

Mental Health and Gaming Addiction among Youth: A Case Study of Lagos, Nigeria

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Abstract: Over 105 million gamers suffer from game addiction. Research indicates a connection between gaming addiction and mental health. Gaming is popular among young people, and they have been observed to engage in it excessively, negatively impacting their mental health. However, there is a dearth of data on gaming addiction and the mental health of youth in Sub-Saharan Africa. This study examines the effects of gaming addiction on the mental health of Lagos youths via an online survey. The study's findings revealed that some are aware of the associated risks of enjoying video games. Furthermore, respondents believe that gaming addiction is caused by depression, loneliness, a lack of focus on other positive activities, video game design, the near-reality nature of video games, and the manipulative nature of the games. The study concludes that beyond the feel-good pleasure of playing video games, addiction is escalating and negatively impacting mental health. The study recommends that youths be adequately educated on the dangers of excessive gaming, the impact of addiction and the adverse effects on mental capacity. Youths should be supervised in their gaming activities, particularly censoring violent games which promote other addictions and aggressive behaviours. Future research can track statistics of game addictions across the nation, mainly because of improving mental health stability.

Keywords: Gaming Effects, Gaming Addiction, Mental Health, Youths, Video Games, Lagos.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The ubiquity of the internet and new technologies has facilitated many countries seeing a rapid paradigm change in technical development and digitalization, making various content accessible online and offline. This digital explosion has advanced many interactive platforms, like video games, with numerous sound effects in nearly all facets of life. As a result, there has been an increase in the number of young people in Sub-Saharan Africa who are exposed to gaming on online and offline interactive platforms. However, it has been noted that there is a tendency to misuse these advantageous effects of video gaming

through excessive gaming behaviours, which breed gaming addiction and worsen youth's cognitive and psychosocial growth (Onivehu, 2020). The impact of gaming addiction on young people in Nigeria, particularly their academic endeavours, has been highlighted in studies like Okika Nwakasi (2016) and Onyemaka, Igbokwe, Adekeye, Agbu (2017). Despite the World Health Organization's (WHO) classification of excessive gaming disorder as a mental illness, there are few studies on how gaming addiction affects young people's mental health in Nigeria. Therefore, this study investigates the impact of gaming addiction on young people's mental health in Lagos State.

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Digitalization and information and communication technology advances have transformed the world, altering how things are done. This is reflected in many aspects of life. It has also been evident in the evolution of interactive media, such as video games, which have become better with time and have given rise to a range of different gaming platforms, especially at the turn of the 20th century (Ahmed & Ullah, 2013; Kefalis, Kontostavlou & Drigas, 2020). As a result of the variety of games available on various devices such as smartphones, computers, televisions, and other gaming devices, video games are becoming increasingly popular in modern times. Because of the level of involvement in video game play, the popularity of video games has spawned a new breed of individuals who frequently identify as gamers (Pew Research Centre, 2016).

It has been established that video games can positively enhance the cognitive process, mainly promoting recovery from posttraumatic stress, serving as a viable means of education across all levels, and enhancing skills in mathematics. This phenomenon of this identified rise in gaming attitude over time has therefore generated immense research interest among numerous scholars, with an emphasis on the extent to which video games have a positive effect on players (Ferguson, 2010; Gentile & Gentile, 2008; Holmes, James, Coode-Bate, & Deeprouse, 2009; Hwang & Chen, 2017; Wang, DeMaria, Goldberg, & Katz, 2016; Spence & Feng, 2010; Thirunarayanan & Vilchez, 2012). In these terms, video games are interactive and connect the player with a digital or audio-visual component. However, this interaction fosters an emotional bond between the player and the game's content (Bergonse, 2017). This emotional attachment to games is one of the main reasons they have remained popular for over five decades, with new and improved versions of various video games being developed and distributed (Anderson & Warburton, 2012).

Playing video games may harm the player (Bergonse, 2017). This is typically observed when a person plays video games excessively, frequently resulting in gaming addiction and negatively impacting other aspects of their life, starting with their mental and cognitive abilities before moving on to other social activities. As a result, the gamer cannot go for extended periods without wanting to play (Anderson & Warburton, 2012; Jannah & Nirwana, 2015; Saputra, Marjohan, & Safrizal, 2020).

Gaming addiction, as opposed to other types of addiction like drug usage, is known to cause anti-social conduct in players since it consumes time that would otherwise be spent engaging in other socialization activities. According to Ahmed & Ullah (2013, p. 13), "Video game addiction is not the same

as substance addiction. The individual who engages in them invests more time on devices, which has an impact on their health, family, and social life". Given that video game addiction can negatively impact a person's life and health, there have been recent worries and excitement, particularly among psychologists and psychiatrists, about the inclusion of gaming addiction as a mental disorder in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM). This developed as the World Health Organization (WHO) finally added excessive gaming addiction, or "gaming disorder," to its list of mental and psychological diseases (Anderson & Warburton, 2012; Edokwe, 2021).

The increased gaming consumption among the younger population worldwide is more concerning. However, there is no distinction between this and the scene in Nigeria. Young people in Nigeria spend several hours playing video games instead of participating in other constructive activities, jeopardizing their mental and physical health due to excessive gaming (Edokwe, 2021).

Despite this, the number of individuals playing video games continues to rise, particularly among young people known for being the kind of people who find them interesting enough to play them regularly. Contrary to what has been found in numerous research studies, which show that excessive video game use may have adverse physiological and psychological effects that outweigh any excellent effects, excessive video game use is harmful and counterproductive. This may result from extensively using fictionally violent imagery and composition in most video games (Gentile & Gentile, 2008). The first video game, according to Kirsch (2010), who was quoted by Anderson & Warburton (2012, p. 56), was:

"The 1962 video game Space War, in which two spaceships engage in a deadly space battle. The concept of fighting to the death has not changed in the past 50 years, despite the graphics being relatively simple compared to games today."

