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Research Paper

Gaming Addiction, Irritability and Social Connectedness Among Online Gamers

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ABSTRACT

Online gaming rose in popularity in the 2000s, and studies of gaming addiction on the internet started to appear, detailing the drawbacks of excessive gaming, how common it is, and the risk factors that go along with it. Playing video games on a computer or other electronic device has become one of the most common recreational pursuits among teenagers, video game addiction is characterized as an uncontrollable, prolonged, and excessive interest in computer or video games, notwithstanding any corresponding social or emotional issues (Lemmens, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2009). This study was conducted to find the relation between gaming addiction, irritability and social connectedness among online gamers. In the present study, Pearson Correlation and regression analysis were performed. A non-experimental correlational design with a quantitative approach was used in this study. The sample consisted of 204 individuals aging between 18-40. The tools used for this study were gaming addiction scale (GAS), Brief irritability scale and social connectedness scale-revised. Correlation and regression analysis were both employed to evaluate the link and effect of gaming addiction on irritability and social connectedness. The findings showed that there is a significant relationship between gaming addiction and irritability, where gaming addiction increases irritability also increases. Between gaming addiction and social connectedness, the result showed no significant relationship between the two. For irritability and social connectedness there exists a negative correlation, which indicates as irritability increase social connectedness decreases.

Keywords: *Videogame Addiction, Irritability, Social-Connectedness*

Beginning with videogame addiction there is an impressive number of conflicts among scientists about the idea of "videogame addiction." Albeit the term compulsion isn't utilized by clinicians, videogame addiction is the most pervasive term among analysts to depict inordinate, over the top, habitual, and by and large risky use of videogames. The context of the individual is a key element that distinguishes between excessive gaming and videogame addiction. Depending on the player's living condition and gaming preferences, the context of the game may be of particular significance to them. Furthermore, the cultural context is important since it places the gamer in a group with

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similar values and traditions, giving their gaming a unique significance. The cited neuroimaging studies reveal molecular, neurocircuitry, and behavioural parallels between Internet gaming addiction and other addictions, including substance dependence. The results back up the view that Internet gaming addiction should be viewed as an illness at this point according to many researchers. Uncontrollable, protracted, and extreme interest in video or computer games is known as pathological gaming, regardless of any related social or mental problems. (Lemmens, Valkenburg, & Peter, 2009). The general idea of pathological gaming has achieved significant support among experts as a real behavioural condition, even though terminology is still up for debate (Gentile, 2009; Young, 2009). According to studies (Charlton & Danforth, 2007; Gentile, 2009; Grüsser, Thalemann, & Griffiths, 2007), A small percentage of gamers who engage in excessive gaming display a range of signs of pathological behaviour symptoms, including withdrawal, obsession, loss of control, as well as interpersonal and intrapersonal problems. Additionally, excessive computer and video game use has been connected to psychological and social well-being indicators like loneliness, low self-esteem, social incompetence, and low life satisfaction. In contrast, only a few research have shown conclusively whether these aspects of psychological wellbeing are brought on by or result from excessive gaming. The issue appears to be well-founded because a growing body of research shows that being addicted to online gaming has a variety of harmful outcomes.

Irritability

Irritability is a symptom commonly seen in most addiction disorders and as videogame addiction is getting the attention among the global community. It may be needed on this time to study more deeply about the relationship between videogame addiction and irritability. Theres clear evidence for addictions influencing irritability and much more among individuals who indulge in or are trying to quit the addiction in the form of withdrawal symptoms. In-depth studies have been conducted and have been observed among people with substance abuse disorders regarding irritability and aggression though not a good number of studies hasn't been conducted when it to videogame addiction, as it recently been considered as an addiction problem and different opinions among researchers were observed. Many researchers associate videogame addiction and gambling addiction together, as well as considering them to be similar in their aspects and problems. By taking that into account, it can be said that irritability found in withdrawal during gambling addiction could also be observed in videogame addiction. But this study isn't concerned with finding the similarities between the two addictions, instead its focus is on finding if there's any relationship between videogame addiction and irritability as well as if gaming addiction has any impact on irritability among online gamers.

