

Digital literacy

What are the dangers of children developing a videogame addiction?

ESSAY

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Lecturer: Frans Blauw



Online dangers to children

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1. Introduction

“What is addiction, really? It is a sign, a signal, a symptom of distress. It is a language that tells us about a plight that must be understood.” – Alice Miller.

With the never-ending development of technology, people, most importantly children face the urgency of understanding the dangers of online activities. Children confront these dangers as they grow, and these can take a toll in their behavioral development as well. One of these threats can be addiction which by definition is a compulsive, chronic, physiological or psychological need for a habit-forming substance, behavior, or activity having harmful physical, psychological, or social effects and typically causing well-defined symptoms (such as anxiety, irritability, tremors, or nausea) upon withdrawal or abstinence.

In this research requested by Hz University Of Applied Sciences , I am aiming on finding out how we can negate negative behavioral tendencies e.g addiction among children and answering the following questions:

Main question: **What are the dangers of children developing a videogame addiction?**

Subsequent questions:

- What are the factors of becoming a videogame addict?
- How do children become addicted?
- In what way can games be addictive?

2. Theoretical Framework

According to Bezruczyk (2022) videogame addiction, or also known as gaming disorder, or internet gaming disorder is defined by WHO as a pattern of gaming behavior (“digital-gaming” or “video-gaming”) characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities to the extent that gaming takes precedence over other interests and daily activities, and continuation or escalation of gaming despite the occurrence of negative consequences. The research of Stevens et al. (2020) shows that the worldwide prevalence of gaming disorder was 1.96% in 2020.

2.1 What are the factors of becoming a videogame addict?

According to research of Jin et al. (2021) there are several factors that play a role in developing a videogame addiction. It was found that since humans are herd animals, they crave social interactions, and they want to find them in games which have built in relationship creating/maintaining features. In this research they revealed that children who are from over expecting households, have a higher change of becoming addicted to video games, because they try to find satisfaction in games which they cannot in real life. According to Bezruczyk (2022) children can find themselves being appreciated and useful that cannot feel in their life.

Children who are gaming addicts tend to neglect their family, friends, and education because of the addiction. However, it has been found in the research of Jin et al. (2021) that school environment can take a part in gaming addiction. The research classifies two dimensions: protective and risky school environments. In protective school environments, children can express themselves and contains positive interactions with their friends and teachers. On the other hand, in risky school environments delinquencies are more common and more rules are being broken. Children who belong to a risky school environment are more prone to becoming addicted to video games and fail their studies.

In 75% of American households there is at least one gamer. In the USA 97% of the boys and 83% of the girls has played a video game. Bezruczyk (2022) states that almost everyone has someone close to them who enjoys gaming. Therefore, children can be introduced to gaming through their peers, as they are looking for playmates. The research of Jin et al. (2021) states that as technology has advanced socialization has become more digital, and games are an extension of communication for human beings.

In research of Bezruczyk (2022) it was found that games give the player the chance to feel important, and that they are a part of something. For some this can be the pillar of their self-esteem. Children with low self-esteem are more likely to develop gaming addiction since they might not be able to maintain social relationships successfully. According to research of Jin et al. (2021), since children want to be part of a group, they might pick up games, then develop an addiction.

Parent-child relationship can affect gaming addiction. In families with an absent parent, gaming addiction was more likely to occur among children. The parents who spent more time with their children, the risk of developing a gaming addiction was lower than in their counterparts.

2.2 How do children become addicted?

In the research of Luker (2022) it was found that addiction can happen due to hyperarousal. When a pleasurable experience or hyperarousal occurs the brain's rewarding center releases dopamine. When a game is being played it is processed as if the scenario was real. If a child experiences hyperarousal when playing a game, the brain connects it with dopamine. Dopamine helps sustaining attention and interest, so it is hard to detach from the game, so addiction forms. According to Rick Benson (Can Playing Video Games Lead to a Gambling Problem?, n.d.) children's brain is less developed and linked to increased impulsivity.

Edward Luker (2022) argues that a constant state of hyperarousal can lead to difficulties with paying attention, managing emotions, controlling impulses, following directions, and tolerating frustration. Over time your brain builds up a tolerance against dopamine, so other activities might seem dull or boring. This may lead to a lack of empathy or violence toward others.

