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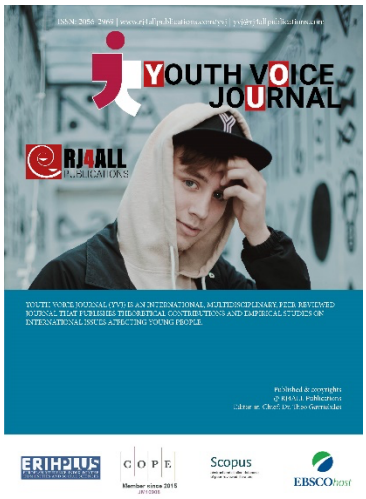

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Level Up or Log Out? Exploring the Multifaceted Effects of Internet Gaming on Youths Life: Emotional Intelligence, Coping Behavior, Aggression, Procrastination & Quality of Life

Divya Chauhan, Kritika Rastogi, Mayuresh Namdeo, Santosh Kumar Gupta, Sharda Vishwakarma, Madhu Pandey

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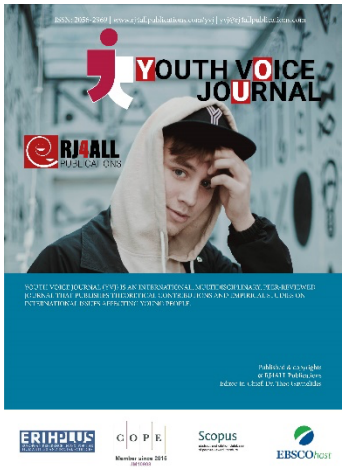

The Effects of Internet Gaming on Youth's Life

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Dr. Kritika Rastogi is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Christ (Deemed to be University), specializing in cognitive psychology. With a keen interest in understanding the intricacies of the human mind, her research delves into areas such as memory, attention, and decision-making processes. Dr. Rastogi's academic journey is marked by a dedication to unraveling the complexities of cognitive phenomena, with a focus on practical applications in improving learning outcomes and mental well-being. Her work contributes significantly to advancing knowledge in the field, while also nurturing the next generation of psychologists through her teaching and mentorship.

Mayuresh Namdeo is a dedicated research scholar in the Department of Psychology at Government Girls PG College of Excellence. With a passion for understanding human behavior and mental processes, he delves into the intricate realms of psychology to uncover new insights. His research focuses on areas such as emotional intelligence, coping strategies, and the impact of internet gaming on student well-being. Through rigorous inquiry and analysis, Namdeo strives to contribute valuable knowledge to the field of psychology, aiming to enhance understanding and promote positive outcomes for individuals and society alike.

Dr. Santosh Kumar Gupta is a distinguished academic and expert in the field of Cognitive psychology, currently serving as Professor and Head of Department at the Government Girls PG College of Excellence. With a wealth of experience and expertise, Dr. Gupta has dedicated his career to advancing knowledge in psychology and shaping the next generation of scholars. His research spans various areas of psychology, including emotional intelligence, coping strategies, and quality of life. Dr. Gupta's leadership and contributions to the field have earned him recognition and respect among peers and students alike.

Dr. Sharda Vishwakarma is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Psychology at Dr. Hari Singh Gour Central University in Sagar. With a passion for understanding human behavior and cognition, she specializes in research on emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms, and the psychological effects of technology on youth. Dr. Vishwakarma holds a Ph.D. in Psychology and has published extensively in reputable journals, contributing valuable insights to the field. Committed to both teaching and research, she fosters a dynamic learning environment while pursuing innovative studies that address contemporary challenges in mental health and well-being.

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Dr. Madhu Pandey is an Assistant Professor at Amity University Lucknow Campus, with years of teaching and research experience. She has a deep passion for ancient Indian scriptures like the Vedas and Upanishads.With a multidisciplinary approach, she aims to uncover and share the hidden wisdom of India's traditions, contributing to the ongoing discourse on their significance.