Social-Connectedness

The need to connect with others is inherent to who we are as social beings. This need must be satisfied since it has a significant impact on practically every part of our life, including our psychological and physical health as well as how long we live. With the goal of ensuring that everyone may socially engage with others, regardless of the situation, Social Creatures was established. According to a general definition, "social connectedness" (also known as "social connection") refers to the sensation of being close to or "attached" to another person or group of people. This includes having a sense of community or belonging, as well as being cared for and caring about others. Simply expressed, social connectedness might be considered the antithesis of loneliness. Of course, it's not that easy. Having stated that, our real social network frequently affects how socially connected we feel. For example, living alone, having fewer social contacts, or going through difficult relationships can all operate

as social isolation barriers and have been found to be important risk factors for loneliness. As a result, the relationships between real social interactions and how they are eventually interpreted to affect a person's sentiments of social connectedness are complicated, and they can even vary depending on the personality, preferences, and life experiences of a given person. Consider introverted people, who enjoy a reduced amount of social interaction. Because of this preferred level of social involvement, their sentiments of social connectedness develop (at least in part), and as a result, they require fewer social interactions than more extraverted people to achieve acceptable sensations of social connectedness. In the end, social connectivity results from a person's ability to routinely satisfy their specific social requirements through their social network.

Studies on videogame usage among the Indian population are scarce. Thus, this study aims to gain an understanding of the relationship videogame addiction has on irritability and social-connectedness. The population taken in this study were individuals between the age group 18 to 40 who play online games of different genres, with a sample size of 204 from different parts of India including Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Mumbai and Andhra Pradesh.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

This research is a correlational research design and the data was collected using convenient sampling method. The sample consists of 204 individuals who play online games, of which 182 are males and 22 are females, falling between the age 18 to 40 years. The population was taken from the regions of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Mumbai and Andhra Pradesh.

Objectives of the study –

- To identify if there's relationship between gaming addiction and irritability among online gamers.
- To identify if there's relationship between gaming addiction and social connectedness among online gamers.
- To identify if there's relationship between irritability and social connectedness among online gamers.
- To find if there's any impact of gaming addiction on irritability among online gamers.
- To find if there's any impact of gaming addiction on social connectedness among online gamers.

Hypotheses

- H01 There is no significant relationship between gaming addiction and irritability.
- H02 There is no significant relationship between gaming addiction and social connectedness.
- H03 There is no significant relationship between irritability and social connectedness.
- H04 There is no significant impact of gaming addiction on irritability.
- H05 There is no significant impact of gaming addiction on social-connectedness.

Description of the Tool:

- **Game Addiction Scale**

  The Game addiction scale (GAS) developed by (Lemmens et al.,2009) and it consists of 7 items and is used to measure videogame addiction. It was conceptually based on

the criteria for pathological gambling in the fourth edition of the DSM (DSM-IV). Each item on the GAS is preceded by the statement "During the last six months, how often…" and is scored on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never, 2 = rarely, 3 = sometimes, 4 = often, and 5 = very often). It has a Cronbach alpha of .82 to .87 were reported in the original validation study.

- **Brief Irritability Test**
  The brief irritability testis a brief self-report scale consisting of5-items to measure irritability reliably and was developed by (Holtzman et al.,2015). Each item is measured on a six-point scale (Never = 1, Rarely = 2, Sometimes = 3, Often= 4, Very Often = 5, Always = 6) The BITE was compared to measures of life satisfaction, perceived social support, pain severity, and pain interference as a preliminary test of concurrent validity. At p .001, all were significant. Latent trait and raw total BITE scores had a.98 Pearson correlation. The BITE has a Cronbach's alpha value of .88 which denotes a good level of reliability.
- **Social Connectedness Scale- Revised**
  Social connectedness scale- revised developed by (lee et al.,) is a 20-item questionnaire which measures the feeling of closeness in interpersonal surroundings and difficulties in establishing and upholding a sense of relatedness with other individuals. The SCS-R uses a 6-point rating scale (1 = strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). The scale can reach a score comprised between 20 and 120 with an item. Ten items are negatively worded while the remaining are positively worded. Sample items include "I don't feel I participate with anyone or any group" and "I am in tune with the world." Items with negative wording are reverse scored, and a higher score denotes a stronger level of social connectivity. The psychometric properties of the SCS-R, a scale created to evaluate the SC construct, showed good validity and reliability in the authors' validation trials. The reliability measured by Cronbach's Alpha was ($\alpha = 0.88$)

RESULTS

The test was conducted on individuals between the age group 18 to 40 who play online games from different genres and with a sample size of 204 from the regions of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Mumbai and Andhra Pradesh.

Table 1 shows the results for Pearson Correlation test on gaming addiction, irritability and social connectedness among online gamers.