However, this carries a negative connotation, particularly for video game players who might interpret this idea as socially acceptable conduct and tend to mimic it in reality by engaging in violent activity. This explains one of the most well-known adverse impacts of video game addiction. This reality is supported by research, which shows that excessive gaming exposure among young people, particularly to violent games that are more popular, has a situational influence and attachment to aggression that manifests in real life. Young gamers' judgment about the appropriate attitude to adopt is also clouded by this, especially in conflict situations where they are

more likely to adopt violent thoughts, beliefs, and behaviours learned through video games. Therefore, it can be inferred that playing video games continuously and excessively might lead to aggressive cognitive processing, which leads to aggressive behaviour in practically every situation the player encounters (Berkowitz, 1993; Edokwe, 2021; Dill & Dill, 1998).

The perception of gaming in Nigeria is that it is a form of leisure and enjoyment. However, when used frequently, it still significantly negatively affects young people's mental health (Info Guide Nigeria, 2022). This was confirmed by Aderinto, Opanike, and Alare (2021). They said that the way gamers interact with their world is changing, posing problems for medical professionals, academics, and decision-makers. The likelihood of mental health issues and gaming addiction among Nigerian youth typically brings on these difficulties. This research was done to assess the effect of gaming addiction on the mental health of young people in Lagos and ask research questions like to what extent youths are exposed to gaming, what factors contribute to gaming addiction among youths and how gaming addiction has negatively affected the mental health of youths in Lagos.

2. Youths and Gaming Addiction

Youth are represented in the top row of the population of gamers (World Health Organization, 2020). There is a tendency for more young individuals to become gaming addicts. This is further predicated on the idea that playing video games is accompanied by positive emotion. As a result, it may be argued that the need to enjoy oneself with every gaming session contributes to gaming addiction. This is closely related to other addictions that harm people's mental health and well-being, such as excessive media use, mainly social media and drug abuse. All these can release the feel-good chemical dopamine, continuously encouraging young people to play video games despite the known adverse effects (Newport Academy, 2021). As a result, young people who become addicted to video games develop a mental health issue known as "gaming disorder," which involves prioritizing gaming over other social activities and, in most cases, causing the gamer to become socially and morally isolated from the rest of society (World Health Organization, 2020).

Over time, playing video games has become a kind of entertainment and a way to unwind. It is interactive digital software installed on media platforms, including computers, smartphones, televisions, and other consoles made just for gaming (Ayenigbara, 2018). The same is true for video games, which operate as an interface between the player and the game's content and allow various activities to

engage the player's major sensory organs. The player can simulate what is in their possession (Gentile, Swing, Lim, and Khoo, 2012; Miezah, Batchelor, Megreya, Richard, and Moustafa, 2020).

The allure of video games to people is due to the incorporation of audio-visual characteristics, such as visuals and sound, with the development of technology, making them easily accessible online (Gentile, Swing, Lim & Khoo, 2012; Kweon & Park, 2012; Miezah, Batchelor, Megreya, Richard & Moustafa, 2020; Monke, 2009). Though entertainment is the primary goal, video games are made for various reasons. This is why "entertainment games" are mentioned as gaming. These games are designed with funny, nonviolent, and aggressive content, usually with stages to finish, word puzzles, and other components frequently used to inspire the player to perform predetermined tasks while learning and unwinding simultaneously (Ahmed & Ullah, 2013). Similar to instructional materials, video games are also designed to teach. These interactive video games connect the player's mind to a learning platform by highlighting key points on a particular subject in a visually appealing manner (Ahmed & Ullah, 2013). The two types of gameplay most frequently employed to reflect all the advantages of gaming are strategy and role-playing games. These games have violent elements, even though they are filled with entertainment-promoting factors. Hence, they are known as "violent games" since they have vivid visuals that depict acts of violence like killing, fighting, stealing, and other anti-social vices. However, a behavioural study has found that young people find violent games more appealing, leading to addiction and other psychiatric problems (Ahmed & Ullah, 2013). Because the player takes center stage and performs the violent act in the game, violent video games diverge from the original purpose of gaming and end up serving as a forerunner to aggressive behaviour in real life.

This is possibly why (Dill & Dill, 1998) contends that playing violent video games is essentially active, covert role-taking aggression, as opposed to watching violence on television or in movies, which is more passive and vicarious. Based on the assertion above, it may be concluded that gaming, specifically violent video games, warrants concern, especially about young people's mental and physical health (Berkowitz, 1993; Edokwe, 2021).

3. Prevalence of Video Gaming Addiction

The term "addiction" connotes excessive indulgence in anything, even with negative consequences. Addiction is typically seen through the lens of health issues like the use of drugs and other harmful substances. Subsequently, addiction raises issues about the person's health and personal well-

being. In terms of how it affects the brain's cognitive functions, gaming addiction's prevalence is comparable to any other type of addiction. Based on this, academic efforts have been made to reflect on gaming addiction with various viewpoints on the actual and accepted definition of gaming addiction (American Psychiatric Association, 2013; Kuss & Griffiths, 2012).

Numerous attempts have identified the underlying factors behind gaming addiction, particularly among young people. More recent research in this area points to young people's excessive amounts of free time as well as their online entertainment usage, notably their time spent playing new paid games. Beyond leisure time spent playing games, there are, however, a lot more underlying factors that contribute to gaming addiction in young people. Loneliness, depressive tendencies, and gaming addiction are all closely related (Edokwe, 2021; Newport Academy, 2021).

Based on this, young people are likely to turn to the game to prevent experiencing sadness and to get relief from loneliness. Even though all ages are affected by the same factors, young individuals are more vulnerable because of their brains' ongoing growth. Additionally, it is frequently noticed that young males are more likely than young females to develop a gaming addiction. This fact was confirmed by Onivehu (2020, p. 431). His argument is, "In the vast majority of research in the body of literature, the impact of gender on the use of a huge array of technical gadgets has been the primary focus. To this aim, the gender-based analysis of the issue of video game addiction is replete with a variety of contradictory results".

This claim is supported by medical research because there are more indications of guys' intense enthusiasm for activities like gaming. Their desire for additional addictive activities, such as gambling and drug usage, further supports this. Similarly, men tend to exhibit winning-oriented traits more frequently than women. This is a crucial motivator for men to start gaming because they always want to win. When they lose, they are more likely to keep playing for a long time, which leads to gaming addiction (Edokwe, 2021; Newport Academy, 2021).

