

Research Paper

Family Communication, Peer Relationship and Game Addiction among Adolescents

Soumya P.^{1*}, fr. Dr. Gimmi Antony Akkattu CST²

ABSTRACT

Aim: The objective of the present study is to examine the relationship between family communications, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents and to examine the difference in the level of family communications, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents across sociodemographic variables. **Method:** The sample selected for the present study consists of 150 adolescents 74 females and 76 males from Attapady, Kerala, and their age range was between 12-18 years. The data was collected directly from the participants by distributing questionnaires using a purposive sampling method. Participants were given Inventory of Parents and Peer Attachment-Revised (IPPA) developed by Armsden and Greenberg, (1987) and Game Addiction Scale for adolescents (GAS) developed by Jeroen et al., (2016). The instruments were administered offline and the data was analysed by using SPSS very specifically Shapiro-Wilk test, Spearman's rank correlation and Mann-Whitney U Test. **Result:** The results indicate that there is a significant relationship between family communications, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents. There was no significant difference in level of family communications, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents across gender.

Keywords: *Family Communication, Peer Relationship, Game Addiction*

Over two billion people play video games worldwide, and the number is likely to surpass three billion by 2023 and 3-4% of gamers are addicted to video games. That means there can be as many as 60 million people (or more) suffering from gaming disorder. Between 0.3% and 1% of the general population have symptoms associated with gaming disorder and 8.5% of youths aged 8-18 suffer from gaming disorder (Phil, 2023).

The research and the debate are ongoing. Some argue, for example, that gaming could be a symptom of an underlying problem, such as depression or anxiety, and not a disorder or addiction itself. Even while professional debate, individual stories in the media point to struggles and devastation from the phenomenon. (APA, 2024)

¹M.Sc. Psychology, YIMS, Palakkad, YIMS, Palakkad

²Head of the Dept. of Psychology, YIMS, Palakkad, YIMS, Palakkad

*Corresponding Author

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Family communication

A family consists of a group of individuals united by biology or by marital, adoptive, or other intimate ties. The family is the fundamental social unit of most human societies, but its form and structure can vary widely, including the biological family, extended family, stepfamily, and even groups of friends known informally as “families.” Family members influence each other’s thoughts, feelings, and behaviours. Family dynamics refers to the impact of these influences on the members of the family (APA, 2024).

Families are primarily composed of involuntary relationships (besides the primary couple unit), family communication can be fairly intense. Power struggles frequently occur as members struggle to attain different goals. Spouses argue over how to spend money, the best way to discipline the children, and whether to switch jobs or move to another house (APA 2024).

Adolescents struggle against their parents’ conceptions of them as children as they strive to develop their own unique sense of self as separate from their parents. Family communication is the exchange of information between members of a family unit and the way that they interact. The four family communication styles recognized as the power relationships between members are a monopoly, equality, balanced split, or unbalanced split (APA, 2024).

Peer relationship

Peer relationships are interpersonal relationships established and developed during social interactions among peers or individuals with similar levels of psychological development (Greca, 2005) and are a form of social support. At the university level, interpersonal relationships among college students are mainly peer relationships (Chai et al., 2018). Individuals’ behaviours are influenced by the social environment in which they live (Salancik & Pfeffer, 1978).

Peer relations become more salient in adolescence. The transition from childhood to adolescence engenders changes in the individual, social context, and social norms that serve to elevate the importance of peers. Young people become likely to spend more time with age mates, often with reduced oversight by adults, and they put greater stock in the expectations and opinions of peers. In some arenas, peers compete with adults as a significant source of influence on adolescent attitudes, activities, and emotional well-being (Brown & Larson, 2009).

Game addiction

According to DSM -5 Gambling disorder is currently the only non-substance-related disorder included in the DSM-5 Section II chapter “Substance-Related and Addictive Disorders.” However, there are other behavioural disorders that show some similarities to substance use disorders and gambling disorder for which the word addiction is commonly used in nonmedical settings, and the one condition with a considerable literature is the compulsive playing of Internet games (DSM-5, 2013).

Internet gaming has been reportedly defined as an “addiction” by the Chinese government and is considered a public health threat in South Korea, where treatment and prevention systems have been set up. Reports of treatment of this condition have appeared in medical journals, mostly from Asian countries, but also in the United States and other high-income countries. Further, the seemingly high prevalence rates, both in Asian countries and in the

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West, justified inclusion of this disorder in Section III of DSM-5 and in the Mental, Behavioural, and Neurodevelopmental Disorders chapter in ICD-11. Note that since the publication of DSM-5, the number of clinical reports has continued to accumulate, but many of the issues remain unresolved (DSM-5, 2013).

