ISSN: 0023-074X
Volume 70, Issue 05, May, 2025

Parents' Perceptions on Addiction to Electronic Games and its Relationship to Social Isolation among Primary School Children

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Keywords:
Addiction, electronic Games, social isolation.

DOI:
05.1767/Csb.28.05.2025.01

ABSTRACT

Playing is a mental, imaginative, entertaining, social, and educational activity that contributes to developing child's personality. It develops children in mental, physical, social and linguistic areas. Due to technological developments, electronic games are highly used today. In fact, some children are addicted to such games and become socially isolated. Thus, it's necessary to conduct studies about the relationship between addiction to such games and social isolation. This study explored the level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from parents' perspective. It also explored the relationship between such addiction and social isolation among primary school children from the point of view of parents. The researchers adopted the descriptive correlational approach. They sampled 120 parents who play electronic games with their children. They obtained data from them through using two questionnaires. The first one measures the level of addiction to electronic games. The second one measures the level of social isolation. 1)-The level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from parents' perspective is moderate in the social and behavioral areas. 2)-The level of social isolation among children of the primary school children is moderate. 3)- There's a significant relationship between such addiction and social isolation among primary school children. The level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children is moderate from parents' point of views. This is the first study that examined the level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from parents' perspective in Jordan. The researchers recommend promoting awareness among children in schools about the consequences of addiction to electronic games.

1. Introduction

Playing is a mental, entertaining, social, and educational activity that contributes to developing child's personality. It develops children in mental, physical, social and linguistic areas. Due to technological developments, electronic games are highly used today. In fact, some children are addicted to such games [3].

Children are often attached to electronic games due to the availability of attractive elements in them [2]. However, the excessive use of electronic games by children shall to various physical and mental complications on the long-term.

The addiction to electronic games is characterized by having a deep impact and spread among children.. According to [14], with the development of technology for portable digital devices, many of the functions of these devices have been transferred to gaming applications such as iPad and mobile phone. As a result, these games have become more developed in which users depend on video games and continue to play and repeat them over long periods of time [14].

Technology and its applications have captured the attention of different age groups. However, children and adolescents are the ones attached and interested in technology, its tools and applications [11]. It requires parents and teachers to pay attention to this issue, provide more care and guidance, introduce the children to the negative aspects of addiction to this technology and its applications. Parents and teachers must encourage children to reduce the time dedicated for playing electronic games to avoid having negative impacts on them.

The choice of children and adolescents for this diverse mix of electronic games that represent violence or adventure shows the ability of these games to capture children's interest in them and practice them continuously and repeatedly. The examples of electronic games are football, wrestling, boxing, or imaginary games such as space conquest, star wars, police pursuits, gang wars, and others, where the player controls some elements of the game such as the weapons used, directing and firing them, or choosing the participants and warriors and developing plans and roles for each of them, then directing and defeating the opponents [18].

[3] confirmed that the most isolated children, or those who tend to be psychologically lonely, are often addicted to playing electronic games. [13] believe that children who feel inadequate in discharging their energies, and in meeting their mental, emotional, or social needs are the most oriented towards these games, believing that they will achieve their self-identity.

[17] add that children who suffer from feelings of emptiness or isolation often resort to playing electronic games to expand their intellectual imagination. They also improve their social interaction possibilities by creating a more comprehensive scope on a social network with different levels of closeness with other people, whether they are real or imaginary.

[9] suggest that the negative effects of electronic games include: physical problems, and problems related to attention, lessons and family. They add that such effects include: increasing anger, waste of time, food and

sleep problems, emotional problems, and socialization problems. They add that such effects include: eye-related problems

[12] also confirmed that children's addiction to playing electronic games may have many negative effects on the child's personality, values, behavior, thinking, mental and emotional health, and personality in general. According to [1], electronic games are a double-edged sword that some may see as negative, but they also carry many positives, as playing for children or adolescents expresses social, psychological, and physical needs that help to resume and excel in the rest of daily social activities. It also has advantages related to children's thinking, the ability to imagine, raise the degrees of visual and mental perception, their level of attention, and provide them with the skills of remembering and anticipation. These abilities and skills are increased and improved through electronic games, with what they contain of exciting and attractive colors, graphics, and forms.