4. The Negative Effects of Video Game Addiction on Mental Health

With a focus on the reality of video game addiction among young people and the brain, which is at the center of all cognitive processes involved with gaming, being frequently stressed beyond capacity, some academic studies in the social and health fields have examined the effects of gaming, particularly gaming addictions. This action always

results in a change in the brain from regular exposure to gaming. Excessive gaming is associated with poor judgment, emotional intelligence, impulsive control, and, in rare instances, drug usage, so this alteration is typically on the negative side (Edokwe, 2021; Newport Academy, 2021).

Comprehensively, gaming addiction is known to affect the mental health of people in the following ways:

- i. It creates hindrances in self-control and deprives the gamer of the ability to pay attention.
- ii. It brings about emotional imbalance.
- iii. It reduces the zeal for educational activities.
- iv. Brings about depression and anxiety
- v. It affects the nervous system through excessive stress.
- vi. It affects the eating habits of gamers.
- vii. Brings about insomnia and other sleep-related disorders.
- viii. It is engendering violent and aggressive behaviours.
- ix. Becoming desensitized to violence (Edokwe, 2021; Newport Academy, 2021).

Excessive gaming is known to have negative consequences on cognitive function, which can frequently lead to serious mental health issues later in life. The formation of specific indications and symptoms following prolonged exposure to gaming, such as chronic headaches, depression, and back and neck discomfort, further supports the truth of the statement, as mentioned earlier (Edokwe, 2021). This is also connected to the musculoskeletal disorders that active athletes experience. The result of gaming addiction also includes postural issues, significant tendinosis, and transverse numbness of the thumb. Additionally, epileptic seizures result from video game addiction due to the ongoing stress on the nervous system from hours of gaming activities (Ayenigbara, 2018; Burke & Peper, 2002; Macgregor, 2000).

To demonstrate the seriousness of the impact of gaming addiction on young people's mental health, numerous studies have been done, with each one pointing to a detrimental effect of excessive gaming. In the study by Onwukwe, Njemanze, Njoku, and Obia (2017) on the effects of violent video games and violent movies on the aggressive behaviour of children in Imo State, Nigeria, it was found that exposure to violent video games makes children more likely to engage in violent behaviour because these games and movies have a significant impact on children's aggressive behaviour. As a result, it was advised that parents should actively monitor their children's gaming behaviour, especially when it comes to the violent video games they choose to play.

Similarly, Saputra, Marjohan, and Safrizal (2020) found that online game addiction has a significant negative impact on young people's mental health and discourages them from refraining from playing video games, causing them to center their lives on video games and push other crucial facets of life to the side. Additionally, it was shown that the detrimental effects of gaming on adolescents' mental health make them unable to accept failure in real life, which causes them to project aggressive behaviour and violence as a solution.

Osuagwu (2015) found that children in Port Harcourt, Nigeria, have a high level of gaming addiction, which has a detrimental effect on their academic performance. The study examined the relationship between children's excessive game playing and academic performance. Therefore, parents were advised to examine the amount of gaming their kids do carefully.

Additionally, Purwaningsih & Nurmala's study from 2021 on the effect of internet games on teenage mental health found that playing online games regularly is significantly associated with many detrimental mental health issues. The study "I failed because I was playing videogames: An examination of undergraduate males' videogame addiction and academic performance" by Onyemaka, Igbokwe, Adekeye, and Jane-Frances (2017) also showed that playing videogames has several adverse effects on undergraduate students' academic performance, particularly among males.

According to Onivehu's (2020) research on the prevalence and correlates of video game addiction among Nigerian in-school adolescents, the majority (74 per cent) played both offline and online video games, with 13.5 per cent being addicted. The proportion of males who were addicted to video games was significantly higher. Gaming negatively impacts in-school adolescents' academic performance, daily functioning, and sense of fulfilment. It was said that effective preventive measures should be implemented to stop the epidemic of video game addiction and its effects on teenagers in Nigeria.

In addition, Ayenigbara's (2018) investigation into gaming disorder and the harms associated with gaming: Analysis indicated that excessive gaming is linked to several physical and mental health conditions, including epilepsy, obesity, muscular-skeletal diseases, and vision impairment. To prevent physical and mental health problems from excessive gaming, it is advised that players be aware of the amount of time spent playing video games and seek medical assistance when symptoms of gaming disorder appear, such as depression.

5. Theoretical Framework

5.1 Technological Determinism Theory and Uses & Gratification Theory

Several effect theories apply to this investigation; however, the technological determinist theory and the theory of uses and gratification were adopted. The foundation of the technological determinism theory is that social structure, norms, and cultural values develop due to the technological advancements available to society. Thorstein Veblen (1857–1929), a well-known American sociologist and economist, is credited with helping to create technological determinism. However, other renowned academics have also researched this hypothesis. Marshall McLuhan is one such scholar. According to the theory of technological determinism, advancements in science, technology, and media contribute to societal change, globalization, and other phenomena (Smith, 1994; Kunz, 2006).

The main principle of the technological determinism theory is that modern human behaviour is fundamentally based on technology. Technology is crucial to society's advancement (Smith, 1994). The main principles of technological determinism theory are:

- i. Technology is an extension of ourselves, enabling us to communicate and travel farther through time and space.
- ii. These extensions reflect the human body.
- iii. This temperature-based metaphor applies to the audience/user interaction level with a particular medium and states that all media are, to some extent, "hot" or "cool."
- iv. No one can truly comprehend it until a medium is no longer dominant and is viewed through the prism of the new dominant media.

The use of video games, which have grown in popularity among young people and are primarily responsible for determining how they derive happiness, is central to this research study because it is sacrosanct to social and behavioural changes brought about by technological advancement. This leads to excessive video game playing and addiction among gamers, especially young people.

Similarly, the fundamental ideas of this study are clarified by the uses and gratifications theory, developed by Elihu Katz, Jay Blumler, and Michael Gurevitch in 1974. According to the theory, media material satisfies and reinforces human needs. The theory's fundamental principle is that media consumers are engaged and eager to employ media-derived content to meet their immediate needs (Asemah, 2011; Daramola, 2012). According to Folarin (1998, p. 65), the uses and gratifications theory emphasizes how "needs are simply specified"

(entertainment, relaxation, knowledge acquisition). From behaviour, needs can be determined. Because of this, gamers must find video games online to satisfy their desire for happiness and avoid loneliness and sadness. This is likely the main factor behind the high-frequency young people who may be seen online, searching for the most recent versions of their favourite games (Dill & Dill, 1998; Newport Academy, 2021).

