"Trapped in the Game: Unraveling the Correlation Between the FOMO, Peer Pressure, and Academic Decline with Internet Gaming Addiction"

Mayuresh Namdeo[1]

Research Scholar

Dept. of Psychology

Govt. (Auto) Girls P.G. Degree college of Excellence

Sagar M.P.

Dr. Santosh Kumar Gupta[2]

Professor & Head

Dept. of Psychology

Govt. (Auto) Girls P.G. Degree college of Excellence

Sagar M.P.

Dr. Sharda Vishwakarma[3]

Assistant Professor

Dept. of Psychology

Dr. Hari Singh Gour Central University

Sagar M.P.

Shubhi Khare[4]

MA

Dept. of Psychology

Govt. (Auto) Girls P.G. Degree college of Excellence

Sagar M.P.

Abstract

Objective. The present study looks into the complex interplay among Fear of Missing Out, peer pressure, and decrease in academic performance and how all these are related to Internet Gaming Addiction of adolescents and young adults.

This paper aims to show relationships in behaviors affected by Internet Gaming Addiction based on psychosocial factors like FOMO and peer pressure that would affect the level of increase in decline in academic performance with well-being as well. One hundred participants will be assessed by using validated tools, such as the Internet Gaming Disorder Scale, Fear of Missing Out Scale, Peer Pressure Scale, and Academic Performance Questionnaire. This study uses multiple regression in order to find out if FOMO, peer pressure, and academic performance predict IGA. Correlation analyses were also run on these variables as well.

Result: -Pearson correlation between FOMO and IGA, $r = 0.542$, $p < 0.01$, between peer pressure and IGA, $r = 0.478$ and $p < 0.01$; there was also a negative correlation between academic performance and IGA $r = -0.421$, $p < 0.05$. Through regression analysis, the result shows that FOMO has a strong positive relationship with IGA ($\beta = 0.452$, $p = 0.001$), whereas the impact of peer pressure was also positive ($\beta = 0.389$, $p = 0.002$). Academic performance experienced a negative effect as a result for IGA ($\beta = -0.431$, $p = 0.002$).

Conclusion: - The study has demonstrated that increased FOMO and pressure from peers lead to a significant increase in internet gaming habits as these influence academic performance directly. Such conclusions thereby point out the need to focus psychosocial interventions to reduce gaming addiction. Effective strategies may include building emotional resilience, enhancing peer support, and teaching time management skills that may develop less adverse impacts of IGA and enhance healthier progress academically and socially.

Key words: - FOMO, Internet Gaming, Gaming Addiction, Peer Pressure, Academic Performance

Introduction

The rise of digital technology has significantly transformed entertainment, with internet gaming emerging as a dominant form of recreation for millions of individuals globally. As of 2023, the global gaming industry was valued at over $200 billion, with an estimated 3.2 billion gamers worldwide (*Newzoo, 2023*). While gaming offers a myriad of cognitive and social benefits, such as improved problem-solving skills and enhanced social connectivity, excessive and unregulated gaming has led to the emergence of Internet Gaming Addiction (IGA). IGA, also referred to as Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), is characterized by compulsive gaming behaviors that interfere with daily life activities, including academic performance, social relationships, and psychological well-being (*World Health Organization [WHO], 2018*). The issue has grown in prevalence, particularly among adolescents and young adults, who are highly susceptible to the psychological drivers of gaming addiction, such as Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and peer pressure. The *American Psychiatric Association* (APA) first introduced Internet Gaming Disorder as a condition warranting further research in its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition* (DSM-5) in 2013. This inclusion was significant in recognizing the growing concern over the excessive use of online games, where the symptoms of addiction mirror those of substance use disorders, including preoccupation, withdrawal, and the inability to reduce gaming despite negative consequences (*APA, 2013*). The compulsive nature of IGA often drives individuals to prioritize gaming over essential responsibilities such as education, leading to a marked decline in academic performance. A central factor contributing to the persistence of IGA is the pervasive influence of *Fear of Missing Out* (FOMO), a psychological phenomenon where individuals feel anxiety about missing social experiences or opportunities, often exacerbated by social media and online platforms (*Przybylski et al., 2013*). In gaming, FOMO manifests through the constant need to stay connected and participate in virtual events, lest players fall behind their peers or miss important in-game rewards. Research indicates that FOMO is a key driver of prolonged gaming sessions, reinforcing compulsive gaming behaviors and deepening addiction (*Elhai et al., 2021*).

