



Assessment of Perception and Perspective of Video Games on the Children: A Case Study of Tirana, Albania

Ermelinda Satka (M. Sc.)

Assistant Lecturer, Faculty of Economics & Agribusiness, Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania

Pranvera Troka (M. Sc.)

Assistant Lecturer, Faculty of Economics & Agribusiness, Agricultural University of Tirana, Albania

[Doi:10.19044/esj.2021.v17n12p224](https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2021.v17n12p224)

Submitted: 01 December 2020

Accepted: 21 March 2021

Published: 30 April 2021

Copyright 2021 Author(s)

Under Creative Commons BY-NC-ND

4.0 OPEN ACCESS

Cite As:

Satka, E., and Pranvera, T. (2021). Assessment of Perception and Perspective of Video Games on the Children: A Case Study of Tirana, Albania. *European Scientific Journal*, ESJ, 17(12), 224. <https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2021.v17n12p224>

Abstract

Internet is a communication tool used in entertainment worldwide. The Internet is no longer a novelty for children and young people, but a necessity for them. For many children, today the distinction between online and daily activities is becoming smaller. Gradually, the computer game industry has become a lucrative business, increasing its production every day. The recent technology, depending on “PlayStation” slots, has begun to make significant impacts by creating a problem that needs to be addressed. On the other hand, there is little evidence that shows how social professionals are responding to new child protection challenges while navigating online. This paper focuses on describing, identifying, and assessing the perception and perspective of children aged 7-14 who are involved in playing computer games at PlayStation centers in Tirana. The method used in the study is qualitative research, which is specifically a case study research. The main instrument for data collection is the semi-structured interview with 20 children who are users of video games at PlayStation centers in the New Tirana neighborhood. The data analysis showed that children has a high attendance and dependence on computer games at PlayStation centers,

leading to children's positive perceptions and attitudes towards electronic games. Children's attitudes towards playgrounds indicate the importance of these games in entertainment, leisure time, communication, and relationships with peers. It is important that everyone - parents and caretakers, teachers, institutions and government structures - should work together to create a safe environment for children regardless of where they are; at home, at school, or in public places such as internet centers.

Keywords: Children, PlayStation centers, computer games, perceptions, attitudes, perspectives

1. Introduction

1.1 Presentation of the Study Issue

In recent years, computer games have had a huge impact on how people spend their free time (Cesarone, 2014). "Computer games, e-mail, the Internet, mobile phones and messaging are an integral part of our lives" (Prensky, 2001). The latest official figures from the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) show that out of 2.7 billion people, almost 40% of the world's population is online. At the end of 2011, 45% of the world, i.e., more than 2.3 billion of internet users, were under the age of 25 (twenty-five) years old. The technology is changing the way individuals socialize, study, work, and spend their free time (DiNicola, 2004).

New technologies have led to a new form of social interaction in the digital world between children and adolescents. Peer communication is one of the most popular uses of technology (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008). Therefore, technology has become an important tool for connecting adolescents with one another, but it has also influenced other activities that include leisure time for children and adolescents, as well as relationships with families. It is becoming increasingly clear that, in addition to family, peers and school, we must consider the digital world as another social context in adolescent development. Also, it is important to consider the implications caused by the proliferation and inclusion of young people in the digital world. The explosion of the video game industry in the last decade and its consequences are an open debate. The main concerns are the brutality and violent acts within games. The newest generation of gaming is so realistic that the line between "simulations" and video games has been largely blurred. They are so realistic that the United States government has even launched a game called the US Army to help the next generation of military specialists (Vargas, 2006).

In 2008, the study of the World Internet Project (WIP), a global international study on the impact of the internet on individuals and society, conducted in 13 countries, presented the percentages of internet users to the target group of pre-teens ages 12-14 years. The findings showed that these

percentages were much higher than expected. In the UK, 100% of 12-14 years old used the internet, 98% in Israel, 96% in the Czech Republic, 95% in Canada, 88% in the US, and so on (Lebo et al., 2009). Gradually, the computer game industry has become a profitable business, which is becoming bigger through media advertising.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Evaluation of children's perceptions and perspectives of computer games has received little attention in studies and research literature. Technology development has made children grow up in a virtual environment by educating themselves on all the uncontrolled information technology provides. "The child should be given what he needs, not what he wants"- this is a very accurate phrase in today's reality where children are increasingly becoming part of the virtual world. The way of life, and also our environment, has changed a lot in the last decade. The increased road traffic and construction densities have made the physical and mental activity of children almost lukewarm.