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Given that Lagos State is one of Nigeria's most technologically advanced states, data were gathered via a close-ended survey and presented in descriptive charts for analysis and discussion. The sample population are youths in Lagos between the ages of 15 and 39, as this is the youth age range (The Nation, 2016; The Punch, 2022). This sample size was calculated using the Taro Yamane formula for

calculating survey sample size. A closed- and open-ended questionnaire was used to gather the study's data. The respondents' demographic data were covered in Section A, while the psychographic data relevant to the research questions were included in Section B. The generated data were analyzed and interpreted using simple percentages and charts.

7. RESEARCH FINDINGS

This study assessed the effects of gaming addiction on the mental health of youths in Lagos State. The data collected through an online survey is presented, analyzed and interpreted below:

7.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

Marital status was examined using descriptive statistics, such as frequency counts and percentages. The result is presented below:

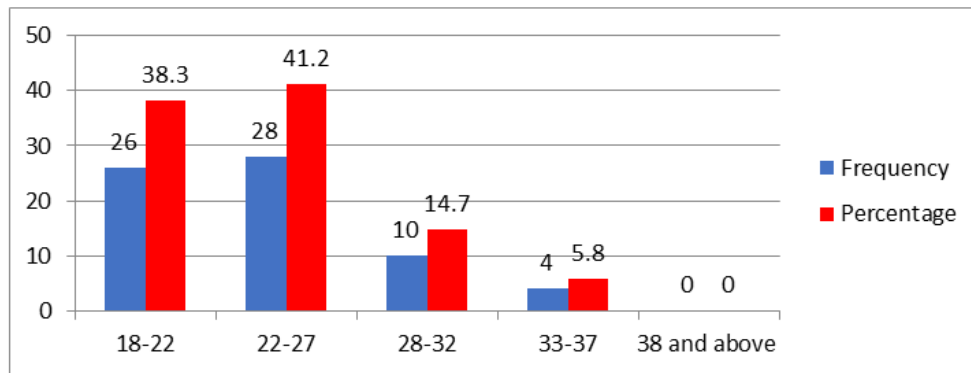


Figure 7.1.1: Showing the age bracket of respondents

The data presented in Figure 7.1.1 above revealed that 26 of the sampled respondents (representing 38.3%) are between the ages of 18- 22, 28 (representing 41.2%) are between the ages of 23- 27, and 10 (representing 14.7%) are between the

ages of 28-32, 4 (representing 5.8%) are between the ages of 33-37 while 0 (representing 0%) are 33 and above. Based on the analysis presented in the table and Figure 1 above, it was shown that most of the sampled respondents are between the ages of 23-27.

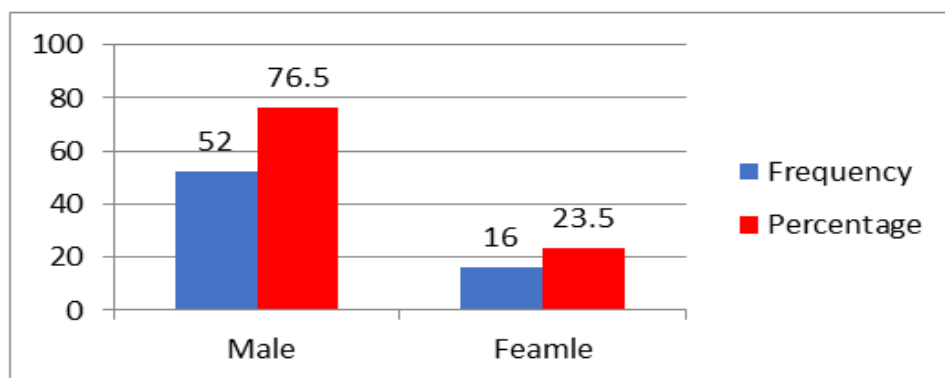


Figure 7.1.2: Showing the sex of the respondents

Based on the analysis, it was discovered that most of the respondents are male. The data presented in Figure 7.1.2 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 52 (76.5%) are male, while 16 (23.5%)

are female. This implies that video games are played by males more than females among the youth in Lagos State.

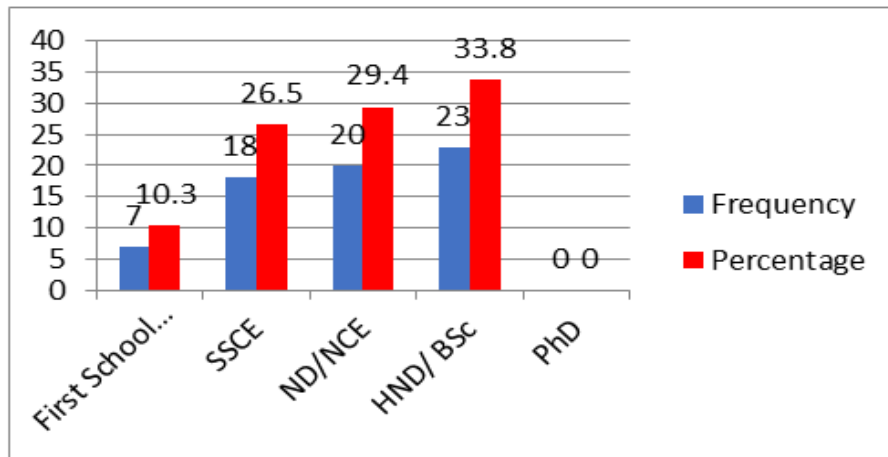


Figure 7.1.3: Showing the educational qualification of respondents

The data presented in Figure 7.1.3 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 7 (representing 10.3%) have a First School Leaving Certificate, 18 (representing 26.5%) have SSCE, 20 (representing 29.4%) have ND/NCE, 23

(representing 33.8%) have HND/BSc. In contrast, 0 (representing 0%) have a PhD. Based on the analysis presented above in Table and Figure 3, it was discovered that most respondents have HND/ BSc.