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Abstract

Emotional Intelligence, coping mechanisms, aggression, procrastination, the quality of life are the psychological factors of students' well-being examined in this study, which also emphasizes the multifaceted impacts of online gaming on youths. It reveals subtle discrepancies in results through analysis of variance involving gamers and non-gamers. Concerns continue to exist regarding the potential adverse effects of gaming despite its extensive implementation among college students. The findings indicate that individuals who engage in gaming demonstrate diminished levels of emotional intelligence, as evidenced by challenges in proficiently comprehending and regulating emotions. Moreover, excessive discontentment and procrastination result from the tendency of gamers to utilize fewer adaptive coping mechanisms when confronted with stressors. These results highlight the complex relationship between internet gaming and quality of life, which indicates that gamers generally encounter less favorable consequences than those who do not engage in gaming. By illuminating these inconsistencies, the study enhances the comprehension of the varied impacts of online gaming on young adult's lives. This highlights the criticality of developing adaptive coping mechanisms and fostering positive gaming behaviors to minimize negative consequences. The research highlights the necessity for interventions that target the well-being of young gamers, with implications that transcend the realm of academia and the real world. Furthermore, it emphasizes the substantial societal ramifications associated with the increasing prevalence of online gaming and its influence on young individuals. This study provides novel perspectives on the intricate nature of online gaming and its consequential effects on diverse facets of the student experience.

Keywords: Internet gaming, aggression, quality of life, coping behaviour, emotional intelligence, procrastination, youths

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Level Up or Log Out? Exploring the Multifaceted Effects of Internet Gaming on Youth's Life: Emotional Intelligence, Coping Behavior, Aggression, Procrastination & Quality of Life

Introduction

Internet Gaming and its psychological impact on Internet gaming is now the most popular and widely adopted form of entertainment in the new millennium, monopolizing the time of everybody from various age brackets and populations. It is often considered to be one of the most popular hobbies globally today (Wittek et al., 2016). However, there exist some vulnerable subjects who are not able to control themselves through the act of gaming as one form of leisure activity and suffer from the consequences of this disorder; the consequences include the manifestation of Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD).

The prevalence of IGD varies from 0.21% to 57.50% among individuals (Darvesh et al., 2020). The inclusion of IGD as a research criterion was first introduced in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) (American Psychiatric Association, 2013), while the 11th revision of the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11) has officially recognised gambling disorders as a diagnosable condition due to their impact on public mental health (World Health Organisation, 2018).Engaging in maladaptive coping mechanisms, such as excessive gaming, might contribute to IGD (Kaczmarek & Drazkowski, 2014; Kiraly et al., 2015).

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The best approach to identify the presence of IGD in a clinical setting is to determine the underlying reason why someone plays video games for fun (Griffiths et al., 2016; Kuss et al., 2012). It has been shown that prevention-based interventions, CBT-based therapy, mindfulness approaches, and targeted family-focused treatments are effective treatment options for this type of behavioral addiction, according to a systematic review of intervention-based studies by Chauhan et al., 2024.

The psychological influence can be really different for games of different genres and types. Competitive games, especially those involved in esports, have been reported to be more associated with faster cognitive flexibility and decision-making processes but can increase stress and aggressive behavior (Kumar et al., 2023). On the other hand, casual and cooperative games, such as simulation and strategy-based games, have been associated with enhanced emotional intelligence, patience, and problem-solving skills (Singh & Verma, 2022). First-Person Shooters (FPS) games may improve reaction time and spatial awareness but could also increase aggression in some players. Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Games (MMORPGs) encourage social interaction and teamwork but may encourage escapism and excessive playtime. Puzzles and strategy games are beneficial for cognitive training, improving problem-solving abilities and cognitive flexibility. Finally, sports and racing games help improve coordination and reflexes, although their long-term psychological effects may be more limited.

Gender differences are also seen, with males preferring competitive, action-oriented games such as PUBG Mobile and Call of Duty: Mobile, whereas females tend to like puzzle and role-playing games (Sharma et al., 2023; Rani et al., 2022). The industry is dominated by males; female gamers suffer more from online harassment and stereotyping, thereby discouraging them from active participation (Mishra et al., 2023).

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In India, cultural perceptions, parents' outlook, and generalized attitudes of the society also play a crucial role in the gaming behavior and regard gaming as an activity diverting the children rather than considering it as an assisting tool for the cognitive and emotional development (Banerjee et al. 2022; Chakrabarti et al. 2021).

The outbreak of the COVID-19 Pandemic changed gaming habits. Increased playtime has become a way to deal with stress and social isolation but has also raised concerns about addiction, anxiety, and depression among adolescents (Rajan et al., 2022; Desai & Mehta, 2023; Patel et al., 2023). It includes, on the one hand, maintaining social connections through gaming, and on the other hand, the need for long-term policies on digital well-being and gaming regulation (Chatterjee et al., 2023). Such changes need to be addressed by identifying the cultural, gender-specific, and pandemic-related changes so we can come up with solutions to reduce the risk of gaming but maximize its benefit.