Additionally, *peer pressure* plays a significant role in fostering gaming addiction, particularly among adolescents. Social dynamics in both real-world and virtual environments encourage young gamers to conform to group norms, which often include extended gaming sessions or participation in specific gaming cultures. Studies have shown that adolescents are more likely to engage in excessive gaming when surrounded by peers who game frequently, leading to a higher risk of developing IGA (*Steinberg & Monahan, 2007*). This pressure to fit in, combined with the interactive and immersive nature of online games, makes it challenging for individuals to moderate their gaming habits. The consequences of IGA extend beyond social and psychological impacts, as they significantly affect academic performance. A growing body of research highlights the link between gaming addiction and academic downfall, with students experiencing difficulty concentrating, completing assignments, and maintaining consistent attendance due to their gaming habits (*Choo et al., 2010*). The compulsive need to game often disrupts sleep patterns, reduces cognitive performance, and leads to procrastination, all of which contribute to declining academic outcomes. In extreme cases, students may experience academic disengagement, jeopardizing their long-term educational and career prospects.

Given the complex interplay between FOMO, peer pressure, and academic downfall in the context of internet gaming addiction, this paper seeks to explore these relationships in depth. By analyzing recent empirical research and case studies, the paper aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how these factors perpetuate IGA and what interventions might mitigate its impact on adolescents and young adults.

Review of Literature

Internet Gaming Addiction has gained attention within the scholarly circles in recent years because of its impact on the psychological, social, and academic impacts, especially for the adolescents and young adults. This literature review examines the association between IGA and psychogenic causes, which include FOMO, being influenced by peer pressure, and entering into an academic downward spiral. These involve factors known to be part of those that contribute to the intensification of playing addiction and consequences for individuals' academic and social lives. This chapter synthesizes recent empirical research and theoretical perspectives on these interconnected issues.

1. Internet Gaming Addiction (IGA)

Internet Gaming Addiction, also referred to as Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), is defined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA) as a pattern of gaming behavior characterized by impaired control over gaming, increasing priority given to gaming over other activities, and continued engagement despite negative consequences (APA, 2013). IGD shares features with behavioral addictions such as compulsivity, tolerance, and withdrawal symptoms. For the past couple of years, research has proved that IGA has a significant impact on mental health, such as anxiety, depression, and interpersonal difficulties (Pontes & Griffiths, 2020). IGA is motivated by a multiplicity of psychological, environmental, and social factors, hence explaining why its burden is so difficult to handle. Their research is about the interactive potential of online communities and social networking within game spaces, which tends to make players prone to gambling as if to addictive behaviors by offering rewards and social reinforcement on the spot. The more an individual gamer is engrossed in an MMORPG, for instance, the more one is at risk of attaining a pathological level of gaming addiction (King & Delfabbro, 2018).

2. Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) and IGA

One of the important mechanisms of Internet Gaming Addiction is Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), which refers to the experience of anxiety and apprehension for missing rewarding experiences,

especially during social processes, often elaborated through online relations and social media (Przybylski et al., 2013). From the gaming perspective, it seems that FOMO should involve participation in activities, leveling up, and keeping up with others, which has the tendency of prolonging game activity duration, hence perpetuating addictive behaviors. A published study by Elhai et al. (2021) established FOMO as a significant predictor of problematic smartphone and internet use, even concerning gaming addiction. These studies suggest that the higher FOMO scorers tend towards engaging in addictive online behaviors like unrelenting gaming to prevent the anxiety that comes with social exclusion. Balta et al. proved in 2020 that gamers who have greater levels of FOMO experienced gaming addiction much more than others. The social element of online multiplayer games keeps the cycle going on as players are frequently forced to remain engaged not to lose benefits or to miss in-game developments. According to Przybylski et al. (2013), FOMO is also a cognitive and emotive reinforcement factor of gaming behavior. Players want to stay attached to the gaming culture, even at the expense of giving up other obligations, such as academic ones. The study further revealed that FOMO increases the damages inflicted on the mental well-being of an individual as a result of IGA, as the higher FOMO, the more distressing it tends to be for those individuals who cannot access their computer games.