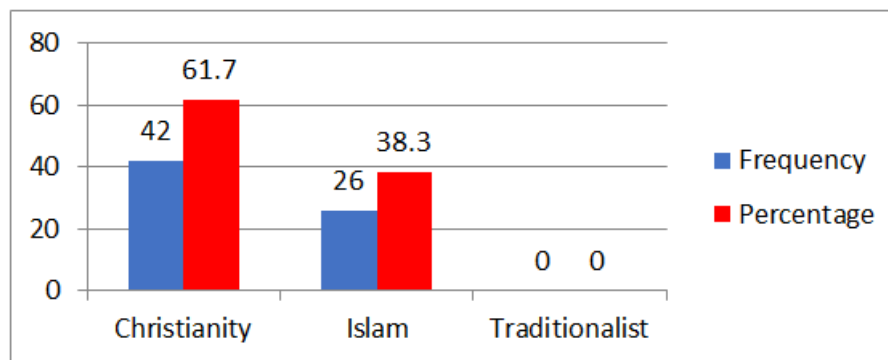


Figure 7.1.4: Showing the religion of respondents

The data presented in Figure 7.1.4 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 42 (representing 61.7%) are of the Christian faith, 26 (representing 38.3%) are of the Islamic faith, and 0

(representing 0%) are traditionalists. The data presented above indicated that the majority of the respondents are Christians.

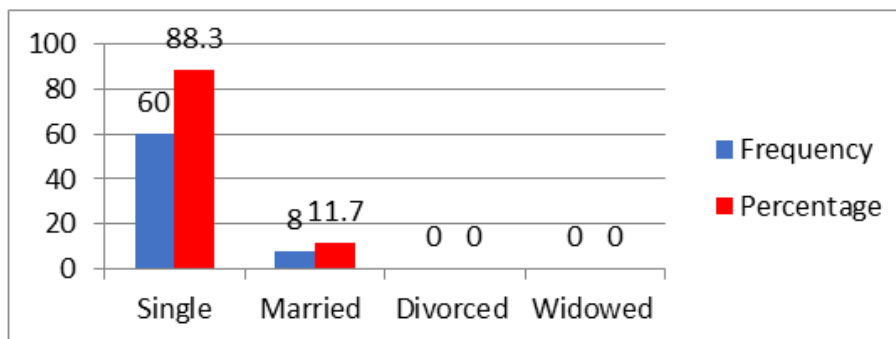


Figure 7.1.5: Showing the marital status of the respondents

The data presented in Figure 7.1.5 above shows that out of 68 sampled respondents, 60 (representing 88.3%) are single, 8 (representing 11.7%) are married, 0 (representing 0%) are

divorced, and 0 (representing 0%) are widowed. The data presented above indicated that the majority of the respondents are single.

7.2 Presentation of Psychographic Data

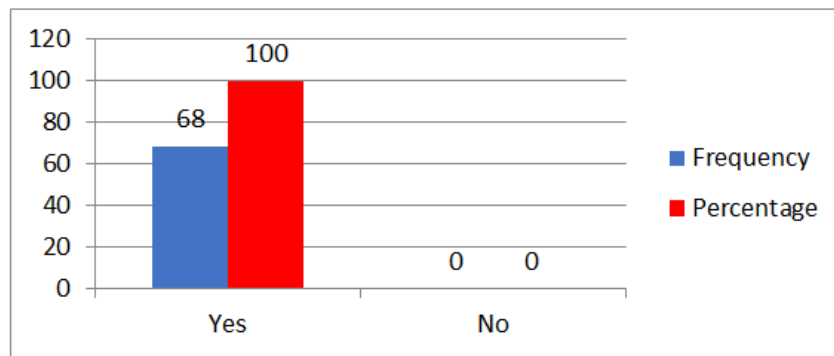


Figure 7.2.1: Showing whether respondents know about video games

The data in Figure 7.2.1 above shows that 68 (representing 100%) of the sampled respondents say they know about video games. In comparison, 0 (representing 0%) say they do not know about video games. Based on the data presented above, it was

discovered that most youths in Lagos State are aware of video games. This implies the high popularity of video games among the youth population in Lagos State.

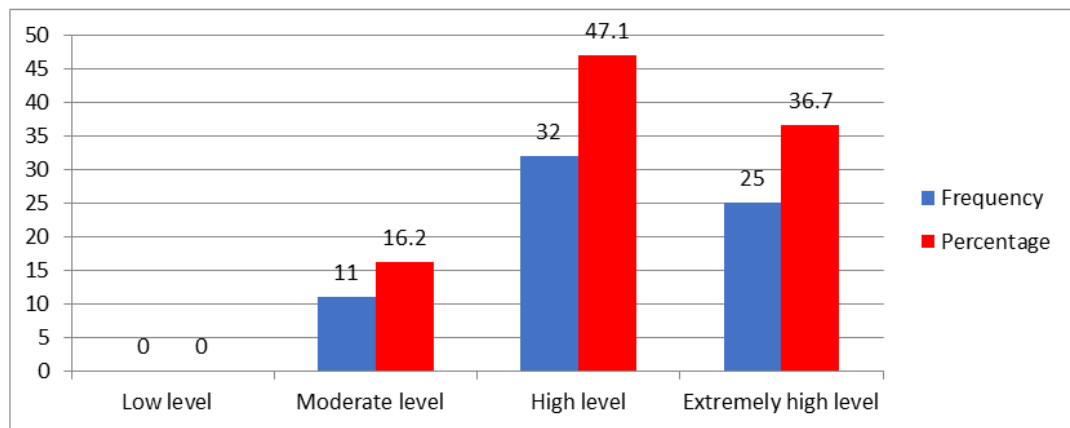


Figure 7.2.2: Showing the level of respondent's knowledge of video games

The data presented above indicated that most respondents have a high level of knowledge about video games. The data in Figure 7.2.2 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 0 (representing 0%) say that their level of knowledge of video games is low, and 11 (representing 16.2%) say that their level of knowledge of video games is to

a moderate level, 32 (representing 47.1%) say that their level of knowledge on video games is to a high level. In contrast, 25 (representing 36.7%) say that it is at an extremely high level. The implication is that most of the youth in Lagos are likely to be involved with video gaming to a great extent and have such knowledge about gaming.