A study by [11] showed some negative effects on children social development. They confirmed that the impact of frequent use of games is related to the low level of social interaction of the user with family members and friends, low participation in social life, and lack of positive communication skills with oneself and with others. In addition to being exposed to Internet addiction and social isolation, some of these games contain ideas and tools that are not compatible with religious and societal values and beliefs. As a result, communication through them creates many problems resulting from the different social, cultural and environmental affiliations of the players within the game. [7] added some negative effects of electronic games on mental and physical health, which leads to psychological, nervous and physical stress, because most games contain various forms of pistols, daggers or swords, laser games that destroy and weaken the optic nerve through the rays emanating from them, a feeling of redness of the eye, and a low level of vision and sight.

Accordingly, many studies have focused on researching electronic games from multiple angles. In a study conducted by [4] with the aim of identifying the effects of addiction to electronic games on the psychological and social side of a sample of female students, it showed the existence of many negative effects of addiction to electronic games on the psychological and social sides. The findings revealed the existence of a statistically significant positive correlation between social interaction and addiction to electronic games, which is represented in poor performance of interaction with others, separation, and rejection. Furthermore, the study of [6] was concerned with identifying the educational implications of the use of electronic games by primary school children from the point of view of parents. This study confirmed that parents face real suffering because of children staying up late playing electronic games, which affects their academic achievement, in addition to these games taking over the time and minds of their children, which may cause several problems within the family or school, such as poor family or school social interaction, and the emergence of selfishness among children. Parents also expressed their concern about the scenes of violence and indecent shots contained in these games.

Additionally, [5] investigated the relationship between addiction to electronic games, psychological loneliness, and social anxiety among a sample of female students. This study found a positive correlation between addiction to electronic games, psychological loneliness, and social anxiety. Almost similarly, the study of [15] tried to investigate the relationship between the feeling of social isolation and addiction to electronic games through the content of electronic games. They confirmed the existence of an inverse correlation between the feeling of social isolation and addiction to electronic games.

In the same manner, the study of [2] confirmed that children love electronic games and spend a lot of their

time in them, because they present elements of excitement and challenge and may reach the point of addiction to electronic games, which may pose a great threat to children that may lead to psychological and social disorders. Because children spend most of their time playing, these games cannot constructively build social relationships with others.

[8] showed that the moderate use of electronic games to achieve a specific goal and without mental, psychological or physical stress may help unload the potential energies of the child. Nonetheless, there are some physical and psychological damages that result from the bad use of electronic games, such as low school achievement, anxiety, fatigue, and psychological loneliness.

[10] aimed to explore the impact of COVID 19 pandemic on the risks of having children becoming addicted to electronic games. She identified the negative impacts of addiction to electronic games on children. She sampled 289 children. She used a survey to acquire data from the sample. After the analysis of data, she found that COVID 19 pandemic contributed significantly to increasing the risks of having children becoming addicted to electronic games. She found that this addiction has negative behavioral, social and psychological impacts on children. For instance, this addiction leads to the prevalence of the following problems among children: social isolation, depression, introversion, intolerance, violence, aggression, lying, deception, imitation, vigilance, physical stress, poor eyesight, and refrainment from practicing religious rituals. It also leads to the promotion of the following problems among children: academic delay, selfishness, sadness, social withdrawal and refrainment from creating social relationships and commutating with others.

[16] aimed to explore the effects of playing video games on anxiety, loneliness, depression, and stress during the early stages of the COVID-19 pandemic. They conducted a meta-analysis to acquire and analyze data. After conducting the meta-analysis, they found that plays video games contribute to reducing anxiety, depression and loneliness among adolescents and youth.