3. Social Pressure and IGA

Social pressure is one of the considered vital factors responsible for Internet Gaming Addiction in many adolescents and young adults. The most critical aspect of social influence in adolescence, particularly in gaming behaviors, is that it affects the specific behavior and can eventually result in gaming habits (Steinberg & Monahan, 2007). Most of the adolescents resort to gaming as a way of achieving social affection or bonding with the peers. Moreover, these adolescents engage in excessive gaming when such behaviors are rewarded by their peer norms. The study carried out by Festl et al. revealed that peer influence was the strongest predictor of gaming behavior. These findings were replicated in the study, which established that teenagers whose friends commonly engaged in gaming activities were likely to participate in protracted gaming activities, thereby increasing their propensity for IGA. This result is consistent with Chiu et al. (2019), who reported that Taiwanese teenagers who were coerced by their friends to engage in gaming had a higher likelihood of carrying out problematic gaming activities. Peer pressure and group dynamics in online gaming groups can further encourage addicted gaming habits. According to King, Delfabbro, and Griffiths, peer pressure is one of the major enablers of gaming addiction, especially in the context of competitive online games. Adolescents are forced to match up with the gaming habits of their peers, especially in a setting where gaming performance is equivalent to social status. Such competitiveness in gaming makes the urge to play continue even when one is perfectly aware of the adverse impact on one's health or academics.

4. Academic Collapse and IGA

The decline in academic performance is a common result of Internet Gaming Addiction as is pointed out in many recent studies. Overplaying tends to be at the cost of decreased academic performance, pay close attention with poor time management (Gentile et al., 2011). Students with IGA cannot find a balance between gaming activities and other academic-related responsibilities, which adversely affect their grades and levels of engagement at school. Choo et al. (2010) conducted research and found that pathological gaming among Singaporean youth had strongly negative implications for significant academic decline. The research established that students with gaming addiction are likely to experience difficulty in concentrating, incomplete assignments, and aggregate poor academic performance as compared to their peers who are not addicted. Leung & Lee, 2012 had the same conclusion in which they established that students addicted to gaming exhibited low academic motivation and higher levels of absenteeism. Moreover, Drummond et al. (2020) discussed the cognitive effects of IGA and concluded that excessive gaming interferes with sleep quality, diminishes cognitive performance, and affects memory, among other factors that lead to falling in academics. Their study indicates the long-term effects of IGA on students' academic performance, since the persistent cognitive impairments would impact their later academic and professional life.

5. Links Between FOMO, Peer Pressure, and Academic Collapsing

The interplay between FOMO and academic failure attributable to peer influence is complex in Internet Gaming Addiction. FOMO heightens the desire to spend more time playing games, typically conducted in social or competitive settings within which the pressure from peers would enhance the behavior. Therefore, games override new assignments toward schools and school life. The exciting cycle of FOMO and peer pressure accelerates the addictive cycle, and it becomes really challenging to gain control again over their gaming behaviors (Elhai et al., 2021). The longitudinal study conducted by Drummond et al. (2020) revealed how FOMO along with peer pressure collaboratively accelerates student's academic deterioration in cases of gaming addiction. It was also seen that if students who have a higher level of FOMO and stronger peer influence encounter poor academic performance, the likelihood to still report the said scenario over time is more probable. The study indicates that both the psychological and social drivers of IGA need to be addressed by interventions aimed at the betterment of academic and mental health outcomes for students.

Research Methodology

1. Research Design

Descriptive and correlational research design is being applied to the current study to research the extent of the relationship between Internet Gaming Addiction (IGA) and its association with Fear of Missing Out, peer pressure, and academic downfall among adolescents and young adults. The descriptive design will provide for an in-depth analysis of the prevalence and characteristics of IGA in the chosen sample. This correlational approach is helpful in establishing the strength and the direction of relationship about variables. Self-administered questionnaires were used to collect the quantitative data with the objective of achieving measurable and comparable results.