2.3 In what way can games be addictive?

Videogames can affect the brain the same way as addictive drugs would, with the release dopamine which reinforces behaviors. Although spending too much time gaming can be a symptom of addiction, Bezrutczyk (2022) states that it is important to understand that the amount of time spent playing a game is not a necessary indication of addiction.

Games are designed to encourage compulsive use; just as online gambling is designed to be addictive. Gaming addiction has the same signs as gambling disorder. Rick Benson (Can Playing Video Games Lead to a Gambling Problem?, n.d.) argues that videogames can be a gateway to gambling. Games are designed to be addictive, and this is shown by the introduction of lootboxes in games. Lootboxes contain a random item, and their outcome is completely luck based. Therefore, lootboxes are like slot machines. Belgium has deemed lootboxes as gambling, so some companies pulled their game from the country.

3. Conclusion

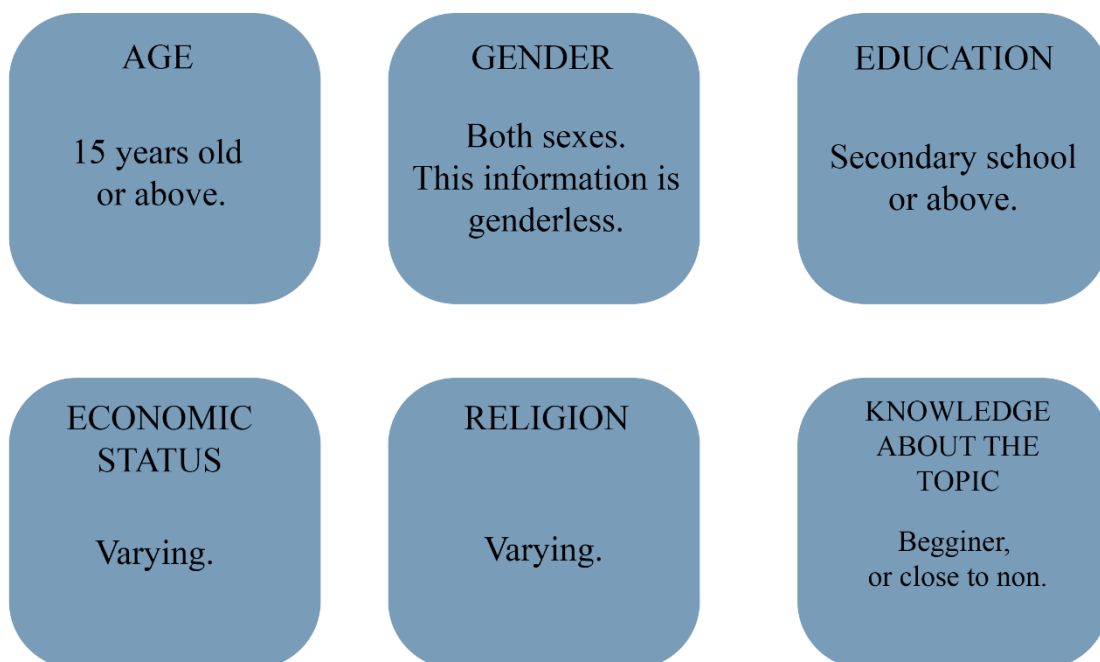
Videogames are becoming more popular among children as a form of socialization, and a way of stress relief. But we cannot forget the fact that videogames are made to be addicting with the addition of lootbox systems, the competitiveness of some games. Children are under the threat of being in a constant state of hyperarousal because of the excessive number of sensory inputs, which can lead to them being addicted to games. We must monitor the many factors which induce the development of videogame addiction amongst children.

From my research I can conclude that we should place more attention on the family environment that it is not filled with over expectation, the relationship of the parents and their children, the school environment, the children's peers, and the children's self-esteem, to lower the rate of children who develop gaming addiction.

