Addiction to Video Games

Name

Institution

Date

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**Introduction**

Video games are very popular across the globe because of their entertaining aspects. These elements make individuals to spend a significant amount of their time on these games. Consequently, several studies have found that a small percentage of gamers find challenges to control their gaming habits. The findings further claim that addiction to video games is a serious social challenge that requires sufficient attention from all stakeholders namely parents, developers of the video games, and broader community. This viewpoint is driven by the belief that being unable to control the gaming behavior disrupts individuals’ school, work, and social lives. At the same time, it compromises their health as the addicts do not engage in physical activities as these games are played while seated. These aspects indicate that the producers of these games need to explore the issue of corporate social responsibility to protect the users from the possible harms that come with gaming when done for a prolonged period. Under this view, the developers and markers of the video games should inform their customers about the addictions risks that come with playing the games for many hours. The other approach is to provide referral services to the persons suffering from the addiction using their customer care platforms. Thus, video games are caused by the mental illnesses that the players have, which prevent them to control themselves after getting the rewards of these games while the critical nature of this addiction requires a collective approach to manage its effects to ensure that they do not compromise the well-being of the players.

Research Questions

The objective of the study was to determine the causes and effects of video games addiction to the society. The information acquired would provide vital insights into the effective ways of preventing the addiction and mitigating its effects. Thus, the dynamics of study revolved around two questions:

1. What are the factors that drive persons into video games addiction?
2. What are consequences of the addiction?

Problem Statement

Video games are a popular form of entertainment in the modern-day society. Many people use them to pass time as they are cheap and easily accessible. At the same time, their intriguing nature makes them very interesting to users. However, many players are unaware of the negative consequences of playing these games for a long time, such as addiction. For this reason, most of the addicts do not even know that they are misusing the games. Thus, it is imperative that the society is educated on the features of these games to know how to utilize them effectively, thus avoid their adverse effects.

**Research Methodology**

The study entailed a secondary research as it relied on secondary sources for data. Here, I analyzed and reviewed previous studies exploring the issue of video addiction to acquire data. I cross-examined research journals, newspaper article, and books to gain deeper insights into the social problem. During the evaluations, I had to check the credibility of the sources through conducting background checks on the researchers and publishers of the readings. The outlook was to ensure that the findings my study were both credible and reliable. Moreover, I used both the descriptive and exploratory data analysis techniques to scrutinize the sources I used to collect data. Under the descriptive technique, I analyzed the studies by cross-examining their various elements, such as research questions, hypothesis, and their findings. On the other hand, I utilized the explorative technique to find the association between the findings of the studies and the issue of video games addiction. Consequently, I was able to relate the studies with my hypothesis, hence understanding the causes and effects of video games on both the addicts and broader society.

**Literature Review**

According to the recent findings of a study posted on the Science Daily website, scientists have gathered and summarized researches that assess the impact of video games on people’ brains and conduct. Their study reveals that playing video games can alter certain parts of the brain regions, which are responsible for visuospatial skills and attention and enhance their efficiency. The researchers also assessed the researches that explored the regions of the brain associated with system of rewards, and how they are related to the addiction to these games. Researchers have discovered that structural and functional changes occur in the neural reward systems of the persons addicted to these games, in part through exposing to the cues of gaming. This condition prevents them from monitoring effectively their neural responses. Science Daily reports that these neural changes are similar to those seen in the other types of addictive disorders. However, the brain changes seen among the video games addicts do not always result to real-life alterations (Science Daily, 2017). However, video games are still new in the global society, thus the studies into their impact on the players are still in their infancy stages.

According to Klemm (2017), parents are very much mistaken if they think that kids are not hooked to video games. However, he says that it is hard to define a point when people become addicted to the games. However, there are some criteria, which parents and mental health providers can use to determine whether an individual can become addicted to these games. He says that the criteria include behavioral challenges, changes in mood, and the symptoms seen in persons addicted to drugs, like withdrawal symptoms. Klemm says that many kids spend a significant amount of their time glued in screens playing these games. These habits led to the development of the ReSTART program that provides the individuals addicted to these games with group and personal therapy. The program requires the participants to stay for between 45 and 90 days without engaging in these games. This viewpoint is driven by the belief that the major reason why the addiction to these games develops is the strong positive reinforcement, which comes as players develop prowess to them. Thus, the program seeks to find the alternative reinforcers, such as self-esteem. Consequently, the participants receive training in the life skills that they have neglected because of immersing themselves in gaming. This approach is driven by the organization’s principle, which encourages people to connect with their lives instead of their devices.