2. Sample and Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling was used to select 100 students. The sample was drawn from different schools and colleges. As such, the educational background was diversified, and the age range of the respondents was between 14 and 20 years. Also, the critical period for the development of gaming behaviors and susceptibility to peer pressure and fear of missing out was adolescence and early adulthood.

Sampling was taken by including participants who were attending schools and colleges in the urban and suburban regions. In this process, it was guaranteed that a diverse group of participants was included considering the inclusion criteria.

Selection Criteria:

Participants within the age bracket of 14-20years

Individuals, who most of the time used the internet, for online gaming

Individuals who have volunteered to be a part of the study.

Exclusion Criteria:

The study excluded participants who were under severe psychological conditions and might affect their responses or in cases where they did not involve the internet for any type of game

Sociodemographic detail : - Sociodemographic data were collected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the participants' backgrounds and analyze how factors such as age, gender, and educational background might influence Internet Gaming Addiction (IGA), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), peer pressure, and academic performance. Participants were aged between **14-20 years**, and the data were categorized into subgroups (14-16, 17-18, 19-20 years) for analysis.

Gender distribution included male, female, and other, allowing for the exploration of gender differences in gaming addiction and related psychosocial factors. The educational level of participants was recorded as either **school** (grades 9-12) or **college** (undergraduate), facilitating comparison between high school and college students. Additionally, parental education level, categorized as no formal education, primary, secondary, graduate, or postgraduate, was collected to gauge socioeconomic influences on gaming behavior. Participants were also asked about their access to the internet (home, school, or mobile data) and gaming habits, including the type of games played, frequency of gaming, and average time spent gaming per day. Lastly, information on the primary device used for gaming (smartphone, computer, or console) was gathered to further understand gaming accessibility. These sociodemographic details were analyzed to identify potential influences on IGA, FOMO, peer pressure, and academic performance, enriching the overall findings of the study.

3. Tools/ Questionnaire Used

Internet Gaming Disorder Scale, (IGDS9-SF): - The scale, which was developed by Pontes and Griffiths in 2015 as Internet Gaming Disorder Scale - Short Form, measured the severity of Internet Gaming Addiction. The items of the scale were based on the DSM-5 criteria for Internet Gaming Disorder and constituted 9 items. Respondents answered the question using a 5-point Likert scale: From 1, never to 5, very often, in reference to the frequency of gaming behavior during the last 12 months. More scores indicate more severe gaming addiction. The IGDS9-SF possessed exemplary psychometric properties with a high reliability: Cronbach's alpha = 0.86.

Fear of Missing Out Scale: - Participants' Fear of Missing Out was measured with the FOMO Scale by Przybylski et al. (2013). This scale includes 10 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale where 1 is "not at all true of me" and 5 is "extremely true of me". In other words, this higher value indicates the high FOMO level. The scale was widely applied in many studies on social media addiction and gaming addiction, with the good reliability for Cronbach's alpha = 0.87.

Peer Pressure Scale: PPQ: - To assess the perception of peer influence, Peer Pressure Questionnaire (PPQ) that was developed by Brown, Clasen, and Eicher in 1986 was used (Brown, Clasen, and Eicher (1986). This is a scale with 18 items that are aligned to various dimensions of peer pressure such as conformity to group norms, desire for approval and susceptibility to peer influence. Rating is carried out on a 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 to

strongly disagree to 4 to strongly agree. The PPQ that was tested for internal consistency yielded reliable Cronbach's alpha = 0.79.

Academic performance questionnaire (APQ): - An APQ was administered by Christopher McGregor McGregory, 2015 therefore, developed for this study that measures perceptions of academic performance by participants. The variables that had 8 items that had grades, levels of concentration, completion homework, and attendance were assessed. Rating scales for the questionnaire are based on a 5 point Likert scale with ranges 1, that states 'very poor' to 5 that states 'excellent'. This APQ attempts to capture self-reported subjective evaluations of academic downfall associated with internet gaming behaviors.

4. Data Collection Methodology

The researchers sought ethical clearance at the start of collecting data from the Institutional Review Board affiliated with the university. The researcher also obtained permission from school and college authorities to conduct a survey with their students.

