SUNTEXT REVIEWS

The Connection between Today's Youth Online Gaming Addiction and Bent for Hopelessness in Bangladesh

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Abstract

Bangladesh has experienced a surge in internet usage, particularly among its youth population, leading to a notable increase in online gaming activities. This phenomenon has sparked concerns regarding the potential negative impact of excessive gaming on mental health, particularly its association with feelings of hopelessness among young individuals. This study aims to investigate the connection between online gaming addiction and a propensity towards hopelessness among youth in Bangladesh. The research employs a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews to comprehensively explore the phenomenon. A diverse sample of Bangladeshi youth will be recruited to participate in the study, representing various demographic backgrounds and levels of gaming involvement. Furthermore, qualitative interviews will be conducted to delve deeper into the subjective experiences and perceptions of youth regarding online gaming addiction and its potential impact on their mental well-being. These interviews will offer valuable insights into the underlying factors contributing to gaming addiction and feelings of hopelessness, including social pressures, coping mechanisms, and access to support networks. Analysis of the collected data will involve statistical techniques to identify correlations between online gaming addiction and feelings of hopelessness. The findings of this study hold significant implications for policymakers, mental health professionals, and educators in Bangladesh, providing insights into the emerging challenges posed by online gaming addiction among youth and informing the development of targeted interventions and support mechanisms to address these issues effectively.

Keywords: Youth; Online gaming addiction; Hopelessness; Mental health; Internet usage

Introduction

In recent years, the prevalence of game addiction among youth has emerged as a pressing societal concern, warranting comprehensive examination across various domains. This article endeavours to delve into the multifaceted aspects contributing to game addiction among adolescents, considering socio-economic, psychological, academic, social, interpersonal, and health-related dimensions. By scrutinizing these factors, we aim to elucidate the complex interplay between individual behaviours, environmental influences, and technological advancements shaping contemporary gaming habits. Socio-economic factors represent a significant backdrop against which game addiction unfolds. Economic disparities, access to technology, and socio-cultural norms may influence the propensity towards excessive gaming among youth [1]. Moreover, family dynamics and parenting styles play pivotal roles in either fostering healthy gaming habits or exacerbating addictive behaviours among adolescents [2]. Peer influence and social relationships also exert substantial impact on the development of gaming habits, as adolescents navigate social dynamics both online and offline. Understanding the psychological drivers behind game addiction, such as escapism, stress relief, and social fulfilment, is paramount in devising effective intervention strategies [3]. The repercussions of game addiction extend beyond

individual well-being to encompass academic performance, social interactions, and overall health. Excessive gaming has been associated with diminished academic engagement and cognitive abilities among youth, raising concerns about its long-term consequences on educational outcomes [4]. Similarly, the impact of game addiction on social relationships and interpersonal skills warrants careful examination, particularly in the context of adolescents' developmental milestones [5]. Moreover, prolonged gaming can precipitate adverse physical health outcomes, including sedentary behaviour and sleep disturbances, underscoring the need for holistic interventions that address the multifaceted dimensions of well-being [6]. Against this backdrop, exploring existing intervention strategies and proposing evidence-based policy recommendations becomes imperative in safeguarding the health and well-being of today's youth. This article aims to synthesize existing research findings, illuminate critical insights, and propose actionable recommendations to address the burgeoning challenge of game addiction among adolescents. By fostering interdisciplinary dialogue and informed discourse, we aspire to foster responsible gaming behaviours and promote holistic well-being among today's youth.