According to DSM-5 Internet gaming disorder has achieved significant public health importance, and additional research may eventually lead to evidence that Internet gaming disorder (also commonly referred to as Internet use disorder, Internet addiction, or gaming addiction) has merit as an independent disorder. As with gambling disorder, there should be epidemiological studies to determine prevalence, clinical course, possible genetic influence, and potential biological factors based on, for example, brain imaging data (DSM-5, 2024)

Adolescents

Adolescence, transitional phase of growth and development between childhood and adulthood. The World Health Organization WHO (2024) defines an adolescent as any person between ages 10 and 19. This age range falls within WHO whose definition of young people, which refers to individuals between ages 10 and 24.

Adolescence is narrowly equated with and the cycle of physical changes culminating in reproductive maturity. In these societies the term *adolescence* typically refers to the period between ages 12 and 20 and is roughly equivalent to the word *teens* (C.S. & Davidson, 2024).

The Present Study

The current research endeavours to heed Sulaiman's (2023) suggestion to investigate risk factors and the influence of families, aiming to develop effective strategies to mitigate the adverse effects of gaming addiction. This study employs a pertinent theoretical framework. Specifically, it explores how family communication and peer relationships relate to gaming addiction, while also examining gender differences in these dynamics among adolescents. Based on the literature review and the theoretical underpinnings, following hypotheses were formulated for the study

- **H1:** There is a significant relationship between video games addiction, family communication and peer relationship among Adolescents.
- **H2:** There is a significant difference in the level of family communication and game addiction among adolescents across gender.
- **H3:** There is a significant difference in the level of peer relationship and games addiction among adolescents across gender.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and data collection procedure

The study is a quantitative study. With the permission of the authorities of research committee of Psychology Department and from the Head Master of the school for data collection procedure was initiated. The sample consisted of 150 adolescents both males and females of age group of 12 to 18 from Palakkad district. The sample was selected by purposive sampling method. A single questionnaire booklet was prepared by combining the personal data sheet and the two instruments Game Addiction Scale Jeroen et al., (2016) and Parent and Peer Attachment Inventory used in present study Greenberg and Armstern (1987). The questionnaire was directly given to the participants who gave their consent to

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participate in the study. At the beginning the purpose of the study was explained to the participants. All participants were told at the start of the study that there were no right or wrong answers and that they were free to withdraw from the study at any time. The data was collected mostly from the school students. The participant's responses were gathered. The scoring was recorded into excel sheet for analysis and interpretation.

RESULT

Table 1 Relationship between Family Communication, Peer Relationship and Game Addiction Among Adolescents

Variables	Mean	SD	W	1	2	3	4
Family Communication (MC)	97.00	13.832	.98	-			
Family communication (FC)	95.81	14.983	.978	.613**	-		
Peer Relationship	91.03	14.983	.990	.488**	.532**	-	
Game Addiction	42.60	15.386	.936	-.410**	-.375**	-.355**	-

Note: ** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level ($p < 0.01$); SD: Standard Deviation
W: Shapiro Wilk Test. MC = Mother Communication, FC = Father Communication

The data presented in the table 1 demonstrates the relationship between family communication peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents. It is clear from the data that game addiction is statistically related to mother communication ($P = -.410$, $P < 0.01$), father communication ($P = -0.375$, $P < 0.01$), and peer relationship ($P = -0.355$, $P < 0.01$). Hence all the hypotheses are accepted.

Table 2 Regression Analysis Done Among Adolescents Game addiction as Dependent Variable

Variable	Unstandardized		standardized	95% of CIB		R Square	AR square
	B	Std error	Coefficient β	LB	UB		
Constant	85.772	9.146		67.699	103.845		
MC	-.445	.093	-.365	-.630	-.261	.133	.127*
Constant	77.702	8.487		60.930	94.474		
FC	-.366	.088	-.325	-.539	-.193	.106	.100*
Constant	95.5	9.146		76.092	114.932		
PR	-.227	-.092	-.207	-.409	-.045	.167	.156*

Note: predictor (Constant) B: Beta, AR Square: Adjusted R Square LB: Lower Bound, UB: Upper Bound.