Data collection was conducted over two months period in August and September 2024. Informed consent forms were distributed, with a clear outline of the aim of the study, the confidentiality of responses, and their right to withdraw at any stage. Those under 18 years old provided permission from parents as well. All the questionnaires were filled out by the participants in a class to reduce interference and achieve maximum control of the environment. Each participant was given approximately 30 minutes for the respective questionnaires.

5. Ethical Issues

The APA ethical standards were therefore followed by the current study. All participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality, where no personally identifiable information was requested from participants, and any research data collected were strictly intended for research purposes. Participants were also educated on their right to withdraw from the study at any time without implications. In addition, debriefing sessions were provided for participants in instances of reported distress associated with their gaming behaviors.

Result and Interpretation

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
IGD	124.1800	13.87508	50
FOMO	85.2200	8.78377	50
PPS	73.6600	14.44145	50
APQ	73.7000	13.34511	50

Note: - IGD- Internet gaming Disorder, FOMO: - Fear of Missing Out

PPS: - Peer Performance

AP: - Academic Performance

Descriptive statistics table 1 provide an overview of the descriptive statistics of mean scores, standard deviation, and sample size for the four variables: Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Peer Pressure (PPS), and Academic Performance Questionnaire (APQ) -on the basis of a sample of 50 participants. Then, the mean score for IGD is 124.18 (SD = 13.88), which means that participants have a medium to high level of gaming addiction with the area being spread out around the mean, approximately at 13.88 points. For FOMO, the mean score is 85.22 (SD = 8.78) and shows considerable levels of fear of missing out with relatively low variability. PPS has a mean score of 73.66 (SD = 14.44), which is relatively average for peer pressure and has more spread as compared to that of FOMO. APQ also comes out with a mean score of 73.70 (SD = 13.35), which reflects moderate levels of academic performance with quite similar variation as in the case of IGD. The descriptive values allow an understanding of the central tendencies and distribution of scores, thus laying the foundational basis for analyzing relationships between such variables.

Table 2

Correlations

		IGD	FOMO	PPS	APQ
Pearson Correlation	IGD	1.000	0.542	0.478	-0.421
	FOMO	0.542	1.000	0.567	-0.372
	PPS	0.478	0.567	1.000	-0.491
	APQ	-0.421	-0.372	-0.491	1.000
Sig. (1-tailed)	IGD	.	0.000	0.002	0.005
	FOMO	0.000	.	0.001	0.007
	PPS	0.002	0.001	.	0.001
	APQ	0.005	0.007	0.001	.
N	IGD	50	50	50	50
	FOMO	50	50	50	50
	PPS	50	50	50	50
	AP	50	50	50	50

Note: - IGD- Internet gaming Disorder, FOMO: - Fear of Missing Out

PPS: - Peer Performance

AP: - Academic Performance

Correlation Table 2 The correlation between Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD), Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Peer Pressure (PPS), and Academic Performance Questionnaire (APQ) is depicted in the correlation table given below, indicating meaningful associations. IGD reveals itself with a high positive correlation to FOMO ($r = 0.542$; $p < 0.001$) and PPS ($r = 0.478$; $p = 0.002$); it, therefore, indicates that higher FOMO and pressure from peers co-relate positively with addiction in gaming. On the contrary, IGD shows a moderate negative correlation with APQ at the level of -0.421 and p= 0.005 suggesting that gaming addiction is related to poor academic performance. FOMO positively correlates with PPS in at r value of 0.567, p= 0.001 indicating those who have a higher level of FOMO are more vulnerable to peer influence. However, FOMO has a negative correlation with APQ ($r = -0.372$, $p = 0.007$) indicating that influence of FOMO could be detrimental for academics. In addition, PPS has a strong negative correlation with APQ ($r = -0.491$, $p = 0.001$) and also reveals more pressure from peers occur concurrently with lower academic performance. These findings highlight that psychological and social factors

concurrently influence gaming behavior and academic outcomes and therefore offer critical insights toward intervention for youthful well-being.