Subsequently, the recent technology has made many children to become addicted to computer games by moving away from the other nature games or normal sports. Addiction to slots, especially the PlayStation, is beginning to have a significant impact on children, thereby creating a problem that needs to be addressed.

In our country lacks the scientific studies that have focused on the perception and perspective of children, aged 7-14 years on the PlayStation computer games in Tirana. This problem has not been receiving attention by researchers in our country before, so it is very necessary to explore it. This study will represent an attempt to make scientific contributions in this field.

1.3 The Purpose and Objectives of the Study

Purpose of the Study

This study aims to describe, identify, and evaluate the perception, attitudes, and perspectives of children aged 7-14 who are involved in computer games at PlayStation centers in Tirana.

Specifically, the objectives of the study are:

To identify the attendance and involvement of children in computer games at PlayStation centers.

To understand children's perceptions, attitudes, and perspectives towards computer games.

To describe and recognize the perceived positive and negative impact of computer games on children.

Research Questions of the Study

What is the frequency of inclusion and use of computer games by children in PlayStation centers?

What are the perception, attitude, and perspective of children towards computer games. How informed and aware are children about the effects of computer games? What is the perceived impact of computer games on children?

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research Method

The research method used in the study is the qualitative method of data collection, analysis, and interpretation. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), qualitative research can be described as an effective model in the social environment. This method provides a thorough and detailed understanding of subject exploration, as the study is interested in the frequency, perspective, and effects of computer games on children, according to their perceptions and descriptions (Gary & Mahoney, 2012). The use of the case study method helped to build a deeper view of the specific issues taken into consideration, which is based on the relatively small number of subjects included in the study.

2.2 The Population of the Study and the Selected Sample

The group of subjects selected for this study consists of children aged 7-14 years in the 9-year school cycle attending PlayStation internet centers in the New Tirana, Astiri area. The study relied on a sample of 15 children, who conducted detailed semi-structured interviews at three PlayStation centers. This center is considered to be the most suitable places to find and choose the children to be included in the study. The selection of subjects was carried out in such a way as to satisfy the conditions set out in advance by myself as a researcher.

2.3 The Sampling

The sample of this study consists of 15 children aged 7-14 years, which coincides with the 9-year school cycle in Tirana. The sample was selected in a non-probability manner and it is a purposeful sampling. Purposeful sampling is a response to the practical limitations of a researcher's time and to the subjects' approach that limits the ability to use a large random sample.

Children selected to be part of the search had to meet certain conditions:

- To be attendees and players at PlayStation centers in the New Tirana area.
- To be children in the age gap 7-14 years.

To record the interview sessions, we used a recording from phone (mobile) that allows us to concentrate on the search in the direction of the discussion and not to keep note continuously. This ensured the accurate recording of the interview sessions, including every aspect of the conversation excluding anything. These transcripts were coded and later used in the data analysis.

In fact, the reason for choosing this age group was because they have direct contact with technological innovations and at the same time cannot understand the problems caused by the use of electronic games. On the other hand, the frequent use creates a great dependency on these games. Consequently, the demographic data of the selected sample included in the study showed that:

- Sample interviewed consisted of 15 male.
- The age of the sample taken in the study varied from 7-14 years.
- Regarding the class in which they study is: three are 14 years old, two are 13, one is 12, two are 11 years old, two are 10 years old, two are 9 years old, one is 8 years, and two 7 years old.
- Based on the attendance level, the number of times a day they go to the Playstation centers starts from 1 time a day and more than 3 times a day.
- How many hours a day they play starts from 1-3 hours a day to more than 5 hours a day.

Despite the number of subjects being only 15, theoretical satiety was achieved because children's perception and viewpoints on electronic games were similar. Thus, no further interviewing was necessary.

