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Project Report

Psychological Effects of Playing Video Games

Abstract

In India, the video game market has flourished a lot in recent half-decade. Thanks to globalization and increased opportunities that people of this generation can have the luxury to dive into the e-sports industry. India has a huge market in gaming. In this project we will analyze various psychological factors affecting individuals due to playing video games. To accomplish this, we analyze various research papers, web documents and conduct surveys and interviews. Using the surveys and interviews conducted by us we will draw a comparison between external sources of information and our data gathered. This will also enable us to determine the optimal duration and genre of video games that augment psychological as well as all-round development of an individual gamer.

Introduction

An average gamer in India is at 34 years old which indicates that many people of previous generations also play video games. This is since video game market started flourishing during the 1990s and due to liberalised trade policies at the start of nineties the Indian market was overflowing with new products and companies in gaming. There are seventeen percentage of male gamers under eighteen years of age and sixteen percentage in between ages 18 and 35. Female population sees highest percentage of gamers in the age intervals of 18 and 35 at thirteen percent. Percentage of gamers among the population (above thirteen of age) has increased over the years from 58% in 2013 to 66% in 2018.

Research Problem

In India, gaming has become a part of life for millennials and many play games on smartphones from a toddler to a young adult. Often people get to excited or attached to gaming and these lead to several negative consequences. People express violent behaviour, aggression and overall psychological disturbances in children and teens. Most of the affected people includes children and young adult. In this project we endeavour to answer some of the most asked and unanswered questions related to gaming such as its effects on academic performance and social life of students.

Research Methods

In our research and facts gathering period. We read several research papers that supported and did not support gaming. We also gathered interviews of VITians who had some connection to playing video games this gave us qualitative insight into the mind of a video gamer. We conducted a google survey to verify the materials of our research collection. Through several research papers and magazine articles we were able to point out the benefits and banes of video game playing. The benefits were increased proficiency in problem solving and logic, hand-eye coordination, refined motor and spatial skills, enhanced planning and resource management and logistics, multitasking capabilities and tracking of changing variables, quick thinking, increased accuracy and encouraging teamwork and cooperation. A subject was forced to gather qualities such as perseverance, pattern recognition, estimate, inductive reasoning, memory, concentration and focus. A 2010 survey by Kaiser Family Foundation found that youth aged 8 to 18 devoted seven-and-a-half hours a day to entertainment media. Less than half of the kids surveyed said their parents have rules about the shows and games they can watch or play. Socioeconomic status may be an explanation for both a decline in violent behaviour and an increase in video game playing. Drawbacks drawn out from our research was that video games obviously promote violence, have increased rate of juvenile crime, in some cases students and young subjects have expressed lack of empathy and emotional callousness. Parents have reported aggression in their kids. Video games also encourage drug abuse if predisposed to such knowledge in games. World Health Organisation in June 2018 declared gaming addiction as a mental health disorder. In 2018, an analysis of 24 studies involving 17000 youngsters from countries including the US, Canada, Germany and Japan and published in National Academy of Sciences found those who played violent games such as GTA, COD or Manhunt were more likely to exhibit behaviour such as being sent to the principal's office for fighting or hitting a non-family member. Gentile, Lynch and Walsh, 2004 paper has suggested that violent games may be related to aggressive behaviour. Jay Hull's research suggests players may also practice riskier behaviours such as reckless driving, binge drinking, smoking or unsafe sex. MRI scans have indicated similar effects on one's brain due to drugs or alcohol as gaming. Violent games showing repetitive violent actions may reinforce in one's brain violent behavioural characteristics. We also pointed out four major news articles related to gaming incidents that display both aspects of gaming such as a couple finding love due to meeting online on PUBG or a 19-year-old boy killing his family to play PUBG. One incident involved a father abandoning his twin babies in bathtub because he kept playing on his Gameboy and the twins drowned. India is at second place in gaming session shares at 13% according to Global Games Market survey.