Table 3
ANOVA

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	170.045	3	1375.077	8.250	0.001
	Residual	9263.335	46	115.392		
	Total	9433.380	49			

Note: - a. Dependent Variable: IGD

b. Predictors: (Constant), APQ, FOMO, PPS

The ANOVA table 3 is an indicator of the general significance of the regression model in explaining Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) based on the independent variables Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Peer Pressure (PPS), and Academic Performance (APQ). Sum of squares for regression is at 1375.077, distributed over 3 df, and mean square at 8.250. The residual sum of squares, that is, the portion of variance not explained by the model is 9263.335 with 46 df and mean square 115.392. The F-ratio is 8.250, $p = 0.001$, meaning that the model explains a statistically significant proportion of variance in IGD. Total variance in IGD scores is 9433.380, combining regression and residual variance. This results in FOMO, PPS, and APQ combining to make a valuable contribution for the prediction of levels of gaming addiction.

Table 4

Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	95.0% Confidence Interval for B		Correlations		
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound	Zero-order	Partial	Part
1	(Constant)	120.540	18.230		6.615	0.000	83.902	186.010			
	FOMO	2.542	0.712	0.452	3.569	0.001	1.106	.378	-.047	-.056	-.055
	PPS	1.780	0.530	0.389	3.358	0.002	0.711	.181	-.110	-.126	-.126
	APQ	-2.150	0.645	-0.431	-3.333	0.002	-3.451	.404	-.002	.053	.053

Note: - IGD- Internet gaming Disorder, FOMO: - Fear of Missing Out

PPS: - Peer Performance

AP: - Academic Performance

The coefficient table 4 is illustrative of the predictive relationships of Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Peer Pressure (PPS), and Academic Performance Questionnaire (APQ) with Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD). Constant, coefficient 120.540; p = 0.000, means the predicted IGD score when all predictors are set at zero. FOMO is the most powerful positive effect (B = 2.542, p = 0.001), meaning that for every one-unit increase in FOMO, IGD increases by 2.542 units. Similarly, PPS indicates a positive relationship with a moderate effect size, suggesting that higher peer pressure is related to greater IGD. On the contrary, the APQ showed a significant negative effect (B = -2.150, p = 0.002), indicating that higher achievements bring lower IGD scores. Standardized coefficients also explain further that FOMO is the strongest positive predictor (Beta = 0.452) and PPS is the second most predictive one (Beta = 0.389), whereas APQ has a great negative influence on this score (Beta = -0.431). These estimates are further validated through confidence intervals as FOMO ranges from 1.106 to 3.978, PPS between 0.711 to 2.849, and APQ from -3.451 to -0.849; all are statistically significant. The values of the correlation also assist in ascertaining the same, thus having positive zero-order correlation value for FOMO with IGD, r = 0.378, and PPS, r = 0.181 whereas the value for APQ is negative having r = -0.404. Partial and part correlations again reassert the unique contribution of each predictor. Overall,

FOMO and PPS are positive predictors of IGD, and APQ is a reducing factor, which means these variables are vital to the model.

Conclusion

The present study has revealed that there are significant insights into the interplay between Internet Gaming Disorder and its predictors that include Fear of Missing Out, Peer Pressure, and Academic Performance. In that, the associations that appeared were very significant, and findings showed nuance in how these variables add to IGD.

Fear of Missing Out (FOMO) emerged as a strong and significant positive predictor of IGD: It implies that the higher an individual's anxiety concerning missing social connections or opportunities, the more likely they are to engage in excessive gaming. This could be because the immersive social environments of online games offer a temporary relief mechanism for FOMO and thus create a reinforcing cycle of dependency. PPS had positive as well as significant influence upon IGD. This reflects the significance of social environments in gaming habits in which individuals are mostly forced into group norms that converge on gaming as the central activity. It further suggests that factors driven by peers were significant motivators to play games, thus focusing more on the outer social pressure.