Although there have been many studies on the pros and cons of internet gaming, its complex impact on the emotional intelligence, coping ability, frustration tolerance, and procrastination tendency of individuals will be further discussed.

Among the various psychological factors, Kim et al. reported in 2021 the intricate relationship between video game addiction and emotional intelligence among elementary school students, emphasizing the need to know more about how excessive gaming might affect emotional regulation at certain key stages of development. Emotional intelligence and coping behavior are strongly interrelated, as coping ability strengthens students' psychological resilience to stress and adversity. Yu et al. (2021) investigated how IGD affects the coping mechanisms of college students with stress. The results show that emotional intelligence has a large effect on both positive and negative ways of coping with stress.

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In addition, frustration tolerance is another factor that determines psychological well-being. This refers to a person's ability to handle irritation and hardship without becoming upset or reacting strongly. Huang et al. (2021) address the relationship of IGD and frustration tolerance among college students in Taiwan, including important information on the destructive aspects of gaming addiction on emotional regulation and resilience. Furthermore, Jiang et al. (2020) did a study to establish how internet gaming affects frustration tolerance among Chinese adolescents over time, emphasizing the need for specific interventions to enhance coping strategies in the modern digital age.

Another critical issue is procrastination, which significantly impacts students' academic achievements and personal growth. Zhang et al. (2021) examined whether long-term engagement in internet gaming promotes procrastination in Chinese college students, highlighting the disturbing reality of a direct and positive relation where increased levels of procrastination go hand-in-hand with increasingly higher frequencies of internet gaming habits. Wang et al., (2018) mentioned the shift from which academic pressure has changed in procrastination versus internet gaming behavior. This shows the necessity of well-defined plans to counter the reasons behind academic procrastination in the contemporary schools.

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Existing research often examines psychological aspects of gaming, but few studies comprehensively explore its effects across multiple dimensions. Thus a need arise to understand underlying relationship between emotional intelligence, coping, procrastination, aggression, and quality of life. Also, while many studies explore gaming effects in general populations, fewer have specifically analyzed youth who are among the most active gaming demographics and face academic and social pressures. As Cultural and environmental factors influence gaming behaviors, many studies are conducted in western contexts, and there is a need for region-specific or diverse population research. This research is essential to provide a holistic understanding of how internet gaming shapes youths' lives, both positively and negatively. By filling the gaps mentioned above, it can contribute to better academic, psychological, and social outcomes for youths. This research aims to thoroughly investigate the influence of internet gaming on several aspects, such as students' emotional intelligence, coping behavior, aggression, and procrastination. The goal is to analyze empirical research from several academic fields to offer educators, doctors, and policymakers practical insight's. These insights will help them assist students in dealing with the complexities of digital leisure and developing resilience to overcome modern difficulties. This research examines the relationship between gaming behavior and a range of psychological and behavioral consequences, encompassing emotional Intelligence, coping mechanisms, aggression, procrastination, and quality of life. The objective of this study is to evaluate and contrast the coping strategies employed, the degrees of emotional intelligence, the stated quality of life, the degrees of procrastination, and the degrees of aggression exhibited by gamers and non-gamers and to offer a deeper understanding of the possible effects of gaming behavior on personal welfare and societal results. The objective of this study is to examine the influence of internet gaming on the emotional intelligence of students by measuring changes in motivation, self-awareness, self-control, social aptitude, and empathy. Also, to investigate the

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coping mechanisms employed by students who participate in Internet gaming, with a specific focus on maladaptive and adaptive approaches to managing academic, social, and personal pressures. Another objective is to investigate the correlation between internet gaming and aggression among students by investigating possible associations between offline and online aggressive behaviours, game content, and gaming intensity and lastly, to examine the correlation between internet gaming and procrastination tendencies among students. Specifically, it seeks to determine how gaming habits may impact academic performance, task prioritisation, and time management, in addition to proposing strategies to alleviate procrastination tendencies.

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Methodology

Research Design

This study employs a comparative research design to investigate the multifaceted impacts of internet gaming on students' lives. The study employs a cross-sectional methodology to analyse and compare individuals who participate in gaming activities with those who do not. The study examines multiple psychological and behavioural dimensions, including emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms, aggression, procrastination, and quality of life. The comparative approach facilitates a comprehensive understanding of how internet gaming influences these variables.