Literature Review

In contemporary society, the rise of digital entertainment, particularly the proliferation of video games, has led to concerns about the prevalence and impact of game addiction among youth. Understanding the multifaceted nature of game addiction requires an exploration of various socio-economic, psychological, academic, and social, health, and intervention-related factors. This literature review delves into existing research to shed light on the complexities surrounding game addiction among youth. Socio-economic status has been identified as a contributing factor to game addiction among youth. Studies have shown that individuals from lower socio-economic backgrounds may be more susceptible to excessive gaming due to limited access to alternative recreational activities and resources [7]. Moreover, the affordability and accessibility of gaming technology play a significant role in shaping gaming habits among different socio-economic groups. Family dynamics and parenting styles significantly influence the development of gaming habits among youth. Research suggests that authoritative parenting characterized by warmth, support, and setting clear boundaries tends to mitigate the risk of excessive gaming [8]. Conversely, permissive or neglectful parenting styles may inadvertently facilitate the onset of game addiction by failing to establish appropriate limits and supervision. Peer influence and social relationships play a pivotal role in shaping gaming habits among youth. Adolescents often engage in gaming as a means of socializing and bonding with peers. The acceptance and normalization of gaming within peer groups may contribute to the escalation of gaming behaviour and the development of addictive tendencies.

One of the primary psychological drivers behind game addiction is escapism. Video games offer an immersive escape from real-life stressors and provide individuals with a temporary respite from academic, familial, or social pressures [9]. The ability to assume alternate identities and embark on virtual adventures fulfills the inherent human desire for novelty and excitement. For many individuals, gaming serves as a platform for fulfilling social needs and establishing meaningful connections with others [10]. Online multiplayer games facilitate social interaction and collaboration, fostering a sense of belonging and camaraderie among players. The social aspects of gaming contribute to its appeal and reinforce continued engagement. Game design elements, such as rewards, achievements, and progression systems, play a crucial role in triggering addictive behaviours. The strategic incorporation of intermittent reinforcement schedules and dopamine-inducing mechanics heightens player engagement and compels individuals to invest increasing amounts of time and effort into gaming activities. There exists a complex interplay between mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, and the likelihood of developing a gaming addiction. While some individuals turn to gaming as a coping mechanism to alleviate symptoms of psychological distress, excessive gaming can exacerbate pre-existing mental health conditions and contribute to social withdrawal and isolation [11]. The relationship between excessive gaming and academic performance among youth is a topic of considerable research interest. While moderate gaming may serve as a recreational outlet and even enhance certain cognitive skills, excessive gaming has been associated with detrimental effects on academic achievement [12]. Prolonged gaming sessions often lead to neglect of academic responsibilities, reduced study time, and poor time management skills, ultimately compromising educational outcomes. The impact of different game genres on cognitive abilities, attention span, and academic engagement varies considerably. Role-playing games (RPGs) and simulation games, characterized by immersive narratives and complex decision-making, may enhance problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities [13]. However, the addictive nature of these genres can also disrupt academic focus and impede learning.

Excessive gaming can have profound implications for social interactions and interpersonal relationships among youth. While online gaming platforms provide opportunities for socialization and collaboration, excessive gaming can lead to social withdrawal and isolation from offline relationships. The prevalence of online friendships may overshadow real-world connections, hindering the development of essential social skills and emotional intelligence. Prolonged gaming is often accompanied by sedentary behaviour

and a lack of physical activity, contributing to a host of health issues such as obesity, musculoskeletal disorders, and cardiovascular problems [14]. Additionally, excessive screen time and exposure to blue light emitted by electronic devices can disrupt circadian rhythms and lead to sleep disturbances among youth. The impact of game addiction on overall well-being encompasses both emotional and physical dimensions. Studies have shown a correlation between excessive gaming and increased levels of stress, anxiety, and depression [15]. Furthermore, the compulsive nature of gaming can erode self-esteem and exacerbate feelings of inadequacy and social alienation. Effective intervention strategies aimed at mitigating game addiction among youth involve a multifaceted approach encompassing education, awareness, and behavioural interventions. Educational initiatives and awareness campaigns play a crucial role in promoting responsible gaming behaviours and raising awareness about the potential risks associated with excessive gaming. Behavioural interventions, such as cognitive-behavioural therapy and family-based interventions, address underlying psychological factors contributing to game addiction and foster healthier coping mechanisms.

