

Gaming Habits Among Youth During and Post Lockdown Period: A Study

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Abstract-- Uncertainty pervades our surroundings, especially in the current times. Whether it concerns their future academic and career prospects, the economy, and their health during the global pandemic. Yet as human beings, we crave security. This ambiguity over the consequences of lockdown besides the other concerns, makes the youth vulnerable to stress and boredom during the pandemic. Gaming in the digital platform has been identified as an effective way to cope, it has become a leisure activity among the youth. Increased outdoor restrictions, occupational disruptions, and more leisure time have led to a wide scope of gaming during COVID-19. The objective of the current study is to determine gaming habits among youth from March 2020 onwards until post-lockdown. So, during a pandemic, studies have indicated that psychiatric disorders and lockdown boredom have been the major reasons leading to online gaming. The study also depicts that most of the youth spend limited time on gaming and this shows that they are not addicted to online gaming and more than 31% of the youth play sports and adventurous games.

Keywords: Online-Gaming, Pandemic, Lockdown-boredom, addiction, stress, digital platform.

Introduction

As internet usage has steadily increased, various electronic gadgets have made an enormous impact on the gaming habits of the youth. The COVID-19 pandemic has brought about extensive changes to our daily lives, with lockdown restrictions profoundly shaping our work lives, and social lives and also causing a wide range of emotional breakdowns. It has also led to mental health issues ranging from stress, anger, anxiety and emotional exhaustion to depression. In such a situation, online gaming was a great motivation for most of them to overcome the implications of the global pandemic. On opening of educational institutions or workplaces, children and adolescents would find it difficult to cope with the educational responsibilities and youngsters with their work responsibilities leading to decreased productivity, but still, covid-19 could be brought under control with co-ordinated efforts. Gaming has

been reported as a new way to satisfy basic human needs with the constraints of the current modern society. Moreover, in a period of social distancing strategies and limited opportunities face-to-face for organised activities, online gaming became increasingly important to young people, both for entertainment purposes and as a valuable arena to stay socially connected. The balance between young people's screen-based activities and physical activity involvement was a public health concern before COVID-19, but during and post-pandemic, nevertheless, limited sports opportunities, restricted recreational facilities and no travel time during school closure affected this relationship in many of them. But though gaming had a positive impact on most of the youth, the study also depicts that a significant proportion of the youth engaged in gaming habits excessively. Besides entertainment, few of them were pushed into binge gaming because they were in a perspective to gain social acceptance that fulfils the psychological aspects, of their achievements, for some, extreme engagement in gaming was found to be strongly associated with poor academic performance and missing good career opportunities.

Literature Review

- Pawan Sharma, Swarnadeep Singh and Yatan Pal Singh Balhara (2021) conducted a study titled- "The Impact of Lockdown on the Online Interest for Digital Gaming in India". They concluded that participating in social online play is associated with smaller and of lesser quality offline social circles with an overall negative impact on the social health of a significant proportion of heavy gamers.
- Yatan Pal, Dheeraj Kattula, Swarnadeep Singh, and Surekha Chukkali (June 2020) studied the effect of lockdown in their paper titled," The Implications of the COVID-19 Lockdown on Players' Behaviour of the College Students. "The study observed that during the subsequent closure of the COVID-19 pandemic, the surge in gaming habits was associated with examination pressure and their belief that gaming helps combat stress. These observations highlighted the need to focus on the coping style of the students to ascertain the likelihood of them engaging in gaming behaviour as a coping mechanism against stress.
- Maria Anna Donati, Cristiana Guido, and Alberto Spalice (June 2021) in their research on, "Gaming Habits among Youngsters and Adolescents Amid the COVID-19 Lockdown and the Parental Role in Video Game and Gaming Disorder Time Spent." This research had two objectives: first, it aimed to analyse video gaming behaviour in young people and teenagers during the pandemic and related lockdown and also used this time to research the role that parents play.
- Matthew Barr and Alicia Stewart (May 2021) in their research on "The influence of video gaming amid the global pandemic and effects on players well-being. Research indicates that engaging in video

games has positively impacted individuals' well-being amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. These games have served as a source of enjoyment for maintaining social connections and have offered a means of stress relief and mental stimulation, serving as an escape from the constraints of lockdown measures.