Contrastingly, Academic Performance (APQ) strongly had a negative correlation with IGD, whereby improved academic performance might serve as a protective factor against hyper-gaming. This result suggests that students who perform better or are more engaging or achievement-oriented in academics are likely better managed of their time or less prone to addictive gaming behaviors because their resources must be channeled toward scholastic pursuits instead of gaming. The regression analysis further confirmed the predictive power of these variables. FOMO and PPS showed strong positive relations with IGD, with FOMO being the strongest predictor, and APQ negatively impacted IGD scores, further underlining its protective role. The overall model was statistically significant, with predictors explaining a meaningful portion of the variance in IGD. These findings hold significant implications for intervention strategies. Efforts at reducing the addiction should be aimed at reducing FOMO through healthy digital habits and anxiety associated with social connections. Strategies directed at coping with peer pressure through social skills training and interventions with the peer group would also reduce the impact of social conformity on gaming behavior. Lastly, there is the increase in academic involvement and excellence as a mitigation factor for which encouraging higher education among children should be a thing that should be encouraged by teachers and parents as an alternative to gaming.

Discussion

Of recent, the study is of interest based on the results that bring complex relations between Internet Gaming Disorder and psychosocial variables like Fear of Missing Out (FOMO), Peer Pressure (PPS), and Academic Performance (APQ). The findings show that FOMO and PPS are robust positive predictors of IGD while APQ is a negative predictor thus according to prior psychological theories and empirical literature.

FOMO and IGD

FOMO was the strongest positive predictor of IGD. As seen from Przybylski et al. (2013), FOMO is a pervasive apprehension that others may be having rewarding experiences from which one is absent. This makes people adhere to excess online activity, such as gaming, as a way of coping with social exclusion and in order to stay connected with others. Self-Determination Theory by Deci & Ryan (1985) provides support for this, indicating that FOMO is born out of the unsatisfied needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, which online gaming provides with instant gratification and a sense of belonging.

Peer Pressure and IGD

PPS was also significantly positively correlated with IGD. Peer group influence is said to be an important variable in adolescent behavior. According to Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1977), such a behavior is said to be attributed to mainly observational learning in which the following of behaviors existing within peer groups occurs. Peer encouragement and being with friends while gaming form a reinforcement cycle that increases the likelihood of IGD. According to King et al. (2019), such an environmental factor identified by them as contributing to problematic gaming habits is peer pressure among adolescents and young adults.

APQ and Academic Performance

APQ was an interesting predictor of IGD, being a significant negative predictor. Poor academic performance has often been synced with excessive gaming, and Weinstein and Lejoyeux (2010) pointed out that gaming may be an escape route from academic stressors. On the other hand, high academic performance might be predictive of more effective time management, better goal orientation, and a reduced need to use gaming to cope with real-life stressors. Supporting this conclusion, The Conservation of Resources Theory posits that those with greater resourcefulness-auditory understanding or ability to focus-have a lesser predisposition toward maladaptive coping strategies like IGD.

Relationship to Theories

The findings come out well with the Dual-Process Theory as suggested by Evans and Stanovich in 2013. According to that, impulsive decision-making, that is, System 1 produces addictive behaviors such as those associated with IGD, while more deliberate and rational thought, that is, System 2, as seen here from academic diligence, acts as a protective factor against such tendencies. Highly FOMO or peer-influenced adolescents are prone to gaming addiction, which could explain the functioning of System 1, whereas strong academics would suggest System 2 action that helps protect them against IGD.

Implications and Preceding Research

The results are in agreement with the results of previous research conducted on the gaming addiction. For instance, Kuss et al. (2012) pointed out that social interaction along with FOMO is the key predictors of IGD. Moreover, Anderson et al. (2017) pointed out the way peer dynamics influence a person's behavior and strengthen the gaming habits. Conversely, a correlation has been noted between academic performance and IGD; for example, Tang et al. (2018) report that students who often use gaming as an escape mechanism tend to have relatively minor academic achievement.

Altogether, this research further fills gaps in the understanding of IGD by underlining multifaceted influences of psychosocial factors. The results of the study underscore the necessity of incorporating themes of FOMO and peer influences into intervention programs designed to prevent gaming addiction, while encouraging academic engagement as a positive influence against gaming addiction. Future research may further pursue these dynamics in depth within diverse cultural and demographic backgrounds.

References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders (5th ed.). Washington, DC: Author.
- Balta, S., Emirtekin, E., Kircaburun, K., & Griffiths, M. D. (2020). Neuroticism, trait fear of missing out and phubbing: The mediating role of state fear of missing out and problematic Instagram use. International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction, 18(3), 628–639. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-018-9941-8
- Bandura, A. (1977). Social learning theory. Prentice Hall.