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Appendix 1: Target Audience Analyses



Appendix 2: CARS CHECLIST

CARS-checklist					
0 = Not at all, 5 = Yes it does					
https://www.addictioncenter.com/drugs/video-game-addiction/	1	2	3	4	5
Reliable					
The source contains extensive background information from the author or organization responsible for the content of the site or document.					X
There is a quality control on the content of the site or document, for example with certain controlled portals, organized websites, online magazines or when the author publishes from an organization or institution.					X
The information is clearly structured					X
The site/document contains well-formulated sentence structures without spelling errors.					X
There are links to the site or document from reliable sources or articles.					X
Accurate					
The site / Document is recently updated or of a recent date					X
The site/document contains up-to-date information.				X	
The author has clearly attempted to highlight aspects from several angles (completeness).					X
Credibility					
There is a balanced (unbiased) representation of matters, in which the opinions of opponents are also respectfully involved in the argumentation (honesty).					X
It appears that the author has done his utmost to describe things as objectively as possible.					X
Based on your own (prior) knowledge and experience, it can be concluded that the content of the source is reasonable (plausible, acceptable).					X
The author has a scientifically informative purpose (e.g. no financial or political purpose).					X
Support					
The article/document clearly indicates where the information comes from.					X
The article/document contains contact details of the author or organization for which the author writes.					X
At least two reliable sources confirm the content / claims of the article / document.					X

Conclusion Reliability: 5

Conclusion Accuracy: 4.6

Conclusion Credibility: 5

Conclusion Support: 5

Conclusion (Based on what reasons are you selecting this article?)

Because in my research I focus on the dangers of videogame addiction and this article it defines game addiction, and the process of how someone becomes an addict

CARS-checklist					
0 = Not at all, 5 = Yes it does					
https://www.algamus.org/blog/video-games-gambling-problem	1	2	3	4	5
Reliable					
The source contains extensive background information from the author or organization responsible for the content of the site or document.					X
There is a quality control on the content of the site or document, for example with certain controlled portals, organized websites, online magazines or when the author publishes from an organization or institution.					X
The information is clearly structured					X
The site/document contains well-formulated sentence structures without spelling errors.					X
There are links to the site or document from reliable sources or articles.					X
Accurate					
The site / Document is recently updated or of a recent date				X	
The site/document contains up-to-date information.				X	
The author has clearly attempted to highlight aspects from several angles (completeness).					X
Credibility					
There is a balanced (unbiased) representation of matters, in which the opinions of opponents are also respectfully involved in the argumentation (honesty).				X	
It appears that the author has done his utmost to describe things as objectively as possible.					X
Based on your own (prior) knowledge and experience, it can be concluded that the content of the source is reasonable (plausible, acceptable).					X
The author has a scientifically informative purpose (e.g. no financial or political purpose).					X
Support					
The article/document clearly indicates where the information comes from.					X
The article/document contains contact details of the author or organization for which the author writes.					X
At least two reliable sources confirm the content / claims of the article / document.					X

Conclusion Reliability: 5

Conclusion Accuracy: 4.3

Conclusion Credibility: 4.75

Conclusion Support: 5

Conclusion (Based on what reasons are you selecting this article?):

I chose this article based on the fact it gave me an answer on one of the dangers of addiction, and the information about the tools companies can use to achieve addiction in their games.

CARS-checklist					
0 = Not at all, 5 = Yes it does					
https://www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/hometown-health/speaking-of-health/are-video-games-and-screens-another-addiction	1	2	3	4	5
Reliable					
The source contains extensive background information from the author or organization responsible for the content of the site or document.					X
There is a quality control on the content of the site or document, for example with certain controlled portals, organized websites, online magazines or when the author publishes from an organization or institution.					X
The information is clearly structured					X
The site/document contains well-formulated sentence structures without spelling errors.					X
There are links to the site or document from reliable sources or articles.					X
Accurate					
The site / Document is recently updated or of a recent date				X	
The site/document contains up-to-date information.				X	
The author has clearly attempted to highlight aspects from several angles (completeness).					X
Credibility					
There is a balanced (unbiased) representation of matters, in which the opinions of opponents are also respectfully involved in the argumentation (honesty).					X
It appears that the author has done his utmost to describe things as objectively as possible.					X
Based on your own (prior) knowledge and experience, it can be concluded that the content of the source is reasonable (plausible, acceptable).					X
The author has a scientifically informative purpose (e.g. no financial or political purpose).					X
Support					
The article/document clearly indicates where the information comes from.					X
The article/document contains contact details of the author or organization for which the author writes.					X
At least two reliable sources confirm the content / claims of the article / document.				X	

Conclusion Reliability:5.....

Conclusion Accuracy:4.3.....

Conclusion Credibility:4.6.....

Conclusion Support:4.6.....

Conclusion (Based on what reasons are you selecting this article?)

I selected this article because it helped me gather information about the development of gaming addiction and it is crucial to my research.