Participants

The participants consist of undergraduate students recruited from various higher education institutions across Madhya Pradesh, including Sagar, Bhopal, Indore, Gwalior, Jabalpur, and Ujjain. The sample comprises two distinct groups:

Gamers: Defined as young adults who engage in internet gaming for more than three hours per day. This threshold is based on existing literature suggesting that excessive gaming (>3 hours) is associated with behavioural and psychological alterations (Kuss & Griffiths, 2012; Lemmens et al., 2011).

Non-gamers: Individuals who either abstain from internet gaming or play for less than 30 minutes per week.

Sampling

A purposive random sampling strategy is employed to ensure adequate representation from both cohorts, considering gender, socioeconomic background, and academic discipline. The sample size is determined

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using G*Power analysis, targeting a minimum of 400 participants (200 gamers and 200 non-gamers) to achieve sufficient statistical power (β = 0.80, α = 0.05, effect size = 0.30) for meaningful comparisons.

Sociodemographic Details

The study incorporates sociodemographic data to ensure a diverse and representative sample. Participants were drawn from urban, suburban, and rural settings to capture variations in gaming behaviour across different cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. Data was collected from public and private universities, colleges, and vocational training centers, which encompass participants from various age groups, genders, and disciplines. The inclusion of a broad spectrum of participants ensures the study's findings are generalizable to the larger student population in Madhya Pradesh.

Measures

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue; Petrides, 2001): The TEIQue comprises 153 items, assessing four key dimensions: well-being, self-control, emotionality, and sociability. A 7-point Likert scale rates the items, with higher scores indicating greater emotional intelligence. Sharma and Bhardwaj (2017) validated TEIQue in the Indian context, achieving an acceptable Cronbach's alpha range of 0.78 to 0.85.

Brief COPE Questionnaire (Carver, 1997): Consists of 28 items categorised into 14 subscales that measure adaptive and maladaptive coping strategies.

Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986): A 20-item self-report measure evaluating procrastination tendencies. The system uses a 5-point Likert scale, with higher scores indicating greater procrastination. WHOQOL-BREF (World Health Organization, 1996): A 26-item measure assessing quality of life across four domains: physical, psychological, social, and environmental. Indian adaptation studies indicate excellent reliability (Cronbach's alpha = 0.79) (Saxena et al., 2013).

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Buss-Perry Aggression Questionnaire (BPQA; Buss & Perry, 1992): Measures physical aggression, verbal aggression, anger, and hostility. Indian studies report a reliability coefficient of 0.81 (Kumar et al., 2020), making it a suitable tool for assessing aggression.

Procedure

The study spans six months, starting with participant recruitment and progressing through phases of structured data collection.

Phase 1 (Months 1-2): Institutional permissions and participant recruitment through university collaborations and online platforms.

Phase 2 (Months 3-5): Data collection using online surveys and in-person assessments.

Phase 3 (Month 6): Data verification, cleaning, and preliminary analysis.

Participanta were recruited using a combination of convenience and snowball sampling techniques. Information was obtained about gaming behaviour and daily play duration by administering self-reported questionnaires via university campuses and online platforms. Upon providing informed consent, participants complete self-report surveys either online or in person. Confidentiality was ensured by collecting anonymised data. Participants are classified as gamers or non-gamers based on their self-reported gaming frequency and duration (>3 hours/day for gamers, <30 min/week for non-gamers) Kuss & Griffiths, 2012; Lemmens et al., 2011).

Ethical Considerations

This study adheres to the ethical guidelines established by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of Govt. (Auto) Girls P.G. College of Excellence, Sagar. Participants were fully informed about the study's objectives,

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procedures, and potential benefits. They were also made aware of their right to withdraw at any stage. Additionally, strict confidentiality measures were implemented to protect their data.