Theoretical Framework

Drawing from various theoretical perspectives in social science, we can construct a theoretical stage to elucidate the complexities of gaming addiction and its impact on individual behaviour, social interactions, and well-being. Social Learning Theory; Albert Bandura's social learning theory posits that individuals acquire behaviours, attitudes, and beliefs through observational learning and modelling [16]. In the context of gaming addiction, youth may observe and internalize gaming behaviours exhibited by peers, family members, or media influences. Daniel, Emily, Michael, Sarah, and David may have been exposed to gaming environments that reinforce addictive behaviours, leading to the adoption of similar patterns of excessive gaming. Cognitive-Behavioural Perspective; the cognitive-behavioural perspective emphasizes the role of cognitive processes, beliefs, and coping strategies in shaping behaviour [17]. Youth experiencing gaming addiction, such as Michael and David, may exhibit maladaptive thought patterns and coping mechanisms in response to stressors or emotional challenges. Cognitive distortions, such as cognitive dissonance or selective attention, may perpetuate addictive gaming behaviours and hinder the development of healthier coping strategies. Bio psychosocial Model; the bio psychosocial model integrates biological, psychological, and social factors to understand health and illness [18-20]. In the context of gaming addiction, biological predispositions, psychological vulnerabilities, and social influences interact to shape individual susceptibility and resilience. Sarah's physical health concerns,

David's struggles with depression, and Michael's academic decline may reflect the interplay between genetic, environmental, and psychosocial factors contributing to gaming addiction.

Research Methodology

This study employed a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative research methods. This approach addresses the multi-layered research objectives and provide a well-rounded understanding of the gaming addiction of youth. Quantitative data were gathered through structured surveys and questionnaires administered to residents of selected areas in Dhaka. Qualitative data were collected through case studies. The study focused on selected schools and college areas in Dhaka, the capital of Bangladesh, which is known for its rapid urbanization and challenges related to game addiction. The sampling technique in this study was purposive sampling. The study has shed light on the socio-economic factors that may contribute to game addiction among youth, psychological mechanisms, academic performances social and interpersonal consequences and recommendations for sustainable solutions.

Conceptual Frame Work

Youth

In research, "youth" typically refers to the period of life between childhood and adulthood, encompassing a range of ages that can vary depending on the context but generally includes individuals from approximately 12 to 24 years old. This stage is characterized by significant physical, psychological, and social changes as individual's transition from dependence on their caregivers to greater independence and self-sufficiency.

Online gaming addiction

Continuing to game despite knowing its negative consequences. This condition is recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) in its International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). In this research online gaming addiction refers to the Internet gaming disorder, is a behavioural addiction characterized by excessive or compulsive use of online games, leading to significant impairment or distress.

Hopelessness

Hopelessness in youth with gaming addiction refers to a psychological state characterized by pervasive feelings of despair, futility, and a lack of expectation for positive change in the future. This condition is often exacerbated by excessive and compulsive engagement in online gaming, which can negatively impact various aspects of a young person's life, including their mental health, social relationships, academic performance, and overall well-

being. These definitions encompass the general understanding of each term and highlight the key aspects associated with them.

Objectives of the Research

The general objective of the study is to know the Connection between Today's Youth Online Gaming Addiction and Bent for Hopelessness in Bangladesh
The Specific objectives are to:

- To examine the socio-economic factors that may contribute to game addiction among youth.
- To explore the psychological drivers behind game addiction, such as escapism, stress relief, and the fulfilment of social needs.

- To examine the correlation between mental health issues (e.g., anxiety, depression) and the likelihood of developing a gaming addiction.
- To evaluate the relationship between excessive gaming and academic performance among youth.
- To examine the physical health consequences of prolonged gaming, including issues related to sedentary behaviour and sleep disturbances.

Findings and Discussion

Based on research findings, suggest evidence-based policy recommendations for parents, educators, and policymakers to address and prevent game addiction in today's youth (Table 1).