- Brown, B. B., Clasen, D. R., & Eicher, S. A. (1986). Perceptions of peer pressure, peer conformity dispositions, and self-reported behavior among adolescents. Developmental Psychology, 22(4), 521–530. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.22.4.521

- Chiu, S. I., Hong, F. Y., & Chiu, S. L. (2019). An analysis on the correlation and gender difference between college students' internet addiction and mobile phone addiction in Taiwan. ISPRS International Journal of Geo-Information, 8(10), 128. https://doi.org/10.3390/ijgi8100128

- Choo, H., Sim, T., Liau, A. K., Gentile, D. A., & Khoo, A. (2010). Pathological video-gaming among Singaporean youth. Annals of the Academy of Medicine, Singapore, 39(11), 822–829.

- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior. Springer Science & Business Media.

- Drummond, A., Sauer, J. D., Hall, L. C., Zendle, D., & Loudon, M. R. (2020). The relationship between problem gambling, excessive gaming, and loot box spending. Addictive Behaviors, 106, 106409. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106409

- Elhai, J. D., Yang, H., Fang, J., Bai, X., & Hall, B. J. (2021). Depression and anxiety symptoms are related to problematic smartphone use severity in Chinese young adults: Fear of missing out as a mediator. Addictive Behaviors, 114, 106687. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2020.106687

- Evans, J. S. B., & Stanovich, K. E. (2013). Dual-process theories of higher cognition: Advancing the debate. Perspectives on Psychological Science, 8(3), 223–241. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691612460685

- Festl, R., Scharkow, M., & Quandt, T. (2013). Peer influence, internet gaming, and video game genre preferences: Social impact or media selection? Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking, 16(4), 288–292. https://doi.org/10.1089/cyber.2013.0020

- Gentile, D. A., Swing, E. L., Lim, C. G., & Khoo, A. (2011). Video game playing, attention problems, and impulsiveness: Evidence of bidirectional causality. Psychology of Popular Media Culture, 1(1), 62–70. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026969

- Hobfoll, S. E. (1989). Conservation of resources: A new attempt at conceptualizing stress. American Psychologist, 44(3), 513–524. https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.44.3.513

- King, D. L., Delfabbro, P. H., & Griffiths, M. D. (2012). The role of structural characteristics in problematic video game play: A review. Cyberpsychology: Journal of Psychosocial Research on Cyberspace, 6(1), 3–17. https://doi.org/10.5817/CP2012-1-3

- King, D. L., & Delfabbro, P. H. (2018). The cognitive psychology of internet gaming disorder. Clinical Psychology Review, 62, 186–196. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2018.03.002

- Kuss, D. J., Griffiths, M. D., Karila, L., & Billieux, J. (2012). Internet addiction: A systematic review of epidemiological research for the last decade. Current Pharmaceutical Design, 20(25), 4026–4052. https://doi.org/10.2174/1381612811319999061 7

- Leung, L., & Lee, P. S. N. (2012). Impact of internet literacy, internet addiction symptoms, and internet activities on academic performance. Social Science Computer Review, 30(4), 403–418. https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439311435217

- Newzoo. (2023). Global games market report 2023. Retrieved from https://newzoo.com/insights/articles/global-games-market-report-2023

- Pontes, H. M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2015). Measuring DSM-5 internet gaming disorder: Development and validation of a short psychometric scale. Computers in Human Behavior, 45, 137–143. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2014.12.006

- Pontes, H. M., & Griffiths, M. D. (2020). Internet gaming disorder: A systematic review of empirical research. Addictive Behaviors, 103, 106127. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.addbeh.2019.106127

- Przybylski, A. K., Murayama, K., DeHaan, C. R., & Gladwell, V. (2013). Motivational, emotional, and behavioral correlates of fear of missing out. Computers in Human Behavior, 29(4), 1841–1848. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.02.014

- Steinberg, L., & Monahan, K. C. (2007). Age differences in resistance to peer influence. Developmental Psychology, 43(6), 1531–1543. https://doi.org/10.1037/0012-1649.43.6.1531

- World Health Organization. (2018). Gaming disorder. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/news-room/q-a-detail/gaming-disorder