- Emma Claesdotter, Frida Andre and Andres Hakansson (January 2022) in their study titled, “Gaming Behaviour among the Youngsters during the Covid-19.” The study observed and reported changes in the gaming activity, they found significant differences in ages, work status, income available, and amount of time spent at school and psychological distress and also said that issues related to gambling and gaming. And the reports depicted that during the global pandemic, there was a greater possibility of players to be between 16- to 39-year-olds.

- Kritika Premnath Amin, Mark D, Deena Dimple Dsouza and Griffiths (June 2020) worked on a study titled, “Online Gaming during Covid-19 Pandemic in India: Strategies for work-life balance”. Studies suggest that the majority of gaming involvement yields positive outcomes, with potential benefits spanning educational, physical, and therapeutic domains.

Objectives

- To study the Gaming Habits of Youth during and after the lockdown
- To identify and analyse the positive and negative impact and the consequences of gaming behaviour among the youth
- To examine the various factors leading youth to enter into gaming habits during the lockdown

Research Methods

The primary data required for the study was collected through a structured questionnaire. A total of 160 responses were collected through convenient sampling techniques. Only 104 responses out of 160 were suitable for the study. The secondary data was collected from sources like trusted websites, journals, and research articles.

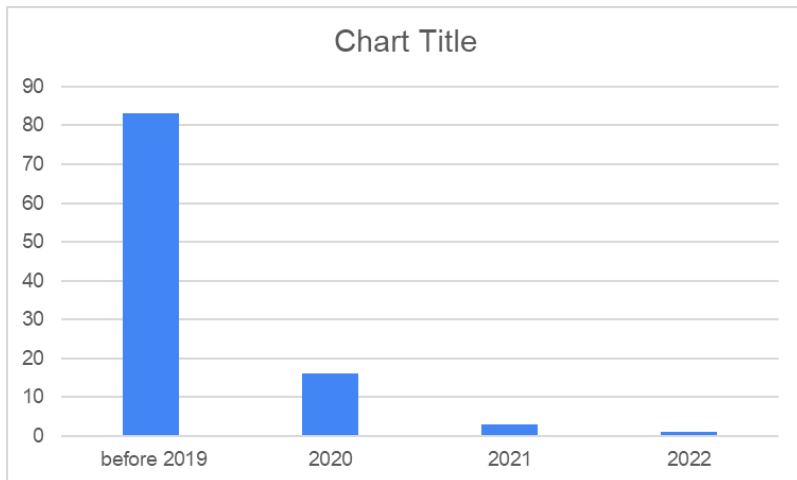
Analysis and Interpretation:

The observations from the sample are tabulated as:

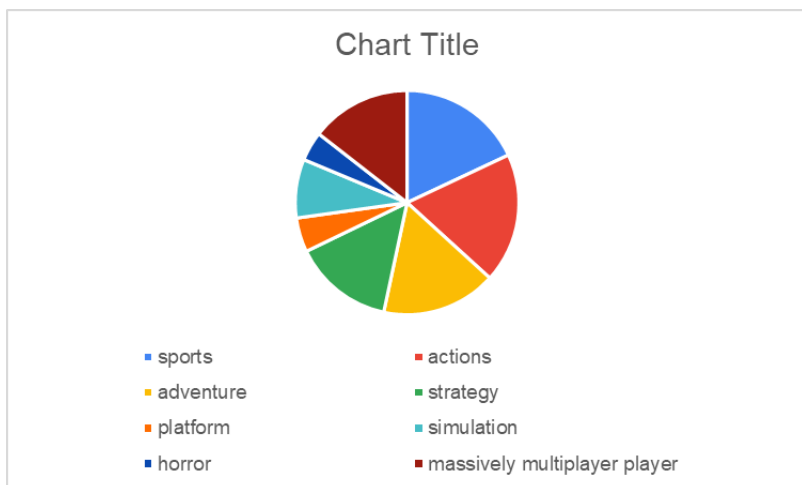
Basis of Analysis	Interpretation
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of 104 responses collected (56%) were from the age group of 18-21
Gender	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of the 104 responses collected, 52.8% are female and 40.5% are male
Occupation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> From the data collected through the questionnaire, (91.8%) of the students are into online gaming and part-time employees and self-employed constitute 8.2%.
Do they play games?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Out of 160 total responses collected, (65.2%) i.e. 104 of the youth do play online games
When did they start gaming?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The study has observed that most of the youth started gaming before 2019 and (15%) of them started during the lockdown period
What genre of games do the youth play?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to the observations of the study, (51.5%) of them are into “Action games” and (49.5%) of them are into “Sports games” and other few are into various other genres of games
How many hours do youth spend playing online games?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As per the observations of the study, (53%) of them spend 1 hour and (37.9%) of them spend more than an hour playing online games
Advantages of online-gaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysing situations and thinking ability have been recognized as the most advantageous factors of playing online games
Negative impact of playing online games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Distractions and addiction to online games have been recognized as negative aspects

