International Scientific Journal of Engineering and Management (ISJEM) ISSN: 2583-6129
Volume: 04 Issue: 06 | June – 2025 DOI: 10.55041/ISJEM04224
An International Scholarly || Multidisciplinary || Open Access || Indexing in all major Database & Metadata

ONLINE GAMING AND ITS EFFECT ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

Krishna Agrawal, Amity Business School
agrawalkrishna209@gmail.com
Pratiksha Mishra, Assistant Professor,
Amity Business School
pmishra1@rpr.amity.edu

Abstract

The growing popularity of online gaming among students has raised concerns about its implications on academic performance. This study investigates the relationship between gaming behavior and scholastic achievement, using a mixed-methods approach. A structured survey of 60 students was conducted alongside qualitative interviews to understand the effects of time spent gaming, game type, and motivations on academic outcomes. The findings reveal a nuanced relationship—moderate gaming may enhance cognitive abilities and social interaction, while excessive use can lead to academic decline. Results also suggest that gender, time management, and parental involvement significantly influence outcomes. The study proposes balanced strategies for students, parents, and educators to manage gaming habits and enhance academic performance.

Keywords:
Online Gaming, Academic Performance, Students, Gaming Addiction, Time Management, Cognitive Skills, Youth Behavior.

1. Introduction

The advent of digital technology has revolutionized entertainment, particularly through online gaming, which has become increasingly accessible via mobile devices and PCs. While gaming offers benefits such as stress relief, improved coordination, and cognitive development, concerns persist about its overuse, particularly among students balancing academic responsibilities.

This research investigates the effect of online gaming on students' academic performance, exploring the roles of motivation, frequency, psychological factors, and demographics. Understanding this relationship is vital in the digital age where gaming is embedded in youth culture and education is key to future opportunities.

2. Objectives of the Study

- To assess the prevalence and frequency of online gaming among students.
- To examine the relationship between gaming behavior (time, type, addiction) and academic performance.
- To analyze psychological and motivational factors influencing gaming.
- To evaluate the role of demographic variables such as gender, age, and parental guidance.
- To provide practical recommendations for healthy gaming and improved academic engagement.

3. Literature Review

The impact of online gaming on academic performance continues to be a topic of active investigation, particularly in the post-pandemic digital learning environment.

Academic Performance and Time Spent on Gaming

Several studies suggest that time spent gaming, when excessive, leads to academic disengagement. According to Zhang and Wu (2022), students who spend more than 3 hours per day gaming reported lower GPA scores, indicating a trade-off between leisure and study time. Conversely, Huang and Li (2021) found that moderate engagement (under 1 hour daily) improved attention and information retention.

Gaming Addiction and Mental Health

Gaming addiction has emerged as a mediating factor in academic performance. In a recent meta-analysis, Chen et al. (2023) concluded that gaming addiction negatively affects cognitive control and emotional regulation, which are essential for academic success. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2021) also officially classified "gaming disorder," leading to increased academic scrutiny.

Cognitive and Social Benefits of Gaming

On the positive side, Lee and Park (2020) demonstrated that strategy-based games can improve working memory, multitasking ability, and planning—skills relevant to academic tasks. Multiplayer cooperative games were also linked to enhanced peer collaboration and engagement in classroom environments (Martínez & García, 2022).

Gender and Demographic Influences

Gender differences in gaming behavior were highlighted by Singh and Kapoor (2021), who found male students more likely to engage in competitive games, while females preferred casual or social games. Both groups reported differing effects on concentration and motivation levels, suggesting the need for gender-sensitive educational strategies.

Gaming During COVID-19 and Academic Adaptation

The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated the use of digital media. A study by Ramesh and Thomas (2022) found that online gaming during lockdown became both a coping mechanism and a distraction from academic routines. The transition to online education made it difficult for some students to distinguish between learning and entertainment environments.

4. Research Methodology

Research Design:

A mixed-methods approach was adopted combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews.

Sample:
60 students from various academic backgrounds in Chhattisgarh were selected using stratified random sampling to ensure demographic diversity.

Data Collection:

- *Quantitative:* Structured questionnaire with Likert-scale questions on gaming frequency, motivation, and academic performance.
- *Qualitative:* Semi-structured interviews with select students to gain deeper insights into behavior and self-reflection.

Analysis:
Descriptive statistics, correlations, and thematic analysis were used to interpret the data. Cross-tabulations examined associations between gaming habits and academic indicators.

5. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Demographic Breakdown:

- **Age:** 47% between 18–24; 33% under 18.
- **Gender:** Nearly equal (48.3% male, 46.7% female).
- **Device Used:** 48.3% preferred mobile phones; 30% used PCs.

Gaming Behavior:

- 41.7% played daily; 15% monthly.
- 33.3% gamed for relaxation; 28.3% aimed for a gaming career.

Academic Impact:

- 26.7% strongly agreed gaming affected their academic performance; 43.3% felt addicted to gaming.
- Students with time-managed gaming schedules had better academic outcomes than those indulging without restraint.

Social and Mental Effects:

- 55% made new friends through gaming.
- 46.7% believed gaming positively impacted mental well-being.
- Toxicity was experienced by 46.7%; coping mechanisms varied.

6. Findings

- **Balanced Gaming Can Be Beneficial:** Moderate play supports cognitive development and social learning.
- **Excessive Gaming Hampers Academics:** Poor time management and addiction correlate with lower academic outcomes.
- **Social Gaming Improves Peer Support:** Multiplayer and cooperative games foster engagement.
- **Parental Supervision Is Crucial:** Students with parental boundaries perform better.

- **Game Genre Matters:** Strategy and skill-based games improve problem-solving; violent or immersive games may harm attention spans.
- **Gender and Motivation Vary:** Males preferred competitive play; females gravitated toward social or casual games.

7. Recommendations

- **Educate on Responsible Gaming:** Conduct awareness programs for students and parents.
- **Time Management Tools:** Promote apps and planners to balance study and gaming.
- **Gamify Learning:** Use educational games in curricula to leverage students' interests.
- **Parental Involvement:** Encourage parents to set gaming schedules and discuss content.
- **Counseling Support:** Offer help for students showing signs of addiction.
- **Further Research:** Expand sample size and include longitudinal studies for deeper insights.

8. Conclusion

This study highlights the complex relationship between online gaming and academic performance. While moderate gaming offers mental and social benefits, excessive indulgence impairs scholastic focus. A balanced approach, with support from families and institutions, can help students enjoy gaming without compromising education. The findings underscore the importance of digital wellness, self-discipline, and informed parental guidance in the lives of students.

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