We personally conducted qualitative interviews which had both open-ended as well as close-ended questions to gain some insight into the minds of gamers. Several interviews had the subjects giving contradictory answer. We had on purpose several questions that were highly associated, so we expected similarly directed answers on both questions, but several subjects' answers differed in these and contradicted each other. This is since many people have different

definition of addiction. One of the subjects stated that they played for just two hours on average per day, but they thought they were addicted to video games and later the subject also stated that gaming does not affect their studies or social life because they keep a balance on it. Yet the subject stated they are addicted to games.

Our google survey gathered a total of 117 responses from the VIT circle. The age distribution was mostly concentrated in the age interval of 19-24 and some of the subjects were in 14-18 and >24 category. 75 individuals were male and 34 of them were females while others refrained from stating their gender. Many of the subjects had decent academic grades and most of them had CGPA in the interval of 7.5 – 8.5. The subjects also had decent average attendance between 80 to 90% while there were less than 10 who had average attendance under 75%. Most of the individuals considered themselves Friendly and introverted but the results were neck to neck with "Friendly and extroverted" individuals. Many of the subjects were not socially shy. Most of the subjects did not consider themselves addicted to video games. Many individuals considered playing video games augmented beneficial traits. At the end of the survey they had neutral opinions on gaming culture indicating that while the young adult generation does give support to esports league, but they also have questions regarding the influence of gaming culture over the general populace and negative connotations attached to it. It also showed how people have stigmatised the gaming culture. People also have a vague idea about addiction and give contradictory answers to several questions posed.

Solutions

There are several solutions that can be provided, and I am not sure if they are going to be creative, but they would be quite effective both on short term as well as long term.

- Since **charity begins at home** therefore parents need to address the issue of gaming addiction to their kids just like parents address the issues related to sex education. Parents need to inculcate a habit of proper time management in their kids. Prioritising and giving value to each activity. While parents encourage and throw such values at their kids they also need to participate actively with their children and be involved with them so that kids open about things to them. Bridging the communication gap increases the possibility in children to seek advice from parents on several issues which they usually won't do if parents do not maintain an environment of open communication.
- Instead establishing a gaming hub inside of homes, people can create **community hubs** or houses of gaming. People would be forced to walk out of their homes and attend these hubs to play games. The gaming hubs can have fixed timings and proper billing can be done so that gamers are forced to leave early or at a proper enough time. I borrowed this idea from the arcade games hub which we used to have back in the 2000s in India. They are discontinued but we as kids loved going to these.

- **Parents should have control over the stash of games** that their kids have. As simple as that. This one is a plain one. Parental controls over computer which would not let children open violent or illegal games before even the child can play the game.
- In India, there are a total of **5000 psychiatrists for a population of 1.3 billion** (which was stated in a presentation related to suicide in class), this is a big problem for a country like India which is struggling in the field of mental health problems. India before colonialism had very meticulous schools of thoughts that addressed these issues of individual development but nowadays the general populace is struggling with individual spirituality and mental problems. Proper professional institutions need to be established. The government should give the luxury to people to seek care and advice for their mental health issues. I don't think any country can make proper progress if the minds of its citizens are not stable and indifferent to the work they do.
- **Government needs to play an active role in addressing issues** related to every kind of addiction that World Health Organisation list states. We are still struggling to address issues on sexuality, sex and suicide amongst students. Government can also focus on these issues rather than just economic reforms.
- Most of the times, **rebellious people do not like being told "what not to do"** like me so the third solution might not work where we have parents controlling every aspect of their child. During teenage years, this solution will fail. I have had my parents inculcate in me a habit of having a purpose. There should be rewarding mechanism for each activity you do, and we can keep a smartphone application for such a thing. If one has completed their two hours of assignment, they can reward themselves with either a pat on the back or some materialistic reward or reward themselves with one hour of gaming. Inculcating a habit of time management and responsibility amongst teenagers also helps. Like doing one's own laundry or doing a part-time job. Being responsible helps people control their misdoings.
- **Read Books.** I don't know. I prefer reading books more than gaming. Personally, I would stop playing a video game if you buy me the latest novel by Dan Brown or Cornelia Funke.

Thus, endeth the sermon on psychological effects of video game playing.