Source: Primary data collected through a questionnaire

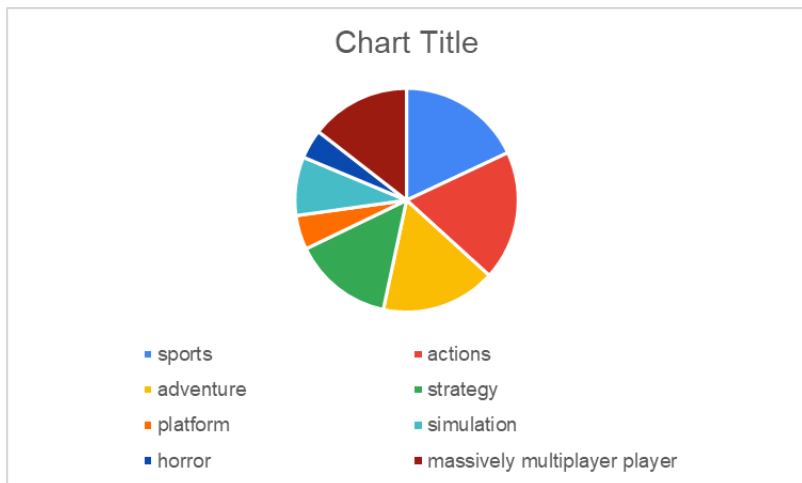
Count of years when youth started gaming



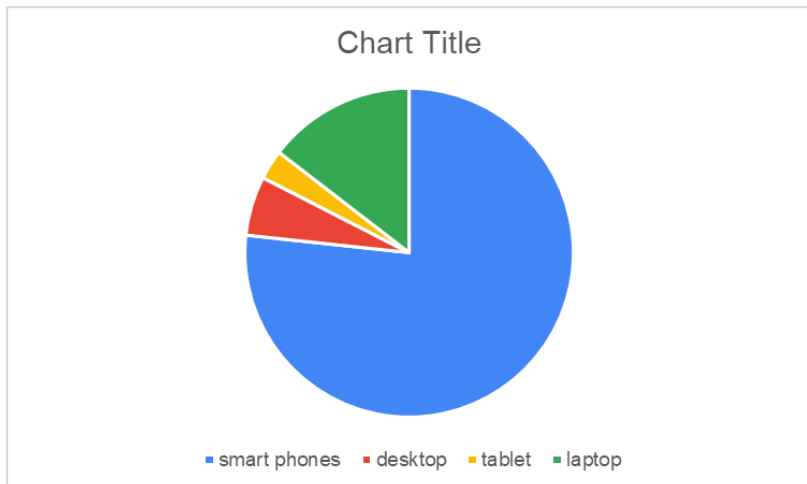
Count of the Genre of games played by youth



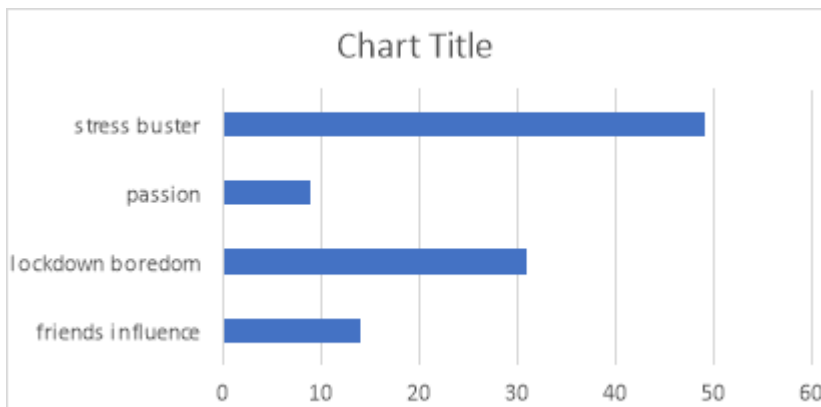
Count of the Genre of games played by youth