Table 1: *Demographic information of the youth addicted to game.*

Age	Percentage	Gender	Percentages	Education	Percentages
13-15	16%	Male	44%	Informal	11%
16-18	39%	Female	54%	Primary	4%
19-21	31%	Transgender	2%	Secondary	24%
22-24	10%	Non-binary	0%	Higher secondary	27%
25 & above	4%	Others	0%	Graduation (+)	34%
Total	100%	Total	100%	Total	100%
Occupation	Percentages	Socioeconomic Status	Percentages	Average timing in gaming	Percentages
Student	22%	High-income Middle income Low income	34% 48% 18%	Less than 1 hour	17%
Employed	13%			1-2 hours	31%
Unemployed	17%			2-4 hours	22%
Self-employed	30%				
Homemaker	18%			More than 4 hours	8%
Total	100%	Total	100%	Others	22%

The role of your friends in shaping your gaming habits

Friends play a crucial role in shaping your gaming habits. They introduce you to new games, help you improve your skills, and provide a sense of camaraderie and competition. Gaming with friends often leads to shared experiences and inside jokes, making the activity more enjoyable and memorable. In essence, friends make gaming a more engaging and dynamic part of your life. The table outlines the influence of friends on shaping gaming habits, expressed as percentages (Figure 1). According to the data, 25% of individuals find their friends' influence on their gaming habits to be "not significant at all." A larger group, 56%, considers the

influence to be "somewhat significant," indicating that friends play a moderate role in their gaming choices and behaviours. Finally, 19% of respondents feel that their friends' influence is "very significant," suggesting a strong impact on their gaming habits. The total adds up to 100%, representing the entire survey population.

Have you personally experienced symptoms of anxiety or hopelessness? (If comfortable sharing)

Symptoms of anxiety and hopelessness from gaming addiction can manifest in various ways. Individuals may experience persistent worry about the game, restlessness when not playing, and isolation from social activities, leading to loneliness. They might also

neglect responsibilities, lose interest in other hobbies, and suffer from sleep disturbances. The table presents the percentages of individuals who participated in an awareness campaign (Figure 2). According to the data, 58% of respondents participated in the campaign, showing a majority involvement. In contrast, 17% did not participate, indicating a smaller group who did not engage with the campaign. Additionally, 25% of respondents were neutral, neither actively participating nor completely abstaining. The total percentage sums up to 100%, representing the entire group surveyed.
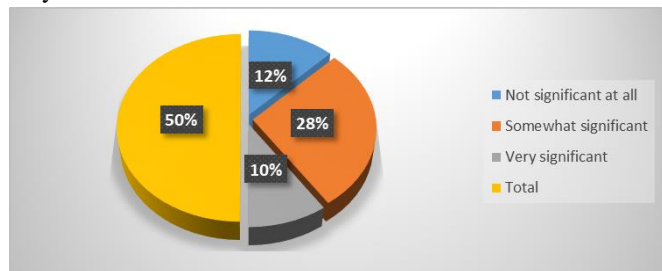
impact on their lives. The total percentages add up to 100%, representing the entire group surveyed.

Figure 3: Field Survey Data.

Figure 1: Field Survey Data.

Figure 4: Field Survey Data.