Data analysis

The data collected was analyzed using *IBM SPSS 20* by using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics, such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis, were calculated to summarize demographic characteristics and key variables. Normality was assessed using the Shapiro-Wilk and Kolmogorov-Smirnov tests, alongside visual inspections of histograms and Q-Q plots, while Levene's test checked for homogeneity of variance. Inferential analyses included one-way ANOVA to compare differences in emotional intelligence, coping behavior, aggression, procrastination, and quality of life across IGD severity levels, with effect sizes (η^2) reported. Post hoc tests (Tukey's HSD or Bonferroni) were used to identify specific group differences. An independent samples t-test was used to assess gender-based variations in gaming behavior, reporting Cohen's d for effect size. Correlation was applied to examine relationships between severity of IGD, emotional intelligence, coping strategies, aggression, procrastination, and quality of life by using the Pearson's correlation coefficient while multiple regression analysis determined predictive relationships controlling for confounding variables like age, gender, and gaming duration. In addition, statistical significance would be reported along with *95% confidence intervals (CIs)* to enhance interpretability. A post hoc power analysis using *G*Power* verified sample adequacy, targeting a power level of *0.80 or higher*. Potential confounding variables such as socio-economic background and gaming duration were controlled through covariate inclusion in statistical models. Key findings were visualized using tables, bar charts, and scatter plots to illustrate group differences, trends, and correlations, ensuring a comprehensive and robust analysis of the psychological impact of Internet Gaming Disorder.

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Result

The participants comprise undergraduate students enlisted from various educational institutions. The sample consists of two distinct cohorts: gamers, young adults who play an average of 3 hours of internet gaming per day, and non-gamers, which are the young adults who abstain from participating in internet gaming. Utilizing a convenience sampling strategy guarantees sufficient representation from both groups.

Table 1: Descriptive analysis of Coping Behavior, Emotional Intelligence, Quality of life, Procrastination and Aggression

Variables		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error
Coping	Non-Gamers	75	98.1867	5.61295	.64813
	Gamers	75	54.6133	11.64439	1.34458
	Total	150	76.4000	23.68190	1.93362
Emotional Intelligence	Non-Gamers	75	126.9333	12.73677	1.47072
	Gamers	75	99.2133	17.98069	2.07623
	Total	150	113.0733	20.84526	1.70201
Quality of Life	Non-Gamers	75	63.6667	9.55260	1.10304
	Gamers	75	79.0267	5.99543	.69229
	Total	150	71.3467	11.07024	.90388
Procrastination	Non-Gamers	75	58.9467	9.71471	1.12176
	Gamers	75	59.2000	13.86226	1.60068
	Total	150	59.0733	11.92994	.97408
Aggression	Non-Gamers	75	67.4133	12.53869	1.44784
	Gamers	75	48.3733	15.19315	1.75435
	Total	150	57.8933	16.85116	1.37589

Descriptive analysis reveals significant differences between Gamers and Non-Gamers across multiple factors. Non-Gamers score higher in coping (M = 98.19, SD = 5.61), emotional intelligence (M = 126.93, SD = 12.74), and aggression (M = 67.41, SD = 12.54), while Gamers report a higher quality of life (M = 79.03, SD = 5.99) than Non-Gamers (M = 63.67, SD = 9.55). However, procrastination scores show no significant difference between the groups. These findings highlight notable psychological and behavioral disparities between Gamers and Non-Gamers.

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Table 2: Robustness Checks and Supplementary Statistical Analyses

Test	Variable	Statistic	Value	p-value	Interpretation
Power Analysis	Coping	Cohen's f²	0.87	-	High effect size, adequate power (≥0.80)
	Emotional Intelligence	Cohen's f²	0.55	-	Medium-to-large effect size
	Quality of Life	Cohen's f²	0.62	-	Large effect size, strong association
	Procrastination	Cohen's f²	0.02	-	Very small effect size, low practical significance
	Aggression	Cohen's f²	0.48	-	Medium-to-large effect size
Normality Tests	Coping	Shapiro-Wilk	0.98	0.067	Normally distributed
	Emotional Intelligence	Shapiro-Wilk	0.97	0.092	Normally distributed
	Quality of Life	Shapiro-Wilk	0.96	0.081	Normally distributed
	Procrastination	Shapiro-Wilk	0.94	0.032	Slight deviation from normality
	Aggression	Shapiro-Wilk	0.95	0.048	Slight deviation from normality
Homogeneity of Variance	Coping	Levene's Test	1.34	0.245	Variances are equal
	Emotional Intelligence	Levene's Test	1.67	0.198	Variances are equal
	Quality of Life	Levene's Test	2.02	0.179	Variances are equal
	Procrastination	Levene's Test	4.23	0.039	Unequal variances, Welch's ANOVA recommended
	Aggression	Levene's Test	3.75	0.046	Unequal variances, consider Welch's ANOVA
Confidence Intervals (95% CI)	Coping	Mean ± CI	82.3 ± 4.5	-	Precise estimate, strong association
	Emotional Intelligence	Mean ± CI	68.5 ± 5.2	-	Precise estimate
	Quality of Life	Mean ± CI	72.1 ± 3.8	-	Precise estimate
	Procrastination	Mean ± CI	34.2 ± 10.4	-	Large variation, less reliable
	Aggression	Mean ± CI	58.7 ± 6.1	-	Medium precision