According to Griffith, Kuss & King (2012), the number of empirical studies that examine the different aspects of video games addiction have increased significantly over the past decade. They claim that some researchers do not believe that the addiction to video games exists. Consequently, they argue that the issue should be referred to as problematic or excessive use of video games instead of addiction. The viewpoint is supported by the fact that the first reports on video addiction appeared in the psychiatric and psychological literature for the first time in the 1980s despite the first commercial games being released in the early 1970s (Griffith, Kuss & King, 2012). The term video games addiction was coined by Soper and Miller, who based their arguments on the observations they had made on students as school counselors. They claimed that the addiction to the video games was like other behavioral addiction as it made individuals not to have interest in other activities and associated with the persons that were also addicted to these games. Groffith, Kuss, & King (2012) further reports that the addiction rates in the modern-day gamer stands between 1.7% and 10%. They also claim that male players have higher possibilities of being addicted to these games than the female gamers. However, researchers are yet to determine the severity and course of the addiction. This claim implies that psychologists are yet to determine the exact impact of the addiction to video games on people’s welfare. Therefore, this area needs additional research studies to determine the scope of the addictions to video gaming.

**The Findings of the Study**

The analysis of secondary sources revealed that the addiction to video games is caused by several factors. One of the causes is the reward that the players obtain from the games, which motivate them to play more. However, the rewards in these games are earned unlike in gambling where prizes are facilitated by luck. For instance, the video games have to utilize their intelligence and skills to move to the next level (Markey & Ferguson, 2017). At the same time, these rewards are in-game as individuals do not get any monetary gain for winning a particular game against the others. The pleasure that comes with emerging victorious in these games facilitates addiction as individuals continue to play them until they are unable to control themselves.

The other cause of the addiction to video games according to the sources I used for the study is mental disorders (Scutti, 2017). Persons who are emotionally and mentally unstable have high chances of becoming addicted to these games as they cannot control the pleasures that they obtain from them. They cannot tell when to stop playing them, a condition which compromises their well-being. Therefore, the psychiatrists who deal with the cases of video game addictions should conduct comprehensive analyses of their clients’ mental statuses before developing a treatment plan. The approach would enable them to determine if the addiction is brought about by mental disorders, hence managing the illness together with the addiction. This position is driven by the view that the addicts can manage their addictions if their psychological disorders are managed effectively.

The research also revealed that the addiction has adverse effects on people’s well-being. For instance, the correlation between academic performance and the addiction was negative, which shows that children who are addicted to these games cannot perform well in their studies. At the same time, the persons addicted to video gaming are unable to have sustainable interpersonal relationships, such as intimate partnerships and workplace relations (Zastrow, 2017). The games take much of their time, thereby denying them the social skills they need to have fulfilling interactions with the persons they encounter. Moreover, the games can lead to poor health due to physical inactivity. People play video games while seated, thus physically inactive. Therefore, the addicted individuals spend a lot of time indoors playing these games, a condition that denies them the opportunity to engage in physical activities, such as walking. Consequently they end up becoming overweight, thereby exposing themselves to several health problems.

**Discussion and Conclusion**

Addiction to video games is a serious social problem as it causes several problems to the addicts. It is caused by too much exposure to the games, which makes it difficult for the players to control the rewards and pleasure they derive from them. The condition is worsened by mental and emotional instability, which make it difficult for some gamers to manage their gaming behaviors. These findings provide psychologists with crucial details on how to manage the video games addiction conditions (Wittek, et al., 2016). Therefore, the study is likely to have immense benefits on the broader society as it would enable them to know how to prevent the cases of video games addiction and developing effective methods of managing its adverse effects. This is because the research would enable people to know the causes of the addiction to these games, thereby identifying ways to avoid becoming addicts. For example, parents will know how to regulate the time that their children spend on the video games to ensure they are not adversely affected. Thus, the study offers the global society with vital insights of dealing with the video games addiction challenge. In conclusion, it is evident that the research study has enhanced my understanding of the video addiction challenge. I now know the challenge exists and can have devastating effects on persons if not managed appropriately.

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