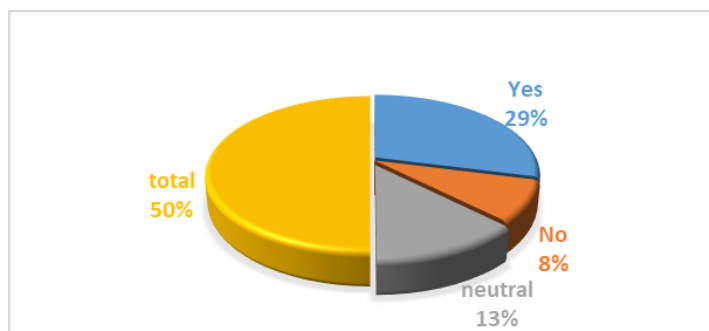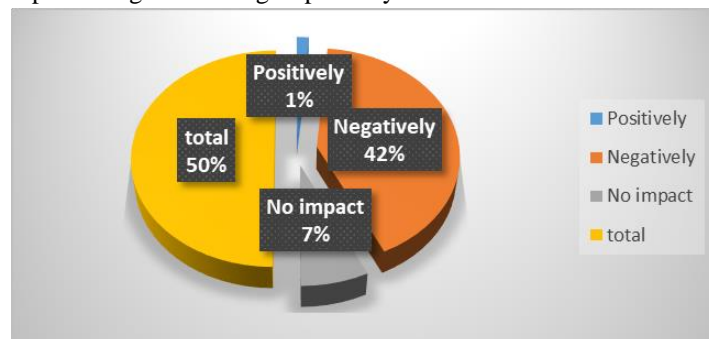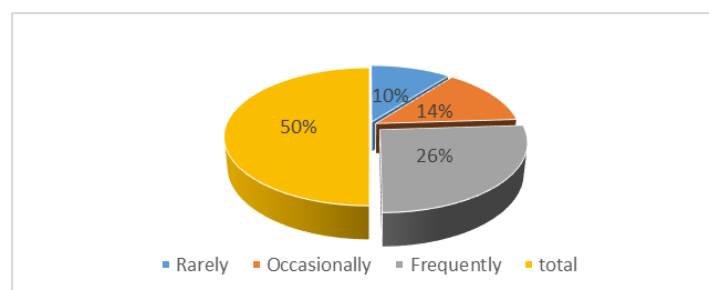*Figure 2: Field Survey Data.*

Figure 5: Field Survey Data.

Do you think your gaming habits have positively or negatively affected your interpersonal skills?

Gaming habits can significantly impact interpersonal skills, both positively and negatively. On the positive side, multiplayer games often require teamwork, communication, and strategic planning, which can enhance social skills, foster collaboration, and build friendships. Conversely, excessive gaming can negatively affect interpersonal skills by reducing face-to-face interactions and increasing social isolation. This can lead to difficulties in real-world social situations, decreased empathy, and challenges in forming meaningful relationships outside the gaming context (Figure 3). The table illustrates the perceived impact of gaming on individuals, expressed as percentages. According to the data, only 3% of respondents believe gaming has had a positive impact on them. A significant majority, 83%, feel that gaming has negatively affected them. Meanwhile, 14% report that gaming has had no
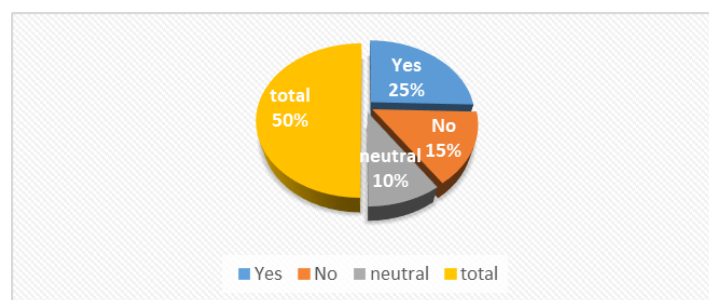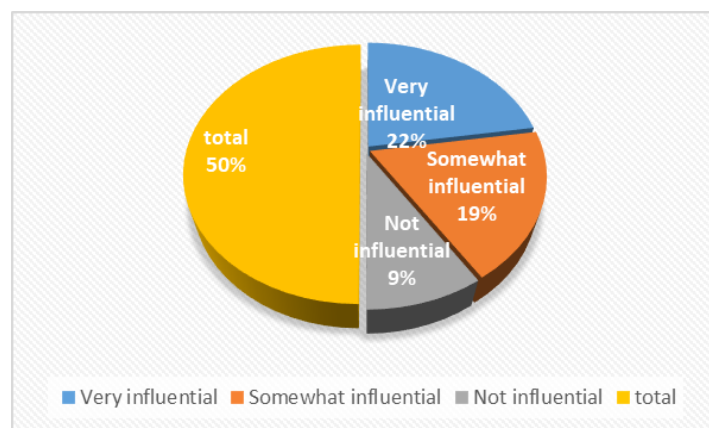

Figure 6: Field Survey Data.

How often do you experience physical health issues related to prolonged gaming?