2. Statement of the Problem and the Study's Questions

Addiction to electronic games is a behavioral problem that has been increasing among children at homes, schools, and cafes. That's because such games are attractively designed, regardless of their content and the effects that may have on players. This addiction has negative behavioral, physical and psychological impacts on children. It affects children's social interaction with others. Thus, the problem of this study is represented in exploring the level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from the parents' perspectives

The study's questions are listed below:

1. What is the level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from the parents' perspectives?
2. What is the level of social isolation among primary school children from the parents' perspectives?
3. Is there any statistically significant relationship between addiction to electronic games and social isolation among primary school children?

3. Objectives

The researchers aimed to:

1. Identify the level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from parents' point of views.

2. Identify the level of social isolation among primary school children.
3. Explore the relationship between addiction to electronic games and social isolation among primary school children.

4. Significance of the Study

This study is significant due to the reasons below:
1. The studies addressing this topic in Jordan are scarce. Thus, this study enrich the relevant literature
2. There's a need to identify the impact of addiction to electronic games on children and adolescents in psychological, emotional, and social aspects

5. Definition of Terms

-Electronic Games: The games that can be played through digital means [12].

-Addiction: It's the state of doing a habit in a regular manner for long time with having the intention of entering a state of euphoria and excluding isolation or depression" [18], 92)

-Social Isolation: The degree to which one isolates himself from others, and avoids others [18], 93)

6. Methodology

The researchers used the descriptive correlative approach.

6.1 Population and Sample

The population consists of all the parents of primary school students in Irbid during the academic year 2021/2022 / the second semester. The sample consists of 120 parents whose children play electronic games in a regular manner. Those parents were chosen from Irbid.

6.2 Instruments

The researchers developed two questionnaires. The first ones measures the level of addiction to electronic games. It consists of 15 items that target the behavioral and social aspects. The second questionnaire aims to measure the level of feeling social isolation. It consists of 15 items that target family and social aspects). The questionnaires were developed based on the works: [8], [4].

6.3 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments

The validity of the two instruments were verified through two means. The first mean is content validity. That was done through passing the instruments in their initial version to a group consisting of 10 experts who were chosen from Al-Balqa Applied University. Those experts are specialized in educational techniques and technology, psychology, and psychological counseling.

In light of the experts' comments, the final version of the questionnaire measuring the addiction to electronic games consists of 15 items. It targets the behavioral area social areas. The final version of the questionnaire measuring social isolation consists of 15 items. It targets two areas (family and social areas).

The second mean is represented in measuring the internal consistency of the two questionnaires through calculating the correlation coefficient between the score on the items of each dimension and the overall score. That was done after administering the questionnaires to an exploratory sample consisting of 25

parents. This sample wasn't chosen from the actual sample.

The values of the correlation coefficient of the items are greater than 0.65. They're statistically significant at the level (□≤0.05). The internal validity of the two questionnaires was also confirmed by calculating the correlation coefficient of each item with the dimension to which it belongs. The correlation coefficients of the items of the two questionnaires with their dimensions ranged between 0.68-0.72. The overall correlation coefficient for the addiction questionnaire was 0.70, and 0.72 for the social isolation questionnaire.

The reliability coefficient of the two questionnaires was calculated calculating the Cronbach alpha coefficient values. The reliability coefficients for the addiction identification items range between 0.78-0.88. The overall reliability coefficient is 0.84. The reliability coefficients for the items of social isolation questionnaire ranged between 0.82-0.90, with an overall reliability coefficient of 0.87, which indicates that the reliability coefficients for the two questionnaires are supporting for the procedure and application. The standard value which should be competed for Cronbach's alpha is 0.70. In addition, the minimum threshold for the value of Cronbach's alpha is put at 0.6.

7. Results and Discussion

7.1 The results related to the first question:

What is the level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from parents' point of views?

To answer this question, means were calculated for the two dimensions as shown in table 1.

Table 1: The means of the targeted areas

Number	Rank	Dimension	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	1	Social Aspect	2.86	0.84	Moderate
2	2	Behavioral Aspect	2.68	0.86	Moderate
		Overall	2.77	0.83	Moderate

The overall the level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from parents' point of views is moderate, because the overall mean is 2.77. The mean of the social area is 2.86 which is moderate. The mean of the behavioral area is 2.68 which is moderate.