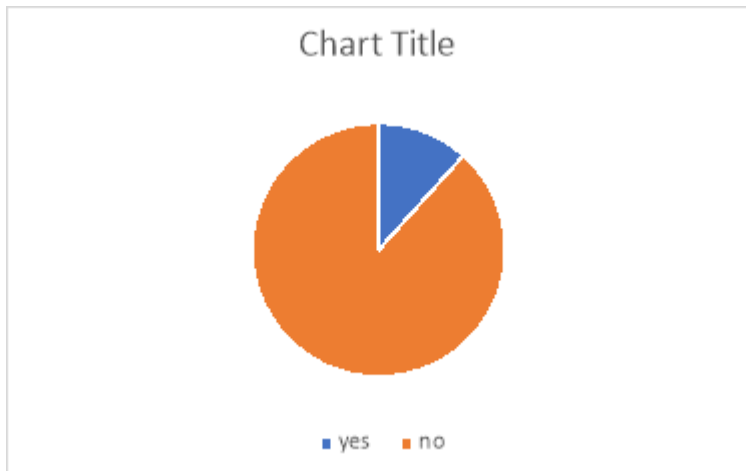
Count of devices used for playing



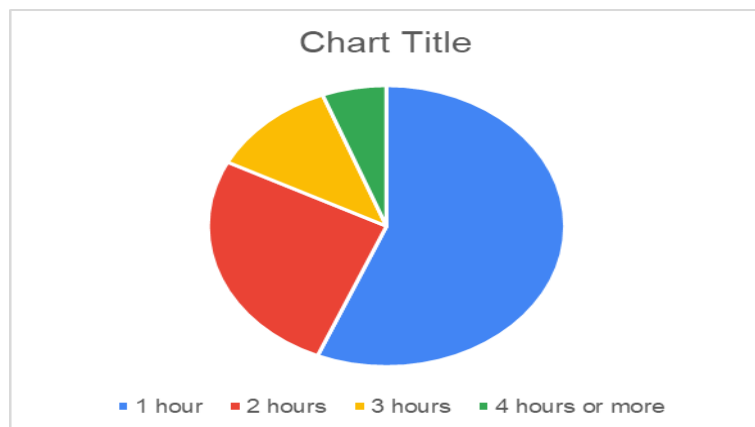
Count of reasons for starting gaming



Count of people willing to pay for gaming



Count of number of hours spent by youth on online gaming



The Chi-Square Test was used to study the demographic variables

Relationship between gender and gaming:

calculated value	0.00001711
tabulated value	3.841

The calculated value is less than the tabulated value. So, we accept that there is an association between gender and playing games.

Relationship between age and gaming:

Calculated value	0.19210957
Tabulated value	7.815

The calculated value is less than the tabulated value. So, we accept that there is an association between age and playing games.

Findings

In the survey conducted for the research, among the respondents, 56% of them were from the age group 18-21 and 32.1% of them were from the age group 15-18. As per the observations of the survey, students were most occupied in online- gaming, lockdown- boredom and beating stress have been recognized as the major reasons for playing games.

In such an uncertain situation, online gaming has been described as a coping mechanism for most of the youth. Most of them spend 6-7 hours per week and smartphones are the most frequently used devices to play. As per the responses collected among the youth, analysing the situation and thinking ability have

been recognized as the positive effects of playing online games, nevertheless, every aspect has a negative impact. In this aspect, distraction and addiction are the major concerns. The above are the major observations made in the research and 10-15 % of youth continue playing online games even today.

Limitations

The Research is limited to youth and the survey is conducted in the Southern region of the country.

Conclusion

The current study observed the changes in the gaming habits of youth during and post-lockdown period. About half of the participants of the survey projected an upsurge in gaming behaviour to combat stress and depression problems and to pass their leisure time during the pandemic. These results emphasize the importance of focusing on the students' strategies for coping to determine their gaming habits as an adaptive response. We can conclude by saying that “Uncertainty is a part of life; it can’t be avoided. The best way to deal with it is to learn techniques that help you live with it, without accompanying worries.

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