Table 2 shows that a total of three variables were entered in the regression to predict game addiction among adolescents. The variables are mother communication, father

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communication and peer relationship from the table 2 its clear that mother communication ($\beta = -.365$; $P < 0.001$), Father Communication ($\beta = -.325$; $P < 0.001$) and peer relationship ($\beta = -.207$; $P < 0.001$) are the predictors of game addiction among adolescents. The obtained result shows that mother communication is first variable to enter regression equation which alone contributed 12% of variance in game addiction, likewise the obtained result implies that father communication is the second variable to enter regression equation which contributed 10% of variance in game addiction and the obtained result implies that peer relationship is the third variable to enter regression equation which contributed 15% of variance in game addiction. The negative data value of the predictor variables further indicate that the predictors have a significant negative relationship with game addiction.

Table 3 Comparing Family Communication, Peer Relationship and Game Addiction Among adolescents across gender.

Variables	Gender	N	Mean Rank	U	Sig
MC	Male	76	79.15	2535.000 ^{NS}	.297
	Female	74	71.75		
FC	Male	76	76.61	2728.000 ^{NS}	.751
	Female	74	74.36		
PR	Male	76	75.80	2790.000 ^{NS}	.933
	Female	74	75.20		
GAS	Male	76	74.30	2721.000 ^{NS}	.730
	Female	74	76.74		

Note: *correlation is significant at 0.05 level ($P < 0.05$): NS Not Significant

The present study further examines the significant difference in the level of family communication, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents across gender. The table 3 shows that there is no significant difference in the level of mother communication ($U = 2535.000$, $P > 0.05$), father communication ($U = 2728.000$, $P > 0.05$), peer relationship ($U = 2790.000$, $P > 0.05$) and game addiction ($U = 2771.000$, $P > 0.05$) among adolescents across gender. Hence, the hypothesis there will be a significant difference in the level of family communication, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents across gender is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The objective of the study was to examine the family communication, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents and the significant difference in the level of the family communication, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents across gender. The study included a total of 76 males and 74 females. Inventory of parent and peer attachment developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1986) and game addiction scale developed by Lemmens et al., (2009) were used to measure the variables. Shapiro Wilk test, Mann Whitney U Test, Spearman Rank Correlation and Multiple Regression were used the data analysis.

The results showed that there is a significant relationship between family Communication, peer relationship and video game addiction among adolescents. There are a positive

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correlation family Communication and peer relationship and a negative correlation between game addiction with family Communication and peer relationship among adolescents.

According to Teng et al., (2021), parent communication and peer attachment are negatively correlated with game addiction, which indicate that they play an important role in game addiction, also according to Monteiro et al., (2023) internet game addiction is negatively correlated with family communication, and also Ruiz et al., (2023) found that parenting style of low affection and communication was directly related to game addiction disorder. According to Shi and Bochan (2023), the peer attachment was negatively related to internet game addiction. Thus, the result obtained from the present study correspond to the existing findings. The findings of present study resonate with the existing findings that there is no significant difference in the level of family Communication, peer relationship and video game addiction among adolescents across gender (Liu et al., 2023)

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The objective of the study was to see if there is a significant relationship between family Communication peer relationship and video game addiction among adolescents. This research was guided by the following hypotheses, H1: There will be a significant relationship between family Communication peer relationship and video game addiction among adolescents .H2: There will be a significant difference in level of family Communication, peer relationship and game addiction among adolescents across gender.

The objective of the study was to examine the relationship between family Communication peer relationship and video game addiction among adolescents. Inventory of parent and peer attachment developed by Armsden and Greenberg (1986) and game addiction scale developed by Lemmens et al., (2009) were used to measure the variables. Shapiro Wilk test, Mann Whitney U Test, Spearman Rank Correlation was used to analyze of the data and the result showed that there is a significant relationship between family Communication peer relationship and video game addiction. The findings of the present study confirm that there is no significant difference in family Communication peer relationship and video game addiction among adolescents across gender.

Implications

From the result it is clear that game addiction is negatively correlated with family communication. It may be probable that most of the adolescents get addicted to online games because of lack of communication with parents, and also parents being focused on many other concerns of life. Therefore, close familial communication and bonds can help solve this issue to an extent.

Peer relationship also is negatively correlated with game addiction. Spending quality time with the peer group is vital since peer influence that plays a significant role in the behavior of game addiction. The adolescents need to be trained in enhancing their skills in building up and maintaining peer relationships in their life.

Limitation of study

The sample size was small. The data was collected from a limited geographical area namely Attappady. The study was conducted in a relatively brief time period.

Recommendations

- The study can be replicated in other cultural groups.

- Longitudinal study can be done.
- Variables closely related to the variables in the current study and the effect of other sociodemographic variables on the variables in this study can be examined.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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