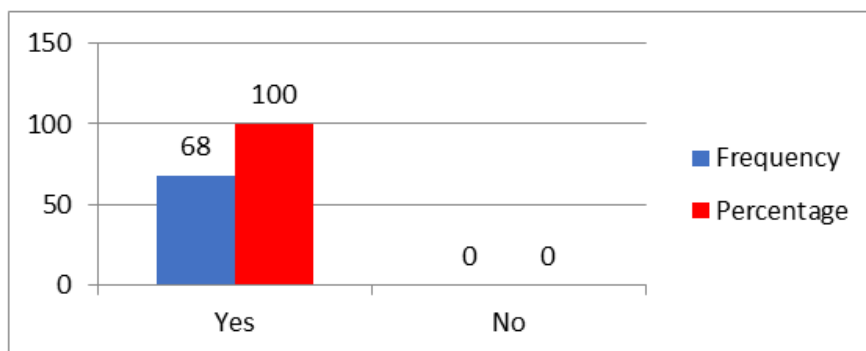


Figure 7.2.3: Showing whether respondents play video games

Based on the data presented above, it was discovered that most Lagos state youths play video games. The data presented in Figure 7.2.3 above shows that 68 (representing 100%) of the sampled

respondents say that they play video games, while 0 (representing 0%) say that they do not. The implication is that there is a tendency for the prevalence of gaming addiction in Lagos State.

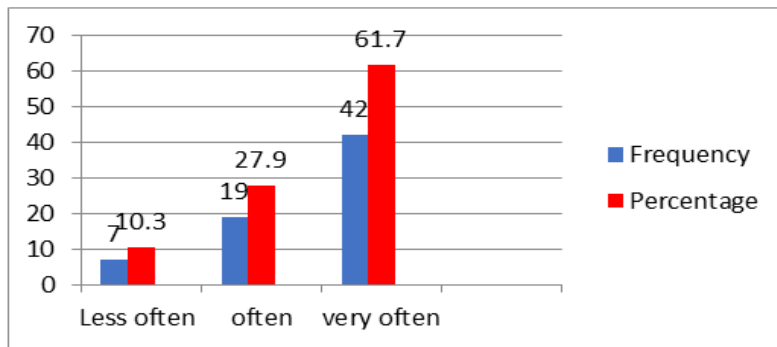


Figure 7.2.4: Showing how often respondents play video games

The data presented in Figure 7.2.4 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 7 (representing 10.3%) say they play video games less often, and 19 (representing 27.9%) say they play them often. In contrast, 42 (61.7%) say they play video games very often. Based on the data analysis

presented above, it was discovered that most respondents play video games very often. This implies that there is excessive and possible addiction to video gaming among youth in Lagos State because youths are often involved in gaming.

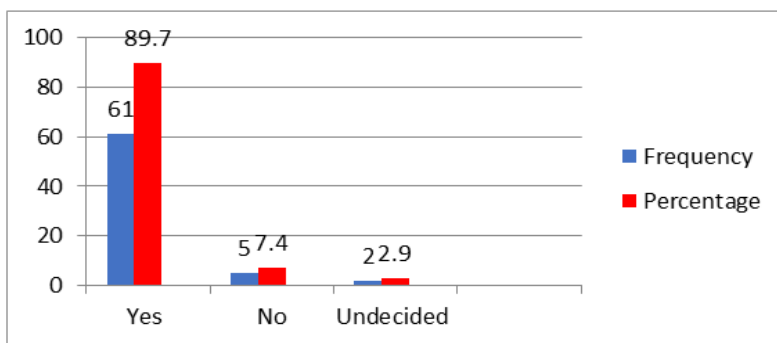


Figure 7.2.5: Showing whether respondents play video games too much

The data presented in Figure 7.2.5 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 61 (representing 89.7%) say that they play video games too much, and 5 (representing 7.4%) say that they do not play video games too much. At the same time, 2 (representing 2.9%) were undecided on whether

they play video games too much. Based on the data analysis presented above, it was discovered that most respondents agreed to play video games too much. The implication is that there is likely to be more youth in Lagos State who have become addicted to video gaming.

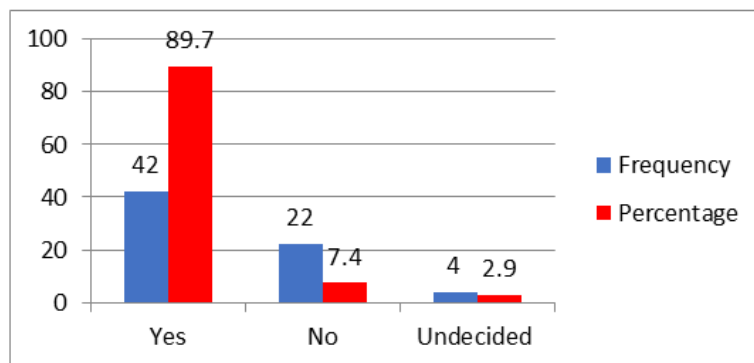


Table 7.2.6: Showing whether respondents think that playing video games can be addictive

Based on the data analysis presented above, it was discovered that most respondents think playing video games can be addictive. The data presented in Figure 7.2.6 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 42 (representing 89.7%) say that playing video games can be addictive, and 22

(representing 7.4%) say that they do not think playing them can be addictive. In contrast, 4 (representing 2.9%) were undecided on whether playing video games can be addictive. This implies that youths in Lagos State are very much aware of the addictive nature of excessive gaming.