The table shows the frequency of physical health issues resulting from prolonged gaming, expressed as percentages. According to the data, 21% of respondents experience physical health issues rarely. A larger group, 27%, encounters these issues occasionally. The majority, 52%, report frequently experiencing physical health problems due to prolonged gaming. The total percentage sums up to 100%, representing the entire group surveyed (Figure 4).

Are you aware of any interventions or prevention programs aimed at mitigating game addiction?

The table displays the participation in an awareness campaign, with percentages indicating the distribution of responses. It shows that 51% of the respondents participated in the campaign. On the other hand, 30% did not participate, signifying a significant portion of the surveyed population. Additionally, 19% of respondents remained neutral, neither actively participating nor abstaining from the campaign. The total percentage equals 100%, representing the entirety of those surveyed (Figure 5).

To what extent do marketing strategies and advertisements influence your choice of games?

Marketing strategies and advertisements significantly influence gamers' choices by shaping their perceptions and generating interest. Eye-catching trailers, engaging social media campaigns, and positive reviews create anticipation and drive hype around new releases. Influencers and streamers often play a crucial role in promoting games, making them more appealing through their endorsements (Figure 6). The table illustrates the extent to which individuals are influenced by various factors when choosing games, presented as percentages. According to the data, 45% of respondents find their influence on game choices "very influential." A substantial portion, 37%, considers their influence "somewhat influential." Conversely, 18% feel that their influence is "not influential" when it comes to choosing games. The total percentage adds up to 100%, representing the entire group surveyed.

Case Studies

Case study no: 01

Rafi, a 16-year-old high school student in Bangladesh, demonstrates concerning behaviours indicative of online gaming addiction. Consumed by his gaming pursuits, Rafi spends over six hours daily immersed in online multiplayer games, often sacrificing sleep and neglecting his academic responsibilities. Despite his parents' persistent efforts to curtail his gaming habits, Rafi reacts defensively and exhibits irritability when confronted, highlighting potential addiction-related behaviours. Rafi's excessive gaming not only disrupts his daily routine but also strains his relationships and familial dynamics. He prioritizes gaming over social interactions, withdrawing from real-world connections, and forsaking household obligations. This neglect of responsibilities has led to escalating conflicts within the family, further exacerbating the situation. Beyond the surface manifestations of addiction, Rafi's behaviour hints at underlying emotional struggles. His defensive stance and irritability suggest a sense of dependence on gaming as a coping mechanism, potentially masking deeper feelings of insecurity or inadequacy. Furthermore, his prioritization of gaming over essential activities may reflect a sense of hopelessness or escapism, wherein the virtual world offers solace from real-life stressors. By examining Rafi's experiences, it sheds light on the complex interplay between excessive gaming, emotional distress, and familial dynamics. Effective interventions should not only address Rafi's addictive behaviours but also provide support for his underlying emotional needs, fostering healthier coping mechanisms and restoring balance to his life.

Case study no: 02

Sarah, a 15-year-old enthusiastic gamer, is grappling with physical health issues stemming from her prolonged gaming sessions. Her intense gaming habits see her spending hours in front of her computer or gaming console, often without taking breaks or engaging in physical activity. Consequently, Sarah experiences a range of discomforts, including headaches, eye strain, and back pain, which are common symptoms of musculoskeletal strain and excessive screen time exposure. Despite these physical ailments, Sarah finds it challenging to detach herself from her gaming pursuits. The allure of her favourite games outweighs her concern for her own well-being, leading her to prioritize gaming over addressing her health concerns. This prioritization underscores the potential addictive nature of gaming and its profound impact on individuals' behaviours and choices. Sarah's case highlights the need for a holistic approach to address the detrimental effects of gaming addiction on physical health. While the psychological aspects of gaming addiction are often emphasized, the physical toll it takes on individuals like Sarah should not be overlooked. Implementing strategies to promote responsible gaming habits, such as regular breaks, ergonomic setups, and physical activity, is crucial in mitigating the risk of musculoskeletal issues and other health complications associated with excessive gaming.