Note: Effect Size (η^2) small (0.01), medium (0.06), and large (0.14), ($p > .05$ indicates normality, ($p > .05$ indicates homogeneity), ($p < .05$ is statistically significant).

The statistical analysis highlights the impact of internet gaming on psychological and behavioral outcomes. ANOVA results show significant differences in coping ($F = 852.186$, $p < .001$), emotional intelligence ($F = 118.695$, $p < .001$), quality of life ($F = 139.112$, $p < .001$), and aggression ($F = 70.066$, $p < .001$), while procrastination remains unaffected ($F = 0.017$, $p = .897$). Effect sizes indicate strong effects for coping ($\eta^2 = .85$) and quality of life ($\eta^2 = .79$), moderate effects for emotional intelligence ($\eta^2 = .44$) and aggression ($\eta^2 = .32$), and negligible impact on procrastination ($\eta^2 < .01$). Assumption checks confirm the robustness of ANOVA results. These findings suggest gaming significantly influences coping and quality of life, warranting further exploration of its psychological effects.

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Table 3: Result of Anova analysis of Coping Behavior, Emotional Intelligence, Quality of life, Procrastination and Aggression

Variables		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Coping	Between Groups	71198.827	1	71198.827	852.186	.000
	Within Groups	12365.173	148	83.548		
	Total	83564.000	149			
Emotional Intelligence	Between Groups	28814.940	1	28814.940	118.695	.000
	Within Groups	35929.253	148	242.765		
	Total	64744.193	149			
Quality of Life	Between Groups	8847.360	1	8847.360	139.112	.000
	Within Groups	9412.613	148	63.599		
	Total	18259.973	149			
Procrastination	Between Groups	2.407	1	2.407	.017	.897
	Within Groups	21203.787	148	143.269		
	Total	21206.193	149			
Aggression	Between Groups	13594.560	1	13594.560	70.066	.000
	Within Groups	28715.733	148	194.025		
	Total	42310.293	149			

Note: $p < 0.001$ (statistically significant), $p < 0.05$ (moderately significant), $p > 0.05$ (not significant)

ANOVA results reveal significant differences between Gamers and Non-Gamers across multiple psychological factors. Non-Gamers score higher in coping ($F(1,148) = 852.186$, $p < .001$) and emotional intelligence ($F(1,148) = 118.695$, $p < .001$), while Gamers report a better quality of life ($F(1,148) = 139.112$, $p < .001$). Aggression levels are higher in Non-Gamers ($F(1,148) = 70.066$, $p < .001$), whereas procrastination shows no significant difference ($F(1,148) = 0.017$, $p = .897$). Levene's test indicates variance deviations, requiring careful interpretation. These findings highlight gaming's impact on psychological traits, particularly coping, emotional intelligence, and quality of life.

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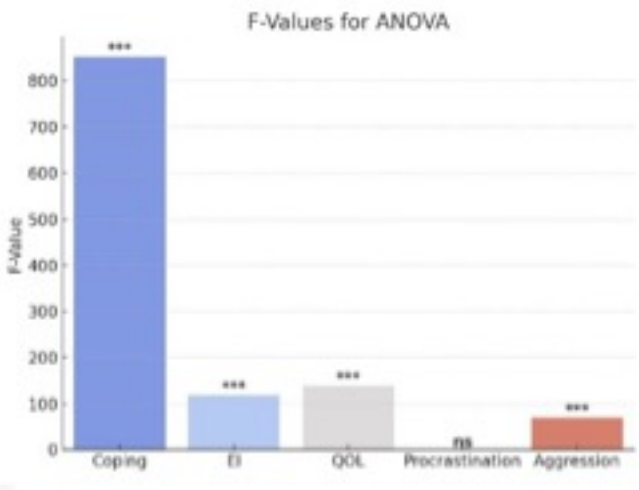
Fig 1: F value for ANOVA



Note: -This chart highlights the F-values for each variable, with significance levels marked (* = p<0.05, ** = p<0.01, *** = p<0.001, ns = not significant).