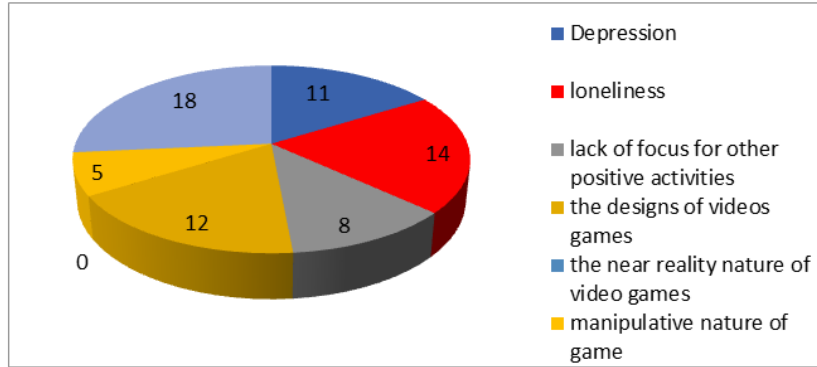


Figure 7.2.7: Showing what respondents think is responsible for gaming addiction

The data presented in Figure 7.2.7 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 11 (representing 16.2%) say that depression is what they think is responsible for gaming addiction, and 14 (representing 20.6%) say that loneliness is what is responsible for gaming addiction. Furthermore, 8 (representing 11.7%) say that it is a lack of focus on other positive activities, 12 (representing 17.6%) say that the design of video games is what is responsible for gaming addiction, and 0 (representing 0%) say that the near reality nature of video games is what is responsible for gaming addiction, 5 (representing 7.4%) say that it is the manipulative nature of the game. In contrast, 18 (representing 26.5%) say that

depression, loneliness, lack of focus on other positive activities, the designs of video games, the near reality nature of video games and the manipulative nature of the game are responsible for gaming addiction. Based on the analysis presented above, it was discovered that the majority of the respondents believe that gaming addiction is brought about through depression, loneliness, lack of focus on other positive activities, the designs of video games, the near-reality nature of video games and the manipulative nature of the game. This implies that when youths in Lagos State are often lonely, depressed, and lack focus on other things, they turn to the game as a form of escapism, regardless of its addictive tendency.

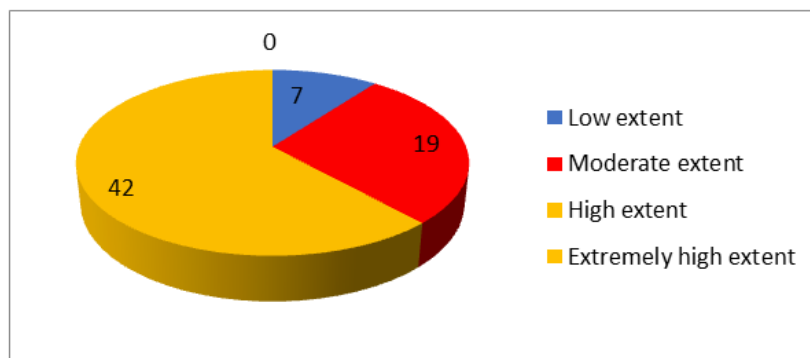


Figure 7.2.8: Showing the extent to which respondents think the above reasons have influenced the level of their playing of video games

The data presented above in Figure 7.2.8 revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 7 (representing 10.3%) say that reasons such as depression, loneliness, lack of focus on other positive activities, the designs of video games, the near reality nature of video games and the manipulative nature of game have influenced their level of playing video games to a low extent, 19 (representing 27.9%) say

that the influence is to a moderate extent, 42 (representing 61.7%) say that it is to a great extent. In contrast, 0 (representing 0%) says it is to a greater extent. Based on the analysis of the data presented above, it was discovered that the majority of the respondents believed that reasons such as depression, loneliness, lack of focus on other positive activities, the designs of video games, the near reality nature of

video games and the manipulative nature of the game had influenced their level of playing video games to a

great extent. This implies that youths in Lagos State are highly addicted to gaming.

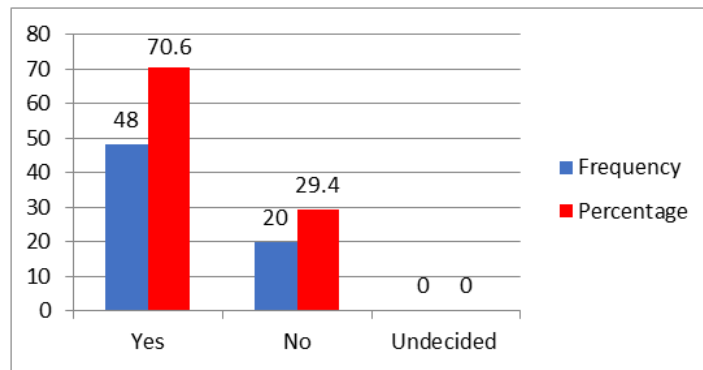


Figure 7.2.9: Showing whether respondents believe that too much playing of video games can affect the mental health of the player

The data presented above in Figure 7.2.9 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 48 (representing 70.6%) say that they believe that too much playing of video games can affect the mental health of the player, and 20 (representing 29.4%) say that they do not believe that too much playing of video games can affect the mental health of the player. In contrast, 0 (representing 0%) were undecided on

whether playing too many video games can affect the player's mental health. Based on the analysis presented above, it was discovered that most of the respondents believe that playing too many video games can affect the player's mental health. The implication is that youths in Lagos State know that excessive gaming activities adversely affect gamers' mental health.

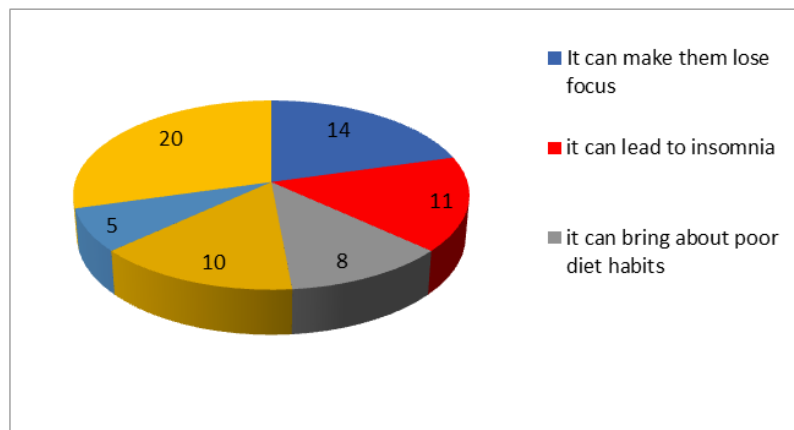


Figure 7.2.10: Showing the ways respondents think gaming addiction can negatively affect the mental health of gamers