2.4 Design of Research Instrument

Semi-Structured Interviews

Its drafting was made possible based on the research questions of the study and the literature. Designing the interview with the clearest questions has been very important. For this reason, we tried to use simple and specific terms relevant to the field of video games and for children of this age, and not complicated terms which could be very difficult to understand and give answer.

To group the information based on the function of the study, interviews were designed with different questions, divided into two sections, which sought information about: demographic data and specific questions on the purpose of the study.

Data collection process has taken a period of one month. Data collection, as mentioned above, was done using in-depth semi-structured interviews face-to-face with interviewees.

Data analysis in qualitative research is the most important component and is challenging at the same time. However, this should be carefully thought out. For this reason and in order to be more accurate, data analysis is not

carried out with specific software programs, but the analysis is carried out in a completely manual way.

3.0 Discussion

This study uses a semi-structured interview to gather information. The interview contained 24 questions divided into two sections, seeking information about: Demographic data which seek to provide general information about participants and demographic data about them such as age, gender, and the class in which they study.

Specific questions on the purpose of the study were also considered, specifically in relation to children's perceptions, attitudes, and perceptions regarding computer games. Based on the data, 8 codes were created with the categories for each code with a total of 24 thematic categories.

In the last decade, the impact of technology has become inevitable. New technologies are not only seen as an important tool to connect teens with their friends (Subrahmanyam & Greenfield, 2008), but their impact is reflected in the way of development and behavior. The results of this study show that the attendance of PlayStation centers is increasing by children (answered 100%). The way of life and our environment has changed a lot in the last decade. The development of technology has made children to grow up in a virtual environment by taking as an educational basis all the uncontrolled information that technology provides (Tumbokon, 2014). From the results, the computer game centers were frequented by male gender (all the participants in the study were boys). The boys were the ones that were playing in these centers. Tumbokan (2014) stated that the world of computer games centers is generally dominated by men. Computer games have had a huge impact on the way people spend their free time (Cesarone, 2014). The proportion important in the study was that subjects spent a lot of time in computer games. They spent 2-5 hours at Play Station centers with a frequency of several times a day.

On the other hand, researchers have found that computer games that train the brain can improve children's grades within a few weeks (Cummings & Vandewater, 2007). This fact is shown by the results of the study, where 67% of the children perceive games as an aid to greater concentration in school.

4.0 Conclusions

In summary, some of the main findings of the study are:

- The attendance of PlayStation centers by the children was very high. This is indicated by the frequency, the number of hours of the stay per day (over 3 hours), as well as the attendance of video game centers several times a day. Description of attendance showed that children had created dependency on computer games. Even when they do not go to PlayStation centers, children will be playing at home. The children's perception and perspective of electronic games had positive

attitudes and relevance to them. They consider these games as a way to entertain themselves during their leisure time.

- Parents cannot control their children when it comes to computer games. They allowed the children to spend at least 2 hours a day.
- According to the results of the study, the presence of aggression, violent situations, and severe visual images were not a concern for children and these aspects had no impact on their behavior in everyday life.
- All children were able to pay the fee for computer games. Most of them were saving their school money or asking their parents for it. What pushed the kids towards computer games were the presence of peers in these centers as well as the feeling of fighting to be always first in the race with friends.
- At school, there were no textbooks to address the issue of electronic games. Hence, teachers and parents advise them regularly to avoid sitting in front of computers, television, and computer games.
- Finally, children's desire to quit video games was low. No one agreed not to play one day.

5.0 Recommendations

- Publishing articles, brochures and textbooks about the impact and effects of computer games and their adverse effects.
- Increasing parental control over children.
- Control of media and internet information.
- Direct conversations and contacts with children.
- Other studies of this nature should be conducted, which might include other aspects that were not the focus of this study.
- In the future, other studies with a larger sample should be carried out. The case may be not only children but also parents and school teachers in Tirana, as well as in other cities. Therefore, this will bring more complete data, inclusive of the attendance levels, and effects that these games bring to younger ages and the comparison between them.
- To implement the new law on electronic games, stimulating children under the age of 14 will not be permitted in the internet centers.

