage in collaborative gameplay or compete against others.

The social aspect of online gaming taps into extrinsic motivators, such as social approval, recognition, and the formation of virtual communities.

Building friendships, working as a team, and experiencing a sense of belonging within these virtual communities contribute to the motivation and engagement of players.

2.2 Cognitive Benefits and Skills Development

Engaging in online gaming can have positive cognitive effects, enhancing various skills and cognitive abilities.

Players are often required to employ problem-solving strategies, critical thinking, and decision-making skills to navigate complex game scenarios.

These cognitive demands promote mental agility, adaptability, and strategic planning.

Additionally, online gaming can improve hand-eye coordination and spatial awareness.

The rapid and precise control required in many games can enhance fine motor skills and coordination, particularly in activities such as aiming, timing, and precise movement.

2.3 Psychological Addiction and Problematic Gaming Behaviours

While playing video games online can be fun and rewarding, it's crucial to be aware of the possibility of psychological addiction and the emergence of hazardous gaming behaviours.

Some people may grow an unhealthy addiction to gaming that causes them to play it excessively and compulsively, neglecting other crucial elements of life including relationships, academics, work, and self care.

Problematic gaming habits can appear in many different ways, such as persistent preoccupation with gaming, ineffective attempts to limit or reduce gaming time, withdrawal symptoms while not gaming, and jeopardising personal or professional duties owing to excessive gaming.

To keep a good balance between gaming and other activities in life, it is essential to be aware of the symptoms of addiction and take preventative action.

2.4 Effects on mental health and well being

Engaging in pleasurable and difficult gaming experiences can serve as a way of relaxation, stress reduction, and escapism from daily demands. However, online gaming can have a substantial impact on mental health and well-being both positively and negatively.

While excessive and troublesome gaming can have a negative impact on mental health, it can also give a sense of accomplishment and enjoyment, which can improve mood and general well-being. Long gaming sessions, social isolation, and neglecting real-world connections can all contribute to feelings of loneliness, depression, and anxiety.

Some online games' intensely competitive nature can also lead to increased stress and potential emotional distress. Maintaining a healthy balance, setting boundaries, and prioritizing self-care are essential in mitigating the potential negative psychological impact of online gaming. Regular breaks, physical activity, social engagement, and seeking support from friends, family, or mental health professionals can promote a healthy gaming experience.

Understanding the complex psychological impact of online gaming allows us to appreciate its potential benefits and address its associated challenges, ultimately fostering a positive and balanced gaming environment.

III. CONCLUSION

Key findings summary

This study examined the many facets of online gaming, looking at how it affects people, society, and the gaming business.

The following is a summary of the main findings:

- Online gaming keeps players interested by combining intrinsic motivators like success and personal development with extrinsic motivators like social engagement and acclaim from online groups.
- It is important to be aware of the possibility for psychological addiction and problematic gaming behaviours as excessive and compulsive gaming can negatively impact various aspects of life.
- Playing video games online can improve cognitive abilities including problem solving, critical thinking, decision-making, and hand-eye coordination.
- Both positive and bad effects on mental health and wellbeing can be attributed to online gaming.
- Excessive gaming and social isolation can worsen emotions of loneliness, despair, and anxiety even if they can be relaxing and enjoyable.
- Self-care must be prioritised and a healthy balance must be maintained if online gaming is to have any positive psychological effects.
- Online toxicity, cyberbullying, and harassment are some of the problems that come with online gaming, which encourages social engagement and the growth of virtual communities.
- Gamification, skill development, and the possible use of gaming components in formal education to improve engagement and learning results are some of the educational advantages of online gaming.

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