Variables	Gaming addiction		Brief irritability		Social connectedness	
	r	p	r	p	r	p
Gaming addiction	----	----	0.243*	.000	-.123^{NS}	.080
Brief irritability	0.243*	.000	----	----	-.337**	.000
Social connectedness	-.123^{NS}	.080	-.337**	.000	----	----

*** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), N=204, NS not significant at 0.05 level*

Table 1 shows the Pearson correlation, for the variables gaming addiction and irritability with a correlation coefficient (r = .243) and the corresponding p-value (<0.01), there is a statistically significant positive correlation between the two variables, where in the excessive use of online games increases irritability also increases. Thus, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between gaming addiction and irritability" is rejected. The correlation between gaming addiction and irritability found here is consistent with an earlier study by (G.S Brunborg. Et al, 2013) where it was found that gamers who are addicted and those of less severe gaming use have a greater risk of feeling irritable. It's also consistent

with the article by (Young. K,2009) regarding gaming addiction and its effects that mentioned about how gaming addiction make individuals to become irritable, anxious, or depressed when they are unable to play it. One study by (M.D. Griffiths., A. Meredith,2009) on videogame addiction and its treatment found that gamers who couldn't access the game experience a feeling of loss and experience a tremendous urge to play the game, as well as missing it. When they are made to give up the game, this sensation may become so strong that they exhibit negative emotions such as agitation, anxiety, or depression. For the variables, gaming addiction and social connectedness with a correlation coefficient (r =-.123) and corresponding p-value (>0.05) there is no significant correlation between the two variables. Hence, there is no relationship between the two variables. Thus, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between gaming addiction and social connectedness" is accepted.

For the variables, irritability and social connectedness, the correlation coefficient is (r=-.337**) and the corresponding p-value (<0.01) which indicates negative correlation between the two variables, whereby irritability increases social connectedness decreases. Hence, the null hypothesis "There is no significant relationship between irritability and social connectedness" is rejected.

Table 2 using linear regression shows the impact of gaming addiction on irritability

Variable	Dependent variables	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	Model summary
		B	std error	Beta	
Gaming addiction	Irritability	.16	.04	.24	R= 0.24 R^2= .059 t = 3.55 F = 12.62 p = 0.00

Table 2 shows regression analysis of gaming addiction on irritability with Beta value of 0.24, F value of 12.62 and t value of 3.55. The table also indicates that the R2 value is 0.059 and the result was found to be significant with p<=0.01. This indicates that there's a considerably significant impact of the variable gaming addiction on irritability. The R2 value indicates that 5.9 % change in irritability is predicted by gaming addiction. Thus, the null hypothesis stated "There is no significant impact of gaming addiction on irritability" is rejected.

Table 3 using linear regression shows the impact of gaming addiction on social connectedness

Variable	Dependent Variables	Unstandardized coefficient		Standardized coefficient	Model summary
		B	std error	Beta	
Gaming addiction	Social connectedness	-.33	.18	-.12	R= 0.12 R^2= .015 t = -1.76 F =3.102 p = 0.80

Table 3 shows regression analysis of gaming addiction on the dependent variable social connectedness with the significant value which is p>=0.05, which indicates there is no significant impact on social connectedness by gaming addiction. The beta value is -0.12, F value is 3.102 and t value is -1.76. As there's no significant impact, the null hypothesis

which stated "There is no significant impact of gaming addiction on social connectedness" is accepted.

DISCUSSION

This present study "Gaming addiction, Irritability and Social Connectedness Among Online Gamers" was conducted to find if there's any relationship as well as impact of gaming addiction on irritability and social connectedness. The major objectives of this as mentioned above is to find if there's any significant relationship between the mentioned variables. The target sample here is online gamers of ages 18-40 from the regions of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Mumbai and Andhra Pradesh. The sample size is 204 out of which, 182 are males and 22 females.

The tools used in this study were the gaming addiction scale (GAS), the brief irritability scale and social-connectedness scale-revised. The data was collected online through google forms. Information regarding the purpose of the study was given to the participants. Informed consent was taken from participants before answering the questions. The consent from each participant was taken. The data collected was scored according to manual and was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Normality was checked and it was identified that the data was normally distributed and the parametric tests i.e. Pearson correlation and linear regression test were used.

The goal of this study was to identify if there's any relationship along with impact gaming addiction has on irritability and social connectedness among online gamers. From the findings, the following conclusions were made

- There's a significant relationship between gaming addiction and irritability.
- There's no significant relationship between gaming addiction and social connectedness.
- There's significant relationship between irritability and social connectedness.
- There is slight significant impact of gaming addiction on irritability.
- There is no significant impact of gaming addiction on social connectedness.

The limitations of the studies should be considered before any further study.

Implication of the Study

The major implications of this study would be how excessive use of videogames could influence irritability across the age groups and how social connectedness of an individual would get influenced by this excessive videogame usage. Increased irritability could affect the aspects of one's day to day life and with the availability of online games becoming wide spread and appealing to different age groups, it may soon become a necessity to study more about the influence videogames have on the individual to help them deal with this addiction more efficiently

Limitations of the Study

1. The sample size is relatively smaller.
2. The study doesn't have equal number of individuals in the demographic groups.
3. The data collection was conducted through online, which could've affected the results of the study

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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