The First Dimension: The Behavioral Aspect of Addiction

Table 2: The means of the items related to the behavioral aspect

Rank	No.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	3	Avoiding exposure to disturbing situations while playing.	3.30	0.95	moderate
2	5	Spending a lot of time playing electronic games.	3.15	0.80	moderate
3	7	Getting angry when banned from electronic games.	3.18	0.87	moderate
4	1	Exhibiting some unusual behavior after playing.	2.82	0.80	moderate
5	4	Refusing to set aside time to play electronic games.	2.75	0.84	moderate
6	8	Thinking about electronic games more than other activities.	2.63	0.85	moderate
7	2	Talking all the time with his brothers about the electronic games he loves.	2.59	0.72	moderate
8	6	Continuous playing regardless of my request to him to stop.	2.53	0.81	moderate

Overall	2.86	0.87	moderate

Based on table (2), the respondents' attitudes on the items of the behavioral aspect are neutral. That's because the overall mean is 2.86. All the items related to the behavioral aspect are moderate.
Item (3) states: "Avoiding exposure to disturbing situations while playing". The mean of item (3) is 3.30 which is ranked first. Item (5) states: (Spending a long time playing electronic games). The mean of item (5) is (3.15) which is ranked fourth.

The Second Dimension: The Social Dimension of Addiction

Table (3) presents respondents' attitudes on the items related to the social area:

Table 3: The means of the items related to the social aspect

Rank	No.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	9	Interact with others while playing with them online	2.95	0.94	moderate
2	12	Isolate from those around him while playing games	2.81	0.82	moderate
3	14	Make friends with others who play games	2.77	0.90	moderate
4	10	Stay in touch with siblings while playing	2.73	0.97	moderate
5	15	Talking to others while playing electronic games	2.62	0.88	moderate
6	13	Feel inconsistent with family members and others	2.45	1.01	moderate
7	11	Feel sensitive to criticisms of him	2.43	1.02	moderate
		Overall	2.68	0.93	moderate

Based on table (3), the respondents' attitudes on the items related to the social aspect are neutral. That's because the overall mean is 2.68 which is moderate.
The means range between (2.43-2.95). Item No. 9, "Interact with others while playing with them online". The mean of item (9) is 2.95 which is moderate. It's ranked first. Item 12 states: "Isolate from those around him while playing games". The mean of item (12) is 2.81 which is moderate.

In line with the above findings, the researchers believe that addiction to electronic games increases children's sense of social isolation and distances them from their family and social surroundings, in addition to their practicing some unwanted behaviors that may be imitating what they see of events that attract their attention and admiration. However, regardless of the dangers of addiction to electronic games, they have a lot of positive effects on children, as some targeted games contribute to expanding the child's perceptions, developing his/her ability to think and focus, and make him/her more disciplined in his/her behavior, if he/she practices them well.

This result in this regard is consistent with the studies conducted by [4]. It showed that children's addiction to electronic games in children has impacts on daily social behavior and practices and psychological and social areas of life.

7.1 Results related to the second question:

What is the level of social isolation among primary school children from the parents' perspectives?
To answer this question, means were calculated for the two dimensions of social isolation questionnaire as shown in table (4)

Table 4: The means of the areas of social isolation

Number	Rank	Dimension	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	1	Social Dimension	3.39	0.87	moderate
2	2	Behavioral Dimension	3.17	0.90	moderate
		Overall	3.28	0.85	moderate

Based on table 4, the respondents' attitudes on the two dimensions of social isolation are neutral. That's because the overall mean is 3.28. The mean of the social dimension is 3.39 which is moderate. The mean of the behavioral dimension is 3.17 which is moderate.