Case study n0: 03

Rony, an 18-year-old college freshman, enters higher education with aspirations and excitement, yet soon finds himself ensnared by the grips of gaming addiction. Despite his initial enthusiasm for

academic pursuits, Rony's fervour wanes as his excessive gaming habits take centre stage, eclipsing his commitment to his studies. Procrastination becomes his modus operandi as he prioritizes gaming sessions over completing assignments, often forgoing sleep to indulge in his virtual adventures. The consequences of Rony's gaming addiction extend beyond mere academic neglect; they manifest in a myriad of detrimental ways. Skipping classes to prolong gaming sessions becomes routine, and when present, he struggles to concentrate, his mind drifting back to the allure of the digital realm. This pattern of behaviour culminates in a stark decline in his grades, eventually landing him on academic probation—a stark departure from the promising trajectory he once envisioned for himself. Yet, the ramifications of Rony's addiction extend beyond academic setbacks; they permeate his mental and emotional well-being. As the weight of academic underperformance bears down on him, Rony finds himself consumed by stress and anxiety, trapped in a vicious cycle wherein gaming serves as both a coping mechanism and a catalyst for further distress. The once-thriving enthusiasm for learning now gives way to feelings of inadequacy and self-doubt, further exacerbating his struggles.

Recommendation

Based on the research findings regarding "The Connection between Today's Youth Online Gaming Addiction and Bent for Hopelessness in Bangladesh," several recommendations can be proposed:

Public Awareness Campaigns: Launching targeted public awareness campaigns aimed at parents, educators, and youth themselves to increase awareness about the potential risks of excessive online gaming and its impact on mental health. These campaigns should emphasize the importance of moderation and balance in gaming habits.

Educational Programs: Integrate educational programs within schools and communities that provide information on healthy gaming habits, coping mechanisms for stress and negative emotions, and strategies for developing resilience and optimism among youth.

Family Support and Counselling: Encourage family involvement in addressing online gaming addiction by providing resources for parents to recognize signs of addiction and support their children in managing their gaming habits. Family counselling sessions can also be beneficial in fostering communication and understanding within the family unit.

Accessible Mental Health Services: Increase accessibility to mental health services, including counselling and therapy, for youth experiencing feelings of hopelessness or struggling with online gaming addiction. This can involve establishing mental

health hotlines, online counselling platforms, and community-based support groups.

Regulatory Measures: Implement regulatory measures to monitor and regulate the online gaming industry, including age restrictions, time limits, and content moderation to mitigate the risk of addiction among youth. Collaboration with gaming platforms and developers is essential to enforce responsible gaming practices.

Alternative Activities: Promote alternative activities and hobbies that offer positive outlets for self-expression, social interaction, and personal growth. This can include sports, arts, volunteering, or academic pursuits, which can help diversify youth interests and reduce reliance on online gaming as the sole source of entertainment or fulfilment.

Research and Intervention: Invest in further research to deepen understanding of the complex relationship between online gaming addiction and feelings of hopelessness, including longitudinal studies and qualitative research to explore underlying factors and cultural influences specific to Bangladesh.

By implementing these recommendations, stakeholders can work towards mitigating the adverse effects of online gaming addiction and fostering a supportive environment conducive to the well-being and resilience of today's youth in Bangladesh.

Conclusion

The research on "The Connection between Today's Youth Online Gaming Addiction and Bent for Hopelessness in Bangladesh" sheds light on a pressing issue within the country's youth demographic. Through an exploration of online gaming addiction and its potential correlation with feelings of hopelessness, the study provides valuable insights into the psychological and social dynamics at play. The findings suggest that there is indeed a noteworthy relationship between excessive online gaming habits and a sense of hopelessness among the youth population in Bangladesh. This correlation underscores the need for further investigation into the underlying causes and potential interventions. The research underscores the importance of addressing online gaming addiction as a significant public health concern, particularly in the context of its association with feelings of hopelessness among youth in Bangladesh. Effective strategies aimed at prevention, intervention, and support are crucial for mitigating the adverse impacts of excessive gaming and promoting mental well-being among the youth population.

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