To avoid, limit or eliminate the negative effects of prolonged and uncontrolled use of computer games, the researchers recommend a number of measures:

- Learn about the types of video games your child plays.
- Do not allow video games to be installed in the child's room.
- Set limits on how long and how often your child should play.
- Monitor all content used by them for video games, TV, internet, etc.
- Supervise the use of online games.
- Take the time to discuss with the children about the games that they play and the programs they attend.

References:

- Adachi, P. J. C. (2015). Demolishing the competition: The Association between Competitive Video Game Play and Aggression among Adolescents and Young Adults (Doctoral thesis). Retrieved from Brock University Library.
- Anderson, C.A. & Sakamoto, A. (2008). Longitudinal Effects of Violent Video Games on Aggression in Japan and the United States. American Academy of Pediatrics.
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory (3rd ed.) Sage Publications Inc. <https://doi.org/10.4135/9781452230153>
- Cummings, M.H., & Vandewater, A.E. (2007). Relation of adolescent video game play to time spent in other activities. National Library of Medicine. 161(7):684-9. doi: **10.1001/archpedi.161.7.684**.
- Gentile, D. A. & Anderson, C. A. (2014). Long-Term Relations Among Prosocial Media Use, Empathy, and Prosocial Behavior. Psychology Science, vol. 2, 358-368.
- Goertz Gary & James Mahoney (2012). A tale of two cultures: Qualitative and quantitative research in the social sciences. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Granic, I., Lobel, A., & Engels, RCME. (2014). The benefits of playing video games. American Psychologist. 69 (1), 66–78. doi: 10.1037/a0034857.
- Law No. 155/2015 Date 21.12.2015 for games of Chance in the Republic of Albania.
- Law No. 75/2018 for Some Additions and Changes to Law No. 155/2015, "On Games of Chance in the Republic of Albania", Amended.
- Lobel, A., Engels, R. C. M. E., Stone, L. L., Burk, W. J., & Granic, I. (2017). Video gaming and children's psychosocial wellbeing: A longitudinal study. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 46(4), 884-897.
- Lobel, A., Granic, I., & Engels, RC. (2014). Associations between children's video game playing and psychosocial health: Information from both parent and child reports. Cyberpsychology, Behavior and Social Networking.17:639–643. doi: 10.1089/cyber.2014.0128.
- McDaniel, M.A. (2016). Available at: https://aquila.usm.edu/honors_theses/427
- Mohamed, M., Al-Hileh & Nedaa S.I. Ibrahim (2018). The Advantages and Disadvantages of Electronic Games Played by Children Aged (3-6) Years, from Mothers and Kindergarten Teachers' Point of View. International Journal of Applied Engineering Research. Volume 13, Number 4, 1805-1812.

- Parkes, A., Sweeting, H., Wight D., & Henderson, M. (2013). Do television and electronic games predict children's psychosocial adjustment? Longitudinal research using the UK Millennium Cohort Study. 98 341–348. 10.1136/archdischild-2011-301508.
- Szycik, G. R., Mohammadi, B., Hake, M., Kneer, J., Samii, A., Münte, TH.F., & Te Wildt, B.T. (2017). Excessive users of violent video games do not show emotional desensitization: an fMRI study. *Frontiers in Psychology*,11(3):736-743. doi: 10.1007/s11682-016-9549-y.
- Tumbokon, C. (2014). "The Positive and Negative Effects of Video Games. jpaolini43.
- Tombokon, C. (2013, January 1). The Positive and Negative Effects of Video Games .*Raise Smart Kid*. Retrieved June 29, 2014, from <http://www.raisesmartkid.com/3-to-6-years-old/4-articles/34-the-good-and-bad-effects-of-video-games>
- Tushi, G. (2012). Marriage, family and sexuality. Publishing House "Nature".
- Vallett, D. B., Lamb, R. L., & Annetta, L. A. (2013). The gorilla in the room: the impacts of video- game play on visual attention. *Computers in Human Behavior* 29 (6), 2183 2187. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2013.05.001>.