The First Dimension: Family Aspect

Table 5: The means of the items related to the family dimension

Rank	No.	Items	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	4	Behave respectfully with family members	3.85	0.78	high
2	7	Feel affection and love for his brothers if he is not	3.81	0.70	high
3	5	interrupted while playing	3.76	0.93	high
4	2	Get angry when I tell him to stop playing electronic	2.92	0.92	moderate
5	3	games	2.83	0.98	moderate
6	8	His relations with his family are cut off while he is	2.79	0.90	moderate
7	1	playing electronic games.	2.75	0.94	moderate
8	6	Continue to play no matter what happens in the family	2.71	0.99	moderate
		Talk to his brothers all the time about the electronic games he likes			
		Stop playing when assigned to work for his family			
		Feel rejected by his family			
		Overall	3.17	0.90	moderate

Based on table 5, the respondents' attitudes on the items of the family aspect are neutral. That's because the overall mean is 3.17. The means range between (2.71-3.85). Item 4, "Behave respectfully with family members". The mean of item (4) is 3.85 which is high. Item 7 states: (Feel affection and love for his brothers if he is not interrupted during the game). The mean of item 7 is 3.81 which is moderate

The Second Dimension: Social Aspect

Table 6: The means of the items related to the social dimension

Rank	No.	Item	Arithmetic mean	Standard Deviation	Level
1	12	Prefer isolation from those around him while playing	3.88	0.76	high
2	9	games	3.84	0.84	high
3	14	Enjoy sitting on games more than sitting with his	3.81	0.88	high
4	11	friends	3.78	0.87	high
5	13	Make friends with his friends who play electronic	2.95	0.90	moderate
6	15	games	2.92	0.95	moderate
7	10	Games increase his imagination and imaginative play	2.58	0.97	moderate
		Interact a lot with his brothers while playing			
		Feel social security while playing electronic games			
		Prefer games over going out with his friends			
		Overall	3.39	0.87	moderate

Based on table 6, the respondents' attitudes on the items related to the social aspect are neutral. That's because the overall mean is 3.39. The means range between 2.58-3.88. Item 12 states: "Prefer to isolate himself from those around him while playing games". The mean of item 12 is 3.88 which is ranked first and high. Item 9 states: "Enjoy sitting on games more than sitting with his friends". The mean of item (9) is 3.84 which is high.

The results in this regard are consistent with the results of [5], [15], [2]. The latter researchers found that electronic games have negative and positive effects children.

7.3 Results related to the third question:

Is there a statistically significant relationship between addiction to electronic games and social isolation among primary school children? To answer this question, Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated as shown in table 7.

Table 7: Pearson correlation coefficient value

	N	R	Sig.
The relationship between addiction variable and the social isolation variable	100	0.732**	0.000

Based on table 7, the probability value (Sig.) is equal to (0.000) and less than the significance level (0.01). That indicates that there's a direct correlation between addiction to electronic games and social isolation among primary school children. It means that the higher the level of children's addiction to electronic games, the greater the sense of social isolation, and vice versa. The latter result is attributed to the fact that such addiction shall discourage children from interacting with their peers, family members and etc.. This result is consistent with the result reached by [5] who showed that there's a positive correlation between addiction to electronic games, psychological loneliness, and social anxiety.

8. Conclusion

The following results were concluded:

1) The level of addiction to electronic games among primary school children from parents' perspective is moderate in the social and behavioral areas.
2) The level of social isolation among children of the primary school children is moderate.
3) There's a significant relationship between such addiction and social isolation among primary school children

Recommendations

The researchers recommend:

1. Promoting awareness among children in schools about the consequences of addiction to electronic games.
2. Conducting studies about the relationship between addiction to electronic games and academic achievement.

Author Contributions

All the researchers have participated in writing and editing the sections of this research

Funding
This research wasn't funded by any institution

Informed Consent Statement
The researchers obtained written consents from all the participants. Such consents suggest that the participants approve participating in this research. They include: information about the objectives of this research

Acknowledgment
The researchers would like to thank the management of Al-Huson University College for supporting all the faculty members working at it.
Conflict of Interest
The researchers confirm that there isn't any conflict of interest.

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