The data presented above in Figure 7.2.10 revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 14 (representing 20.6%) think that gaming addiction can negatively affect the mental health of gamers by making them lose focus, and 11 (representing 16.2%) say that gaming addiction can negatively affect the mental health of gamers by leading to insomnia, 8 (representing 11.7%) say that gaming addiction can negatively affect the mental health of gamers by bringing about poor diet habits, 10 (representing 14.7%) say that gaming addiction can negatively affect the mental health of gamers by leading to aggressive behaviour, 3 (representing 7.4%) say that gaming addiction can lead to functional and cognitive impairment in life. In contrast, 20 (representing

29.4%) say that gaming addiction can negatively affect the mental health of gamers by making them lose focus, leading to insomnia, poor diet habits, aggressive behaviour, and functional and cognitive impairment in life. Based on the analysis presented above, it was discovered that the majority of the respondents believe that gaming addiction can negatively affect the mental health of gamers by making them lose focus, leading to insomnia, bringing about poor diet habits, leading to aggressive behaviour and leading to functional and cognitive impairment in life. The implication is that gaming addiction ultimately affects the proper mental state of youths in Lagos State who are addicted to gaming in several ways.

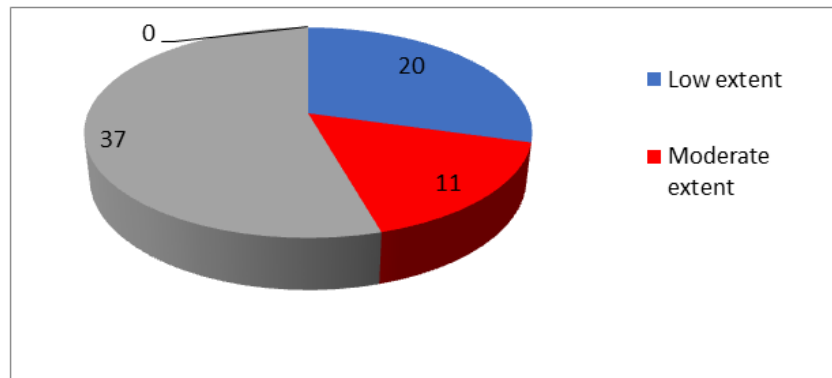


Figure 7.2.11: Showing the extent to which gaming addiction negatively affected the mental health of respondents

The data presented above indicated that most respondents believe that gaming addiction negatively affects mental health to a great extent. The data presented in Figure 7.2.11 above revealed that out of 68 sampled respondents, 20 (representing 29.4%) say that gaming addiction has adverse effects on mental health to a low extent, and 11 (representing 16.2%) say that gaming addiction has adverse effects on mental health to a moderate extent, 37 (representing 54.4%) say that gaming addiction adversely affects mental health to a great extent while 0 (representing 0%) say that it is to a greater extent. The implication is that youth who play video games excessively might suffer from varying mental health challenges or gaming disorders due to gaming addiction.

7.3 DISCUSSIONS

This section presents a discussion and inference based on the findings of this study, which answer the research questions.

RQ1: To what extent are youths in Lagos State exposed to gaming?

According to research findings, the respondents are aware of video games, are knowledgeable about video games, and play video games. These results concur with those of Ahmed & Ullah (2013), Kefalis, Kontostavrou & Drigas (2020), and Pew Research Centre (2016) that video games are becoming more and more popular in modern society as a result of the diversity of games that are now available. Due to the amount of participation in video games, a new breed of people who frequently identify as gamers has emerged due to the popularity of video games.

RQ2: What are the factors that contribute to gaming addiction among youths in Lagos State?

The results showed that most young people in Lagos State believe playing video games can be addictive. Gaming addiction is also influenced by some reasons, including depression, loneliness, a lack

of motivation for other constructive pursuits, the design of video games, their close resemblance to reality, and their deceptive nature. These results are consistent with the claims made by Anderson & Warburton (2012), Edokwe (2021), Jannah & Nirwana (2015), and Saputra, Marjohan & Safrizal (2020), there is evidence to suggest that playing video games negatively affects the gamer. Excessive game playing frequently results in gaming addiction and negatively impacts an individual's life at the mental and cognitive level before spreading to other social activities. As a result, the gamer loses the capacity to go a long time without getting the want to play, and video game addiction has the potential to impact a person's life and health negatively. This emphasizes recent worries and excitement over the addition of gaming addiction as a mental disease in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders, notably among psychologists and psychiatrists (DSM).

RQ3: How has gaming addiction negatively affected the mental health of youths in Lagos State?

According to the research, most respondents feel that playing video games excessively harms their mental health by causing them to lose attention, have insomnia, develop poor eating habits, and behave aggressively. These results are consistent with the assertion made by Gentile & Gentile (2008) that excessive video game use may have adverse physiological and psychological effects that outweigh any favourable effects that may be obtained from its use. The findings are consistent with those of the World Health Organization (2020), which found that youth video game addiction results in a mental health issue known as "gaming disorder," which involves prioritizing gaming above other social activities and, in most cases, causes the gamer to become socially and morally isolated from the rest of society. The results support Edokwe's (2021) assertion that current research shows that youth in Nigeria are becoming alarmingly addicted to video games, spending hours playing instead of doing other worthwhile things.

8. CONCLUSION & RECOMMENDATION

The study concludes that youths in Lagos State have a high level of gaming exposure since they are aware of and actively play video games. Although playing video games can make one feel good, they can also become addictive and harm young people's mental health. Gaming addiction is influenced by several factors, including depression, loneliness, and a lack of motivation for other healthy pursuits, the design of video games, their resemblance to reality, and their ability to manipulate players.

This study showed that video games negatively affect young people's mental health. As a result, it is advised that young people receive the proper education regarding the risks of excessive gaming, which can result in addiction and severely impact their mental capacity. The government should collaborate with game development companies to gradually phase out violent games and replace them with kinder, more fun, and instructive alternatives to decrease the negative impacts of gaming addiction on young people. Youth should be closely supervised in their gaming activities, especially those involving violent games, which promote addiction and aggressive behaviour.

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