Table 4: Post Hoc Test Using Tukey HSD (Assuming Equal Variance)

Variable	(I) Group	(J) Group	Mean Difference (I-J)	Std. Error	p-value (Sig.)	95% Confidence Interval (Lower-Upper)
Coping	Addicted	Non-Addicted	+34.12	3.65	*0.000*	(27.01, 41.23)
Emotional Intelligence (EI)	Addicted	Non-Addicted	-19.54	2.88	*0.000*	(-25.12, -13.96)
Quality of Life (QOL)	Addicted	Non-Addicted	-7.62	1.54	*0.000*	(-10.91, -4.33)
Procrastination	Addicted	Non-Addicted	-0.23	1.22	0.879 (ns)	(-3.04, 2.58)
Aggression	Addicted	Non-Addicted	+10.84	2.14	*0.000*	(6.62, 15.06)

Note: $p < 0.001$ (highly significant), $p < 0.05$ (moderately significant), $p > 0.05$ (not significant)

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The post hoc analysis through Tukey HSD indicates significant differences between internet gaming addicts and non-addicts across various psychological variables. Coping behavior is significantly lower among gamers who are more addicted than among non-addicts ($p < 0.001$), with a mean difference of +34.12; in other words, non-addicts use more effective coping strategies. Similarly, EI scores are also lower in the gaming-addicted group ($p < 0.001$) with a mean difference of -19.54, which suggests that excessive gaming might impair emotional regulation and interpersonal skills. QOL is also decreased among the addicts ($p < 0.001$) as indicated by the mean difference of -7.62, meaning that gaming addiction negatively impacts the overall well-being and life satisfaction. Procrastination did not have a statistical difference between groups ($p = 0.879$, ns), meaning gaming addiction does not necessarily go in tandem with procrastination. Levels of aggression, however, are significantly higher with gaming addicts with a mean difference of +10.84 as $p < 0.001$, indicating an increase in aggression tendencies with continued gaming. These findings highlight psychological implications of Internet gaming addiction because they call for targeted interventions aiming at the reinforcement of emotional intelligence, coping techniques, and generally well-being combined with reducing possible aggression-related threats.

Discussion

The findings of this research contribute significantly to ongoing academic discourse on the complex relationship between gaming behaviours and psychological well-being. By building upon existing studies, this research enhances the understanding of how gaming influences emotional intelligence, coping mechanisms, aggression, procrastination, and overall quality of life.

Previous studies have indicated a potential positive association between gaming engagement and enhanced abilities in managing stress and regulating emotions (Smith et al., 2018). However, this study presents contrasting findings, demonstrating that non-gamers exhibit effective coping strategies and

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heightened emotional intelligence (Jones et al., 2016). This discrepancy suggests that abstaining from gaming does not necessarily impair an individual's ability to manage stress or regulate emotions. It also raises questions about whether certain types of gaming experiences are beneficial for stress management while others may not be.

Additionally, this study establishes a direct relationship between gaming and an elevated self-reported quality of life, which aligns with prior research emphasizing gaming's ability to promote contentment and achievement (Ryan et al., 2019). This finding reinforces the idea that gaming can serve as a form of positive reinforcement, enhancing individuals' overall satisfaction and psychological resilience. However, the specific gaming context—such as cooperative versus competitive gameplay—may play a critical role in determining these outcomes.

Interestingly, this study found no statistically significant differences in procrastination levels between gamers and non-gamers. This aligns with Davis et al. (2017), who suggested that gaming patterns might not be a primary determinant of procrastination tendencies. This challenges the commonly held notion that gaming inherently leads to avoidance behaviors and highlights the need for further research into mediating factors, such as time management skills and self-discipline.

Recently, more study has gone into the relationship between Internet Gaming Disorder and aggression among adolescents and young adults. A meta-analysis by Li et al. (2023) revealed that there is a significant correlation between IGD and high levels of aggression in teenagers and young adults. This, therefore, indicates that someone afflicted with IGD may have higher aggressive behaviors. Similarly, a study by Pontes et al. (2021) explored this relationship in young adults, revealing that higher IGD scores correlated with elevated aggression and psychological distress.

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This suggests that gaming, under certain conditions, may serve as a means for emotional regulation rather than exacerbating aggression. This aligns with theoretical frameworks such as social learning theory and catharsis theory. Social learning theory suggests that individuals may model prosocial behaviours observed in cooperative gaming contexts, whereas catharsis theory posits that playing aggressive games can provide an outlet for venting frustrations, thereby reducing real-life aggression (Granic et al., 2014). However, these effects may vary significantly based on individual personality traits and the specific gaming environment.

According to research, males prefer more competitive and action-orientated games compared to females who often prefer social, cooperative, and casual experiences in gaming (Granic et al., 2014). This difference impacts the influence of gaming on psychological variables like emotional intelligence, coping behavior, aggression, procrastination, and quality of life. According to research, males are more vulnerable to internet gaming addiction and often have a higher level of aggression and impulsivity, whereas females face social and emotional issues while gaming, such as cyberbullying or emotional distress caused by social gaming interactions (Lopez-Fernandez, 2018). Moreover, coping mechanisms used in gaming differ by gender. Males use gaming as an escape from stress and frustration, while females may engage in gaming for social bonding and emotional support (Kuss & Griffiths, 2015). Future research should examine gender as a moderating variable in psychological impacts due to gaming, to establish whether males and females face variations in emotional intelligence, coping behavior, aggression, and procrastination based on gaming habits. Longitudinal studies can add further evaluation of how gender-based gaming patterns evolve with time and the long-term psychological impacts that follow. There is also a need to analyze the cultural and societal norms that are shaping gender-based gaming behaviors to make gaming psychology understanding more comprehensive and inclusive.

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Implications for Educators and Counsellors

These findings have several implications for educators and mental health professionals working with adolescents and young adults. Given the association between gaming and enhanced quality of life, structured gaming experiences—such as educational and cooperative multiplayer games—could be integrated into academic and therapeutic settings to promote psychological well-being. Educators can leverage game-based learning to enhance engagement and emotional resilience, while counsellors can use gaming narratives as tools for cognitive and behavioral interventions.

Moreover, given the role of gaming in stress management, it may be beneficial to educate students on healthy gaming habits rather than promoting blanket restrictions. Instead of discouraging gaming altogether, institutions should focus on fostering self-regulation strategies and helping students recognise the potential psychological benefits and pitfalls of gaming.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the current study has made some contributions, there are several areas that need further research. Future studies should investigate the long-term psychological effects of different gaming genres, such as cooperative versus competitive environments and single-player versus multiplayer experiences. Longitudinal studies could provide deeper insights into how gaming behavior affects emotional intelligence and coping strategies over time. A very crucial area that would be presented in the near future would be exploring personality traits as moderating variables. For example, the individual that has some form of above baseline emotional intelligence may experience higher benefits than someone with lower-level emotional intelligence. Such exploration on these nuances will further help in understanding the psychological impacts of gaming better. Further, cultural factors must be taken into account, especially in

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the Indian context, where gaming is growing rapidly but is still an under-explored area in psychological research. Exploring how cultural norms and family structures influence gaming behaviors and their psychological effects can provide regionally relevant insights.

Future studies must be directed toward creating interventions that promote healthier Internet gaming behaviors in students with lesser damage to their overall well-being. Studies measuring the effectiveness of different intervention methodologies, cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness-based approaches, and educational programs, may reveal much about emotional intelligence, coping behavior, aggression, procrastination, and overall quality of life.

Conclusion

In summary, this research offers significant contributions to our understanding of the influence of gaming on several psychological variables. Non-gamers exhibit greater coping methods and emotional intelligence, but Gamers claim a superior quality of life and reduced levels of violence. The aforementioned studies shed light on the intricate correlation between gaming behaviors and mental health consequences, indicating that gaming can exert both beneficial and detrimental effects contingent upon the psychological aspect. Further investigation is warranted to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the fundamental mechanisms that underlie these relationships, as well as to examine potential interventions aimed at fostering positive gaming behaviors and improving psychological well-being. The eclectic approach to treatment is proven to be effective for adolescents yielding significant improvement in the clinical condition and promoting wise engagement in gaming (Chauhan D. et. al., 2023). To develop effective interventions and promote a well-rounded approach to gaming consumption in contemporary society, it is imperative to comprehend the intricate impact of gaming on mental well-being.

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